

Ahmad Amin's Thought on the Philosophy of Moral Education in Islamic Education

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Abstract

Moral education is a central concern of Islamic education because intellectual development alone does not guarantee the formation of responsible and ethical human beings. This article examines Ahmad Amin's thought on the philosophy of moral education and its relevance to contemporary Islamic education. The study uses library research with a descriptive-analytical approach, drawing primarily on Ahmad Amin's ethical thought and supporting works on Islamic educational philosophy and character education. The analysis shows that Ahmad Amin understands morality as a deeply rooted disposition that becomes visible in habitual conduct. Consequently, moral education should move beyond the transmission of moral concepts toward habituation, exemplary conduct, moral training, and a supportive social environment. His perspective also connects moral formation with the balanced use of reason and spiritual awareness, so that religious commitment is expressed in ethical responsibility and social conduct. The article argues that Ahmad Amin's thought remains relevant to contemporary Islamic education because it offers a humanistic and contextual framework for character formation amid modernization, digital change, globalization, and moral uncertainty.

Keywords

Ahmad Amin; Character Education; Islamic Education; Islamic Morality; Moral Education



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INTRODUCTION

Moral education occupies a foundational position in Islamic education because education is expected to form human beings who are intellectually capable, spiritually aware, socially responsible, and morally mature. The issue becomes increasingly important in contemporary life, where modernization, digital technology, globalization, and rapid social change can influence patterns of interaction and the moral development of younger generations. The source paper identifies declining social ethics, weakened responsibility, and individualistic tendencies as among the challenges that make moral formation an urgent educational concern. In this context, the thought of Ahmad Amin is significant because it places moral formation within a continuous process of habituation, exemplary conduct, and interaction with the social environment.

Ahmad Amin's perspective is particularly relevant to Islamic educational philosophy because it does not reduce morality to the acquisition of ethical knowledge. Moral qualities must become dispositions that are embodied in everyday conduct. The source paper describes morality as a quality rooted in the human soul and formed through repeated practice, moral training, exemplary behavior, and environmental influence. This position shifts the focus of education from knowing what is good to becoming accustomed to doing good. It also indicates that the formation of character is inseparable from the educational environment in which learners live and interact.

Within the broader philosophy of Islamic education, this orientation corresponds with a holistic understanding of human development. Islamic education is concerned not only with cognition but also with spiritual, moral, emotional, and social dimensions. Maragustam (2018) emphasizes the development of human potential and the ordering of behavior according to Islamic values, while Nasution (1983) and Qadir (1989) represent broader discussions of Islamic philosophical thought. Therefore, Ahmad Amin's moral philosophy can be read as an important bridge between ethical reflection and educational practice: moral concepts become educationally meaningful when they are internalized through experience, habit, and social example.

Previous discussions in the source paper also emphasize the relationship between moral education and character education in the contemporary period. Islamic character education is expected to respond to changing social conditions without abandoning its spiritual and ethical foundation. Studies cited in the paper discuss the role of Islamic educational philosophy in character formation and the importance of moral education in the digital era (Cahyani & Abu Bakar, n.d.; Fuadhah, 2024; Kulsum & Muhid, 2022; Ramadhani et al., 2024). The present article therefore focuses on three interconnected questions: how Ahmad Amin's intellectual orientation shaped his view of morality, how his concept of moral formation can be understood as an educational philosophy, and why his ideas remain relevant to contemporary Islamic education.

Based on these concerns, the article aims to reconstruct Ahmad Amin's thought as an educational framework rather than merely a description of moral virtues. The central argument is that his philosophy places moral education on three mutually reinforcing foundations: habituation of good conduct, exemplary influence within the educational environment, and the integration of rational awareness with spiritual values. These foundations provide a useful conceptual basis for developing Islamic

education that is humanistic, contextual, and oriented toward the formation of morally responsible persons.

