



RECONSTRUCTING SHAYKH NAWAWI AL-BANTANI'S PARADIGM OF MORAL EDUCATION: A HERMENEUTIC ANALYSIS OF MARAQI AL-'UBUDIYYAH, NASHAIH AL-'IBAD, AND SALALIM AL-FUDALA

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ABSTRACT

The moral crisis triggered by global flows, digital transformation, and social shifts demands a renewal of the character education paradigm deeply rooted in Islamic intellectual heritage. This study aims to reformulate the theoretical framework, educational objectives, curricular structure, and pedagogical methodology of Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani's moral education through an analysis of his three monumental works: Nashā'ih al-'Ibād, Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah, and Salālim al-Fuḍalā'. Employing a qualitative-descriptive design anchored in a rational-interpretative paradigm, this research utilizes theological hermeneutics and thematic-comparative text analysis. Data collection was conducted via documentation, while data analysis applied content analysis through an inductive-deductive approach. The findings reveal four core thematic insights: First, Syekh Nawawi's moral education paradigm is built upon four foundational pillars: tauhidic, anthropological-spiritual, teleological, and pedagogical-transformative dimensions. Second, the educational orientation aims to cultivate an ideal human profile combining spiritual awareness, ethical integrity, and social responsibility through four typologies (insān 'ābid, insān zāhid, insān muta'addib, and insān muṣliḥ). Third, the educational content is integrally structured by unifying faith, worship, and ethics covering human relations with the Creator, fellow human beings, and oneself. Fourth, ethical internalisation is carried out through a combination of exemplary role modeling (al-qudwah), habituation (al-ta'wid), spiritual discipline (mujahadah, muḥāsabah, riyāḍah), and communicative strategies (admonition and religious dialogue). This study affirms that the reconstruction of Syekh Nawawi's thought offers adaptive theoretical and pedagogical contributions to strengthening character building in modern Islamic education amidst digital-era challenges.

Keywords: Moral Education; Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani; Paradigm Reconstruction; Theological Hermeneutics; Digital Moral Crisis.

INTRODUCTION

Education constitutes a fundamental instrument for the development of human civilization. From an Islamic perspective, education is not merely understood as a process of transferring knowledge (transfer of knowledge), but also as a process of transmitting and internalizing values (transfer of values) that integrates intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions in order to cultivate individuals of virtuous character (Al-Attas, 1980). However, empirical realities in Indonesia indicate a substantial gap between this normative ideal and the practices of modern education. Academic achievement does not necessarily correspond to students' ethical maturity, suggesting that educational success cannot be adequately measured solely by cognitive and academic attainment.



The phenomenon of moral deterioration within the Indonesian educational context is strongly reflected in various national assessments and integrity indicators. The 2024 Education Integrity Assessment Survey (Survei Penilaian Integritas Pendidikan—SPI Pendidikan) conducted by the Corruption Eradication Commission (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi—KPK) recorded a National Education Integrity Index of 69.50 (KPK, 2024; Kompas.com, 2025). More specifically, 44.75% of students and university students reported having cheated, 38.40% admitted to asking others to complete their assignments, 44.59% of university students acknowledged plagiarism, and 54.79% reported having lied to conceal their mistakes (detikcom, 2025). This condition is further exacerbated by the findings of the 2022 National Assessment (Asesmen Nasional), which indicated that 36.31% of students were potentially exposed to bullying, 34.51% were potentially exposed to sexual violence, and 68% of educational institutions remained weak in maintaining an inclusive and diverse school climate (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Although the Indonesian government has introduced policy interventions, including Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 on Strengthening Character Education (Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter), these persistent problems suggest that the national education system remains relatively oriented toward cognitive and academic achievement and has yet to fully internalize moral values in a substantive manner (Zubaedi, 2011).

The persistent gap between Islamic educational ideals, governmental regulations, and the contemporary crisis of ethics necessitates a reconceptualization of moral education rooted in the intellectual heritage of the Islamic Nusantara. Within this context, the thought of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani offers a significant theological and pedagogical framework for rethinking moral education. Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani (1813–1897 CE / 1230–1314 AH), an encyclopedic scholar from Banten who was honored with the title Sayyid ‘Ulamā’ *al-Hijāz*, was a prominent figure within the intellectual network of Nusantara scholars in Mecca during the nineteenth century (Azra, 2004). His scholarly authority extended across various branches of Islamic knowledge, including Qur’anic exegesis, jurisprudence, theology, and Sufism, as reflected in more than 115 written works that have continued to constitute an important intellectual corpus within the pesantren educational tradition in Indonesia (Majid, 2014). His conception of morality is grounded in a theological and spiritual-anthropological framework that places *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) at the center of inner transformation toward virtuous outward conduct. This framework integrates faith, worship, and ethical conduct through a synthesis of pedagogical mechanisms, including exemplary conduct (*al-qudwah*), habituation (*al-ta’wīd*), and spiritual discipline (*riyāḍah*), with the ultimate objective of cultivating the *insān kāmil*—the morally and spiritually perfected human being.

