

DEVELOPMENT OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF
INTEGRATED CHARACTER EDUCATION FOR
MUSLIM STUDENTS IN BANGLADESH

BY

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim nation, is experiencing a growing concern over moral degradation as societal actions increasingly deviate from established religious, cultural, and social norms. Though the government has put forth efforts to impart moral teaching through the existing national curriculum, these challenges remain prevalent, which indicates a gap in effective character education practices. This study aims to conceptualise an integrated character education model for Muslim students in Bangladesh based on Islamic philosophical foundations. The study employed philosophical analysis, historical analysis and library research methods. Drawing on al-Ghazali's and Thomas Lickona's principles of moral and character education, the study offers an integrated, culturally relevant conceptual model grounded in Islamic principles, which integrates character development across curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular domains simultaneously. The model also emphasises a mechanism to assess students' character development through their actions. Furthermore, the study outlines and emphasises the collaborative roles of teachers, educational administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers in ensuring the model's effective implementation across both secular-based and Islamic-based national education systems in Bangladesh. The study contributes a context-sensitive framework for strengthening moral and ethical development among Muslim students and provides a conceptual basis for future character education practices aimed at fostering holistic character formation within the Bangladeshi educational context.

ملخص البحث

تشهد دولة بنغلاديش، بوصفها دولة ذات أغلبية مسلمة، قلقاً متزايداً إزاء تراجع القيم الأخلاقية؛ نظراً لانحراف السلوكيات المجتمعية المتزايد عن المعايير الدينية والثقافية والاجتماعية الراسخة. ورغم الجهود التي تبذلها الحكومة لتعزيز التربية الأخلاقية من خلال المناهج الدراسية الوطنية القائمة، إلا أن هذه التحديات لا تزال قائمة، مما يشير إلى وجود فجوة في ممارسات التربية الأخلاقية الفعالة. وتسعى هذه الدراسة إلى وضع تصور لنموذج متكامل في التربية الأخلاقية للطلاب المسلمين في بنغلاديش، استناداً إلى الأسس الفلسفية الإسلامية. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة على مناهج التحليل الفلسفي، والتحليل التاريخي، والبحث المكتبي. واستلهاهاً من مبادئ الإمام الغزالي وتوماس ليكونا في التربية الأخلاقية والشخصية، تقدم الدراسة نموذجاً مفاهيمياً متكاملاً وملائماً للسياق الثقافي، ومتجذراً في المبادئ الإسلامية؛ حيث يدمج هذا النموذج بناء الشخصية الخلقية عبر المناهج الدراسية، والمناهج المصاحبة والأنشطة اللاصفية الإضافية في آنٍ واحد. كما يركز النموذج على آلية لتقييم التطور الأخلاقي لدى الطلاب من خلال ممارساتهم وسلوكياتهم الفعلية. وعلاوة على ذلك، تحدد الدراسة وتؤكد على الأدوار التكاملية للمعلمين، والإداريين التربويين، والقادة الدينيين، وصناع السياسات؛ لضمان التطبيق الفعال لهذا النموذج في كل من نظم التعليم الوطني العام (العلماني)، والتعليم الإسلامي في بنغلاديش. وتسهم هذه الدراسة في تقديم إطار عمل يراعي خصوصية السياق المحلي لتعزيز السلوك الأخلاقي والقيمي لدى الطلاب المسلمين، كما توفر أساساً مفاهيمياً للممارسات المستقبلية في مجال التربية الأخلاقية، بهدف بناء الشخصية وتنشئتها تنشئة شاملة ومتكاملة داخل المنظومة التعليمية في بنغلاديش.

APPROVAL PAGE

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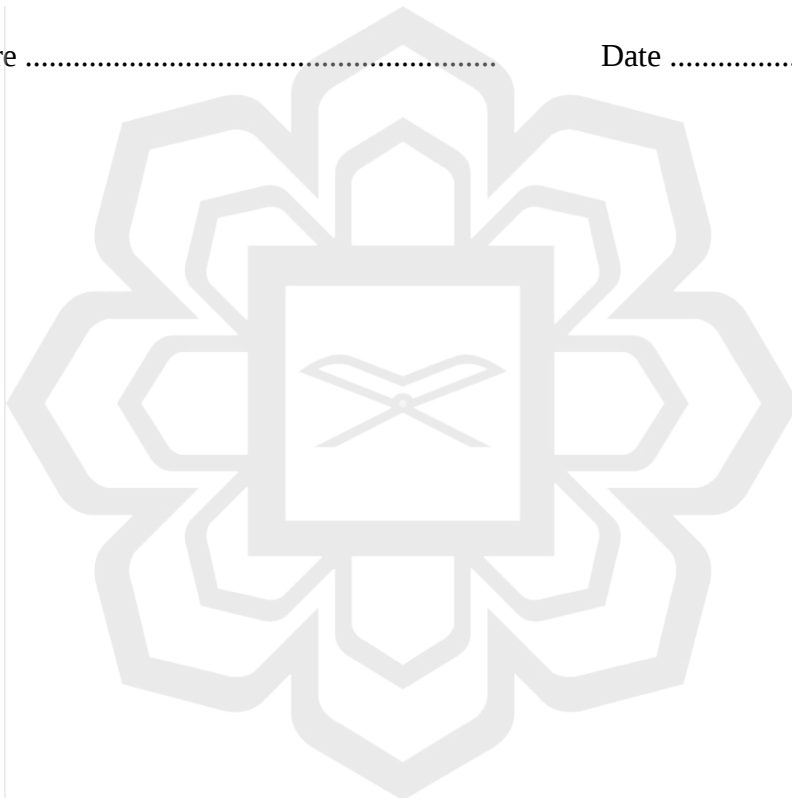
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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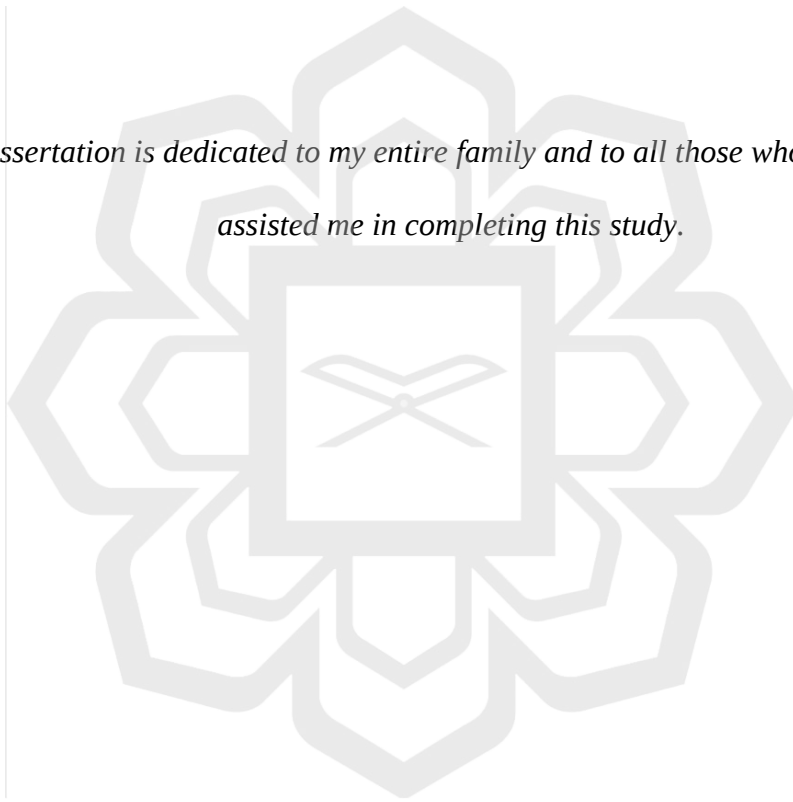
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*This dissertation is dedicated to my entire family and to all those who, beyond them,
assisted me in completing this study.*



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration.....	v
Copyright Page.....	vi
Dedication	vi
Acknowledgements.....	viii
List of Tables	xii
List of Figures	xiii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	9
1.2.1 Broader Moral Challenges in Bangladesh	9
1.2.2 Role of Education in Addressing the Moral Challenges.....	11
1.2.3 Gaps in the Existing Education Systems.....	12
1.2.4 Research Gap and Call for an Integrated Approach.....	15
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	16
1.4 Research Questions.....	17
1.5 Guiding Assumptions of the Study.....	17
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	18
1.7 Methodology of the Study	20
1.8 Organisation of the Remaining Chapters of the Thesis	26
1.9 Positionality	28
1.10 Theoretical Framework.....	30
1.11 Conceptual Framework.....	40
1.12 Definitions of Terms.....	41
1.13 Chapter Summary	44

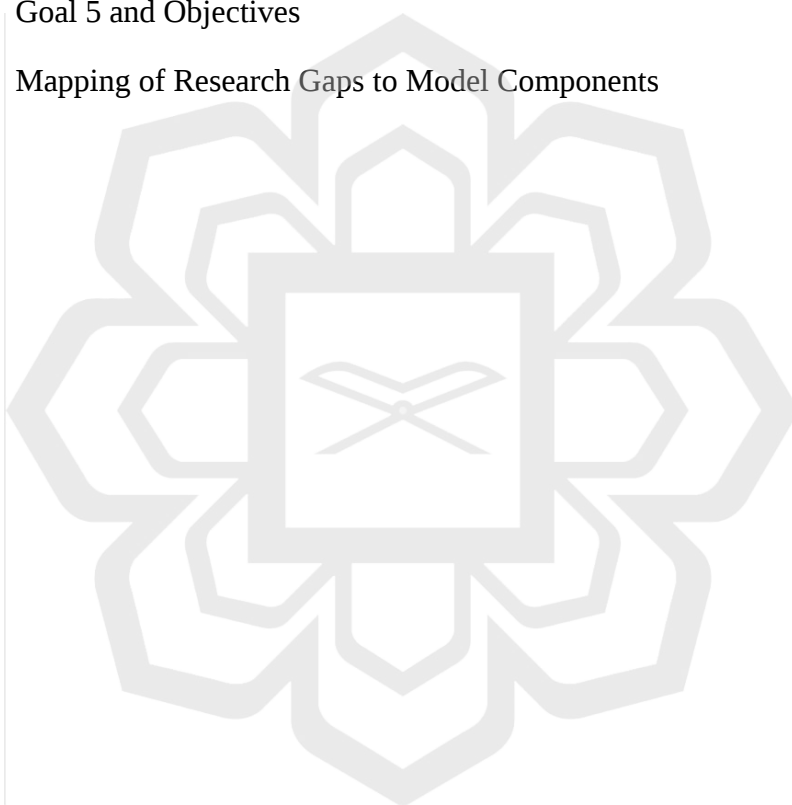
CHAPTER TWO: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION	45
2.1 Introduction.....	45
2.2 Islamic Metaphysical Dimensions and the Foundation of Education	46
2.2.1 Ontological Dimension: The Nature and Existence of Mankind	46
2.2.2 Teleological Dimension: Purpose and Role of Man	48
2.2.3 Cosmological Dimension: The Human Station Within the Universe .	49
2.2.3.1 Human as Khalifah (Vicegerency)	50
2.2.3.2 Amanah (Trustworthiness) in Human-Universe Relationship.....	50
2.2.3.3 Sustainability and Cosmological Balance	51
2.2.4 Islamic Concept of Good Character	53
2.2.5 Islamic Metaphysical Foundations of Education	54
2.3 Islamic Epistemology: Theory of Knowledge (<i>‘Ilm</i>).....	56
2.3.1 Concept and Nature of Knowledge (<i>‘Ilm</i>) in Islam.....	56
2.3.2 Sources of Knowledge in Islamic Epistemology	57