METHODS

This article employs library research using a descriptive-analytical approach. The study treats published books and scholarly writings contained in the source paper as the principal documentary materials. The primary conceptual reference is Ahmad Amin's ethical thought, especially Etika (Ilmu Akhlak) (Amin, 1975), complemented by Fajar Islam (Amin, 1993). Supporting materials include works on Islamic educational philosophy, Islamic philosophical thought, and character education, including Maragustam (2018), Nasution (1983), Qadir (1989), Sarwar (1990), Fuadhah (2024), Huda and Siregar (2025), Kulsum and Muhid (2022), and Ramadhani et al. (2024).

Data collection was conducted through document study. Relevant statements, concepts, arguments, and educational implications were identified from the selected literature and organized around four analytical dimensions: the meaning of morality, the process of moral formation, the role of reason and spirituality, and the relationship between moral education and the social environment. The analysis then compared these dimensions with the stated aims and challenges of contemporary Islamic education as presented in the source paper. Data analysis followed a descriptive-analytical sequence: identification of key concepts, thematic categorization, interpretation of the relationships among concepts, and synthesis of their educational implications. The study does not claim empirical effectiveness because it is conceptual and bibliographic in nature. Its contribution is instead a systematic reconstruction of Ahmad Amin's thought into an educational framework that can be discussed in contemporary Islamic education.

Research Framework

Ahmad Amin's Ethical Thought	→	Concept of Morality	→	Habituation, Example & Training	→	Reason + Spirituality	→	Contemporary Islamic Education
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Figure 1. Conceptual framework for analyzing Ahmad Amin's philosophy of moral education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Ahmad Amin's Intellectual Orientation And The Moral Purpose Of Education

Ahmad Amin is presented in the source paper as a modern Muslim intellectual whose concerns extended to education, culture, and the moral formation of Muslim society. His thought developed in a social and intellectual context shaped by modernization in Egypt. The source paper interprets this context as important for understanding his concern that Islamic education should not be reduced to

memorization or formal religious instruction. Education, in his view as reconstructed in the paper, needs to cultivate a morally oriented personality through habituation, exemplary conduct, and ethical awareness in social life. This orientation leads to a broader conception of educational success. Academic achievement and the accumulation of knowledge are insufficient if learners cannot translate moral values into conduct. Moral education therefore becomes part of the central purpose of education rather than an additional subject placed beside intellectual learning. This is consistent with the holistic orientation of Islamic educational philosophy, in which human development involves intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions (Maragustam, 2018).

Ahmad Amin's ethical orientation also reflects an important distinction between morality as information and morality as disposition. Knowing that honesty, justice, responsibility, and compassion are good does not automatically produce honest, just, responsible, or compassionate behavior. A moral disposition must be strengthened until appropriate conduct becomes habitual. The educational implication is substantial: the classroom, family, school culture, peer relationships, and community environment become part of moral education because they repeatedly expose learners to patterns of conduct. From this perspective, moral education has a transformative rather than merely transmissive character. Education transforms the learner's way of responding to situations by creating repeated opportunities to practice ethical behavior. The teacher therefore becomes more than a transmitter of moral rules; the teacher is a moral example. Likewise, institutional culture becomes an educational instrument because learners observe and experience how values are enacted in everyday relationships.

Ahmad Amin's Concept Of Morality As A Habitual Disposition

The central concept reconstructed from Ahmad Amin's thought is that morality is a disposition rooted in the human soul and manifested spontaneously in conduct. In this understanding, *akhlak* is not simply a set of external rules. A person is morally formed when good values become sufficiently internalized that they guide action naturally and consistently. This explains why moral education cannot be completed through lectures, advice, or examinations alone.

The process of formation is gradual. Habituation, repeated exercise, and moral training give learners opportunities to transform values into stable patterns of behavior. The source paper repeatedly emphasizes that moral formation is continuous and that the environment of family, school, and society has a significant influence on the process. This interpretation places moral education within the logic

of practice: learners need to perform, reflect, repeat, and receive examples of the values they are expected to embody.