Previous studies have examined various dimensions of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani’s thought from different perspectives. Hamid (2019), for instance, analyzed moral values in *Naṣā’ih al-‘Ibād*; Farih (2024) examined the concept of social piety in *Marāqī al-‘Ubūdiyyah*; Hasibuan (2023) investigated the values of adab in Bahjah al-Wasā’il; Priyanto (2021) explored the concept of maqāmāt in *Salālim al-Fuḍalā’*; while Khaeroni (2021) analyzed the dimensions of *ta’līm*, *tarbiyah*, and *ta’dīb* in the Tafsīr *Marāḥ Labīd*. Although these studies have made valuable contributions to the study of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani’s intellectual legacy, several significant limitations remain. First, most previous studies are fragmented, as they tend to focus on a single work rather than examining the interconnectedness of his



ideas across different texts. Second, the approaches adopted are predominantly descriptive and textual, and therefore have not sufficiently produced a systematic conceptual synthesis linking the major components of moral education, including its objectives, paradigmatic foundations, educational content, and methods of internalization. Third, previous scholarship has not explicitly brought together Shaykh Nawawi's ethical thought across multiple works in order to formulate a contextual educational framework capable of responding to the contemporary crisis of integrity, particularly in the digital era.

To address this research gap, this article offers a novel contribution by reconstructing Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's paradigm of moral education through a thematic-comparative and theological-hermeneutic analysis of three of his major commentarial works: *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād*, *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah*, and *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'*. Rather than examining these texts independently, this study places them in dialogue with one another in order to identify the underlying patterns, continuities, and conceptual relationships within Nawawi's thought. Through this cross-textual reconstruction, the study seeks not only to clarify the theoretical foundations of his conception of moral education but also to formulate its potential theoretical and practical relevance for the development of contemporary Islamic education.

More specifically, this study aims to analyze four interrelated dimensions of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's paradigm of moral education: (1) the foundational pillars underlying his educational thought; (2) the orientation and typology of the ideal human being that his educational paradigm seeks to cultivate; (3) the structure and integration of faith, worship, and ethical education; and (4) the methods through which moral values are internalized, together with their relevance to addressing the contemporary crisis of integrity. By reconstructing these dimensions across the three selected commentarial works, this study argues that Shaykh Nawawi's conception of moral education represents an integrated paradigm in which theological conviction, spiritual cultivation, ethical discipline, and social conduct are mutually interconnected. Such a paradigm provides an important conceptual basis for rethinking Islamic moral education in response to contemporary educational challenges.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in library research, incorporating historical-philosophical inquiry and textual-conceptual analysis to explore, interpret, and reconstruct Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's paradigm of moral education comprehensively. Situated within an interpretive paradigm, the study views classical religious texts as intellectual constructions embedded with rich spiritual, ethical, and sociological meanings. To develop a coherent and contextually relevant conceptual synthesis, the study integrates three complementary approaches. First, theological hermeneutics is employed to interpret the implicit meanings and theological orientations embedded within the texts. Second, a historical-contextual approach is used to situate the scholar's thought within the socio-intellectual context of the nineteenth century in the Nusantara and the Haramayn. Third, a philosophical approach is applied to examine the epistemological structure and conceptual foundations underlying the moral education framework articulated in his works.



The research data consist of primary and secondary sources. The primary data comprise three major commentarial works (sharḥ) by Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani, purposively selected based on their substantive treatment of ethical cultivation, adab, and the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), namely *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād*, *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah*, and *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'*. The secondary data include supporting literature such as scholarly biographies, historical documents concerning the development of Islamic education in the Nusantara, relevant peer-reviewed journal articles, and national empirical data concerning the contemporary integrity crisis in education. All data were collected through documentary research, involving the verification of textual authenticity, close reading and textual coding, and the classification of relevant passages into a thematic data matrix.

The data were subsequently analyzed using content analysis combined with cross-textual thematic analysis through an inductive-deductive analytical process, with the researcher serving as the primary research instrument. The analytical process began with the reduction and categorization of data from the three selected works into major thematic clusters. This was followed by systematic data presentation and hermeneutic synthesis, through which the theological, spiritual, and practical-moral dimensions of Nawawi's thought were brought into dialogue. The analysis culminated in the formulation of a reconstructed paradigm of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's moral education. The credibility of the interpretation was maintained through cross-textual source triangulation across the three primary works and theoretical triangulation involving contemporary discourses on Islamic education. This methodological framework was employed to ensure that the resulting reconstruction was grounded in the textual evidence while remaining theoretically coherent and relevant to contemporary educational challenges.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of three major works by Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād*, a commentary on *Al-Munabbihāt 'alā al-Isti'dād li Yawm al-Ma'ād* by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī; *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah*, a commentary on *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah* by Imam al-Ghazālī; and *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'*, a commentary on the poetic text *Hidāyat al-Adhkiyā' ilā Ṭarīq al-Awliyā'* by Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn al-Malībārī has enabled the reconstruction of a comprehensive and systematic theological-pedagogical framework within the epistemology of Islamic moral education. These three commentarial texts are not treated as isolated literary works; rather, they are understood as interconnected components of an epistemological hierarchy linking the dimensions of Islamic law (*sharī'ah*), ethical conduct in social relations, and the highest dimensions of Sufi esotericism. Through thematic tracing combined with hermeneutic analysis, this study reconstructs Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's conception of moral education into four major and mutually complementary domains.

The first domain establishes the paradigm of moral education as a philosophical foundation, positioning *tawḥīd* as the principal axis of morality and *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) as the primary mechanism of inner transformation. This paradigm directly informs the second domain, namely the objectives of moral education, which are teleologically oriented toward the formation of an ideal moral personality through the integration of three dimensions of piety: individual, ritual, and social piety.

The third domain translates these objectives into a reconstruction of educational content and curriculum structure, organizing the contents of faith, ritual worship, and



public ethics in a gradual and hierarchical manner. The final domain operationalizes the entire framework through a typology of pedagogical methods that comprehensively integrates the cognitive-reflective dimension through *mau'izah* (moral exhortation) and *hiwār* (dialogue), the affective dimension through *uswah ḥasanah* (good example), and the psychomotor-spiritual dimension through *ta'wīd* (habituation) and *riyāḍah* (spiritual discipline). The integration of these four domains offers a basis for reconceptualizing character education in ways that are responsive to the crisis of integrity within modern educational systems.

