

Sincerity, Responsibility, and Moral Conduct: The Relevance of Ibn Taimiyah's Ethics in Early Childhood Teaching Practice

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Abstract : The ethical conduct of educators plays a foundational role in shaping student character, yet contemporary early childhood education often lacks integrative models rooted in spiritual and moral traditions. Despite the richness of Islamic pedagogical heritage, particularly the thought of Ibn Taimiyah, its practical application in modern classrooms remains underexplored. This study aims to examine how the ethical values articulated by Ibn Taimiyah are understood, enacted, and remain relevant within a contemporary early childhood educational context. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research was conducted at TK Muslimat Malihatul Hikam in Lamongan, Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 17 informants (one principal, eleven teachers, and five parents), direct classroom observations, and document analysis. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. Findings indicate that teachers demonstrate a comprehensive understanding and application of core ethical principles, including sincerity, responsibility, patience, and moral conduct. These values are manifested through consistent professional discipline, spiritual routines, compassionate communication, and ethical use of technology. The ethical framework espoused by Ibn Taimiyah proved adaptable and effective in reinforcing holistic character development and promoting a spiritually infused teaching environment. This study affirms the empirical relevance of classical Islamic educational ethics in contemporary practice and highlights the potential for bridging traditional moral philosophy with current pedagogical needs in early childhood education.

Keywords : Teacher Professional Ethics; Ibn Taimiyah; Islamic Pedagogy; Early Childhood Education; Moral Character Development

Abstrak : Perilaku etis pendidik memainkan peran mendasar dalam membentuk karakter siswa, namun pendidikan anak usia dini kontemporer seringkali kurang memiliki model integratif yang berakar pada tradisi spiritual dan moral. Terlepas dari kekayaan warisan pedagogi Islam, khususnya pemikiran Ibn Taimiyah, penerapannya secara praktis di kelas modern masih kurang dieksplorasi. Studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti bagaimana nilai-nilai etika yang diartikulasikan oleh Ibn Taimiyah dipahami, diterapkan, dan tetap relevan dalam konteks pendidikan anak usia dini kontemporer. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini dilakukan di TK Muslimat Malihatul Hikam

di Lamongan, Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan 17 informan (satu kepala sekolah, sebelas guru, dan lima orang tua), observasi langsung di kelas, dan analisis dokumen. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa guru menunjukkan pemahaman dan penerapan yang komprehensif tentang prinsip-prinsip etika inti, termasuk ketulusan, tanggung jawab, kesabaran, dan perilaku moral. Nilai-nilai ini diwujudkan melalui disiplin profesional yang konsisten, rutinitas spiritual, komunikasi yang penuh kasih sayang, dan penggunaan teknologi yang etis. Kerangka etika yang dianut oleh Ibn Taimiyah terbukti adaptif dan efektif dalam memperkuat pengembangan karakter holistik dan mempromosikan lingkungan pengajaran yang sarat spiritualitas. Studi ini menegaskan relevansi empiris etika pendidikan Islam klasik dalam praktik kontemporer dan menyoroti potensi untuk menjembatani filsafat moral tradisional dengan kebutuhan pedagogis saat ini dalam pendidikan anak usia dini.

Kata kunci: Keterlibatan Pemangku Kepentingan, Perencanaan Pariwisata Berkelanjutan, Teori Kolaborasi Freeman, Kerangka Tata Kelola Bramwell, Sumatera Utara, Tata Kelola Kolaboratif

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary educational discourse, the ethical integrity of educators occupies a pivotal role in shaping both pedagogical effectiveness and the moral character of learners. As frontline agents of moral and intellectual development, teachers are entrusted not only with the dissemination of knowledge but also with the embodiment of ethical and spiritual values (Icka & Kochoska, 2024; S. Putri & Nugraha, 2025). Within this framework, early childhood educators assume a particularly influential position. The developmental sensitivity of early learners demands an ethical model that is both consistent and profound. Consequently, ethics in the teaching profession transcends procedural expectations and enters the realm of existential accountability, where educators' conduct manifested in sincerity, patience, and moral guidance forms the substratum of holistic education (Kurniawan, 2018; Tabang & Saefulloh, 2023).