Such a view is closely connected with Islamic conceptions of character formation. The Qur'anic emphasis on purification of the self, exemplary conduct, justice, and social responsibility provides a religious framework within which moral habituation can be understood. The source paper uses Qur'anic passages such as Q.S. Asy-Syams [91]: 9–10 and Q.S. Al-Ahzab [33]: 21 to reinforce the importance of self-purification and exemplary conduct. In educational terms, this means that the goal is not only behavioral conformity but the development of an inner moral orientation.

Ahmad Amin's concept also implies that learners possess moral possibilities that require direction. Education is therefore a process of guiding human potential toward ethically responsible conduct. The educational environment should provide consistent expectations, opportunities for responsible action, constructive supervision, and models of good behavior. Character emerges when these experiences are repeated and gradually internalized. The following table summarizes the major elements of Ahmad Amin's moral philosophy as reconstructed from the source material and translates them into educational implications.

Concept	Core Meaning	Educational Implication
Moral disposition	Morality is rooted in the self and appears in conduct.	Assess character through consistent behavior, not knowledge alone.
Habituation	Good conduct is strengthened through repeated practice.	Build routines that repeatedly exercise honesty, discipline, responsibility, and care.
Exemplary conduct	Learners are influenced by the behavior of significant adults.	Teachers and school leaders must model the values they teach.
Moral training	Ethical qualities require deliberate exercise and guidance.	Provide practical moral tasks, reflection, supervision, and feedback.
Social environment	Character develops through everyday interaction.	Integrate family, school, peers, and community into character formation.
Reason and spirituality	Moral awareness involves rational understanding and spiritual orientation.	Connect ethical reasoning with Islamic values and spiritual consciousness.

Table 1. Key elements of Ahmad Amin's moral philosophy and their educational implications.

Integration Of Reason, Spirituality, And Social Responsibility

One of the important implications of Ahmad Amin's thought is that moral education should integrate rationality and spirituality. The source paper explains that moral education is not intended merely to produce formal compliance with religious rules. It should also cultivate ethical awareness arising from understanding, reflection, and spiritual appreciation of Islamic values. This makes moral education intellectually meaningful and prevents it from becoming a purely mechanical

exercise.

The integration of reason and spirituality is particularly important in contemporary education. Learners encounter complex moral questions through digital media, social networks, technological innovation, cultural diversity, and rapid information flows. A purely prohibitive approach may not provide sufficient capacity for learners to evaluate unfamiliar situations. Ahmad Amin's orientation suggests that learners should develop an internal moral compass: they should understand why a value is important, recognize its relationship with Islamic teachings, and practice it until it becomes part of their character. Social responsibility is another dimension of this integration. Moral excellence is not confined to private piety; it is demonstrated through relationships with other people and through responsible participation in society. The source paper connects moral education with justice, tolerance, responsibility, and concern for social harmony. In this sense, Islamic moral education should prepare learners to become ethical participants in society rather than merely compliant individuals.

Maragustam's (2018) account of Islamic educational philosophy strengthens this interpretation by emphasizing the development of human potential and behavior based on Islamic values. Similarly, discussions of character education in Islamic education underline the importance of integrating moral values into the broader educational process rather than treating them as isolated content (Fuadhah, 2024; Ramadhani et al., 2024).

RELEVANCE TO CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC EDUCATION

The relevance of Ahmad Amin's thought becomes clearer when contemporary Islamic education is viewed against the challenges of modernization, globalization, and digital transformation. The source paper identifies weakening social ethics, individualistic tendencies, and moral uncertainty as challenges that require stronger character formation. Ahmad Amin's emphasis on habituation is useful because it shifts character education from occasional programs toward everyday educational culture. First, habituation can strengthen the continuity of character formation. Schools can translate moral values into routines of learning, interaction, responsibility, and service. Honesty, discipline, respect, responsibility, and care should be practiced in concrete situations rather than taught only as definitions. This approach is consistent with the source paper's argument that moral values must be reflected in daily life.