The Paradigm of Islamic Moral Education

The reconstruction of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's paradigm of Islamic moral education is derived explicitly from the textual evidence and thematic synthesis of his three commentarial works: *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād*, *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah*, and *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'*.

1. The Theocentric (*Tawḥīdic*) Paradigm: God as the Center of Moral Orientation

Qualitative exploration of the corpus of *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād*, *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah*, and *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'* confirms that Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's construction of moral education is integrative and fundamentally grounded in *tawḥīd*. Through qualitative coding, the study maps the organic relationship among theological consciousness, spiritual submission (*'ubūdiyyah*), and the ethical articulation of human conduct.

At the open-coding stage, textual extraction identified three principal functions of *tawḥīd* within the construction of morality. First, *tawḥīd* functions as an ontological consciousness and foundation of intention, in which the interpretation of the Prophetic tradition "*fa-innamā al-a'mālu bi al-niyyāt*" underlies the emergence of the codes of intention, sincerity, and divine orientation [NSI-05/K1-NI]. Sincerity is positioned as a prerequisite for the moral value of human action, whereas the deviation of *tawḥīd* toward materialistic attachment (*ḥubb al-dunyā*) is identified as a source of moral disorientation [NSI-07/K4-CD]. Second, *tawḥīd* operates as an inner moral control and source of values, as reflected in the statement "*ra's al-ḥikmati makhāfatullāh*" ("the foundation of wisdom is the fear of God") [NSI-09/K7-KH]. This orientation is reinforced in *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'*, which positions the Divine attributes (*asmā' al-jalālah*) and the attribute of *raḥmah* (mercy) as primary references or governing principles for commendable moral qualities (*akhlāq maḥmūdah*) [SAF-01/K10-IJ; K13-RH]. This is further expressed through the formulation "*wa aṣlu kulli khayrin al-tawḥīd, wa bihi takmulu makārim al-akhlāq*," which establishes *tawḥīd* as the ultimate source of ethical perfection [SAF-10/K19-TSK]. Third, *tawḥīd* is manifested in operational ethical conduct, whereby *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah* emphasizes the definition of *'ubūdiyyah* as "*ḥaqīqat al-'ubūdiyyah kamāl al-tadhallul wa al-inqiyād lillāh*," generating the codes of *tadhallul* (humility and self-abasement before God) and *inqiyād* (complete submission and obedience) [MAU-08/K10-TZ].

At the axial-coding stage, these codes were organized into a categorical relational matrix comprising *Tawḥīd as Ontological Consciousness* [AX-01], *Tawḥīd as the Axiological Center* [AX-02], and *Tawḥīd as Ethical-Practical Orientation* [AX-03]. Within this structure, *'ubūdiyyah* functions as a mediating category [AX-04] that transforms theological values into concrete moral conduct. The final synthesis through selective coding generated the core category: "Tawḥīd as an Internalized Transcendental Value System Mediated through 'Ubūdiyyah in the Formation of Virtuous Character" [SC-01].



This finding demonstrates that, within Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's epistemology, moral education is not merely a form of behavioral conditioning or mechanical moral instruction. Rather, it constitutes an existential-spiritual transformation rooted in *tawhīd*, cultivated through *'ubūdiyyah*, and ultimately expressed through individual and public piety.

2. The Anthropological-Spiritual Paradigm: The Human Being as the Subject of Transformation

Character formation in Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's thought is grounded in a philosophical understanding of the human being as a dualistic entity comprising the bodily (*jismiyyah*) and spiritual (*rūḥiyyah*) dimensions, with the heart (*qalb*) functioning as both an epistemological center and the principal regulator of morality. Qualitative exploration confirms that ethical transformation can only be achieved through a structured process of internalizing the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*). At the open-coding stage, textual extraction from *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'* through the formulation "*fī tazkiyat al-nafs 'an al-akhlāq al-madhmūmah wa taḥliyatihā bi al-maḥmūdah*" generated the codes of soul purification, *takhallī* (elimination of blameworthy traits), and *taḥallī* (cultivation of praiseworthy traits) [SAF-04/K1-TN]. These data indicate that moral education constitutes a gradual process of purifying the self from the principal diseases of the heart (*amrāḍ al-qalb*).

The centrality of the heart is further emphasized through the statement "*al-qalb amīr al-badan wa sā'ir al-a'dā' junūduhū*" ("the heart is the commander of the body, while the other limbs are its soldiers"), which generates the code of the *qalb* as a center of control and bodily reflexivity [SAF-08/K4-QB]. This formulation indicates that outward behavior (*exoteric conduct*) is a direct reflection of the inner condition of the soul. The operational dimension of inner habituation is further developed in *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah* through the clause "*muhālabat al-raghā'ib wa qahr al-shahawāt*," generating the codes of *mujāhadah* (spiritual struggle) and moral resilience [MAU-12/K7-MJ]. Similarly, *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād* contains the statement "*idhā fasadat al-muḍghah fasada al-jasad kulluh*," generating the codes of inner pathology and *muḥāsabah* (self-accountability) [NSI-15/K10-PB]. Together, these findings suggest the necessity of consistent spiritual discipline (*riyāḍah*) to restrain the destructive tendencies of the self. At the axial-coding stage, these textual units were consolidated into three functional categories: Purification of the Heart as the Ethical Foundation [AX-05], The Dynamics of Asceticism and Self-Control [AX-06], and The Integrity of Anthropological Duality [AX-07]. The final synthesis through selective coding generated the core category: "An Anthropological-Spiritual Construction Based on *Tazkiyat al-Nafs* as a Prerequisite for Moral Transformation" [SC-02]. This finding demonstrates that, within Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's pedagogy, moral education cannot be effective if it targets only outward behavior or the *behavioral surface*. Moral education is fundamentally an education of the soul a process of reconstructing human consciousness from the dominance of desire and passion toward spiritual illumination oriented toward God. Accordingly, moral transformation is conceived not as the external regulation of conduct but as an internal restructuring of the moral subject.