2.3.3 Classification of Knowledge in Islamic Thought.....	59
2.3.4 Curriculum Foundations in Islamic Education	60
2.3.5 Islamic Pedagogical Principles and Approaches.....	62
2.4 Islamic Axiology: Ethics, Values, and Moral Development in Education....	64
2.5 Reason and Intellect (‘ <i>Aql</i>) in Islamic Education	66
2.6 The Role of Character and Its Development in Islam	67
2.7 Knowledge (‘ <i>Ilm</i>) and Its Role in Islamic Educational Philosophy	68
2.7.1 Conceptual Foundations of Islamic Education	72
2.8 Islamic Worldview: A Foundation for Education and Human Purpose	73
2.8.1 Islamic Worldview in Relation to Contemporary Educational Perspectives	75
2.8.2 Relevance of Islamic Worldview to Education in Bangladesh.....	76
2.9 Islamic and Contemporary Educational Philosophies	76
2.10 Relevance of Islamic Philosophy of Education in Bangladesh	78
2.11 Philosophical Foundations of Islamic Character Education	79
2.12 Character Education in Islam: Integration of Philosophical Concepts	82
2.13 Relevance of Foundations for Character Education in Bangladesh	83
2.14 Chapter Summary	85
CHAPTER THREE: CHARACTER EDUCATION IN NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH	87
3.1 Introduction.....	87
3.2 Education System in Bangladesh	87
3.2.1 Educational Reforms in Independent Bangladesh	88
3.2.2 Present Education in Bangladesh	91
3.2.2.1 The 2010 Educational Policy and the New Curriculum for All	92
3.2.2.2 Madrasah Education System.....	93
3.2.2.3 General Education (secular-based national education).....	98
3.2.2.4 Core Subjects and Competencies: Islamic Studies for Madrasah	99
3.2.2.5 Examination.....	100
3.2.2.6 Assessment	101
3.2.2.7 Teaching-Learning Strategies	102
3.3 Character Education in Bangladeshi Education	104
3.3.1 National Education Policy and Character Education	104
3.3.2 Character Education in Curriculum Framework.....	105
3.3.3 Character Education in Textbooks	110
3.4 Challenges in Integrating Islamic Character Education	112
3.5 Chapter Summary	117
CHAPTER FOUR: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF INTEGRATED CHARACTER EDUCATION FOR MUSLIM STUDENTS IN BANGLADESH	119
4.1 Introduction.....	119
4.2 Towards a Conceptual Model of Integrated Character Education for Muslim Students in Bangladesh	120
4.2.1 Organisation of the Model	121
4.2.1.1 Philosophy	123

4.2.1.2 Vision and Mission	125
4.2.1.3 Goals and Objectives	126
4.2.1.4 Curriculum Framework of the Model.....	138
4.2.1.5 Censoring Educational Resources for Integration and Islamisation	158
4.2.1.6 Holistic Islamic Character Educational Settings	158
4.3 Role of Stakeholders in Implementing the Developed Conceptual Model in Bangladesh	161
4.3.1 Teachers	167
4.3.2 Educational Administrators.....	169
4.3.3 Religious Leaders.....	172
4.3.4 Policymakers	173
4.4 Chapter Summary	179
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	181
5.1 Introduction.....	181
5.2 Summary of the Study	181
5.3 Implications of the Study: Theory and Practice	183
5.4 Contributions of the Study.....	187
5.4.1 A Novel Conceptual Model for Integrated Islamic Character Education	187
5.4.2 Advancement of the Field of Character Education	188
5.4.3 Boarding the Scope of Islamisation of Knowledge	188
5.4.4 Practical Guidelines for Stakeholders and Implementation	189
5.4.5 Integration of Character Education and Academic Knowledge.....	189
5.4.6 A Global Solution to the Moral Crisis	189
5.4.7 Empowerment of Stakeholders in the Education System	190
5.4.8 Empowerment of Teachers	190
5.4.9 Groundwork for Integrated Islamic Character Education	191
5.5 Recommendations of the Study	191
5.5.1 Recommendations for Policymakers.....	191
5.5.2 Recommendations for Future Research	194
5.6 Conclusion	196
REFERENCES.....	198

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
4.1	Goal 1 and Objectives	128
4.2	Goal 2 and Objectives	130
4.3	Goal 3 and Objectives	132
4.4	Goal 4 and Objectives	135
4.5	Goal 5 and Objectives	137
4.6	Mapping of Research Gaps to Model Components	159



LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure No.</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1.1 Juvenile Crimes in Bangladesh, May 2015 (Source: Sharmin, 2021)	2
1.2 Teen Gangs in Bangladesh (Source: Prothom Alo EN, Amin, 2024; Islam, 2024)	3
1.3 <i>Akhlaq</i> Components for Character Education for Classes One and Two	7
1.4 Concept of Al-Ghazali's Character Education	35
1.5 Components of Good Character by Thomas Lickona (1991)	37
1.6 Conceptual Framework of the Study	40
2.1 The Comprehensive Conception of Man in Islam (Source: Vazhathodi, 2011)	52
2.2 Foundations and Curriculum Components (Source: Maksoud & Suhailah, 2016), as cited in Aziz, 2018)	62
2.3 The Islamic Education's Pedagogical Focus (Source: Vazhathodi, 2011)	64
2.4 The Islamic Holistic Integrated Value-structure (Source: Vazhathodi, 2011)	65
2.5 The Conceptual Basis of Islamic Character Education (adapted from Vazhathodi, 2011)	83
3.1 Subjects of Alia Madrasah Education in Bangladesh (Source: National Curriculum Framework 2021)	95
3.2 Core Competencies and Subjects in Bangladeshi Education (Source: "National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021)	100
3.3 Assessment Mechanism (Source: "National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021)	101
3.4 Multidimensional Experiential Teaching-learning Strategies (Source: "National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021)	103

3.5	Desired values of the Learner (Source: “National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021)	106
3.6	Religion Studies (Source: “National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021)	108
4.1	Theoretical Guidance of Integrated Character Education for Muslim Students in Bangladesh (developed based on al-Ghazali (1993a) and Lickona (1991))	121
4.2	Foundations and Curriculum Components of Islamic Character Education (Source: Adapted from Maksoud & Suhailah, 2016, as cited in Aziz, 2018)	139
4.3	The Islamic Holistic Integrated Value-structure for Islamic Character Education, adopted from Vazhathodi (2011)	140
4.4	Conceptual Synthesis of Character Education Principles for Curriculum Design Derived from al-Ghazali and Lickona (developed from al-Ghazali, 1993a, and Lickona, 1991)	142
4.5	The Process of Curriculum Decision-making for Islamic Character Education Adapted from Vazhathodi (2011)	144
4.6	The Islamic Education’s Pedagogical Focus Adopted from Vazhathodi (2011)	146
4.7	Assessment of Justice using Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (Source: Developed using Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy by Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)	154
4.8	Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) Ecology of Human Development (adopted from Buckley and Budzyna, 2023)	162
4.9	Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) Different Layers of Environmental Influence on Human Development (Adopted from Guy-Evans, 2024)	164
4.10	Implementation Strategies for Integrated Character Education for Muslim Students in Bangladesh (adapted from Berkowitz and Bier, 2005)	166
4.11	Alignment of the Conceptual Framework with the Integrated Character Education Model for Muslim Students in Bangladesh (developed by the researcher)	176
4.12	Conceptual Model of Integrated Character Education for Muslim Students in Bangladesh (developed by the researcher)	177

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Education plays an important role in developing human nature physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. Formal education helps to create skilled human capital and employment opportunities for them. It is not only the formal process of acquiring knowledge but also the process of producing ideological citizens and good individuals. On the other hand, non-formal education also plays a significant role, especially in fostering and transmitting social and moral values, including religious norms and traditions, to its new members and future generations. Therefore, the aim of education is not only employment but also to foster excellence in every sphere of life (Rahman, 2023). In this context, character education provides the basis for both an individual's and society's full growth.

Since gaining its independence from Pakistan in 1971, Bangladesh has struggled with moral decay (Talukdar & Hasan, 2018; Ara & Mahjabeen, 2010; Rahman et al., 2018; Haque & Karim, 2018; Saha et al., 2019; Faisal & Akther, 2020; Rahman, 2022), and the current situation is out of control as corruption has increased almost in every sector and discipline has collapsed all over the country. Moreover, at present, there are around 273 “teen gangs” in Bangladesh, among them 127 are active in the capital city, Dhaka, with a total number of 1,382 members, and the second highest is in Chattogram, with 57 gangs with a total of 316 members (Amin, 2024; Firoz, 2024; Islam, 2024). The gang members are aged 14 to 18+ (Islam, 2024; Firoz, 2024). Gang culture is widespread in other cities and local areas as well, with most of them backed by local political leaders or elders (Boro Bhai) and brother syndicates (Hossen, 2023; Amin, 2024; Islam, 2024; Hasan, 2024). Consequently, they are involved in diverse criminal enterprises, including illicit drug distribution, property theft, sexual assault, extortion, illegal land dispossession, and homicide, reflecting patterns typical of adult criminality (Amin, 2024; Hossain et al., 2024; Hossen, 2023;

Islam, 2024). Figure 1.1 presents Sharmin's (2021) outline of juvenile crimes in Bangladesh in May 2015.

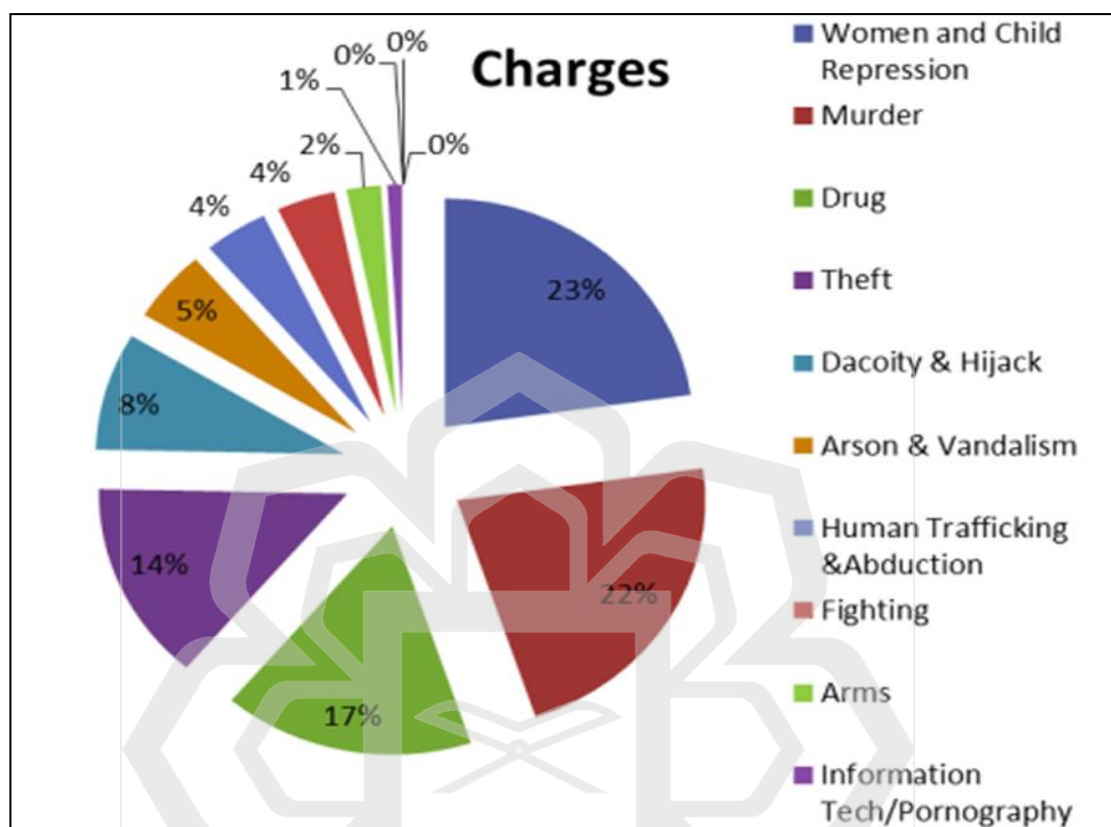


Figure 1.1 Juvenile Crimes in Bangladesh, May 2015 (Source: Sharmin, 2021)

Furthermore, sources from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police informed that the teen gangs were involved in 25 killings in 2023 in Dhaka (Amin, 2024; Islam, 2024). The recent rise in teen gang violence was highlighted by the killing of a 14-year-old schoolboy, Adnan Kabir, in 2017, who was killed in an inter-gang conflict in Dhaka. Additionally, the killing of 17-year-old Mohsin Ali in 2019 drew attention to the spreading issue of gang violence in Bangladesh (Dewan, 2021). Gang violence is even evident in broad daylight without any hesitation or fear in Bangladesh, which indicates the severity of the issue. Although they are minors in the eyes of the law, their criminal activities in some cases exceed those of adults. Figure 1.2 presents teen gangs and their crimes in Bangladesh.



