

The Relevance of Ibn Miskawayh's Ethics Concept to Character Education in Indonesia within the Framework of Strengthening Character Education

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the relevance of Ibn Miskawayh's concept of morality to character education in Indonesia within the framework of Strengthening Character Education (Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter/PPK). The study employs a qualitative approach using a library research method. Data were obtained from Ibn Miskawayh's major work, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Taḥrīr al-A'rāq*, as well as relevant books, scholarly articles, and policy documents. The data were analyzed using content analysis through the processes of data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that Ibn Miskawayh's concept of morality, which emphasizes habituation (*ta'wīd*), exemplary conduct, self-control, and purification of the soul, has strong relevance to the implementation of PPK. The four principal virtues he proposed *al-hikmah* (wisdom), *al-'iffah* (self-control), *al-shajā'ah* (courage), and *al-'adālah* (justice) are closely connected to the five core values of PPK: religiosity, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, and integrity. This study contributes a conceptual synthesis that positions Ibn Miskawayh's thought as a philosophical foundation for strengthening character education in Indonesia. Thus, integrating Ibn Miskawayh's concept of morality with PPK can serve as an alternative approach to developing an educational system that is oriented not only toward academic achievement but also toward cultivating students who possess noble character, integrity, and the capacity to face the challenges of the digital era.

1. INTRODUCTION

Character education has become one of the important issues in Indonesia's national education system amid the rise of various moral problems, such as low honesty, bullying, misuse of social media, intolerance, and the declining responsibility of students (Solehudin & Iskandar, 2026; Rachman, 2026). This condition shows that educational success is not only measured by cognitive aspects, but also by the ability to shape a character that is honest, religious, and responsible as preparation for life in society. As an effort to address these issues, the government has developed the Character Education Strengthening (PPK) policy, which integrates religious, nationalist, independent, cooperative, and integrity values into the learning process, school culture, and family and community involvement. However, the implementation of PPK still faces various challenges, such as the dominance of learning focused on academic achievements and the suboptimal internalization of character values (Farozah, Fathurahman, & Kalsum, 2026). Therefore, we need a philosophical foundation that can strengthen the implementation of character education in Indonesia. One of the Islamic thinkers who paid great attention to moral education was Ibn Miskawayh through his work *Tahdzib al-Akhlāq wa Taḥrīr al-A'rāq*. He viewed morals as a character shaped through education, habituation, practice, and self-control. According to Ibn Miskawayh, forming a person with noble character relies on four main virtues: *al-hikmah* (wisdom), *al-'iffah* (self-restraint), *al-*

syaja'ah (courage), and al-'adalah (justice), which form the foundation for a balanced personality (Jannah, et al., 2026). The concept of ethics from Ibn Miskawaih is strongly relevant to the values of Strengthening Character Education. Religious values, integrity, independence, mutual cooperation, and nationalism in PPK align with Ibn Miskawaih's teachings, which emphasize getting used to doing good, controlling desires, responsibility, justice, and harmonious human relationships. This alignment shows that Ibn Miskawaih's thoughts can serve as a philosophical foundation for enhancing the implementation of character education in Indonesia (Makhzunyah, et al., 2026). Amid the challenges of the digital era marked by the rise of individualism, consumerism, and moral crises, Ibn Miskawaih's concept of ethics becomes increasingly relevant. His approach, which emphasizes internalizing values, practicing good behavior, and setting a good example, offers the perspective that character education isn't just about transferring knowledge, but should be realized through a continuous process of personality development. Therefore, studying the relevance of Ibn Miskawaih's ethics to Strengthening Character Education is important as an effort to enrich the conceptual foundation of character education in Indonesia.

Research on Ibn Miskawaih's concept of ethics has been widely studied from the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy. Research (Ilmiyah, Yuliyani, Yani, & Abdullah, 2026) highlighting character building through habituation, self-control, purification of the soul, and the development of four main virtues, namely al-hikmah (wisdom), al-'iffah (self-control), al-syaja'ah (courage), and al-'adalah (justice). The study shows that Ibn Miskawaih's thought is relevant to shaping students' character, but the discussion is still mostly dominated by normative and philosophical analysis without connecting it comprehensively to character education policies in Indonesia. On the other hand, research (Arjuna & Wahyudi, 2026) Regarding the Strengthening of Character Education (PPK), it mostly focuses on implementing the five main character values, namely religious, nationalist, independent, cooperative, and integrity in both the learning process and school culture. Although the implementation of PPK is considered capable of encouraging positive student behavior, various studies show that its execution still faces obstacles, such as weak internalization of values and the philosophical foundation supporting sustainable character education not being fully optimal. Based on a review of the research (Satra, Romeinita, Hidayah, & Rebagus, 2025), There is a research gap showing that studies on Ibn Miskawaih's concept of morality and Character Education Strengthening are still developing only partially. Previous research tends to discuss Ibn Miskawaih's thoughts as a topic in Islamic philosophy or to study the implementation of PPK as an educational policy, without integrating both into one conceptual framework. As a result, there hasn't been much research explaining the relevance of Ibn Miskawaih's four main virtues as a philosophical foundation for strengthening the five main PPK values in Indonesia. Based on this gap, the novelty of this research lies in the effort to build a conceptual synthesis between Ibn Miskawaih's moral thinking and the Character Education Strengthening (PPK) framework. This study maps the relationship between the four main virtues according to Ibn Miskawaih and the five main values of PPK systematically, resulting in a new perspective on character education strengthening grounded in Islamic educational philosophy. Thus, this study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to enriching character education studies while also serving as a conceptual foundation for a more comprehensive and contextual implementation of PPK in Indonesia.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a type of research called library research. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on a conceptual analysis of the relevance of Ibn Miskawayh's thoughts on ethics with the concept of Character Education Strengthening (PPK) in Indonesia through the review of various literature sources related to the subject. Library research