3. The Teleological Paradigm: Education as the Formation of a Comprehensive Pious Person



From a teleological perspective, moral education in Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's thought ultimately aims at the formation of a comprehensively pious human being, represented practically through the ideal of *al-insān al-kāmil*. This objective is articulated through an integrated triadic conception of piety encompassing individual, ritual, and social dimensions. At the open-coding stage, textual examination of *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād* through the Prophetic tradition "*akmal al-mu'minīna imānan aḥsanuhum khuluqan*" generated the codes of inner depth and spiritual consciousness [NSI-18/K1-KB]. The ritual dimension of piety is further articulated in *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah* through the statement "*fa-inna al-ṣalāta tanhā 'an al-faḥshā'i wa al-munkar*," generating the codes of Sharī'ah observance and ritual discipline [MAU-22/K4-KS]. This formulation indicates that formal worship must produce tangible ethical consequences, particularly by restraining individuals from immoral and reprehensible conduct. Meanwhile, the dimension of social piety receives strong emphasis through the Prophetic maxim "*khayr al-nāsi anfa'uhum li al-nās*," generating the codes of public concern, social justice, and altruism [NSI-25/K7-KP]. This textual evidence demonstrates that individual spiritual excellence cannot be separated from the individual's contribution to the welfare of others. At the axial-coding stage, these three dimensions were consolidated into the following functional categories: Individual Moral Integrity [AX-08], Formal-Devotional Manifestation [AX-09], and Eco-Social Responsibility [AX-10]. The final synthesis through selective coding generated the core category: "The Teleology of Moral Education: Integrating the Three Dimensions of Piety toward the Formation of a Comprehensive Pious Human Being" [SC-03]. This finding demonstrates that, within Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's pedagogical epistemology, the ideal human being is not an extremely ascetic figure detached from social life. Rather, the ideal person is spiritually oriented toward God, disciplined in relation to the self, and substantively committed to promoting justice, social harmony, and the welfare of others. Thus, *al-insān al-kāmil* is conceptualized not merely in terms of personal spiritual attainment but as an integrated moral personality whose relationship with God is manifested through disciplined selfhood and constructive social engagement.

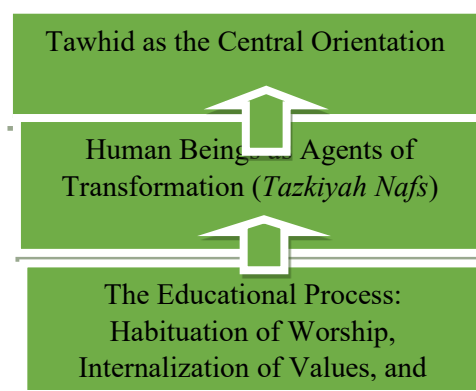
4. The Transformational-Pedagogical Paradigm: Education as a Gradual and Progressive Process

In practical terms, Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's conception of character transformation reflects a transformational-pedagogical paradigm grounded in progressive internalization, rather than merely a doctrinal transfer of moral knowledge. Moral formation is understood as a systematic and gradual endeavor in which cognitive and theological transformation is continuously cultivated until it develops into deeply ingrained behavioral habituation or *malakah*. Accordingly, moral education is not considered complete when learners merely understand moral principles; rather, its success is determined by the extent to which these principles become internalized dispositions and are consistently manifested in everyday conduct. At the open-coding stage, textual extraction from *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'* through the sequential framework of "*al-takhallī thumma al-taḥallī thumma al-tajallī*" generated the codes of removing blameworthy traits (*takhallī*), cultivating praiseworthy characteristics (*taḥallī*), and attaining spiritual illumination (*tajallī*) [SAF-12/K1-TK]. This sequence indicates that pedagogical intervention should be aligned with the psychological capacity and developmental condition of learners. The



elimination of negative dispositions must precede the cultivation of positive moral values, suggesting that character formation requires a carefully ordered process of moral purification and reconstruction. This conception is reinforced by *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah* through the expression "*al-khayru 'ādah wa al-sharru zājirun*," which generates the codes of habituating virtuous conduct and conditioning behavioral responses [MAU-30/K4-PK]. The textual evidence demonstrates that moral values must be practiced and reinforced consistently until virtuous behavior becomes an established disposition. In this sense, habituation functions not merely as repetitive behavioral training but as a mechanism for transforming consciously learned moral values into stable character traits. Meanwhile, the dimensions of exemplary conduct and pedagogical supervision in *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād* are reflected in the narrative "*salāmat al-insān fī ḥifẓ al-lisān wa mu'āsharat al-ṣāliḥin*," which generates the codes of exemplary social environments and positive interpersonal interaction [NSI-32/K7-KL]. This finding highlights the importance of a supportive educational ecosystem and the presence of a guiding figure or *murabbī* in the process of moral formation. Character development, therefore, cannot be reduced to an individual psychological process but is also shaped by social interaction, role modeling, and the moral quality of the learner's surrounding environment.