Figure 1.2 Teen Gangs in Bangladesh (Source: Prothom Alo EN, Amin, 2024; Islam, 2024)

Hossen (2023) found that around 75% of children aged 15-18 are involved in numerous sorts of criminal activities such as drug smuggling, rape, fighting, stealing, eve teasing, carrying and displaying illegal arms, and killing in the district of Chottogram and Dhaka in Bangladesh. In addition, cheating, scamming, and fraud have added a new dimension to crime, and physical as well as virtual bullying, especially on social media, has intensified. Cybercrime Awareness Foundation (CAF) stated that in 2022, cyberbullying was reported for 52.21% of all cybercrimes, including pornography, abusive social media posts, and vulgar messaging using online platforms in Bangladesh (Begum, 2024). Over and above, fraud, financial deception, fake job offers, and appointments, unethical hacking, and demanding ransom are increasing day by day in Bangladesh. Moreover, a report claimed that the top cybercrimes in Bangladesh are social media and other online account hacking, as it was 21.65% from 2023 to 2024 (“Social Media Hacking Tops Cybercrimes in Bangladesh: Study,” 2024). In Bangladesh, in the last few years, rape cases, including sexual harassment and teasing, have increased rapidly. In other words, the situation is worsening swiftly, and it is awful and gloomy (Juhi, 2019).

The murder of a university student in the residence hall by a group of seniors and juniors is one of the most horrific recent incidents in Bangladesh. Abrar Fahad, a second-year Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) student at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), was tortured and killed by some of the impolitic student activists of Bangladesh Awami League’s student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), inside the university’s student residential Sher-e-

Bangla Hall. He was 21 years old (*Abrar Fahad Killing: Bangladesh Student Was Beaten for Four Hours*, 2019). Iftekhhar (2021) reported that several teachers have been insulted during online classes, and students treat such incidents as amusement without hesitation, indicating a failure to instill the right conduct in them.

According to Dewan (2021), a statistic of the government revealed that the number of 5-17-year-old children is nearly 40 million in Bangladesh, and among them, 70% engage in crimes. However, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs, most street children are engaged in smuggling drugs 44%, robbing 12%, human trafficking 11%, and other crimes 21% (Dewan, 2021). Furthermore, the most recent Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) report demonstrates that political violence, domestic worker abuse, and violence against women are widespread problems in Bangladesh. According to their report, 574 children were killed in total between January and December 2024. There are 105 children below the age of six and 107 victims between the ages of 7 and 12. Their report also revealed a total of 401 rape incidents as violence against women between January and December 2024, and among them, in 24 incidents, the victim was below the age of six. 100 people lost their lives as a result of rising political violence between January and December 2024, which also saw 649 violent events that were reported and 6190 injuries (Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), 2024). Additionally, Bangladesh is one of the most corrupt countries, according to Transparency International's 2024 Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which ranked it 151 out of 180 and gave it a score of 23 out of 100 (Transparency International, 2025).

The moral decadence of contemporary Bangladesh can be linked to character (*akhlaq*) education, and character building is taught in both secular and Islamic-based national education in Bangladesh, yet there is a lack of formal and effective character education, which they term moral education (Shahiduzzaman, 2016; Akhter, 2022). Although character education is significant for the spiritual, moral, and ethical development of students, in a predominantly Muslim majority country (*Census 2022: Number of Muslims Increased in the Country*, 2022), character education is taught in Bangladeshi secular-based national schools through the *akhlaq* component sharing chapter, in *Islamic studies* subject both primary and secondary levels for Muslim students from III-X (Puja, 2020; Ahmad et al., 2023/2025, pp. 48–61; Tamizuddin, Mea, Ali, Siddique, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 40–54; Tamizuddin, Mea, Ali, Jabbar, et al.,

2012/2024, pp. 64–85; Akhtaruzzaman, Tamizuddin, Malek, Rashid, Yusuf, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 84–103; Akhtaruzzaman, Tamizuddin, Malek, Rashid, Yousuf, Shaikh, Sharif, Rahman, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 82–103; Akhtaruzzaman, Tamizuddin, Malek, Rashid, Yousuf, Shaikh, Sharif, Ibrahim, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 91–118; Akhtaruzzaman, Malek, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 138–191). Moreover, Islamic-based national education, known as Alia Madrasah, is officially recognised and equivalent to secular-based national education, and offers subjects in both religious and worldly education, such as science, technology, and mathematics. Alia Madrasah also taught character education through *akhlaq* components sharing chapter in *Al Aqaid Wal Fiqh* subject both Ibtedaie and Dakhil (primary and secondary) levels (Alim, Al-Maruf, et al., 2013/2025a, pp. 18–22; Alim, Al-Maruf, et al., 2013/2025b, pp. 27–30; Alim, Al-Maruf, et al., 2013/2025c, pp. 26–30; Alim, Alam, et al., 2013/2025a, pp. 48–58; Alim, Alam, et al., 2013/2025b, pp. 66–76; Hossain et al., 2013/2025, pp. 108–126; Khan et al., 2013/2025a, pp. 147–168; Khan et al., 2013/2025b, pp. 176–208; Khan et al., 2013/2025c, pp. 138–177). On the other hand, Qawmi Madrasah education in Bangladesh is completely independent, inclined to Islamic theology, and does not implement the national curriculum in its teaching and learning. Hence, character education is covered through Islamic institutions, following their practices regarding the development of students' moral character to make them good Muslims (Bhuiyan, 2010; Raqib et al., 2015; Shaon, 2018). While *akhlaq* components in both secular-based and Islamic-based national education are discussed from an Islamic perspective, focusing on imparting the knowledge concerning Islamic values, morality, ethics, and character, such as honesty, kindness, justice, and responsibility (*National Education Policy 2010*, 2010; “National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021). However, the scope and depth of character education and character-building are often limited to teaching a single chapter or several themes, without focusing on practical application in real life. These limitations demonstrate that character development is given a narrow, academic approach in Bangladeshi education; thus, students are left with a formal education that fails to instil the character qualities necessary for future moral uprightness. While informal settings such as family, society, and *Maktab* also contribute to the development of good character, they are often brief and unstructured.

For non-Muslim students, secular-based national education incorporates some moral and religious values, such as respect for others and justice related to their respective religious classes. Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian students acquire their religious, moral, and ethical values through subjects such as *Hindu Religion Studies* (Biswas et al., 2023/2024; Adhikary et al., 2012/2024), *Buddhist Religion Studies* (Barua et al., 2023/2024; Barua et al., 2012/2024), and *Christian Religion Studies* (Rozario et al., 2023/2024; Pereira et al., 2012/2024) both at primary and secondary levels. However, they are fragmented and not focused on students' character development, since character education components are only a small part of the *Religion Studies* subject. Non-Muslim students face a similar issue; while informal settings such as family, society, and religious institutions also contribute to developing good character, they are often short and unstructured.

Character education components are organised in textbooks, both primary and secondary, in both secular-based and Islamic-based national education, focusing on imparting knowledge related to values and ethics such as integrity, justice, compassion, respect, and so on (*National Education Policy 2010*, 2010; “National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021). From the beginning, it introduces *akhlaq* (morality), with its meaning covering both good and bad character concepts simply and straightforwardly, and gradually it goes into more detail, either in theme-based or overall discussions, at the next level of study with new textbooks. Furthermore, the approach to character education also varies between secular and Islamic-based national education systems. In secular-based schools, generally, students have different classes related to Religion Studies. Muslims need to join Islamic studies, and non-Muslims need to join their respective religious classes concerning character education, since religious studies subjects share space with character education. Although the components of character in *Islamic Studies* are taught from an Islamic perspective, they are not similar to what students are taught in Alia Madrasah’s *Al Aqaid Wal Fiqh*. Additionally, all classes are conducted from different perspectives, depending on the religion. It indicates a lack of integrated, comprehensive character education in secular-based national schools, which might limit students’ holistic development of the qualities and shared values necessary for moral uprightness.

On the other hand, Madrasah education, such as Alia Madrasah, offers character education that is more Islamic in terms of content, themes, examples, and explanations than secular-based national education. However, Madrasah students have more opportunities, as they are taught other Islamic subjects such as the Qur'an and Hadith, which inherently discuss components of Islamic character, encouraging the development of good character in individuals. Likewise, in Qawmi Madrasahs, character education is deeply rooted in Islamic principles, and students have greater space for character development, as they are inclined toward Islamic theological teaching and learning (Bhuiyan, 2010; Raqib et al., 2015). However, none of the education systems in Bangladesh fosters character development through standalone subjects or any other comprehensive and formal manner (Shahiduzzaman, 2016; Akhter, 2022). Although secular- and Islamic-based national education is equivalent and shares at least 10 core subjects, when it comes to character education, they do not have a common textbook; thus, students at the same level do not receive the same character education instruction, indicating shortcomings in the Bangladeshi curriculum. In addition, Islamic-based national education includes character education components from grade I, whereas secular-based national education includes them from grade III. Figure 1.3 presents *akhlaq* components for character education for class one and two students in Bangladesh.

Secular-based national education (General Education)				Islamic-based national education (Alia Madrasah)				
Textbook: Absence of dedicated textbook				Textbook: <i>Al Aqaid Wal Fiqh</i> (Alim, Al-Maruf, et al., 2013/2025a, pp. 18–22 (chapter 5))		Textbook: <i>Al Aqaid Wal Fiqh</i> (Alim, Al-Maruf, et al., 2013/2025b, pp. 27–30 (chapter 6))		
				Class One		Class Two		
Level	Class	Topics	Allocated Chapter & Location	Topics	Allocated Chapter & Location	Level	Topics	Allocated Chapter & Location
Primary	One and Two	N/A (No subject or chapter related to character education)	N/A (No subject or chapter related to character education)	• Akhlaq e Hashanah • Salam • Musafah • Speaking the Truth	1/5	Ibtidaie (Equivalent to Primary)	☐ Akhlaq e Hashanah, ☐ Salam ☐ Musafah ☐ Speaking the Truth ☐ Keeping the Promise *discussion a little bit elaborated than class one	1/6

Figure 1.3 *Akhlaq* Components for Character Education for Classes One and Two

Accordingly, grade I and II students are not getting any instructions concerning good character and morality, as well as religious institutions, since there is no religion subject for these classes. These create inequality, discrimination, and a significant gap in the character development of Muslim students in Bangladesh, contributing to contemporary moral decay in society. Consequently, the present character education in Bangladesh faces shortcomings, particularly a lack of a structured, integrated, and comprehensive approach. Thus, there is no integrated character education curriculum that offers universal ethical principles appropriate to all students regardless of their religion. These shortcomings lead to inconsistencies between secular-based and Islamic-based education and a failure to address the moral and ethical needs of both Muslim and non-Muslim students in public education (Ahamed, 2021).

Furthermore, character education lacks emphasis on the community and societal aspects of good character and moral values as well as its application in social and personal life, which is a core issue contributing to moral decadence and social unrest among individuals (Shahiduzzaman, 2016). Moreover, Tasnim (2024) found that there are shortcomings in the textbooks concerning ethics and moral education since learning goals, skills, and assessment questions are not appropriately aligned, which makes students solely dependent on teachers' explanations and information. Moreover, she outlined that teachers employ only convenient approaches, such as storytelling and explaining, rather than innovative, interactive, and educational technologies in teaching and learning approaches. She found that there is a lack of resources and training for teachers as well as teacher-parent relationships. Accordingly, neither teachers nor students are adequately motivated concerning character education and character-building. Thus, character education is not impacting as it should on students' real-life situations. However, it outlined that the role of the family in developing the good character of students is significant (Tasnim, 2024). Although her study focused on Grade V, this picture implies the current state of character education in Bangladesh's education system.