Despite the normative expectations placed on educators, ethical lapses remain a pressing concern in educational institutions. Numerous incidents across Indonesia have underscored a troubling disconnect between the idealism of teacher ethics and the reality of misconduct in the field. Notable cases include altercations between educators in classroom settings and alarming reports of moral violations involving students (Febrianti, n.d.; Kahar S. Laiya et al., 2025). Such cases not only compromise the educational mission but also erode public trust in teachers as moral exemplars. Scholars such as Zubaidah (2022) argue that these ethical failings are, in part, symptomatic of the broader sociocultural transformations induced by digitalization. The erosion of ethical sensibilities is attributed to the prioritization of technical knowledge over character development, reinforcing the necessity of reintroducing ethical imperatives rooted in Islamic educational thought.

Within Islamic pedagogy, the role of the teacher is elevated to that of a moral and spiritual guide, an heir to prophetic missions (Nata, 2015; Rahman, 2016). One prominent Islamic scholar whose educational philosophy remains profoundly relevant is Ibn Taimiyah. His vision of teaching emphasizes ethical rigor, spiritual sincerity, and social accountability. According to Ibn Taimiyah, an educator is obliged to act with honesty, patience, and responsibility, grounding their instructional endeavors in divine intention rather than worldly gain (Marhamah et al., 2023; Sulhan, 2022). This perspective offers a theologically robust framework for addressing the ethical

challenges confronting modern educators, particularly in foundational learning environments such as kindergartens.

The pedagogical significance of early childhood education lies in its foundational impact on cognitive, emotional, and moral development (Helandri et al., 2024). At this stage, educators serve not merely as facilitators of learning but as primary behavioral models whose actions and attitudes are internalized by young children (Wandi & Nurhafizah, 2019). The pedagogical literature emphasizes that early childhood educators must maintain heightened ethical awareness, as their behavior directly influences children's development of empathy, discipline, and social norms (Arifin & Pauweni, 2019; Marlina, 2021). In Islamic contexts, this moral responsibility is further magnified by the conception of teachers as 'waratsatul anbiya' successors to the prophets (Arfandi, 2020). As such, the ethical standards applied to educators are not only professional but also spiritual imperatives.

This focus on early childhood education is particularly significant because the early years constitute a "golden age" of development, during which cognitive, emotional, social, and moral foundations are formed most rapidly and are highly receptive to environmental influences. Consequently, the ethical conduct of teachers during this period exerts a more profound and lasting impact on character formation than at later educational stages, making it an especially relevant context for examining the practical applicability of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical concepts.

Previous studies have explored the integration of ethical values in Islamic educational settings. Fitriatin and Rosyidah (2024) highlight the essential traits of a professional Islamic educator, including sincerity, piety, knowledgeability, patience, and a deep sense of responsibility. These qualities align with Qur'anic injunctions and hadith traditions, framing ethical conduct as both a religious duty and a professional necessity. Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's pedagogical model further elaborates on these principles, emphasizing the centrality of intention (*niyyah*) and the unity between ethical disposition and instructional effectiveness (Alfiah, 2020; Azis & Hidayah, 2023; A. Putri et al., 2021).

Ibn Taimiyah's educational paradigm offers a compelling moral architecture grounded in the dual foundations of tauhid and humanistic development. His classification of beneficial knowledge as that which leads to moral and social betterment anchored in divine revelation and rational reflection positions ethical conduct as inseparable from epistemic pursuits (Qoyyimah et al., 2020). Central to his model is the conceptualization of the teacher as khalifah, a trustee of divine knowledge whose instructional praxis must reflect prophetic virtues. This model delineates a clear distinction between temporal success and spiritual efficacy, directing educators to prioritize the formation of virtuous character in their students (Tambak et al., 2021; Yusoff et al., 2024).

However, despite the richness of Islamic pedagogical thought, empirical studies on the application of classical Islamic ethics in modern kindergarten settings remain limited. There exists a critical research gap concerning the operationalization of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical constructs in real-life educational environments, especially at the early childhood level. Given the unique ethical challenges faced by kindergarten teachers ranging from managing diverse learner behaviors to maintaining consistent emotional regulation investigating how these classical ideals are instantiated in practice becomes essential.

This study seeks to bridge that gap by examining the implementation of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical principles among teachers at TK Muslimat Malihatul Hikam, a kindergarten institution in Lamongan, East Java. The central research questions are: (1) How are the ethical concepts formulated by Ibn Taimiyah understood and interpreted in a modern early childhood education context? (2) How are these ethical values operationalized in the daily practices of teachers at TK Malihatul Hikam? (3) What is the relevance and practical resonance of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical teachings in contemporary educational settings?