At the axial-coding stage, these textual units were consolidated into three functional categories: Gradual Internalization Processes [AX-11], Habituation and Behavioral Regulation [AX-12], and Pedagogical Ecosystem and Exemplary Conduct [AX-13]. The final synthesis through selective coding generated the core category: "A Transformational-Pedagogical Paradigm Based on Gradual Stages, Structured Habituation, and Ecological Exemplarity" [SC-04]. This finding reinforces the argument that Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's epistemology of moral education demonstrates a strong sensitivity to the psychological and developmental dimensions of human beings. Character education is conceived as a human-centered, measurable, and progressive process that integrates inner cultivation with consistent behavioral practice and a supportive social environment. The transformational process therefore moves from cognitive awareness to spiritual internalization, from internalization to habituation, and ultimately from habituation to the formation of stable moral dispositions (*malakah*). Accordingly, Shaykh Nawawi's pedagogical paradigm can be understood as a multidimensional process in which knowledge, spiritual purification, habituation, exemplary conduct, and social environment operate as interconnected mechanisms of moral transformation. This framework provides a significant conceptual foundation for developing contemporary Islamic character education that seeks to move beyond knowledge-centered instruction toward the sustainable internalization of moral values. The following diagram illustrates the conceptual framework of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's paradigm of moral education:



Objectives of Moral Education

The thematic exploration of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's major works—*Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād*, *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'*, and *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah*—confirms that the teleology of moral education is articulated as a systematic transformative process aimed at cultivating an ideal human profile, practically embodied in the concept of *al-insān al-kāmil*. Through qualitative coding, this study identifies four interrelated foundational orientations that constitute the primary objectives of Shaykh Nawawi's conception of moral education. At the open-coding stage, textual extraction from *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād* through the statement "*man ja'ala Allāha nuṣba 'aynayhi kafāhu Allāhu mā ahammah*" establishes the first pillar: the cultivation of God-consciousness as a fundamental guide for human conduct [TP-01/NSI-41]. This orientation is further operationalized in *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah* through the statement "*afḍal al-a'māl dawām al-'ubūdiyyah ma'a ṣidq al-tawajjuh*," which generates the codes of steadfastness (*istiḳamah*) and sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*) [TP-02/MAU-12]. These findings indicate that the ultimate objective of moral education lies in the formation of *malakah*, namely a stable and enduring moral disposition that consistently shapes human conduct.

The esoteric dimension of moral formation is further developed in *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'* through the statement "*lā yabluḡ al-'abd darajāt al-fuḍalā' illā bi-tazkiyat al-naḥs*," which generates the code of soul purification (*tazkiyat al-naḥs*) [TP-03/SAF-27]. This formulation positions the purification of the inner self from spiritual and moral diseases (*amrāḍ al-qalb*) as a prerequisite for the emergence of genuine ethical excellence. Thus, moral education is not confined to the regulation of outward behavior but extends to the transformation of the inner dimensions of the human being. The altruistic and societal dimension is reinforced by *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād* through the maxim "*khayr al-nāsi anfa'uhum li al-nās*," which generates the code of social orientation [TP-04/NSI-52]. This textual evidence confirms that individual spiritual piety must ultimately be manifested through tangible contributions to society and concern for the welfare of others. Consequently, moral excellence is understood as incomplete when it remains confined to the private sphere of individual religiosity. Through axial coding and selective coding, these four pillars converge into the core category: "The Teleology of Moral Education Based on the Integration of Divine Consciousness, Steadfastness, Inner Purification, and Social Altruism." This construction integrates the dimensions of individual and vertical piety (*ḥabl min Allāh*) with social and horizontal piety (*ḥabl min al-nās*). The achievement of these educational objectives ultimately leads to the reconstruction of an Ideal Moral Personality, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Three-Dimensional Construction of the Ideal Human Profile from the Perspective of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani

Dimensions of the Objective	Construct Description	Subjective Explanation
Spiritual	Total Submission to Allah	. To realize true servitude (<i>'ubūdiyyah</i>), cultivate murāqabah (the awareness of being constantly



		watched by God), and achieve complete submission in every aspect of life.
Ethical	Self-Control and Moral Perfection	The ability to control one's desires (<i>mujāhadah</i>), overcome destructive impulses (<i>takhallī</i>), and adorn oneself with virtuous and praiseworthy qualities (<i>taḥallī/maḥmūdah</i>).
Social	Ethical Relationships with Others	The manifestation of the value of <i>rahmatan lil-ālamīn</i> through social concern, justice, generosity, and the preservation of harmonious human relationships

The integration of the three dimensions presented in Table 1 demonstrates that Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's construction of the objectives of moral education rejects any separation between ritual-esoteric piety and social-exoteric piety. The spiritual dimension functions as a motivational driver, the ethical dimension serves as a source of character resilience, while the social dimension constitutes a form of practical proof of a student's moral maturity in the public sphere. Accordingly, moral education is conceived as an integrated process in which spiritual consciousness, ethical self-discipline, and social responsibility mutually reinforce one another.

Reconstruction of the Content Structure and Curriculum of Moral Education

The reconstruction of the content and curriculum of moral education in Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's thought, based on an analysis of *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād*, *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah*, and *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'*, confirms the existence of a holistic and progressive curricular framework. Moral education is articulated through a gradual progression that encompasses the level of *Sharī'ah* or exoteric religious observance, represented particularly in *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah*; the cultivation of ethical and social conduct, emphasized in *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād*; and the level of *ḥaqīqah* or esoteric Sufi cultivation, developed in *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'*. This progressive framework is translated into an organized learning syllabus encompassing everyday *adab*, the purification of moral and spiritual diseases through *tazkiyat al-nafs*, and the attainment of spiritual *maqāmāt*, including *zuhd* (ascetic detachment), *tawakkul* (reliance upon God), and *riqā* (contentment) [MP-04].