For both Muslim and non-Muslim students, character education and teaching in formal settings is often fragmented and inadequate, given non-formal contexts including family, society, and religious organisations acting a supportive role in inculcating moral principles. Though powerful, non-formal sources exist outside of the formal educational framework and create critical voids in holistic character development. Furthermore, character education is hardly provided to postsecondary students in Bangladesh (Faisal & Akther, 2020). As a result, the lack of a structured and dedicated character education program in both Islamic-based and secular-based national education systems fuels moral decay and social challenges in Bangladesh. In light of this scenario, it is critical to consider education as a potential solution to the dilemma surrounding the moral decline and character development of students in Bangladesh. Consequently, character education is important.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This section presents the problem in a structured manner. It outlines the broader moral challenges in Bangladesh, examines the role of education in addressing these challenges, and analyses gaps within both the general (secular-based national) education system and the Islamic-based national education system, specifically the Alia Madrasah education system. The study emphasises that understanding these aspects is crucial for identifying the research gap, which calls for an integrated approach to character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

1.2.1 Broader Moral Challenges in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is facing increasing moral and ethical challenges reflected in growing corruption, crime, bloodshed, and social disorder. Reflecting the collapse of discipline, society, moral, and religious values, contamination of food, unfair means in tests, and question papers leak, attacks on teachers, ill-mannered behaviour, and adultery are increasingly widespread (Islam, 2019). In Bangladesh, bribery and corruption are the prevalent issues that deeply impact students. As highlighted by Billah (2012), eighty-six per cent (86%) of Bangladesh University of Engineering and

Technology (BUET) students admitted they would accept a bribe without hesitation if offered during their service. Moreover, a huge number of citizens believe in a connection between corruption and success.

In 2015, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) claimed that a considerable number of young people who responded to the survey said that they would prefer to engage in corrupt activities for personal benefit. For example, to get a good grade in a vital job (around 32%), collect official documents, permits, and licenses (around 32%), gain admission to a good school or a reputable company (around 42%), and most alarmingly, get a dream job (around 49%), a segment of the youth are willing to compromise with the principles of integrity. However, eighty-two per cent of them believed that via advocacy and changes in attitudes, they can play a significant role in promoting integrity and fighting corruption (Transparency International Bangladesh, 2015). However, the 2023 National Household Survey (NHS) by TIB found that 70.9% of households experienced corruption while accessing services from both public and private institutions between May 2023 and April 2024 in Bangladesh (Transparency International Bangladesh, 2024). This situation was deeply reflected when the 2024 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) by Transparency International ranks Bangladesh 151/180, having a score of 23/100, which places it as the 14th most corrupt country globally, as well as holds the position of the 2nd most corrupt in South Asia (Salman, 2025; Transparency International, 2025). In this context, the role of education becomes crucial in understanding and addressing these moral challenges.

The moral challenges of contemporary society in Bangladesh are closely linked to both the lack of effective character education and the inadequate cultivation of character (*akhlaq*) within educational settings, since its education system faces a significant gap in providing effective character education, which is crucial for the moral and ethical development of students. Therefore, both teaching character and providing an environment in which the taught character can be practised and demonstrated are equally important for the development of moral and ethical values in an individual. However, despite being academically ingrained in character education through *akhlaq* or moral components shared in *Religion Studies* subjects in secular-based national education and *Al Aqa'id Wal Fiqh* subjects in Islamic-based national

education in the curriculum of Bangladesh (*List of Textbooks for Academic Year-2025*, 2025), its implementation is often fragmented, ineffective, and inadequate to address the escalating challenges of moral decay in society.

1.2.2 Role of Education in Addressing the Moral Challenges

Beyond formal education, students' character development is also influenced by non-formal educational settings. In Bangladesh, at the early age of both Muslim and non-Muslim students, non-formal education plays a role in contributing to character education and character-building (Roy et al., 2020). Character education is primarily rooted in family, society, and *Maktab* (Islamic religious institutions), where Islamic teachings and *Akhlaq* (ethics and morals) are imparted through daily interactions and religious instructions for Muslim students. Non-Muslim students also gain moral values through family, religious institutions, and society, focusing on respect and tolerance (Roy et al., 2020). Nevertheless, these non-formal sources, though impactful and institutionally limited, often operate outside the formal education system, creating a critical gap in a comprehensive approach to character education. In this regard, formal education is one of the most powerful institutional settings for the development of students' moral consciousness, ethical behaviour, worldview and social responsibility. Schools and Madrasahs are supposed to impart academic information and also to develop values, discipline and character through organised teaching and learning processes, as a lot of formative years of students' lives are spent in educational institutions. Education is therefore a fundamental means of passing moral, cultural, religious and societal values from one generation to another. Although it is an important issue, character education is not well integrated into the existing educational system of Bangladesh. It is scattered across courses and educational settings and is typically confined to theoretical moral education instead of real-life character development.

1.2.3 Gaps in the Existing Education Systems

Although the general (secular-based national) education system and the Alia Madrasah (Islamic-based national) education system operate within different educational settings and curricular structures, both reveal significant limitations in providing a holistic and integrated approach to character education. In contrast to the general (secular-based national) education system of Bangladesh, the Alia Madrasah (Islamic-based national) education system approaches character education through a different curricular and educational orientation. Within the general (secular-based national) education system in Bangladesh, character education is basically taught through Religion Studies subjects. However, a limited portion of the Religion Studies subject serves as the foundation for formal character education for both Muslim and non-Muslim students, though it is often treated as part of a mere subject instead of focusing on character development within secular-based national schools (primary and secondary) from class three to ten. The primary-level Islamic Studies textbooks for Muslim students (Ahmad et al., 2023/2025, pp. 48–61; Tamizuddin, Mea, Ali, Siddique, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 40–54; Tamizuddin, Mea, Ali, Jabbar, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 64–85) are designed to instruct moral and humane qualities through religious ideals. Still, the content is often inadequate in efficiently guiding students concerning understanding and practising character-building values. Even though Islamic Studies at the secondary level addresses *akhlaq* (Islamic ethics and morals) as a chapter (Akhtaruzzaman, Tamizuddin, Malek, Rashid, Yusuf, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 84–103; Akhtaruzzaman, Tamizuddin, Malek, Rashid, Yousuf, Shaikh, Sharif, Rahman, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 82–103; Akhtaruzzaman, Tamizuddin, Malek, Rashid, Yousuf, Shaikh, Sharif, Ibrahim, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 91–118; Akhtaruzzaman, Malek, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 138–191), it is not the pivotal point of education and is often reduced to mere academic knowledge rather than character development. Additionally, textbooks in Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian Religion Studies for non-Muslim pupils can be traced to moral and human values encouraging ethical living and interreligious harmony (List of Textbooks for Academic Year 2025, 2025). These values are often taught in a disjointed and isolated approach. However, some Religion Studies textbooks do not have a dedicated chapter on character education; they nonetheless include plain discussion on religious values and morality.

On the other hand, character education is not regarded as a standalone or specialised subject in Madrasah education, also known as Islamic education in Bangladesh. Although for character education in Alia Madrasah (Islamic-based national education), the *Al Aqaid Wal Fiqh* textbook has one chapter on ‘*Akhlaq* and *Dua*’ for classes one through five, and classes six through ten have a chapter on ‘*Akhlaq*’ (*List of Textbooks for Academic Year-2025*, 2025). However, the focus on character development remains limited, often overshadowed by other religious doctrines and rituals. *Akhlaq* (Islamic ethics, morals, and character) is regarded as an accessory to Islamic studies rather than a core component of the educational experience in this approach. Consequently, the opportunity to nurture holistic character development in students is hampered, missing the ability to strongly inculcate their religious and ethical values, moral virtues, and social responsibilities.

A comparative and comprehensive view of both systems highlights their structural, pedagogical, and curricular differences. Nevertheless, similar limitations remain. Although informal settings play a role in shaping students’ character at an early age, their operation outside the formal education system creates a critical gap in providing a comprehensive and integrated approach to character education. Students dedicate more time to formal education, where moral values are briefly covered in *Religion Studies* and *Al Aqaid Wal Fiqh* textbooks, but not prioritised for character development. Therefore, character education in the official curriculum is still scattered and insufficient, thus impeding a deeper, practical knowledge of ethical concepts and moral values for the character development of students in Bangladesh (Shahiduzzaman, 2016; Akhter, 2022). For instance, the distinction is apparent in both schools and Madrasahs, where textbooks on character (moral) education contrast significantly in themes, contents, and examples. In schools, character education (teaching *akhlaq*) begins in class three, leaving classes one and two without formal character instructions.

On the other hand, Alia Madrasah introduces character education (teaching *akhlaq*) starting from the *Ibtidai* (primary) level, beginning in class one (Alim, Al-Maruf, et al., 2013/2025a). Additionally, in schools, there are distinctions in the character (moral) education curriculum for Muslim and non-Muslim students, with different textbooks and classes. These distinctions create a critical situation where

students of the same age and educational level (class) do not receive the same character (moral) education, even though they are part of the same educational system under the Ministry of Education. In addition, according to Hena (2019), there is a lack of Islamic values in English textbooks of classes one, three, and five and their teaching materials in Bangladesh, a trend that extends to other disciplines, lessons, and textbooks. Thus, the education system of Bangladesh falls short in promoting holistic character development of students at an early age, producing those who lack the holistic qualities necessary to become sensible citizens and morally trained persons.

Furthermore, for post-secondary students in Bangladesh, a major gap endures in character education (Faisal & Akther, 2020). However, courses such as medical and business ethics concentrate on ethical issues; nevertheless, they are instructed from a secular perspective, offering little space for learners to explore ethical doctrines from a religious or comprehensive stance. Consequently, the lack of character education at the postsecondary level similarly contributes to the moral decay observed, remarkably among the young people in Bangladesh.

Formal education plays a vital role in forming students' ideas, beliefs, manners, character, and ways of life as they devote the majority of their time in these settings. It ultimately forms their character, training them to be sensible citizens and decent people in society (Herman et al., 2022; *The Role of Education in Shaping Character*, 2024). Although the moral instruction in *Religion Studies* and *Al Aqaid Wal Fiqh* in the official curriculum offers a narrow space for character education in Bangladesh. There is a lack of a comprehensive approach essential to appropriately foster the ethical doctrines, moral values, and character development needed in the present education in Bangladesh. Character education is essentially neither provided as a separate subject nor integrated across the curriculum in formal educational environments, therefore depriving pupils of the comprehensive guidance required to build a strong moral foundation.

1.2.4 Research Gap and Call for an Integrated Approach

Both the general (secular-based national) education system and the Islamic-based national, Alia Madrasah education system in Bangladesh incorporate character education components within their respective curriculum. Nevertheless, the preceding analysis reveals several critical gaps. First, character education remains fragmented across formal and non-formal educational settings in Bangladesh. This fragmentation indicates the absence of an integrated and coherent character education framework. Second, character components and moral values are often marginalised and treated as routine content within formal educational settings, rather than being recognised as significant elements for character formation. Consequently, they are unable to play a central role in the holistic development of students. Third, there is an evident lack of integration across the curriculum. Accordingly, character components and values are neither consistently embedded in subjects nor emphasised in ways that translate into practical life skills. Fourth, the coexistence of secular-based and Islamic-based national education systems with differing curricular orientations, institutional settings, and implementation approaches creates inconsistencies in the delivery and emphasis of character education. Consequently, there are no systematic efforts to integrate their approaches to make character education effective and holistic. Finally, character education is largely absent or confined to secular ethical discussions at the post-secondary level of education. Consequently, students' engagement with comprehensive character development and religious perspectives is minimal within the overall education system of Bangladesh. Therefore, the existing literature and educational practices reveal the absence of a comprehensive, structured, and integrated character education model. Such a model should incorporate formal and non-formal education, as well as secular-based and Islamic-based national educational streams. Despite the presence of moral and religious components within existing curricula, there remains limited scholarly effort toward developing a unified and contextually grounded conceptual framework that systematically integrates character education across these educational streams. This gap highlights the need for a contextually grounded and systematically integrated character education framework for Muslim students. It should incorporate character components, moral and ethical values across the curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, as well as ensure their practical translation into students' personal and professional domains.

