

# Islamic Education in Malaysia: Concept, Philosophy and Objectives

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## Abstract

This concept paper intended to examine the concept of Islamic Education, the Philosophy of Islamic Education and the Objectives of Islamic Education according to the point of view of Islamic Education scholars from Malaysia and overseas. The concept of Islamic Education was detailed according to the definition of language and terms. This concept paper also listed the four central aspects supporting Islamic Education Philosophy formation. This concept paper also presented a framework of the principal objectives of Islamic Education which is the result of research on articles related to the purposes of Islamic Education. The determination of the hierarchical priority of Islamic Education goals was carried out using the Atlas.ti Software version 9. The framework of primary objectives of Islamic Education was structured according to the discovery of the most frequent codes. The conclusion verified the highest hierarchy as knowing Allah, The Creator, followed by producing great people and practising Islamic teachings.

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Islamic Education Philosophy, Islamic Education Objectives, Islamic Education Objectives Framework.

## Introduction

Pursuing knowledge is paramount in Islam. Activities that aspire to acquire knowledge and skills are synonymous with education. In Islam, education is crucial as humans have been born ignorant. Therefore, education is a platform for people to enlighten themselves and use knowledge as a guide to live in this world. This is per the verse of the Al-Quran, which signifies that Allah educated the first human on this earth, Prophet Adam A.S.:

“He taught Adam the names of all things, then He presented them to the angels and said, “Tell Me the names of these, if what you say is true?” (Al-Baqarah, 2: 31)

Through Education, Prophet Muhammad BPUH also mentioned that parents are responsible for educating their children with great manners and avoiding despicable practises. It is evident in the Prophet Muhammad PBUH's hadith below

“Anas bin Malik narrated about the Prophet Muhammad PBUH who said: Honour your children and improve their manners” (Ibn Majah, 1954: 1211/2)

Therefore, based on the verses of the Al-Quran and the hadith above, it is apparent that knowledge includes a wide range of fields. It concerns the universe, covers all the rules for living life, and constantly evolves. Nonetheless, education in Islam concentrates on making its followers know Allah as The Creator, realising their responsibility towards other people, creatures, and the environment (Firman, 2017). It endeavours to train humans to fulfil the pursuit of being given life - to be a servant in obedience, as stated in the Al-Quran:

“I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me.”

(Az-Zariyat: 56)

### Concept of Islamic Education

Islamic education phrase consists of two words that form a specific term with its meaning. One needs a straightforward understanding of the two words that make it up to bring a comprehensive concept to this particular term. According to earlier Islamic scholars, education in Islam in terms of language consists of *tarbiyyah*: nurturing and educating (Ibn Mandhur 1997: 207/12; Al-Bustani, 1956:229), *tarbib*: taking care of, promoting, educating, and enhancing attributed to obedience to Allah (Ibn Mandhur 1997: 401/1; Al-Bustani, 1956:229/1), *ta'dib*: teaching civility, training to good manners (Ibn Mandhur 1997: 399/1), *tadris*: a learning process that takes time to get the results (Ibn Mandhur 1997: 79/6), *ta'lim*: the process of teaching and learning to gain knowledge (Ibn Mandhur 1997: 416/2), *tazkiah*: growing, increasing, purifying and improving (Al-Bustani, 1956:287) and *riyadah*: training and mastering it and obeying instructions (Ibn Mandhur, 1997). All these words are of Arabic origin (Jasmi & Tamuri, 2007).

On the other hand, Islamic education refers to subjects designed for human education to Islamic teachings (Jasmi & Tamuri, 2007). From the definition of the term above, one can extrapolate that the basis of reference for Islamic education is based on Al-Quran and As-Sunnah (Darusalam, 2001). A verse supports this in the Al-Quran:

“Allah is the One Who created seven heavens ‘in layers’, and likewise for the earth. The ‘divine’ command descends between them so you may know that Allah is Most Capable of everything and that Allah certainly encompasses all things in ‘His’ knowledge.” (At-Talaq, 28: 12)

“Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatever he forbids you from, leave it.” (Al-Hasyr 28: 7)

The statement Darusalam (2001) is backed by Qutub (2011), who remarked that the Al-Quran is the quintessential source of encyclopedic knowledge and is a source of human reference in all aspects of life. It is evident by the term “*ilm*” 10 times and phrases related to it more than 744 times mentioned in the Al-Quran. In comparison, As-Sunnah is more synonymous with hadith. It signifies everything that comes from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, whether words, actions or statements, are to support the verses of the Al-Quran and

establish laws that are available in the Al-Quran. Both sources are knowledge references that cover diverse facets of life, nature and other creatures.

Islamic education is a lesson that consists of cognitive, physical and spiritual factors Khurshid (1975) to build individuals who have sound intellectual mastery, strong faith, a healthy body and emotions to produce individuals with a high cognitive level Al-Zuhayly (2000), and exemplary manners. One can use it to improve and achieve balance throughout his life (Al-Tamimi et al., 1985), including his relationship with Allah, his connection with other people and his relationship with nature (Al-Kaylani, 2002) to achieve success in this world and the hereafter (Al-Qardhawi, 1980).

Thus, through research on the concept of Islamic education above, Malaysia's Philosophy of Islamic Education (FPI) was constructed, operating previous scholars' ideas of Islamic education. Islamic Education Philosophy (FPI) is a benchmark in the formation of objectives and curriculum content of subjects offered to students at the primary school level through the Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) and high school through the Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSM). Islamic Education is also offered at Public and Private Higher Education Institutions (IPTA / IPTS) in the form of fields of study that are more specialised in the breakdown of the knowledge available in Islamic studies.