The novelty of this research lies in its synthesis of classical Islamic educational philosophy with contemporary pedagogical praxis. It contributes to the broader discourse on teacher ethics by offering an empirically grounded, philosophically informed analysis of how traditional values can inform modern professional behavior. Furthermore, this study provides strategic insights for policymakers and educators seeking to cultivate ethically grounded teaching environments. By

aligning pedagogical practices with the enduring moral wisdom of scholars like Ibn Taimiyah, it becomes possible to forge a more holistic and spiritually attuned educational culture.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to investigate the implementation of professional ethics among kindergarten teachers through the lens of Ibn Taimiyah's educational philosophy. The case study design was chosen to provide an in-depth and contextualized understanding of how classical Islamic ethical concepts are operationalized in a real-world early childhood educational setting. As noted by Assyakurrohim *et al.* (2022), qualitative case studies are particularly effective in capturing nuanced phenomena that are deeply embedded in specific sociocultural contexts. This methodology allowed the researchers to explore both explicit practices and implicit values underlying the ethical behaviors of educators. The research was conducted at TK Muslimat Malihatul Hikam, a private kindergarten institution located in Paciran, Lamongan, East Java, Indonesia. The school is known for its integration of Islamic moral values in early childhood education and has received accreditation for its educational quality.

The study involved 17 informants selected through purposive sampling, a technique appropriate for identifying participants who possess specific knowledge relevant to the research focus (Jailani *et al.*, 2023). The informants included one principal, eleven teachers, and five parents or guardians of students enrolled at the institution. These three participant groups were chosen to provide a multi-perspective understanding of the ethical practices within the school, from administrative leadership to teaching staff and parent perceptions. Data collection was conducted using three primary techniques: semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews enabled the researchers to explore participants' personal experiences, interpretations, and attitudes while maintaining the flexibility to probe deeper into emerging themes (Jailani *et al.*, 2023). The interview guide was informed by the ethical constructs derived from Ibn Taimiyah's educational writings, including sincerity (*ikhlas*), responsibility (*amanah*), patience (*sabr*), and moral conduct (*adab*).

Observations were carried out in classroom and extracurricular settings to corroborate interview data with real-time behavioral insights. This method allowed researchers to witness how ethical principles were enacted in daily teaching practices, routines, and teacher-student interactions. In addition, relevant institutional documents, such as the school's code of conduct, lesson plans (RPP), and activity schedules, were reviewed to identify formal structures that support ethical education. These documents provided contextual evidence of the school's commitment to integrating Islamic ethics into its curriculum and teacher guidelines. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which involves four key components: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018; Miles & Huberman, 1984). This model allowed for the iterative interpretation of the data, ensuring that themes were grounded in participant narratives and observed practices. Coding categories were developed inductively and then refined using the conceptual framework of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical teachings. Triangulation was employed across interview, observation, and documentation sources to enhance the study's credibility.

All participants were informed about the objectives and voluntary nature of the study. Verbal and written consent were obtained prior to data collection, and confidentiality was maintained through anonymized data presentation. The study was conducted with adherence to ethical research protocols, ensuring respect for participant dignity and institutional guidelines. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study, and pseudonyms were used in all research records and reports to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the principal, teachers, and parents participating in the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the key findings of the research conducted at TK Muslimat Malihatul Hikam, Lamongan, focusing on the implementation of professional teaching ethics based on the educational philosophy of Ibn Taimiyah. The findings are analyzed according to three previously

formulated research questions: (1) how are the ethical concepts proposed by Ibn Taimiyah understood and interpreted within the context of contemporary early childhood education? (2) how are these ethical values operationalized in the daily practices of teachers at TK Malihatul Hikam? and (3) what is the relevance and practical resonance of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical teachings in modern educational settings? Data presentation is thematically organized, drawing from interviews with 17 informants, consisting of 1 principal, 11 teachers, and 5 parents.

Teachers' Understanding of Ibn Taimiyah's Ethical Concepts in Early Childhood Education

The informants indicated a sound understanding of the ethical principles derived from Ibn Taimiyah's thought. Teachers articulated core values such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), responsibility (*amanah*), patience (*sabr*), and proper conduct (*adab*) as essential to their teaching practice. These understandings were consistently reflected across various narratives, albeit with differences in depth and expression.