In light of the identified gaps, the moral decay in Bangladesh can be linked to a lack of integrated character education. Without an integrated and structured approach, values are taught in isolation rather than being integrated into daily and professional life. Accordingly, without a coherent framework that both integrates values across the curriculum as well as co-curricular and extracurricular activities and provides dedicated character-focused instruction connected to students' personal and professional lives, students remain inadequately prepared to face contemporary moral and social challenges. Addressing this gap through an integrated character education model is crucial within the formal education system in Bangladesh for cultivating individuals with strong moral values and a balanced sense of accountability, especially within the context of Islamic principles.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are:

1. To conceptualise the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of an integrated Islamic character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.
2. To develop a conceptual model of integrated character education that integrates moral, spiritual, behavioural, curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular dimensions to address the educational, social, and cultural needs of Muslim students in Bangladesh.
3. To examine the implementation roles of teachers, educational administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers in supporting integrated character education practices within the secular-based and Islamic-based education systems in Bangladesh.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is aimed at answering the following questions:

1. What ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations are appropriate for developing an integrated Islamic character education model for Muslim students in Bangladesh?
2. What conceptual model of integrated character education can effectively integrate moral, spiritual, behavioural, curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular dimensions to address the educational, social, and cultural needs of Muslim students in Bangladesh?
3. What roles can teachers, educational administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers play in implementing integrated character education practices within the secular-based and Islamic-based education systems in Bangladesh?

1.5 GUIDING ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

A set of guiding assumptions reinforces the study. These assumptions provide an ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundation of the study. Accordingly, these assumptions ensure methodological lucidity and consistency in the development of the conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

The study is based on the following assumptions:

1. Human beings are moral and spiritual agents whose character is shaped through continuous interaction with their environment and innate disposition.
2. Knowledge in character education is derived from both revealed sources (Qur'an and Sunnah) and rational-human experience.

3. The Islamic moral and ethical values offer a strong normative foundation for directing the character development of students in education.
4. Schools are dominant institutions for systematic character formation of students and are most effective when character education is integrated through the curriculum and instruction.
5. Interconnected ecological systems, including family, school, community, religion, and policy, influence character development.
6. Effective character education needs collaborative responsibility of teachers, administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers.
7. Integration of moral, spiritual, behavioural, curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular dimensions is most beneficial for effective character education.
8. Character education must be contextually relevant to the socio-cultural and religious setting of Bangladesh.

These assumptions collectively guide the theoretical orientation and structural development of the intended conceptual model of integrated character education. Accordingly, the study assumes that character formation is most effectively developed through an integrated educational approach that combines moral values, structured learning experiences, and practical application within both formal and informal educational settings. It further assumes that Islamic philosophical principles provide a suitable foundation for guiding character development among Muslim students in Bangladesh.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In general, this study is significant since it contributed to opening up the possibility of character education as a stand-alone subject in the educational system for Muslim students to address the existing moral decay among Muslims in Bangladesh. It is also significant in a variety of theoretical and practical contexts.

Practically, this study provides a conceptual model for integrating Islamic moral principles into character education. It advocates for the integration of secular-based and Islamic-based national education in terms of character education for Muslim students. It ensures that the approach was aligned with the religious and cultural context of Muslim students in Bangladesh. The model was extended to reinforce the connection of students to Islamic moral teachings, all of which contribute to providing education with a more meaningful basis. It also outlined strategies for key stakeholders, including teachers, educational administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers, to utilise as an instrument allowing for a successful implementation of the model in educational settings. The study addresses local challenges within Muslim students and promotes spiritual, moral, ethical, social, and academic development grounded in Islamic principles. Additionally, the study guides policymakers on how to incorporate Islamic values into education policies. Finally, the study upheld especially SDG4 (Quality Education) as well as SDG16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) regarding the Sustainable Development Goals based on Islamic principles to facilitate the establishment of a comprehensive, ethical education system as well as to ensure a more harmonious and peaceful society in Bangladesh.

Theoretically, the study contributes to the theory of character education by introducing a conceptual model of integrated character education rooted in Islamic philosophy. This model provides new insights into the theoretical debate on the integration of religious principles and values in education. By offering a theoretical foundation for integrating religious, moral, and social values into education rooted in Islam, it contributes to expanding the existing educational framework in Bangladesh. Thus, the study adds to the development of an Islamic ethical framework for character education, advancing the Islamisation of knowledge and education. Ultimately, the conceptualisation of integrated character education rooted in Islamic principles in this study provides a basis for further research on how holistic education can integrate spiritual, moral, social, and academic development in a religious context.

1.7 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research methodology generally refers to the epistemological discussion of the research methods. It is “the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 14 as cited in Williams, 2007, p. 66). Research methodology covers step-by-step research method procedures such as the selection of tools and techniques (Swarooprani, 2022; Gachigo, 2025). Walliman states that “Research method is a range of tools that are used for different types of enquiry” (2011, p. 1). Since the selection of research methods is a crucial component of every study and largely determines the accuracy of research findings, researchers are constantly concerned about how best to conduct their research to achieve their objectives. This section addresses the components of the research method employed for this study. In essence, a conceptual model of integrated character education in Bangladesh was developed by employing philosophical, historical, and library research methods.

The philosophical method (Zrudlo, 2024) facilitated a thorough understanding of the studied phenomena. Central to this method, philosophical analysis (Blau, 2024) critically analyses ideas, principles, and arguments, exploring essential assumptions and weaknesses in existing concepts, thereby enhancing the depth and relevance of the study. According to Gutek, it is a key movement in educational philosophy, focusing on the examination of both everyday and scientific language (1988, p. 136). This method involves breaking down concepts into simpler components, clarifying their meanings, and exploring their interrelations (Hirst & White, 1998, p. 2; Zrudlo, 2024, p. 255; Blau, 2024). According to Sherman, it involves analysing, clarifying, and critiquing the language, concepts, and logic underlying the goals and methods of human experience (1995, as cited in Sheffield, 2004, p. 762). Similar positions are also discussed in recent literature (Horvath, 2017; Kauka, 2018; Kölbel, 2021; Etuk, 2023; Blau, 2024). Philosophical analysis characteristically entails textual analysis (Blau, 2024), and “offers cognitive tools that allow one to perform wider and more in-depth studies of education than empirical methods would ever enable on their own” (Leś, 2020, p. 140). According to Angadi (2019), in conducting philosophical analysis, researchers may utilise a variety of procedures that include summarising, describing, contrasting, evaluating, and cross-examining to engage critically with the

concepts salient to the phenomenon being studied. These standpoints were suggestive and underscored the crucial position of the philosophical method in refining understanding, finding nuances, challenging assumptions, and offering inclusive insights, establishing it as an essential instrument for progressing knowledge in educational research.

This study aimed to develop a conceptual model of integrated character education in Bangladesh, demanding a thorough critique, analysis, and evaluation of current concepts, ideas, techniques, and strategies. To achieve these aforementioned aims, the appropriate instrument to employ was the philosophical method. As such, it utilised a dynamic and analytical approach to understanding the existing concepts and strategies. Additionally, it handed the researcher the opportunity to properly analyse and critically reflect upon the ideas sought to be assessed in detail (Blau, 2024). This method not only facilitated the synthesis of concepts but also split down complex issues into their key parts to clearly understand the concepts involved. Furthermore, it essentially assisted in the integration of pertinent concepts and challenged current opinions. Ultimately, it accelerated filtering and sharpened the concentration of the study for an intense and more insightful analysis.

In addition, the philosophical method was influential in investigating connections among concepts, underlining their interconnectedness and misconceptions, as well as areas for improvement to contribute to the corpus of current knowledge. This study was convinced that philosophical analysis was the best method since it enables a thorough investigation of issues related to integrated character education and the flaws of secular models and policies applied in Bangladesh. By employing this method, the study not only identified and underscored the critical gaps found in character education within Bangladesh but also proposed tailored goals and strategies which fully pass over the Islamic principles. Moreover, it critically challenged current limitations and offered a clear roadmap for its enrichment, as well as presented a vision for the future character education in the country within the context of contemporary educational demands.

More importantly, historical analysis was a vital research method employed in this study for the development of a conceptual model of integrated character education in Bangladesh. Historical analysis, according to Westberg (2025), is “a disciplined and strategic reading of large amounts of information” (p. 1011). It incorporates qualitative analysis, which “aims at providing in-depth and complex interpretations of experiences and meanings” (Westberg, 2025, p. 1008). Historical analysis facilitates the interpretation, explanation, or reconstruction of the past from scattered and fragmented evidence (Koselleck, 2011; Pickard, 2013/2018; Westberg, 2025). It is a systematic and careful study of data to understand the past. By exploring the historical development of character education and the educational system in Bangladesh, this method offered a comprehensive understanding of how past religious, cultural, political, and social factors have shaped the current educational practices. Gutek (1995) underlines that understanding the history of education helps us gain perspective, allowing us to make more informed and reflective decisions about current educational issues (p. ix). This perspective was essential for understanding the historical roots of the challenges facing the existing character education in Bangladesh. Marshall and Rossman’s (1989) assertions were suggestive that historical analysis is a method of discovering, from records and accounts, what happened in the past (p. 95). This view is also supported by Pickard (2013/2018) and More (2023). In this study, historical analysis aided in tracing the development of character education, identifying key moments in its development, and highlighting key impacts that moulded its present state. By critically analysing these historical factors, this study not only uncovered the underlying triggers of the present issues surrounding character education in Bangladesh but also offered insights into how to improve character education moving forward.

In addition, this study incorporated the library research method, which involves systematically accessing, reviewing, and analysing documents and archives, both offline and online, to summarise, synthesise, and critically assess the relevant information (Fitria, 2023; Jamaluddin et al., 2025). It is qualitative (Fitria, 2023; Jamaluddin et al., 2025), does not involve fieldwork, and emphasises the researcher’s critical role in collecting, selecting, and analysing data related to the studied phenomenon. As Babu (2008) suggests, library research focuses on the examination of

evidence such as historical records and documents to draw meaningful conclusions (p. 15). Access to pertinent sources, as well as the ability to conduct a comprehensive and critical examination, in addition to the synthesis of current knowledge, was facilitated by this method. This process allowed the researcher to identify key gaps in and limits of existing practice, which were taken into account in the development of a conceptual model of integrated character education in Bangladesh. In doing so, the study ensured that its attention stayed sharp and that its contributions directly challenged the present system, hence driving the national discourse on character education.

The literature and conceptual sources used for this study were based on a deliberate, theory-driven approach corresponding with its philosophical and conceptual nature. A systematic review process was not used in the study; instead, critical and careful intellectual judgment was applied to identify and select sources that were most appropriate for developing an integrated conceptual model of character education for Bangladeshi Muslim students. The selection criteria were based on four main considerations: (i) compatibility with Islamic epistemological, ontological and axiological principles; (ii) relevance to moral, ethical and character development in educational settings; (iii) suitability for structured school-based character education; and (iv) contextual relevance to the socio-cultural, religious and educational realities in Bangladesh. Therefore, basic Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and Sunnah and classical and contemporary scholarly works of Aristotle, Ibn Yaquub Miskawayh, al-Ghazali and Thomas Lickona were purposely included due to their theoretical value for character education discourse. Relevant educational texts and policy-related materials utilised in Bangladeshi primary and secondary schools and madrasah settings supplemented them.

Sources that lacked scholarly credibility, theoretical relevance and significance, or conceptual contribution to character education were omitted. The method was not meant to be a comprehensive review of all the literature accessible. It was a selective selection of conceptually significant and relevant works that were deemed essential for theoretical synthesis and the conceptual model development. This technique made it possible to retain the consistency of the study with its conceptual-philosophical design and to achieve academic rigour in the development of the proposed integrated character education model for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

In line with this purposive conceptual selection approach, the study drew upon both primary and secondary sources. Although the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) do not specifically outline a structured framework for character education, they present excellent instructions on ethical and moral principles for character development and education. Therefore, they offered merit as primary sources. It also included the original works of Aristotle, Ibn Yaquub Miskawayh, al-Ghazali, and Thomas Lickona, along with current religious studies textbooks used in primary and secondary levels at schools and Madrasahs in Bangladesh, which contain components related to character education.