Second, exemplary conduct is crucial. The teacher's behavior, the fairness of school rules, the way conflicts are handled, and the respect shown to learners all

become implicit lessons. If an institution teaches honesty but tolerates dishonesty, or teaches justice but applies rules inconsistently, the formal curriculum is contradicted by the lived curriculum. Ahmad Amin's framework therefore encourages Islamic educational institutions to examine their institutional culture as part of moral education. Third, the family and community should be involved. Because moral character develops through social experience, schools cannot carry the entire responsibility. Collaboration among families, schools, and communities creates consistency between the values taught and the values experienced. This is particularly important in the digital era, where learners move between multiple environments and encounter moral messages outside school.

Fourth, moral education should include ethical reasoning. Learners need opportunities to discuss real moral situations, evaluate consequences, distinguish right from wrong, and connect decisions with Islamic principles. Such learning complements habituation: practice forms dispositions, while reflection strengthens understanding. The combination of the two can produce character that is both stable and thoughtful. Fifth, Islamic moral education should remain contextual. Ahmad Amin's thought can be applied to contemporary problems without simply reproducing historical educational forms. The enduring principles are habituation, exemplary conduct, moral training, social responsibility, and the integration of reason and spirituality. Their practical expression can adapt to current issues such as digital citizenship, online communication, academic integrity, environmental responsibility, and respectful participation in a plural society. These implications correspond with recent discussions of Islamic character education in the source paper, including the need to respond to digital transformation while maintaining Islamic moral identity (Kulsum & Muhid, 2022; Huda & Siregar, 2025). The contribution of Ahmad Amin's perspective is therefore not a ready-made curriculum but a philosophical orientation for designing and evaluating moral education.

A Conceptual Model For Moral Education Based On Ahmad Amin

On the basis of the analysis, Ahmad Amin's thought can be reconstructed into a five-stage conceptual model. The first stage is value orientation, in which Islamic moral principles provide the normative direction of education. The second stage is moral understanding, in which learners use reason to understand the meaning and significance of values. The third stage is habituation and practice, in which learners repeatedly perform ethical actions. The fourth stage is exemplary and environmental reinforcement, in which teachers, families, peers, and institutions consistently model and support the desired conduct. The fifth stage is internalization, in which repeated

practice and reflection develop a stable moral disposition.

This model illustrates why moral education should not be separated from the wider educational ecosystem. If the value orientation is clear but practice is absent, moral knowledge may remain theoretical. If practice exists but exemplary conduct is inconsistent, learners receive contradictory messages. If practice and example exist without reflection, moral behavior may become mechanical. The integration of values, reason, practice, example, environment, and reflection is therefore essential. At the institutional level, this model suggests that Islamic educational institutions should evaluate not only curriculum documents but also the lived culture of the institution. Indicators may include the consistency of teacher modeling, opportunities for responsible student participation, routines that reinforce ethical behavior, family engagement, and mechanisms for reflective moral learning. In this way, Ahmad Amin's ethical philosophy can contribute to a more coherent framework for character-oriented Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Ahmad Amin's thought provides a coherent philosophical foundation for understanding moral education as a process of forming stable moral dispositions rather than merely transmitting ethical information. Morality is understood as a quality rooted in the self and manifested through conduct; consequently, it must be cultivated through habituation, moral training, exemplary behavior, and a supportive social environment. The analysis also shows that Ahmad Amin's perspective connects moral formation with the balanced development of rational awareness, spiritual consciousness, and social responsibility. This makes his thought relevant to Islamic education because it avoids a narrow distinction between intellectual learning and moral formation. Education is expected to produce persons who can understand values, practice them consistently, and express them responsibly in social life.

In contemporary Islamic education, the relevance of Ahmad Amin's thought lies especially in its emphasis on educational culture. Character cannot be produced by a single lesson or program. It requires continuity among curriculum, teacher example, institutional rules, family participation, community interaction, and learners' daily experiences. Future research should move beyond conceptual analysis by empirically examining how Ahmad Amin's principles can be operationalized in Islamic schools, madrasahs, pesantren, and higher education, including in digital learning environments.

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