Table 1. Kindergarten Teacher Malihatul Hikam's Understanding of Ibn Taimiyah's Concept of Ethics

Ethical Theme	Number of Informants	Sample Interview Quote	Interpretation
Sincerity (<i>Ikhlas</i>)	14	"Being a kindergarten teacher is a form of devotion, not just a profession... the intention is for Allah."	Teachers are aware of the importance of sincere intention, viewing their profession as worship.
Responsibility	11	"We know our duty is heavy, these children are a trust from both the school and from Allah."	Teachers perceive a spiritual and social responsibility towards their students.
Patience	13	"Patience is essential; sometimes children lose focus, but we must remain calm and gentle."	Teachers recognize the need for emotional regulation and patience in education.
Conduct and Role Model	15	"As a teacher, one must be an example in speech and daily behavior."	Teachers view ethics as a concrete role model imitated by children.

From the data above, it can be concluded that teachers have a substantive understanding of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical framework, which has been effectively internalized within their professional mindset. This demonstrates the successful integration of classical ethical values into modern educational contexts.

Implementation of Ibn Taimiyah's Ethical Values in Daily Practice

The practical implementation of ethical values was evident across various school activities, from punctuality and interaction patterns to spiritual habituation. Based on observation and interview data, teacher ethics were manifested in tangible practices such as institutional regulations, humanistic teaching approaches, and positive relationships with students and parents.

Table 2. Implementation of Ibn Taimiyah's Ethical Values in Daily Practice

Ethical Practice Aspect	Number of Informants	Sample Interview Quote	Interpretation
Discipline and Responsibility	12	"We arrive earlier than the scheduled time; it's become a habit and a form of commitment."	Teachers demonstrate responsibility through compliance with schedules and institutional norms.
Conduct in Teaching	13	"We must never scold children; all approaches should be kind and gentle."	<i>Adab</i> underpins a compassionate and respectful teaching approach.

Spiritual Habituation	10	"Every morning we begin with Asmaul Husna, daily prayers, and collective worship."	Daily activities embody Islamic values, reflecting the integration of ethics and spirituality.
Ethical Use of Technology	11	"We avoid using mobile phones during class, except for educational purposes or emergencies."	Teachers' commitment to maintaining focus and professionalism reflects moral accountability.

These findings indicate that ethical values are not only understood conceptually but are also practiced in observable, consistent behaviors. Ethics, therefore, serve not merely as ideal norms but as guiding principles for daily conduct.

Relevance of Ibn Taimiyah's Ethical Thought in Modern Educational Contexts

The relevance of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical philosophy in modern education is evident in the alignment of his teachings with contemporary ethical needs. Informants acknowledged that values such as sincerity, patience, and responsibility remain crucial in addressing current societal and technological challenges that influence child behavior.

Table 3. The Relevance of Ibn Taimiyah's Ethical Thought in the Context of Modern Education at TK Malihatul Hikam

Theme on Classical Value Relevance	Number of Informants	Sample Interview Quote	Interpretation
Role Model as Contemporary Need	14	"Children today need role models, not just advice."	Teachers recognize their importance as exemplary figures amidst a crisis of role models.
Importance of Sincerity and Intention	12	"If we only teach for a salary, we get tired quickly. But if it's for Allah, we gain strength."	Spiritual motivation supports resilience amid workload and emotional challenges.
Ethics Amid Social Change	9	"Children used to be more obedient; now they are more active. We must adapt while maintaining ethics."	Classical ethics remain applicable when interpreted flexibly in changing contexts.

These findings reinforce the argument that Ibn Taimiyah's ethical teachings are timeless and offer a solid moral foundation for navigating change. As such, his classical thought remains relevant for implementation in 21st-century educational transformations.

Parental Perceptions of Teachers' Ethical Practices

Parents expressed positive evaluations of the ethical conduct demonstrated by teachers at TK Muslimat Malihatul Hikam. They noted that teachers not only educated but also shaped the character of children through exemplary behavior and a nurturing approach.

Table 4. Parental Perceptions of Teachers' Ethical Practices

Parental Assessment Aspect	Number of Informants	Sample Interview Quote	Interpretation
Moral and Religious Example	5	"My child often prays at home now, because it's a habit formed at school by observing the teachers."	Parents observed the positive impact of ethical and religious routines instilled by the teachers.