Secondary sources encompassed a wide range of literature on morality, ethics, character development, and character education, including books, journal articles, government publications, archival documents, and materials obtained from online and offline databases. In particular, scholarly works related to the theories of Ibn Yaquub Miskawayh, al-Ghazali, Aristotle, and Thomas Lickona facilitated an in-depth analysis of the philosophical and educational foundations of character education. Together, these primary and secondary sources offered the foundational insights necessary to explore character education in Bangladesh. They also supported the development of a comprehensive and contextually pertinent conceptual model of integrated character education in Bangladesh.

The selected sources were rigorously assessed and analysed for their academic reliability, conceptual relevance, contextual pertinence, and their contribution to the philosophical and educational features of character education. The focus was on classical literature as well as peer-reviewed academic publications and educational resources pertinent to the Bangladeshi and Islamic educational context. These criteria assured the academic rigour, contextual relevance and theoretical coherence of the study.

In analysing the selected resources, the study used the interpretive, concept-focused analytical approach, which was in accordance with the conceptual-philosophical-analytical and non-empirical design of the study. Therefore, in the analysis, critical reading, philosophical analysis, historical analysis, conceptual categorisation, comparison and synthesis of concepts were used instead of statistical

or software-based approaches. Classical and contemporary sources were extensively probed for key themes relating to educational principles, character education, moral development, ethical formation, educational philosophy, and implementation strategies. The analysis particularly focused on ontological, epistemological, axiological, moral, spiritual, behavioural, curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular, and implementation dimensions relevant to character education in Bangladesh. The notions were then analysed for meaning, assumptions and relationships within Islamic educational thinking and more general theories of character education. Through this analytical process, recurring themes, conceptual relationships, and theoretical gaps were critically examined to facilitate the development of an integrated and contextually appropriate conceptual model of character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

Accordingly, the exclusive use of philosophical analysis, historical analysis and library research methods is justified by the study's conceptual, philosophical and analytical nature. The main purpose of this research is to develop a conceptual model of integrated character education for Bangladeshi Muslim students rather than to validate, assess or test an existing framework. Hence, positivist and field-based empirical approaches such as surveys, interviews or experiments were regarded methodologically inappropriate and beyond the scope of the present study. Instead, the study adopts a qualitative research methodology and applies systematic philosophical analysis, historical analysis and library research methods to develop a theoretically grounded, contextually appropriate conceptual model for Bangladesh. Accordingly, the study employed philosophical, critical and historical analysis, comparison, and synthesis of classical and contemporary character education theories, particularly within the Islamic and Bangladeshi socio-cultural and educational contexts. This methodological orientation is in line with educational philosophy and conceptual research traditions in which the emphasis is on conceptual clarification, theoretical integration, and interpretive depth rather than empirical measurement. However, empirical validation is intentionally beyond the scope of this conceptual-philosophical study and is recommended for future research.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE REMAINING CHAPTERS OF THE THESIS

Chapter Two looks into the philosophical foundations of character education, focusing on Islamic philosophy. It investigates the metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological dimensions of Islamic philosophy and how these foundations contribute to outlining the basis for Islamic character education and character-building. This chapter also discusses several key concepts from an Islamic perspective, such as the *khalifah*, *amanah*, sustainability, Islamic worldview, knowledge (*ilm*), education (*tarbiyah-ta'lim-ta'dib*), and the concept of good character. Additionally, it contrasts Islamic and Western philosophical foundations within the context of the educational settings of Bangladesh. The chapter concludes by convincing that the Islamic philosophical foundation of character education is the most appropriate, necessary, and relevant for an integrated character education model for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

Chapter Three delves into the historical development of education in Bangladesh, highlighting its evolution from independence to the present educational reforms and progress concerning the character education of Muslim students. It discusses Bangladeshi education, focusing on the country's educational reforms, general education (secular-based national education) systems, and Madrasah education systems, namely the Qawmi and Alia madrasah (Islamic-based national education). Moreover, the contemporary education and reforms concerning the 2010 educational policy and the new curriculum of 2023. Additionally, it addresses the challenges of integrating Islamic character education into the national and religious educational framework of Bangladesh.

Chapter Four introduces a conceptual model of integrated character education developed for Muslim students in Bangladesh, in addition to outlining various character education approaches, such as teaching, training, and role modelling, to instil good character traits in students. This chapter outlines the core components of the model, including its philosophy, vision, mission, goals and objectives. The proposed model stresses the need for an integrated curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs that reflect Islamic values. A core component of the model is a vigorous assessment mechanism for assessing the character growth of students. The

model highlights the significance of establishing educational settings that promote holistic individual development, integrating both Islamic values and academic knowledge. Moreover, the chapter describes the significant role and strategies of stakeholders, including teachers, educational administrators, religious leaders and policymakers, in the successful implementation of the proposed model in Bangladesh. Ultimately, the chapter highlights the universality and versatility of the proposed model as well as its potential for positive influence on the moral and ethical education of Muslim students in diverse educational settings of Bangladesh.

Chapter Five presents a summary of the study. It also discusses the implications and contributions of the developed conceptual model. Moreover, this chapter makes several recommendations for the effective implementation of the model in Bangladesh. Since the model advocates for the collaboration between character development and character education to foster character development, the chapter highlights a holistic approach that includes policy development, stakeholder engagement, ongoing research and improvement, and implementation within the model components to make it easier to integrate and introduce the model into the existing curriculum in Bangladesh, particularly within national and religious education frameworks.

This study adopts a conceptual, philosophical, and analytical research design rather than an empirical one. Therefore, the literature review, theoretical framework and methodology are not separated into rigid standalone chapters but are instead incorporated thematically in Chapter One to maintain coherence in model development. The theoretical base is the epistemological underpinning for the construction of the integrated character education model. The methodological orientation outlines the analytical and interpretive process of synthesising various frameworks. This structure is not incidental but intentional. This practice is in line with traditions of conceptual education research, where model construction is the core focus of the research outcome.

1.9 POSITIONALITY

In this study, the researcher's position is deeply influenced by a combination of personal educational experiences and professional observations within both secular and Islamic-based educational settings in Bangladesh. Having attended both Madrasah (Islamic-based) and general national (secular-based) schools, the researcher is acutely aware of the gaps—limitations, challenges—and contradictions that exist within character education in these systems. The researcher's parallel exposure to these systems provides me with a unique lens through which to evaluate the present situation of character education in Bangladesh as well as the wider consequences of its failures on moral, ethical, and social development. These experiences have helped me to see the necessity of an integrated, coherent approach to character education in Bangladesh.

Although the researcher values moral lessons in both systems, the researcher's own experience shows that both of them fail to integrate this element into a targeted curriculum, as well as co-curricular and extracurricular activities. The researcher understands that teachers and legislators sometimes underappreciate character education, as it is often assigned a secondary role and overshadowed by the focus on academic success. Many times, it is handled more as an afterthought than as a necessary component of a student's whole development, therefore compromising its ability to mould them into morally conscious, well-rounded people.

Notwithstanding the religion-based schoolbooks and curricula that include features of character education, they are disjointed, fragmentary, and fail to provide a systematic, inclusive, and devoted approach to thoroughly train the students with the kinds of moral and ethical foundations that they need. This fact, combined with the belief of many parents and educators that moral and ethical development is spontaneous and occurs without intervention over time, is a belief that the researcher finds misleading and is very damaging to the long-term future development of children's character. A deficiency worth mentioning is that no curriculum, as well as co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and assessment system is explicitly designed for character development in both education systems.

Furthermore, working as a lecturer and sub-editor has allowed me to observe the wider effects of this educational gap, particularly in the frequency of unethical behaviour in academic and professional settings. Normalisation of corruption, dishonesty, and academic misconduct in both settings highlights the necessity to improve deficiencies within character education. These real-world experiences have significantly shaped my critical perspective on the current educational practices surrounding character development in Bangladesh.

Though personally involved, the researcher stayed dedicated to approaching this study with an academic attitude and objective. The goal was to critically analyse the current character education system in Bangladesh, with the identification of gaps and the proposal of an integrated model that provides for holistic character development, which is rooted in Islamic principles. Through this study, the researcher intends to contribute to the development of a conceptual model that emphasises the importance of an integrated approach to character education and its integration into formal educational settings. This approach ensures that it is not only taught in isolated subjects but is embedded within the entire educational process.

The researcher's position was influenced by the belief that character education should be a critical element of the curriculum as well as co-curricular and extracurricular activities, as it is often overlooked in Bangladesh. Despite the researcher's attempts to be objective, the researcher was inspired by the understanding that character education significantly moulds students. It helps them become ethical and holistic individuals who are in a position to contend with the challenges of contemporary society. Ultimately, this study will serve as a platform to explore the potential for a more holistic approach to character education, one that directly addresses the moral and ethical challenges facing today's generation, grounded in both religious and national values. The researcher aspires for this research to contribute to the establishment of a robust and comprehensive character education framework across all levels of education in Bangladesh. This framework aims to foster moral development and better equip students for the challenges they will face in an increasingly interconnected global society.

1.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Addressing the various philosophical underpinnings, scholars and educators around the world have put forth theories and educational approaches to character education regarding the development of students' character. Among these, the study found that the theories of Ibn Yaqub Miskawayh, al-Ghazali, Aristotle, and Thomas Lickona were very relevant to this study. Due to their insights, complementary strengths, and relevance to the study, the perspectives of al-Ghazali and Lickona were intentionally adopted as the theoretical foundation after critically reviewing these theories.

The selection of the theoretical underpinnings in this study was guided by four criteria: (i) compatibility with Islamic ontological, epistemological and axiological principles, (ii) pertinence to moral and character development in educational settings, (iii) suitability to structured school-based implementation, and (iv) contextual relevance to the Bangladeshi socio-cultural, religious and educational context. Based on these criteria, al-Ghazali and Thomas Lickona were selected as the most comprehensive and complementary frameworks for the development of the proposed conceptual model of integrated character education for Bangladesh.

In addition to these primary theoretical foundations, the study recognises Islamisation of Knowledge and education as an overarching operational, interpretive, and integrative process rather than a standalone theory, through which educational concepts, content, strategies, and resources are critically examined, filtered, integrated, and aligned with Islamic ontological, epistemological, and axiological principles throughout the model development. Accordingly, it is not treated as an independent theoretical framework, but as a crucial mechanism that ensures coherence between external educational knowledge and the Islamic worldview underpinning the study, while remaining responsive to contemporary educational needs.

Al-Ghazali offers a comprehensive Islamic framework rooted in religious, moral, ethical, and spiritual principles. This framework emphasises Islamic morality, self-sanctification, spiritual growth, practical wisdom, and childhood character formation, including the roles of parents and teachers. Lickona, on the other hand, offers theoretical perspectives that integrate moral knowing, feeling, and action into educational practice. Additionally, his framework includes practical strategies that

incorporate community members and parents, educators and educational institutions in forming a comprehensive setting for character education. The key components of al-Ghazali's and Lickona's character education concepts are visually outlined in Figures 1.4 and 1.5, respectively. Conversely, Miskawayh's philosophical approach is largely theoretical and partially influenced by Western thought. It is only partially rooted in Islamic principles and lacks guidance for structured educational settings, which confines its real-world applicability in contemporary education. Although Aristotle's virtue ethics emphasises and advocates the cultivation of moral virtues, it offers minimal practical guidance. Accordingly, it is difficult to translate these principles into structured character education and implementation. These shortcomings limit the relevance of both Miskawayh and Aristotle to the purposes of this study.