allows the researcher to identify, compare, and interpret different concepts, theories, and previous research findings to produce a scientific synthesis on the relationship between classical Islamic moral philosophy and national character education policies (Zed, 2018; Creswell, 2018). The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. The primary data come from the main work of Ibn Miskawayh, namely *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq wa Tathir al-Araq*, which serves as the main reference for understanding the concepts of morals, character development, and the four main virtues he proposed. Meanwhile, the secondary data are obtained from books, reputable scientific articles, proceedings, as well as official government documents, such as the Character Education Strengthening (PPK) policy, Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 on Character Education Strengthening, along with various scientific publications discussing Islamic educational philosophy and character education in Indonesia. The literature used is prioritized from publications in the last five years to obtain up-to-date information, while still considering classical works that form the theoretical foundation of the research (Sugiyono, 2022).

The data collection technique was carried out through documentation, which involved tracing, identifying, classifying, and reviewing various literature sources relevant to the research focus. Next, the data was analyzed using content analysis through several stages, namely data reduction, concept categorization, interpretation, and systematic conclusion drawing. The analysis was done by comparing Ibn Miskawayh's concepts of moral character, including al-hikmah (wisdom), al-'iffah (self-control), al-syaja'ah (courage), and al-'adalah (justice), with the five main values of Character Education Strengthening, namely religious, nationalist, independent, collaborative, and integrity. This analysis process aims to find conceptual convergence and explain the relevance of Ibn Miskawayh's thought to the implementation of character education in Indonesia (Krippendorff, 2019; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2024). The validity of the data in this study is maintained through source triangulation and theory triangulation. Source triangulation is done by comparing information obtained from Ibn Miskawayh's original works, literature on Islamic educational philosophy, national education policy documents, and previous research results. Meanwhile, theory triangulation is carried out by examining the research findings using perspectives from Islamic educational philosophy, character education theory, and the concept of Character Education Strengthening (PPK) to get a more comprehensive and objective interpretation. Through these procedures, the study is expected to produce a conceptual review that has academic validity and contributes to the development of character education in Indonesia based on Islamic moral values (Moleong, 2024).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

The findings indicate that Ibn Miskawayh's concept of morality has very strong relevance to the framework of Strengthening Character Education (Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter/PPK) in Indonesia. Based on an examination of *Tahdhīb al-Akhlaq wa Taṭhīr al-A'rāq*, moral development is understood as an educational process carried out gradually through habituation (*ta'wīd*), practice, exemplary conduct, and the control of desires, thereby cultivating character that becomes firmly embedded within an individual. According to Ibn Miskawayh, character is not an innate and immutable trait but can be developed through continuous education. This perspective is consistent with the objectives of PPK, which emphasize the internalization of character values through learning processes, school culture, exemplary behavior demonstrated by educators, and the involvement of families and communities. The analysis also demonstrates that the four principal virtues (*virtues*) proposed by Ibn Miskawayh correspond closely with the five core values of Strengthening Character

Education. The virtue of *al-hikmah* (wisdom) encourages students to think rationally, critically, and wisely when making decisions, thereby supporting the development of independence and integrity. The virtue of *al-'iffah* (self-control) fosters individuals who are disciplined, moderate, and capable of controlling their desires, which is consistent with the values of religiosity and independence. Furthermore, *al-shajā'ah* (courage) teaches individuals to have the courage to uphold truth, take responsibility, and maintain moral commitment, while *al-'adālah* (justice) instills respect for the rights of others, promotes equality, and encourages harmonious social relations. These correspondences demonstrate that the values promoted by PPK have philosophical foundations that have long been developed within Ibn Miskawayh's ethical thought.