Patience and Compassion	4	"Teachers here never raise their voices; they are always calm and kind."	Empathetic attitudes are seen as essential in shaping children's character.
Parental Engagement	3	"We are involved in school activities and receive regular updates on our children's progress."	Effective communication reflects strong social responsibility and professional ethics.

These external validations support the claim that teacher ethics are not only internally practiced but also visibly impactful on student development and parental trust.

Based on qualitative data from interviews, observations, and documentation, the research hypothesis that the ethical behavior of teachers at TK Muslimat Malihatul Hikam aligns with Ibn Taimiyah's ethical principles was empirically substantiated. Across all dimensions, from conceptual understanding and practical implementation to parent perceptions, a continuity between classical ethics and contemporary practice was evident. This suggests that Islamic value-based character education remains contextually relevant and practically applicable in modern educational systems, particularly at the early childhood level.

Table 5. Summary of Ibn Taimiyah's Ethical Pillars, Classroom Implementation, and Observed Behavioral Markers in Children

Ibn Taimiyah's Ethical Pillar	Practical Implementation in the Classroom	Observed Behavioral Markers in Children
<i>Ikhlas</i> (Sincerity)	Teachers perform educational duties with sincere intention, emphasizing service, care, and spiritual commitment rather than material rewards. Daily activities begin with prayer, remembrance (<i>dhikr</i>), and religious routines.	Children voluntarily participate in prayers, demonstrate enthusiasm during religious activities, and show increasing awareness of Islamic practices both at school and at home.
<i>Amanah</i> (Responsibility)	Teachers consistently arrive on time, supervise children attentively, communicate regularly with parents, and fulfill instructional responsibilities according to school guidelines.	Children display greater discipline in classroom routines, follow instructions more consistently, complete assigned tasks, and develop a sense of responsibility for their personal belongings and learning activities.
<i>Adab</i> and <i>Sabr</i> (Moral Conduct and Patience)	Teachers interact with children using gentle language, avoid punitive approaches, model respectful behavior, and respond patiently to diverse student needs and behaviors.	Children demonstrate polite communication, improved emotional regulation, respectful interactions with peers and teachers, willingness to share, and greater empathy in social situations.

The summary table demonstrates that Ibn Taimiyah's ethical principles are not merely reflected in teachers' professional conduct but are also manifested in observable behavioral outcomes among children. The findings suggest a reciprocal relationship between teacher ethics and child character formation, particularly within the early childhood context where learning occurs primarily through modeling, imitation, and habituation. This reinforces the relevance of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical framework as a practical foundation for character education during the formative years of child development.

Discussion

This section critically analyzes and synthesizes the research findings regarding the ethical values practiced by early childhood educators at TK Muslimat Malihatul Hikam in light of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical philosophy and current educational literature. The discussion is organized around the three central research questions and interprets the data through a theoretical lens while identifying novel contributions of the study.

Interpretation of Ethical Concepts in the Light of Ibn Taimiyah's Philosophy

The empirical findings revealed that teachers at TK Muslimat Malihatul Hikam possess a deep conceptual understanding of key ethical values, particularly sincerity (*ikhlas*), responsibility (*amanah*), patience (*sabr*), and refined conduct (*adab*). This finding resonates with Ibn Taimiyah's assertion that the educator is a "khalifah" entrusted with moral and spiritual guidance (Qoyyimah *et al.*, 2020). His ethical framework emphasizes that education is not solely a cognitive transaction but a divine responsibility grounded in faith and moral character (Marhamah *et al.*, 2023).

This understanding mirrors the ethical imperatives described by Fitriatin and Rosyidah (2024), who affirm that the teacher's sincerity and piety shape their credibility and influence. In comparison to modern secular ethics, which often focus on procedural correctness and professional accountability (Budiman, 2020), Ibn Taimiyah's perspective integrates theological dimensions that elevate teaching to a form of worship. This theological grounding is reflected in the teachers' frequent references to divine intention, aligning closely with the Qur'anic directive in Surah Ghafir:65 and Ali Imran:102.