### **Philosophy of Islamic Education**

*Falsafah* (Philosophy) is a word that has been accepted as a vocabulary in growing the Malay language, which comes from the Greek language, which is philosophic (Daia, 1967). *Philo* represents love, study, and appreciation, and *sophic* denotes thrift, virtue, or truth. Salleh (2004) noted that Philosophy is an effort to find a fact or belief in something by using intellectual competence, looking for or expecting something by applying intelligence and wisdom.

Philosophy is the central pillar needed to implement an education system. In Malaysia, Islamic Education is a unit found in the national curriculum. Islamic education is a different subject from other subjects. Therefore, a Philosophy of Islamic Education in Malaysia has been formed to express the objectives of Islamic Education:

"Islamic education is a continuous effort to convey knowledge, skills and appreciation of Islam based on the Al-Quran and As-Sunnah to form attitudes, skills, personality and outlook on life as servants of Allah who have the responsibility to develop themselves, society, the environment and the country towards achieving good in this world and eternal well-being in the afterlife" (JAPIM Curriculum Section, 2002)

This Islamic Education Philosophy is in line with and supports the National Education Philosophy towards producing balanced and harmonious people who meet intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical needs based on faith in Allah (Azhar, 2013). The philosophy of Islamic Education places four significant aspects as a guide to all individuals who are directly responsible, especially Islamic Education teachers (GPI). The four key elements are as in Table 1 below:

Table 1

*Philosophical Aspects of Islamic Education*

No.	Philosophical Aspects of Islamic Education
1	Al-Quran and As-Sunnah are critical sources of reference in knowledge, skills and appreciation.
2	Islamic Education seeks to form Muslims with skills, noble character and an awareness of their true nature as Servants of Allah.
3	Islamic Education aims to produce Muslims who are sensitive and concerned about their needs, society and the environment.
4	Islamic Education strives to form pious people who make success in the world a path to happiness in the afterlife.

Source: Jasmi & Tamuri (2007)

Through the four leading aspects above, one can clearly see that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) goes beyond a subject in the National Education curriculum. It is a subject that has its position and maintains a vital role in supporting and realising National Education philosophy.

**Objectives of Islamic Education**

Objective implies the purpose or goal of something to be achieved. Therefore, one should establish an objective in advance to decide the direction of something. For Islamic Education, the objective to be achieved refers to a result or finding after completing the lesson session or period of education.

There are many statements related to the goals of Islamic Education in past studies. The researcher discovered ideas from (Ahmad, 2004; Darusalam, 2001; Jasmi & Tamuri, 2007). One can observe the objectives of Islamic Education from the 18 codes from the analysis made through Atlas.ti Software Version 9. Through this analysis, a framework of the main goals of Islamic Education could be formed where the researchers obtained it from the three codes that were most frequently found, as shown in Fig. 1 below:

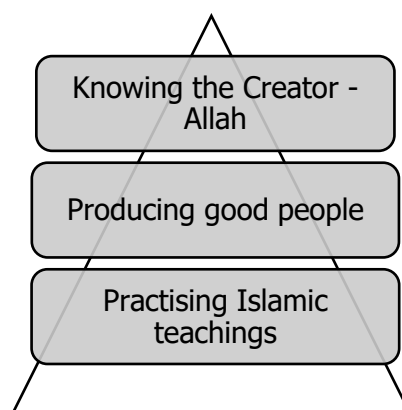


Diagram 1: Framework of Main Objectives of Islamic Education

Source: (Ahmad, 2004; Darusalam, 2001; Jasmi & Tamuri, 2007)

The framework of the main objectives of Islamic Education starts at the highest hierarchy, which is to achieve knowing Allah, The Creator (5 Quotation), where intellectual ability should be able to lead to obedience, a sense of servitude and affirming Allah as the Owner and Creator. This is following the purpose for which man was created, Allah mentioned in the Al-Quran:

“I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me.” (Surah az-Zariyat: 56)

The second objective is to produce good people (5 Quotation). A good person is summed up from the formation of noble morals that can be translated into his relationship with Allah, his relationship with other creatures and his relationship with the environment. It also leads to establishing a good citizen responsible for his country, known as *Khalifatullah*. This goal is also in line with the verse in Al-Quran:

“‘Remember’ when your Lord said to the angels, ‘I am going to place a successive ‘human’ authority on earth.’” (Surah al-Baqarah: 30)

The last objective is to produce practising individuals (4 Quotation). It delivers a broader meaning where knowledge should be used for oneself and conveyed to others who need it to achieve a quality life that includes emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual facets in the world to achieve the pleasure of Allah S.W.T.

Ergo, the objective of Islamic Education does not place mastery of knowledge and skills separately from the purpose of human life. In fact, the objective of Islamic Education demonstrates that knowledge and skills should lead people to the three central goals of Islamic Education above. The more knowledgeable man is, the higher his dependence on Allah who created him, the clearer the understanding of the role of a servant, and the higher the awareness and gratitude that drives him to obey His commandments and abandon all His prohibitions.

## Conclusion

This concept paper aimed to deliver the researchers’ understanding of the concept, philosophy, and goal framework of Islamic Education within the scope of the reference source that the researchers employed as a reference source in this writing. The researchers recorded that the emergence of the concept of Islamic Education is based on the human need for knowledge. It begins at the origin of events in a state of ignorance. Then, the concept of Islamic Education was developed to become more organised by constructing Islamic Education Philosophy. The philosophy of Islamic Education contains the foundation for the work of Islamic Education and the general objectives for the direction of Islamic Education. In comparison, the goal of Islamic Education is a goal to be achieved in stages. Therefore, the researchers suggest investigating more reference sources that one can make to add and enrich science related to the concept, philosophy and objectives of Islamic Education in the national and international contexts.

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