Table 1. Relevance of Ibn Miskawayh's Concept of Morality to the Values of Strengthening Character Education (PPK)

Ibn Miskawayh's Concept of Morality	Meaning of the Concept	Relevant PPK Values	Implementation in Education
Al-Ḥikmah (Wisdom)	The ability to think correctly and make rational decisions	Independence, Integrity	Problem-based learning, critical thinking, and responsible decision-making
Al-'Iffah (Self-Control)	Controlling desires and cultivating good habits	Religiosity, Independence	Developing discipline, honesty, strengthening religious practices, and regulating digital media use
Al-Shajā'ah (Courage)	Having the courage to uphold truth and take responsibility	Integrity, Nationalism	Encouraging students to express their opinions confidently, practice academic honesty, and develop social responsibility
Al-'Adālah (Justice)	Acting fairly and respecting the rights of others	Mutual Cooperation, Nationalism, Integrity	Cooperation, tolerance, deliberation, respect for diversity, and social concern

Based on the analysis above, Ibn Miskawayh's concept of morality not only shares similar values with PPK but also offers a character-development method that is relevant to the needs of contemporary education. Ibn Miskawayh emphasizes that good character can only be cultivated through continuous habituation rather than merely through the transmission of moral knowledge. This approach is consistent with the implementation of PPK, which integrates character education into intracurricular, co-curricular, extracurricular activities, and school culture. Thus, character education does not stop at the cognitive level but develops into habits that are reflected in students' everyday behavior. This study also found that Ibn Miskawayh's thought is highly relevant to addressing the challenges of education in the digital era. The decline in ethics in social media use, the increasing prevalence of individualistic behavior, low levels of academic honesty, and declining social concern indicate that character education requires a more profound approach than merely instilling values through the curriculum. The concepts of habituation, self-control, and exemplary conduct proposed by Ibn Miskawayh provide strategies that can strengthen the internalization of character values, enabling students not only to understand moral principles but also to apply them in their daily lives. Overall, the findings confirm that Ibn Miskawayh's concept of morality has significant relevance to the implementation of Strengthening Character Education (Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter/PPK) in Indonesia. Integrating Ibn Miskawayh's four principal virtues with the five core values of PPK produces a character education framework that balances intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. These findings demonstrate that Ibn Miskawayh's thought is not only historically significant within the tradition of Islamic philosophy but can also serve as a philosophical foundation for strengthening national character education policies, thereby

contributing to the development of students who possess integrity, noble character, and the capacity to face the challenges of modern society.

3.2. Discussion

Research results show that Ibn Miskawaih's concept of ethics is highly relevant to the implementation of Character Education Strengthening (PPK) in Indonesia. The findings emphasize that moral education according to Ibn Miskawaih is not only focused on shaping moral behavior but also on perfecting the soul (*tahdzīb al-naḥs*) through education, habituation, practice, and role modeling. In his view, character is not an innate, permanent trait but can be developed through a consistently and continuously carried out educational process. This perspective aligns with PPK's goals, which place character education as a process of internalizing religious values, nationalism, independence, cooperation, and integrity through learning, school culture, and the synergy between schools, families, and communities (Saputri, Rais, & Khoiriah, 2026). Thus, this research shows that Ibnu Miskawaih's concept of moral education is philosophically in line with the character education paradigm applied in the Indonesian national education system. The findings of this study also align with various studies that affirm that Ibn Miskawaih's thinking is still very relevant in facing the challenges of modern education. (Alburhani, Dahliyana, & Kurniawaty, 2025) explaining that moral education according to Ibn Miskawaih places reason as the controller of behavior so that humans are able to distinguish between good and bad rationally. Similarly, (Iskandar, 2022; Mauludin, Marwazi, & Fadhil, 2025) states that the concept of habituation and self-control in Ibn Miskawaih's thought is the main foundation in developing the character of students who have integrity and responsibility. Research (Mushawir, Arqam, Rambe, & Lubis, 2025) also found that the success of character education is greatly influenced by habituating values in daily life, not just through delivering material in the classroom. Therefore, the results of this study reinforce the argument that character education will be more effective if built through a process of continuous value internalization, as taught by Ibnu Miskawaih. Research results show that the four main virtues proposed by Ibn Miskawaih, namely *al-hikmah* (wisdom), *al-'iffah* (self-control), *al-syaja'ah* (courage), and *al-'adalah* (justice), are closely related to the five core values of Character Education Strengthening. *Al-hikmah* plays a role in shaping students who are able to think critically, wisely, and responsibly in making decisions, thus supporting the values of independence and integrity. *Al-'iffah* instills the ability to control desires, discipline, and maintain behavior, which relates to religious values and independence. *Al-syaja'ah* builds moral courage to speak the truth, uphold principles, and take responsibility for every action, thus supporting the values of integrity and nationalism. Meanwhile, *al-'adalah* serves as the foundation for developing attitudes of tolerance, cooperation, appreciation for diversity, and social care. These findings align with previous research (Inayati, Asy'arie, & Shobahiya, 2026) which states that the four main virtues in Islamic moral philosophy are a universal foundation for character building that remains relevant in 21st-century education.