Operationalization of Ethical Values in Educational Practice

In daily pedagogical practice, teachers operationalize these values through behavior that reflects discipline, gentleness, spiritual consistency, and professional conduct. These practices validate Ibn Taimiyah's view that ethics must be embedded in routine actions (Umam, 2010). According to Ibn Taimiyah, ethical teaching requires the integration of "ilm (knowledge) with 'amal (action), ensuring that the educator not only understands but lives the values they impart (Iskandar *et al.*, 2024; Marfuah *et al.*, 2024). Modern pedagogical theories, such as those by Lickona (1996), similarly stress the importance of modeling character through daily interactions. However, Ibn Taimiyah's contributions go further by emphasizing the eternal accountability of the teacher before God. This spiritual accountability is distinctly observed in the teachers' rejection of materialistic motivations, preference for early arrival, rejection of phone use during class, and their emphasis on internalizing Islamic values in both speech and behavior.

Table 6: Comparison and Integration of Ethical Practice Models

Dimensions	Ibn Taimiyah's Philosophy	Modern Ethics Literature	Empirical Finding from This Study	Novelty
Foundation of Ethics	Tauhid, Divine Intention, Moral Accountability	Professional Codes, Moral Development	Teachers act based on sincere intention and divine mission	Re-spiritualization of teacher ethics in early education
Ethical Practices	Adab, Sabr, Ikhlas, Lifelong Learning	Discipline, Role Modeling, Student Engagement	Consistent practice of moral behavior and discipline	Daily religious rituals reinforcing classroom ethics
Teacher-Student Relationship	Compassionate Guidance with Spiritual Emphasis	Nurturing, Respectful Environment	Respectful and affectionate interactions	Ethico-spiritual relational approach to student care
Evaluation of Behavior	Alignment of Niyyah with Amal	External Assessments, Reflective Practice	Teachers measure success by inner sincerity	Internal measure of success driven by faith-based intent

As seen in Table 1, the novelty of this study lies in demonstrating how classic Islamic values can be contextually applied to modern pedagogical practices, creating a hybrid ethical model that combines divine intention with professional behavior.

Relevance and Resonance in Contemporary Educational Settings

The relevance of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical thought is strongly affirmed by the empirical findings. Teachers and parents both emphasized the timeless need for educators to act as role models. This notion aligns with the concept of “waratsatul anbiya” teachers as heirs to the prophets (Nata, 2015; Ridhwan M. Daud, 2021). The study confirms previous findings by Romzi *et al.* (2024), who argue for the systematic integration of Islamic teachings in character education as a response to the moral challenges of globalization.

While modern theories on character education, such as those by Berkowitz & Bier (2005), emphasize secular values like honesty, diligence, and responsibility, Ibn Taimiyah introduces transcendental motivation, asserting that ethical formation is incomplete without divine accountability. This research uniquely identifies that such values are not only theoretically sound but also empirically viable when adapted to contemporary learning environments, particularly in early childhood settings where foundational habits are formed.

Furthermore, teachers at TK Malihatul Hikam demonstrate a high degree of pedagogical awareness by translating abstract ethical values into actionable routines. This is consistent with research by Fitriyani *et al.* (2020), which stresses the importance of adab in structuring moral education. Unlike general moral education approaches that prioritize civic behavior, this study finds that spiritual discipline such as daily prayers, memorization of Asmaul Husna, and ethical technology use are integrated organically into the school culture.

Despite the strong relevance of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical framework, the findings also reveal certain challenges in translating classical philosophical concepts into developmentally appropriate practices for children aged four to six years. Concepts such as ikhlas (sincerity), amanah (responsibility), and niyyah (intention) are highly abstract and cannot be directly understood by young learners due to their limited cognitive and moral reasoning capacities. Consequently, teachers must simplify these values into observable behaviors, routines, and habits, such as sharing, waiting for turns, praying together, speaking politely, and following classroom rules. While this pedagogical translation enables children to experience ethical values in concrete forms, it also risks reducing the philosophical depth and theological richness of Ibn Taimiyah's original concepts. Therefore, the successful implementation of classical Islamic ethics in early childhood education depends largely on teachers' ability to mediate between complex moral principles and age-appropriate learning experiences without losing their essential meaning.

Synthesizing Prior Research and Study Contribution

Previous studies, such as those by Wandi & Nurhafizah (2019), acknowledged the alignment between Islamic ethics and teaching practices but fell short of deeply contextualizing them within classical Islamic philosophy. This research expands the discourse by tracing these practices directly to Ibn Taimiyah's epistemological and pedagogical roots, thus offering a richer and more robust ethical model. Similarly, the findings support the argument by Sari (2021) that institutional discipline enhances teacher performance, but adds a spiritual dimension by linking it to amanah and niyyah. While Sakti (2018) emphasizes compliance with ethical standards, this study underscores intrinsic motivation based on God-consciousness (taqwa) as the deeper layer of ethical commitment.