The structure of instructional materials and practical learning modules is developed through the integration of thematic texts containing Prophetic traditions (*aḥādīth*), reports of the Companions (*āthār al-ṣaḥābah*), and the wisdom of Islamic scholars as substantive references. These materials are oriented toward daily spiritual practice (*riyāḍah*) and inward reflection through processes of self-assessment. Textual extraction from *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād* through the statement "*al-nasabu lā yakūnu sharīfan illā bi al-adabi... al-'ilmu sharafun lā qadra lahu, wa al-adabu mālun lā khawfa 'alayh*" emphasizes *adab* as a fundamental basis of human dignity [MP-01]. This formulation establishes *adab* not merely as an ancillary component of education but as a foundational value through which knowledge acquires ethical significance.

The centrality of *adab* within the educational process is further reinforced in *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah* through the clause "*izā kunta muta'alliman fa ādābu al-muta'allimi ma'a al-'ālimi thalāthata 'ashara*" [MP-02], which elaborates thirteen forms of student etiquette that are intended to be directly cultivated through affective and psychomotor learning processes. These forms of *adab* demonstrate that moral education involves not only the



transmission of normative knowledge but also the formation of appropriate attitudes, dispositions, and patterns of conduct within educational relationships.

At the highest level, *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'* complements this instructional framework by positioning educator exemplarity as a principal instrument of moral internalization. This is reflected in the statement “*jamī’u mā dhakarnāhu min ādābi al-mu’allimi fī nafsīhi huwa ādābu al-muta’allim*” [MP-03]. The formulation indicates that the moral character of educators constitutes an essential component of the curriculum itself. Students internalize moral values not only through explicit instruction but also through observing and emulating the character and conduct of their teachers.

Accordingly, the structure and curriculum of moral education from Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani’s perspective are comprehensively integrated through three mutually reinforcing components: the cultivation of adab as a foundational value, the habituation of ethical conduct within educational interactions, and the practical embodiment of moral values through educator exemplarity. This integrated structure simultaneously addresses the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions of learners and seeks to sustain moral development through continuous practice and internalization. The comprehensive mapping of the articulation of the curriculum, syllabus, instructional materials, and practical learning modules in Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani’s conception of moral education is presented in detail in Table 2.

Table 2. Reconstruction of the Curriculum Components and Learning Practices of Moral Education in Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani’s Thought

Curricular Components	Levels & Reference Sources	Main Topics	Learning Outcome Indicators
Curriculum	The Gradation of the Three Main Texts (<i>Marāqī, Naṣā’ih, and Salālim</i>)	Integration of the Levels of Sharī’ah (Exoteric), Ethical-Social Refinement, and <i>Ḥaqīqah</i> (Esoteric).	The Balance Between Outward Moral Maturity and Inward Spiritual Depth
Syllabus	Habitual Routines & Purification of the Inner Self	Daily etiquette (waking up, prayer, and social transactions), purification from <i>amrāḍ al-qalb</i> (diseases of the heart, such as envy, ostentation, and arrogance), and the cultivation of <i>maqāmāt</i> (spiritual stations, such as asceticism, trust in God, and contentment).	. Daily Ethical Discipline and Resilience Against the Destructive Impulses of the Lower Self (<i>Hawā Nafsu</i>)
Teaching Materials	Thematic Textual Corpus (<i>Turāth</i>)	Thematic Texts Based on Prophetic Ḥadīth, the Reports of the Companions (<i>Āthār</i>), and the Words of Wisdom of the Scholars	Strengthening Normative-Theological Understanding as the Foundation of Students’ Moral Reasoning.



Applied Modules	Practice Guidelines & Inner-Self Evaluation	Practical Guidelines for Daily Spiritual Practices (<i>Riyāḍah</i>) and Self-Reflection Instruments (Self-Assessment/ <i>Muḥāsabah</i>)	The Formation of the Habitual Disposition for Goodness (<i>Malakah</i>) and Individual Moral Self-Regulation.
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Typology of Moral Education Methods

The exploration of *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād*, *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah*, and *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'* leads to the identification of five major methodological typologies employed by Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani in transforming ethical values into lived moral dispositions. The qualitative analysis demonstrates that his approach to moral education is not merely oriented toward the transmission of cognitive knowledge but is fundamentally concerned with the internalization of moral values and the formation of stable moral dispositions (*malakah*). This process integrates *mau'izah*, *ḥiwār*, *uswah ḥasanah*, *ta'wīd*, and *riyāḍah* as interconnected mechanisms of moral transformation [MET-06].

The lecture and admonition method (*mau'izah*) functions as a direct means of transmitting moral teachings through religious counsel, affirmation of the virtues of commendable character (*akhlāq maḥmūdah*), and warnings concerning the dangers of reprehensible character (*akhlāq maḍmūmah*) [MET-01]. This method provides learners with explicit normative guidance regarding the distinction between virtuous and blameworthy conduct.

The dialogical method (*ḥiwār*) subsequently establishes a dialectical and communicative dimension of moral learning. Through structured questions and answers, *ḥiwār* stimulates learners' rational and emotional awareness, clarifies the boundaries of ethical values, and facilitates meaningful educational interaction between educators and learners [MET-02]. Moral knowledge is therefore not simply received passively but is processed through dialogue, reflection, and active engagement.

The method of exemplary conduct (*uswah ḥasanah*) concretizes ethical values by presenting ideal moral figures through narratives concerning the personality and conduct of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his Companions, and pious scholars. These figures serve as concrete representations of moral behavior that learners can observe, emulate, and translate into their own conduct [MET-03]. Exemplarity thus transforms abstract ethical principles into embodied and observable models of virtuous behavior.