By integrating al-Ghazali's Islamic, religiously and culturally grounded principles with Lickona's contemporary and practical strategies, the study forms a strong theoretical and practical foundation. The process of critical adaptation and Islamisation of relevant educational concepts governs this integration. It ensures that the selection and adaptation of theories and strategies are aligned with Islamic ethical and moral principles while remaining responsive to contemporary educational needs. This foundation is both contextually relevant and practically implementable, enabling the model to address moral development challenges within the educational, religious, and socio-cultural context of Bangladesh. Consequently, the study analyses al-Ghazali's and Lickona's theories and their implications for character education as the theoretical foundation of the study.

The selection of al-Ghazali and Thomas Lickona as the principal theoretical foundations of this study was based not merely on their prominence in character education discourse. Their complementary suitability to the philosophical aims and practical objectives of the study convinced us to adopt them. Al-Ghazali was selected because his theory provides a comprehensive Islamic framework grounded in Qur'anic ethics, spirituality, moral sanitisation, and holistic human development. These are strongly aligned with the Islamic ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of the study. Al-Ghazali's emphasis on soul sanitisation, moral discipline, early character formation, and the integrated roles of teachers, parents, and society makes his framework particularly relevant to the religious and

socio-cultural realities of Bangladesh. However, al-Ghazali provides strong Islamic philosophical and spiritual foundations, but his framework offers comparatively limited systematic guidance. Therefore, his principles of character education alone are not enough for contemporary institutional implementation within modern educational systems such as Bangladesh.

On the other hand, Lickona was selected because his principles offer a more structured and practical educational framework. Lickona's concepts are significant in implementing character education in academic institutions through curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular integration, systematic instructions, and stakeholder participation approaches. His concepts of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, together with his strategies of practical implementation, offer effective strategic guidance. His principles are adaptable through Islamisation and integration to contemporary Bangladeshi educational settings without conflicting with Islamic moral principles. Other theorists, such as Miskawayh and Aristotle, were critically studied but not adopted as the primary theoretical foundations. Their approaches were either more philosophical than practically educational, less contextually adaptable to contemporary education in Bangladesh, or insufficiently grounded in the Islamic worldview central to the present study. Hence, the integration of al-Ghazali's Islamic philosophical foundations with Lickona's practical educational strategies offered the most comprehensive, contextually relevant, and effective framework for the development of the conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

Ibn Miskawaih/Miskawayh's (Mukti et al., 2021) *Tahdhib*, which blends Quranic verses and the Prophet's traditions with the Greek philosophy-ethical tradition, '*ilm al-Akhlaq*' (the Science of Ethics) (Ibn Yaqub Miskawayh, 1968), is the most notable work in Islamic ethics. He states character (*khulq*) as “a state (*ha1*) of the soul which enables it to perform its actions without any reflection or deliberation” (Ansari, 1964, p. 83). It indicates that the soul is an important aspect of character education and development. He believes that education's primary purpose is to shape a person's personality, resulting in a praiseworthy character (Darmawati et al., 2020). According to Khodijah et al. (2024), Miskawayh upholds that good character is developed through education, training, and philosophical thinking. Moreover, his

character concept, The Golden (*al-Wasath*), emphasises the importance of self-restraint, courage, wisdom, and justice in human character (Salim et al., 2022, p. 1473), acknowledges adopting balance in character and actions, as well as the importance of teaching character. In addition, Miskawaih posits that humans have two types of character: natural (*tabi'i*) and acquired through habit and practice. However, his concepts acknowledged the importance of imparting knowledge to develop character, enabling individuals to adopt the middle way. Since the study aimed at developing a conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh to address the existing moral decay, however, his overemphasis on philosophical thought rather than practical applications and not purely rooted in Islam, demonstrated the shortcomings of his concepts for the study.

As a result, the study strived to gain a more practical approach to character education from an Islamic perspective from the Islamic scholar Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058-1111). He underlined the ethical and spiritual components of character education in his writings, especially in "*Ihya Ulum al-Din*." His approach to moral behaviour is still widely used today (Richmond, 2021). His discussions on philosophy, aims, and objectives of Islamic education, particularly in character development, morality, and ethics (Quasem, 1978; Omar, 2010), can be traced in various works such as *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (particularly in V-III & IV), *Bidayah al-Hidayah*, *Ayyuha al-Walad*, *Kemiya Saadat*, *Al-Iqtisad fi-l-I'tiqad*, and *Mizan al-'Amal*. Consequently, his works informed the study that he has also developed a comprehensive approach to character education that is more systematic, accessible, free of Greek philosophical influences, and rooted in Islamic theology, philosophy, and ethics, which was more pertinent to the study. It emphasises the development of moral virtues and soul purification as crucial components of spiritual development and moral behaviour, drawing on the Sufi mystical tradition. Consequently, his character education concepts provided insights into the significance of Islamic moral sincerity, self-sanctification, practical wisdom, and spiritual growth in fostering moral character and ethical citizenship in students within the context of Bangladesh.

Furthermore, to address both good and bad character in a theoretical and practical way, al-Ghazali's character education defines and distinguishes between them. Good conduct, according to al-Ghazali, is the good actions (Rahman, 2016) of the soul. He believes that "...good conduct is the name of bringing greed and anger under the control of intellect and Shariat" (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 52). It acknowledged the importance of soul, aqal, and Islamic principles concerning character development. Additionally, when he regards bad conduct as a deadly poison, a brain injury, and a widely detested evil (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 47, 51), and states that the ultimate goal of excellent character and conduct is to limit one to Allah's love, which may be accomplished by breaking ties to the world's attachments (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 53). It advocates that character development must be within the Islamic context and establishes that it is the most suitable for developing a character education model for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

Character education, according to al-Ghazali, is a methodical approach that aims to purify the soul by eliminating evils so that good deeds may emerge from it. To attain the love of Allah, individuals must gradually be taught moral behaviour and character under the direction of spiritual and religious leaders. It demonstrates the necessity of practical wisdom concerning character development in students. His stance is comprehensive and considers both the world and the hereafter, which is essential to education, particularly when it comes to character education. Huda et al. think that al-Ghazali's concepts of education comprise two-fold aspects which include "transcendence (*rububiyyah*: divine) and humanisation" (Huda et al., 2022, p. 36). His character education concept can be visualised in Figure 1.4.

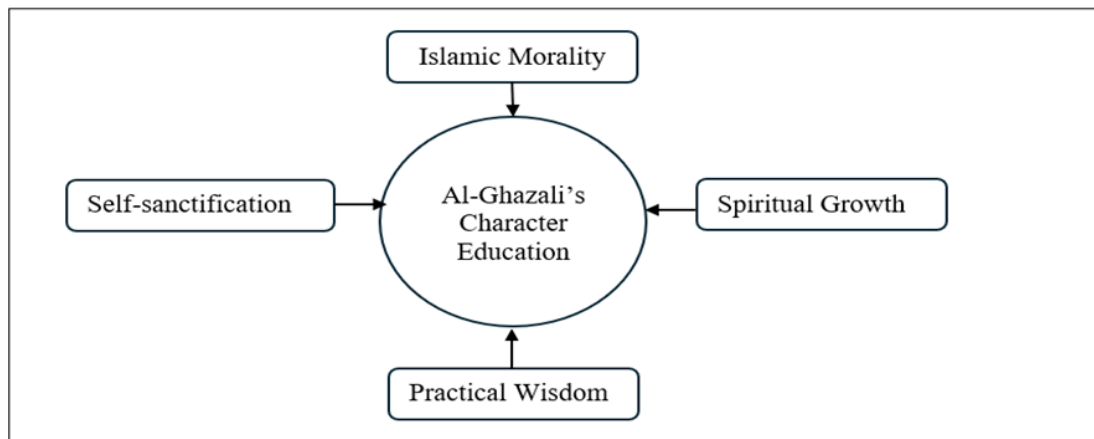


Figure 1.4 Concept of Al-Ghazali's Character Education

Al-Ghazali's Character Education Theory addresses character education in both a theoretical and practical manner, and it is founded on Islamic theological and philosophical ideas. His definition of good and bad characters, placing a strong emphasis on self-effort, education under religious leaders, emphasising early life for character formation, and evaluating actions based on the state of the soul, demonstrated its strengths and relevance in the context of Bangladesh. Employing techniques such as lectures and exemplary modelling, the theory works with parents, educators, and students to provide integrated and comprehensive character education as well as facilitate an outline of the model's successful implementation strategies in Bangladesh. It is devoid of Western influences, such as Greek philosophy, and covers spiritual, moral, physical, worldly, and afterlife components of education. His theory of character education is therefore distinctive and pertinent to the studied issue with the country's Islamic, social, and cultural context as well as educational needs, which convinced the study to adopt it as one of the foundational theories for the theoretical framework of the study.

Furthermore, the study obtained theoretical framework insights and practical guidelines for character education and development from Western perspectives that do not conflict with Islamic principles. Accordingly, it found that Western philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) posits that virtue is a learned habit, as outlined in his influential work, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Küçükuysal & Beyhan, 2011). According to him, "Virtue is a state of character" (Gensler et al., 2005, p. 240). His emphasis is on

the development of moral virtues such as bravery, temperance, justice, and practical wisdom, stressing the significance of soul, habit, and knowledge in moral actions. Although his ethics philosophically advocates that knowledge and habit enable us to act morally by letting us know how, when, and what to do at the proper time, it lacks practical guidance to translate into character education. On the other hand, Thomas Lickona (1943) offers a comprehensive and practical framework for character education and development, which is more updated, focusing on an integrated curriculum. Therefore, the study aimed to obtain more practical concepts from him relevant to the Bangladeshi context.

Lickona states, “*Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good*—habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action” (1991, p. 51). Therefore, character education is “the deliberate effort by schools, families, and communities to help young people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values” (as cited in Lickona, 1996, p. 93). The three main components of Lickona’s ideas—knowledge of good, desire for good, and doing a good action—have been combined and emphasised, expanding the boundaries and space of character formation and education. These components effectively reveal character education and how it can be maintained and demonstrated in one’s life.

Lickona advocates for character education, focusing on the dual goals of education: helping individuals become smart and good throughout history (Lickona, 1993). Moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action are all integrated into Lickona’s comprehensive approach to character education as presented in Figure 1.5.

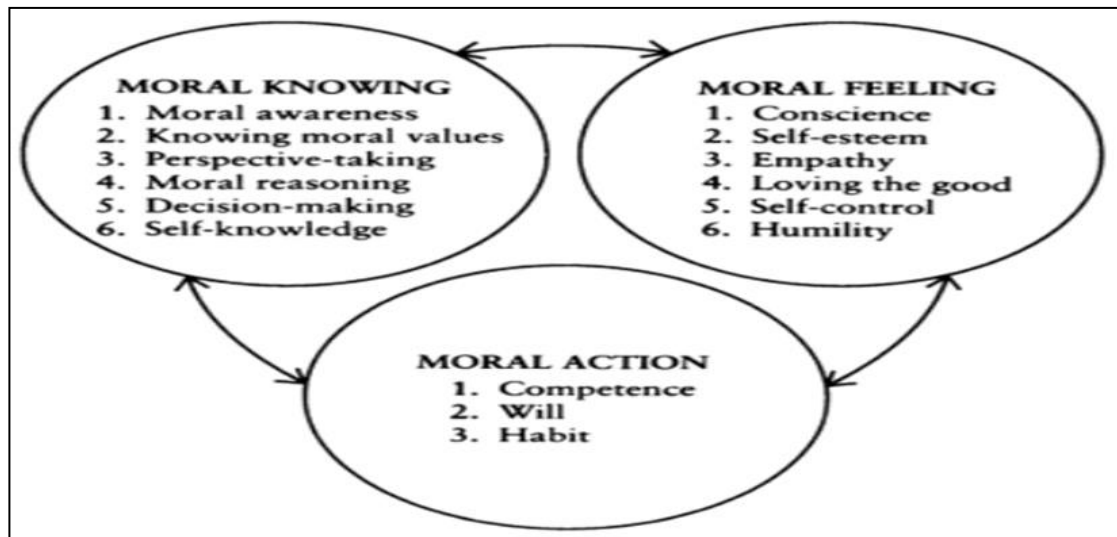


Figure 1.5 Components of Good Character by Thomas Lickona (1991)

In addition to encouraging moral modelling and offering chances for ethical thinking and action, he is an advocate for incorporating character education throughout the curriculum (1993). His strategy, which incorporates ideas from educational theory, moral psychology, and religious traditions, provides a comprehensive framework for fostering moral and ethical development in communities and schools. Outstandingly, Lickona's approach to character education centres on core value concepts that help kids acquire the desired character traits that will ultimately shape their conduct and character. By incorporating moral virtues into educational settings, Lickona's character education framework—specifically, the eleven principles for effective character education—significantly aided in the development of a conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh. Along with his theoretical viewpoints, his character education offered a practical strategy that incorporates community members and parents, as well as educators and educational institutions, to establish a comprehensive setting for character education (1997), which facilitated outlining strategies for the model's implementation. He proposes character education programs that offer schools structured methods for effectively implementing such education, such as the "Smart & Good High Schools" initiative. Since the focus of his character education is on its application in real-world settings, the study adopted his theory to develop the conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh

by integrating it with the country's Islamic, social, and cultural context as well as educational needs. Lickona's focus on character education is on its application in real-world settings, which provides the model with a strong theoretical and practical foundation, especially when it comes to the developed model's practical implementation strategies.