In contrast to Western character education models that often compartmentalize moral reasoning, this study showcases a holistic framework where belief, intention, behavior, and outcome are integrated. This reinforces Ibn Taimiyah's pedagogical model, where adab is both the means and end of education (Qoyyimah *et al.*, 2020).

Implications and Novel Contributions

The study reveals that classical Islamic ethics, particularly as formulated by Ibn Taimiyah, provide a comprehensive framework for contemporary educational ethics. Its novelty lies in three main contributions. First, the study offers a spiritual recontextualisation of ethics by presenting a model of ethical professionalism grounded in divine accountability, which differs from the secular

norms that often dominate current educational discourse. Second, it integrates the concept of *adab* into daily educational practice by explaining how ethical conduct can be implemented through rituals, time discipline, and communicative ethics, rather than remaining at the level of theoretical discussion. Third, the study develops an ethic-relational pedagogy by positioning the teacher-student relationship as a spiritually meaningful interaction, not merely as a form of behavioural management. Through these contributions, the study strengthens the relevance of classical Islamic thought in shaping ethical, professional, and spiritually grounded educational practices today.

These insights are relevant not only for Islamic educational institutions but also for broader multicultural and pluralistic contexts seeking integrative models of character education. By positioning Ibn Taimiyah as a foundational thinker in modern pedagogy, this study opens pathways for further interdisciplinary exploration between Islamic tradition and global educational paradigms. In conclusion, this study not only reinforces the theoretical validity of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical teachings but also demonstrates their empirical applicability and transformative potential in shaping the moral character of both teachers and students in modern educational systems.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the implementation of professional teaching ethics at TK Muslimat Malihatul Hikam through the philosophical lens of Ibn Taimiyah. The findings confirmed that educators at this Islamic early childhood institution demonstrated a robust understanding of ethical concepts such as sincerity, responsibility, patience, and *adab*, aligning closely with the foundational tenets of Ibn Taimiyah's thought. These ethical values were not only theoretically embraced but were consistently translated into daily pedagogical routines, institutional discipline, and teacher-student interactions. The discussion revealed that Ibn Taimiyah's framework offers a timeless and contextually adaptable model that effectively bridges classical Islamic teachings with the operational demands of modern education, particularly in shaping morally-grounded learning environments.

The primary contribution of this research lies in its synthesis of classical Islamic educational philosophy with empirically grounded pedagogical practice. By confirming the relevance and applicability of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical teachings in early childhood education, this study expands the discourse on character education beyond conventional secular paradigms. The implementation of *adab*, spiritual intentionality, and moral accountability by teachers illustrates a holistic model of professionalism anchored in religious ethics. These findings hold implications for curriculum development, teacher training, and educational policy, particularly for institutions seeking to integrate moral and spiritual formation into formal education. More specifically, Islamic early childhood education networks, such as the Ikatan Guru Raudhatul Athfal (IGRA) and similar professional organizations, may consider developing structured professional development modules that translate concepts derived from Tazkiyatun Nafs and Ibn Taimiyah's ethical teachings into actionable classroom micro-behaviors. Such modules could include practical indicators of sincerity, patience, responsibility, and *adab*, expressed through daily routines, communication strategies, classroom management practices, reflective teaching journals, and teacher self-assessment instruments. By operationalizing these ethical principles into observable and measurable behaviors, educators can more effectively bridge classical Islamic values with contemporary pedagogical demands. Acknowledging the contextual limitations of the single-site case study design, the results nonetheless demonstrate the potential for broader applicability in similarly structured Islamic educational settings.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on Islamic pedagogy by providing a rigorous, context-sensitive exploration of ethical professionalism. It fills a notable gap by connecting theoretical concepts of a prominent classical scholar with observable behaviors and institutional practices. Future research may benefit from comparative studies across different educational levels or cultural contexts to further test the adaptability of Ibn Taimiyah's ethical framework. Additionally, longitudinal approaches could assess the long-term impact of such ethical models on student character development. Overall, this research affirms that integrating spiritual

ethics into early childhood education can cultivate morally resilient educators and foster formative learning experiences rooted in sincerity and integrity.

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