At the level of outward character formation, the habituation method (*ta'wīd*) is implemented through the cultivation of moral discipline by means of consistent repetition of positive actions and practices (*istiḳāmah*) [MET-04]. This habituation operates in both ritual worship and everyday social ethics, with the objective of transforming repeated actions into stable behavioral dispositions. Through sustained practice, morally desirable actions gradually become internalized as habitual patterns of conduct.

At the highest level, inner moral internalization is cultivated through the method of spiritual discipline (*riyāḍah*). This approach involves intensive cultivation of the soul through the restraint of base desires, purification of the inner self through *dhikr* (remembrance of God), and continuous maintenance of spiritual awareness (*murāqabah*) [MET-05]. Unlike methods that primarily regulate outward behavior, *riyāḍah* directly



addresses the inner dimension of the moral subject and seeks to transform the spiritual dispositions underlying conduct.

The synthesis of these five methodological typologies demonstrates that Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's approach to moral education is comprehensive, integrative, and practice-oriented. His pedagogical framework harmoniously combines external conditioning through admonition, dialogue, exemplary conduct, and habituation with the cultivation of inner spiritual awareness through systematic spiritual discipline. These methods operate sequentially and reciprocally: moral instruction provides normative knowledge, dialogue stimulates reflection, exemplarity provides concrete models, habituation stabilizes virtuous conduct, and spiritual discipline transforms the inner dispositions that sustain moral behavior.

Accordingly, moral education in Shaykh Nawawi's thought should not be understood as a linear process of knowledge transmission. Rather, it constitutes a multidimensional process of moral transformation in which cognitive understanding, affective engagement, behavioral practice, social modeling, and spiritual cultivation converge in the formation of *malakah*. The comprehensive mapping of the domains, operational mechanisms, and expected outcomes of these five methodological typologies is presented in detail in Table 3.

Table 3. Typology and Operational Articulation of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's Methods of Moral Education

Methodological Typology	Domain Area	Operational Mechanism	Learning Outcome Indicators
<i>Mau'izah</i> (Advice & Lectures)	Cognitive & Affective	Delivery of moral teachings, reinforcement of the virtues of akhlaq maḥmudah, and warnings against the dangers of <i>akhlaq maẓmumah</i>	Increased Normative-Theological Awareness and Understanding of Ethical Boundaries
<i>Ḥiwār</i> (Dialogue & Question-and-Answer)	Cognitive & Interactive	. The use of question-and-answer narratives to stimulate students' critical reasoning and emotional responses.	The Development of Reflective Understanding and Dialectical Communication Between Teachers and Students
<i>Uswah Ḥasanah</i> (Exemplary Conduct)	Affective & Behavioristic	. The Presentation of Factual Exemplars Based on the Lives of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Companions, and Righteous Scholars	The Formation of Moral Role Models Who Serve as Figures for Students to Emulate
<i>Ta'wīd</i> (Daily Habituation)	Behavioristic / Behavioral	Consistent Repetition of Moral Discipline and	The Formation of an Automatic, Stable, and Deeply



		Social Ethics (<i>Istiḳāmah</i>) in Daily Routines	Entrenched Character (<i>Malakah</i>)
<i>Riyāḍah</i> (Spiritual Practice)	Metacognitive & Esoteric	Intensive Spiritual Training (<i>Tazkiyat al- Nafs</i>), Restraint of the Lower Self (<i>Hawā al- Nafs</i>), Dhikr, and Inner Self-Monitoring (<i>Murāqabah</i>)	. The Development of Internal Self- Control and Inner Spiritual Resilience

The reconstruction of moral education in Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's thought is interpreted through the hermeneutic framework of Paul Ricoeur, particularly through three dialectical phases: semantic/textual analysis, which examines the autonomy of the text and its linguistic articulation; structural explication, which maps the internal relationships among the three commentarial works; and appropriation, which brings the meanings articulated in historical texts into dialogue with contemporary educational realities and modern educational theories.

The first phase, Semantic and Textual Analysis, involves a process of *distanciation* in which the text is treated as an autonomous discourse that is no longer reducible to the subjective intentions of its author. Within Shaykh Nawawi's corpus, the texts are not constructed as abstract theoretical treatises but employ the genres of *sharḥ*, *naṣīḥah*, and *naẓm* to articulate ethical and spiritual teachings in accessible and pedagogically meaningful forms. The linguistic formulations employed in these works contain significant psychopedagogical dimensions. For instance, the concept of *'ubūdiyyah* is not presented merely as physical ritual worship but as a structure of consciousness in which servitude to God constitutes the fundamental basis of ethical action. Similarly, the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* in *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'* functions as a pedagogical and methodological variable that conceptualizes soul purification as a process involving the deconstruction of negative dispositions (*takhallī*) and the reconstruction of virtuous character (*taḥallī*). This textual interpretation demonstrates that Shaykh Nawawi constructs his moral terminology upon an esoteric-transcendental ethical framework, rather than within a merely secular-rationalistic conception of morality.

The second phase, Structural Explication, examines the internal logical relationships that connect *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād*, *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah*, and *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'* into a coherent triadic epistemological hierarchy. *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah* establishes an exoteric foundation through the discipline of worship and outward *adab*; *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād* expands this foundation into the domain of *mu'āmalah* and social ethics; while *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'* completes the trajectory through the esoteric cultivation of the soul and Sufi spiritual refinement. This structural relationship demonstrates that the three works should not be interpreted as independent repositories of moral advice but as interconnected layers within a broader educational paradigm.