The alignment between Ibn Miskawayh's concept of ethics and PPK also shows that character education policies in Indonesia actually have a strong philosophical foundation in the Islamic intellectual tradition. So far, the implementation of PPK has mostly been understood as a curriculum and school culture policy, even though the success of character education is greatly influenced by the strength of the underlying philosophy. (Alhamuddin, 2025) explaining that character education should cover three main dimensions, namely moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. These three dimensions seem aligned with Ibn Miskawayh's thinking, who places reason as the source of moral knowledge, the soul as the center of self-control, and habituation as a means to shape good actions. This is also supported by Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1986) which explains that character develops through the process of observation, imitation, and role modeling. Thus, the concept of role modeling (*uswah*) emphasized by Ibn Miskawaih aligns with the social

learning theory widely used in modern education. This study also shows that character development according to Ibnu Miskawaih cannot be separated from the educational environment. According to him, families, teachers, and the community have the same responsibility in shaping students' good habits. This finding aligns with the PPK concept, which emphasizes collaboration between schools, families, and the community as three centers of education. The study (Hermawan & Sudin, 2025) shows that character education programs will be more effective if supported by a positive school culture, teacher role models, and active parental involvement. Similarly, research (Mohamed & Andhim, 2026) emphasizes that character develops through consistent social experiences, so character building should be a culture in all educational activities, not just a learning material. Therefore, the results of this study reinforce the importance of creating an educational ecosystem that gets students used to practicing moral values in their daily lives. In the digital era, the relevance of Ibn Miskawayh's concept of morality is becoming more apparent. The development of information technology has had a positive impact on access to knowledge, but it also brings up various moral issues like the spread of hoaxes, cyberbullying, intolerance, social media addiction, declining communication ethics, and low digital responsibility. Research (Harahap, Gajah, Harahap, & Jannah, 2025) shows that 21st-century competencies not only require digital literacy skills, but also strong character, self-control, and social responsibility. In line with that, (Ibad & Setiyorini, 2025) It emphasizes that future education should integrate ethical, humanitarian, and sustainability dimensions into the learning process. In this context, the concepts of al-'iffah and al-hikmah according to Ibnu Miskawaih are very relevant because they stress the ability to control desires, use reason wisely, and consider moral consequences before acting. This research shows that these values can serve as a foundation for building students' digital ethics, enabling them to use technology responsibly.

Furthermore, this research complements previous studies that generally only examined Ibn Miskawayh's thoughts in the context of Islamic education philosophy or discussed the implementation of PPK (Character Education) as a national education policy. This study offers a conceptual synthesis that shows a systematic relationship between Ibn Miskawayh's four main virtues and the five core values of PPK. This integration results in a philosophical framework that not only enriches the study of Islamic education but also provides a conceptual basis for developing more comprehensive character education. Thus, character education is no longer understood merely as an administrative program but as a process of personality development that touches upon intellectual, spiritual, emotional, moral, and social dimensions in a balanced way. Overall, this discussion emphasizes that Ibnu Miskawaih's concept of morality has a significant contribution to the development of character education in Indonesia. The values he developed are not only historically relevant but also capable of addressing educational challenges in the era of globalization and digital transformation. Integrating Ibnu Miskawaih's thoughts with the Character Education Strengthening framework provides a new perspective that character education requires a solid philosophical foundation, sustainable implementation, and role models from the entire education ecosystem. Therefore, Ibnu Miskawaih's ideas deserve to be used as a reference in developing policies and practices in character education in Indonesia so that students can grow up with integrity, noble character, adaptability to change, and a sense of responsibility as citizens and members of the global community.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Ibn Miskawaih's concept of morality is highly relevant to Character Education Strengthening (PPK) in Indonesia because it emphasizes habituation, role modeling, self-control, and the formation of four main virtues (al-hikmah, al-'iffah, al-syaja'ah, and al-'adalah),

which align with the religious, nationalist, independent, cooperative, and integrity values in PPK. The findings suggest that Ibn Miskawaih's thoughts can serve as a philosophical foundation to strengthen the implementation of character education, especially in facing moral challenges in the digital era. Theoretically, this research enriches studies in Islamic philosophy of education and character education, while practically, it provides guidance for educators and policymakers to integrate moral values into learning processes and school culture. However, this study is still limited to a literature review approach, so it has not been supported by empirical data regarding the implementation of Ibn Miskawayh's ethics concept in educational institutions. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct empirical studies using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approaches to test the effectiveness of applying Ibn Miskawayh's ethics concept in supporting Character Education Strengthening, while also developing a character education model that is relevant to the challenges of the digital era and the development of 21st-century education.

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