The methodological dialectic emerging from this structure further indicates that practices such as *riyāḍah* and *ta'wīd* do not represent forms of passive indoctrination. Rather, they constitute mechanisms for cultivating inner discipline and stable moral



dispositions by integrating the cognitive dimension through *mau'izah*, the affective dimension through *uswah hasanah*, and the psychomotor-spiritual dimension through *riyāḍah*. Moral education consequently operates across multiple dimensions of human development, moving from moral knowledge and awareness toward emotional identification, behavioral practice, and ultimately spiritual internalization.

The culminating phase, Appropriation, brings the *world of the text* into dialogue with contemporary educational contexts and generates two important theoretical contributions. First, Shaykh Nawawi's thought provides a fundamental critique of secular-positivistic approaches to character education that tend to become trapped in formalistic behavioral regulation. His theocentric and anthropological-spiritual paradigm emphasizes that moral education detached from divine consciousness and inner purification risks producing only superficial or externally regulated morality. Within this framework, ethical conduct derives its enduring force not simply from external rules but from the transformation of the moral subject's inner consciousness.

Second, Shaykh Nawawi's educational content and methodological typology reveal significant points of theoretical convergence with modern educational discourse. The methods of *ta'wīd* and *riyāḍah* demonstrate parallels with the principles of Operant Conditioning associated with B. F. Skinner, particularly in their emphasis on environmental conditioning, repetition, reinforcement, and the establishment of stable behavioral patterns. However, Nawawi's framework extends beyond conventional behaviorist assumptions by directing habituation toward the transformation of the individual's inner spiritual dispositions. In other words, behavioral repetition is not regarded as an end in itself but as a means of cultivating an ethically and spiritually integrated personality.

Likewise, the use of *uswah* and *hiwār* resonates with the principles of Social Constructivism associated with Lev Vygotsky. The educator functions as a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) who facilitates learners' moral development through interaction, dialogue, modeling, and guided participation. Within this framework, moral knowledge is constructed and internalized through meaningful interpersonal relationships rather than transmitted solely through one-way instruction. The dialogical dimension of *hiwār* therefore complements the exemplary dimension of *uswah*, enabling learners to negotiate moral meanings while simultaneously observing their concrete embodiment in the conduct of educators and other exemplary figures.

Furthermore, the hierarchical movement from *Sharī'ah* represented by *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah* toward the spiritual dimension of *ḥaqīqah* represented by *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'* can be read in dialogue with Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Both frameworks recognize a movement from externally regulated conduct toward increasingly internalized moral awareness. Nevertheless, the comparison must be understood critically rather than as an exact equivalence. Whereas Kohlberg conceptualizes moral development primarily in terms of increasingly autonomous forms of moral reasoning, Shaykh Nawawi grounds moral maturation in divine orientation, spiritual purification, and disciplined self-transformation. Thus, Nawawi's conception introduces a transcendental dimension that cannot be fully captured by a secular developmental framework.

Taken together, these theoretical convergences demonstrate that Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's conception of moral education possesses substantial potential for articulation within the framework of Holistic Character Education in the twenty-first century. His



paradigm integrates theological consciousness, spiritual cultivation, moral reasoning, behavioral habituation, exemplary conduct, dialogical interaction, and social responsibility into a unified educational process. Its distinctive contribution lies precisely in its refusal to separate outward conduct from inner transformation: character is regarded as sustainable only when ethical behavior is rooted in a transformed spiritual consciousness.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the reconstruction of moral education in Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's thought transcends conventional cognitive approaches to moral knowledge by offering an integrated curricular and pedagogical synthesis. Through Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic framework, the study identifies a triadic hierarchical articulation across the three selected commentarial works: *Marāqī al-'Ubūdiyyah* represents the exoteric-ritual dimension, *Naṣā'ih al-'Ibād* articulates the social and *mu'āmalah* dimension, while *Salālim al-Fuḍalā'* represents the esoteric-Sufi dimension. This structure demonstrates that Nawawi's conception of moral education is fundamentally grounded in theocentric consciousness and the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*).

The five methodological typologies identified in this study *mau'izah*, *hiwār*, *uswah ḥasanah*, *ta'wīd*, and *riyāḍah*—constitute a comprehensive pedagogical framework that integrates the conditioning of outward behavior with the cultivation of inner spiritual awareness. These methods operate across cognitive, affective, behavioral, social, and spiritual dimensions, transforming moral knowledge into embodied character and ultimately into stable moral dispositions (*malakah*).

The findings further demonstrate significant theoretical convergence between Nawawi's educational paradigm and selected modern educational theories. The methods of *ta'wīd* and *riyāḍah* extend the principles of Skinnerian operant conditioning from behavioral habituation toward spiritual and moral cultivation. The methods of *uswah* and *hiwār* reinforce Vygotsky's social constructivism, particularly through the role of the educator as a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) in facilitating learners' moral development through interaction, modeling, and guided learning. Meanwhile, the hierarchical progression across the three commentarial works can be placed in dialogue with Kohlberg's theory of moral development, although Nawawi's framework differs fundamentally in grounding moral maturity in divine consciousness, spiritual purification, and transcendental ethical orientation rather than solely in autonomous moral reasoning.

Ultimately, the reconstructed paradigm demonstrates that Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani's conception of moral education offers a holistic model of character formation in which faith, worship, ethical conduct, social responsibility, habituation, exemplary conduct, dialogue, and spiritual discipline are mutually interconnected. Its contemporary relevance lies in its capacity to bridge the often-separated domains of cognitive learning, character formation, and spiritual development, thereby providing a conceptual foundation for the renewal of Islamic moral education in the twenty-first century.

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