Accordingly, the theories of al-Ghazali and Thomas Lickona have theoretical and practical ramifications, respectively, and are widely used in the contemporary educational system as the main character education theory. In addition, Both al-Ghazali and Lickona's emphasis on teaching core values as well as determining good character through good actions persuaded this study to accept this as an evaluation postulate concerning identifying good character in individuals; thus, all of their ideas provided a strong foundation for integrating existing core values and evaluating good character in individuals in the process of developing the conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh with the country's Islamic, social and cultural context as well as educational needs. Moreover, Lickona's three domains of character education, moral knowing, feeling, and action, are the foundations of global character development and character education. These domains provided significant input into the conceptual model that this study aimed to develop in Bangladesh, focusing on the practical instilling of good character in Muslim students.

Both al-Ghazali and Lickona's focus on character education is ingrained in young children. Since children are born with inherent characteristics, al-Ghazali believes that character development is most important during their formative years. This study supports their views by attempting to create a Conceptual Model of Integrated Character Education for Muslim Students in Bangladesh; therefore, their theories were highly relevant to this research in conceptualising the model. Furthermore, to ensure comprehensive approaches to character education, al-Ghazali and Lickona have also expanded the role of the teacher in character education. In addition, they have incorporated the responsibilities of schools, parents, students, and community members. This study also asserts that all stakeholders, notably teachers, schools, families, parents, and communities, are critical in developing and ensuring

integrated character education settings for students; hence, their ideas are profoundly significant to this study.

Although Lickona's perspective was Western, al-Ghazali's perspective was entirely Islamic, emphasising the ultimate goal of character education and formation as attaining Allah's love following the postulate of 'love for Allah and hate for Allah' in determining and doing any action. Al-Ghazali's concepts were more comprehensive and relevant for students, particularly Muslim students' character development, as they cover a wide range of perspectives based on Islamic teachings that include the success of the individual in both lives by bringing him closer to the creator Allah through good character and actions. Lickona's theories and model also offer practical guidance to the study. Following a critical analysis of their theories and concepts, the study incorporated relevant components from al-Ghazali and Lickona to adapt them to the Islamic, social, and cultural context and educational needs of Bangladesh. These insights distinctly informed the structure, content, and implementation strategies of the conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

Though both al-Ghazali's and Lickona's concepts informed the development and implementation of the model in Bangladesh, the study additionally incorporated and adapted Berkowitz and Bier's (2005) findings and recommendations (pp. 19–22) to strengthen the practical implementation dimension of the model. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) identified eleven major implementation strategies under content and pedagogical categories that were commonly utilised in effective character education programmes in the United States. Moreover, they noted that some of their findings were similar to those outlined by Solomon et al. (2000). Although their research was conducted in the US context, several strategies, such as the integration of character education into the curriculum and the active engagement of stakeholders, possess broader educational relevance and cross-contextual applicability.

Additionally, Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecology of Human Development theory was drawn upon to inform the social and environmental contexts of character development, particularly in relation to stakeholder roles within the implementation process. Drawing on this theoretical contribution, alongside the educational, religious,

social, and cultural context of Bangladesh, the researcher critically adapted and contextualised the identified strategies in developing the implementation framework for the proposed conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh. Accordingly, al-Ghazali's character education philosophy and Lickona's character education framework primarily informed both the development and implementation of the present study as its core theoretical foundation. In contrast, Berkowitz and Bier's implementation strategies provided additional guidance in shaping contextually relevant implementation strategies, and Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological perspective informed stakeholder roles and the social–environmental context of implementation.

1.11 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of the study is portrayed in Figure 1.6. It demonstrates the crucial components required for the development of a conceptual model of integrated character education in Bangladesh. Consequently, all of the components outlined significantly contributed to conceptualising the integrated character education model for Muslim students in Bangladesh. However, continuous improvement and adaptation are necessary for the sustainability of the developed model.

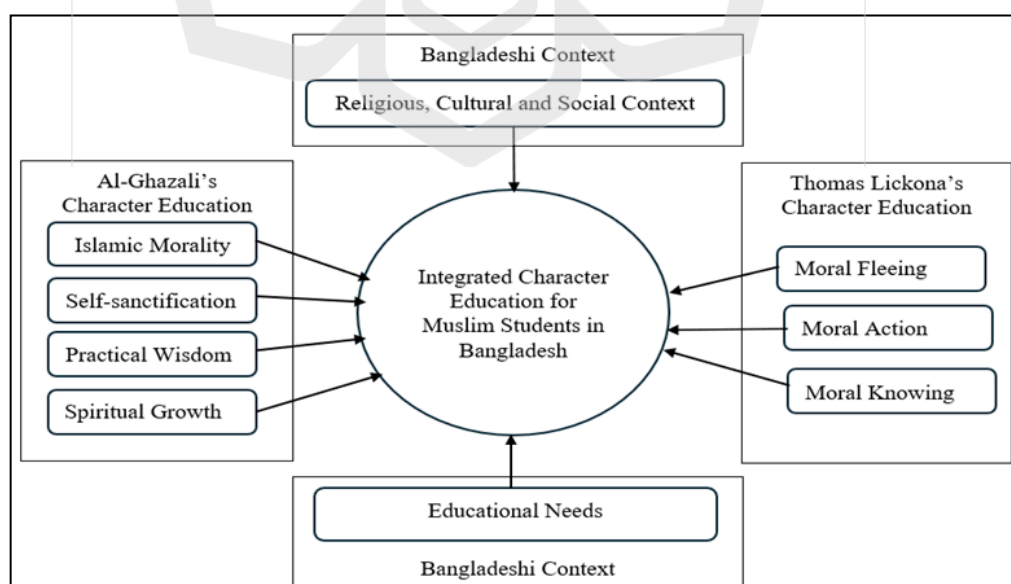


Figure 1.6 Conceptual Framework of the Study

1.12 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Akhlaq

In this study, “*akhlaq*” is translated as “character” and refers to the Islamic concept of moral and ethical conduct that guides an individual’s personal and social behaviours. In addition, it is understood as a positive moral and ethical character framework with a focus on its application in character education.

Holistic Character Development

In this study, “holistic character development” refers to the process of developing and strengthening an individual’s spiritual, moral, ethical, and social qualities rooted in Islamic principles. It incorporates efforts through character education sought to develop virtues such as integrity, justice, and responsibility, enabling persons to become not only good citizens but also morally upright and spiritually developed beings.

Character Education

In this study, “character education” refers to an intentional and structured approach in educational settings rooted in Islamic principles that seeks to promote spiritual development as well as instil positive moral values, ethical behaviours, and responsible citizenship in students. This definition is synthesised from al-Ghazali’s Islamic character education perspectives and contemporary character education concepts advanced by Thomas Lickona, particularly their emphasis on moral formation, ethical conduct, and holistic character development of students through education (al-Ghazali, 1993a; Lickona, 1991, 1993, 1996). This definition serves as the central guiding concept of the study. It informs the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, the development of the conceptual model, and the proposed implementation strategies.

Integrated

In this study, the term “integrated” refers to an approach that aims to achieve overall character development that integrates Islamic and conventional educational approaches. It underlines the need to include character education within the curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, and larger school and community environments within the educational system. “Integrated” also implies the dynamic collaboration of stakeholders, including teachers, school staff, parents, and the community, to establish a holistic and unified educational setting to ensure a unified effort in encouraging students’ moral and ethical growth in alignment with both Islamic principles and contemporary educational objectives. It also refers to the integration of both general education (secular-based national education) and Madrasah education (Islamic-based national education) in terms of character education of Muslim students in Bangladesh.

Integrated Character Education

In this study, “integrated character education” refers to a holistic and systematic approach to character formation in which moral, ethical, and spiritual values rooted in Islamic philosophy are intentionally embedded within the curriculum as well as co-curricular and extracurricular activities and school life alongside academic learning. It is characterised by the purposeful integration of moral development and educational achievement through classroom instruction, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and institutional culture. In the context of Bangladesh, it further involves the integration of general (secular-based national) and Madrasah (Islamic-based national) education systems in promoting unified character development of Muslim students. It also encompasses collaborative engagement of key stakeholders such as teachers, parents, school administrators, religious leaders, policymakers and the wider community, to ensure a coherent and shared responsibility for students’ moral and ethical development in alignment with Islamic principles and contemporary educational goals.

Educational System

In this study, “educational system” refers to the structure and organisation of formal schooling in Bangladesh, encompassing both secular and religious educational institutions, curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment systems that guide the educational development of students.

General Education

In this study, “general education” refers to the national education system in Bangladesh, encompassing both public and private schools, which is grounded in a secular and liberal educational philosophy. To provide clarity, the term “Secular-based National Education” was used to refer to this system specifically.

Madrasah Education

In this study, “Madrasah education” refers to the education system in Bangladesh that is rooted in Islamic teachings, with a curriculum that also includes subjects and textbooks from general education (secular-based national education). Specifically, “Madrasah education” in this context pertains to Alia Madrasahs, which are government-recognised institutions within the national education system. For clarity, this system was also referred to as “Islamic-based National Education.”

Bangladesh’s National Curriculum

In this study, “Bangladesh’s national curriculum” refers to the official educational framework and guidelines established by the People’s Republic of Bangladesh for all schools and madrasahs, which outline the subjects, educational methods, learning objectives, and assessment for students at various educational levels, including both secular and religious education.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter highlighted the importance of the development of an integrated character education model for Muslim students in Bangladesh in response to the growing moral challenges and the lack of effective character education within the existing educational system. The study maintains that character education grounded in Islamic philosophy, principles, and values can provide an effective approach to addressing moral degradation through the cultivation of good character among Muslim students. The chapter introduced the background of the study, presented the statement of the problem, and outlined the research objectives and questions that guided the study. It also discussed the significance of the study and the rationale for addressing the identified issues. In addition, the chapter presented the guiding assumptions of the study, research methodology, organisation of the remaining chapters, researcher positionality, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and definitions of key thesis terminologies. Overall, the chapter established the philosophical, conceptual, and contextual foundation for developing the proposed conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER TWO

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Character education is crucial for the development of good character, and both its quality and sustainability mostly depend on its fundamental foundations, which provide the guiding orientation, principles, essential elements, and appropriate framework for developing character education and its approaches. Accordingly, the understanding and practice of character education differ according to the philosophical foundations upon which they are grounded. It ultimately influences whether an educational approach is holistic and comprehensive. This chapter explores the philosophical foundations of character education through Islamic fundamental philosophy, focusing particularly on its metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological dimensions to understand how these foundations form the basis of human development, character formation, and education. It examines core concepts, including the Islamic worldview, knowledge (*ilm*), education (*tarbiyah-ta'lim-ta'dib*), reason and intellect (*'aql*), and the concept of good character from an Islamic perspective. In addition, the chapter discusses the relevance of Islamic philosophical foundations in relation to contemporary educational perspectives and the educational context of Bangladesh. By focusing on the Islamic philosophical foundations of character education, the study seeks to examine how these foundations contribute to fostering moral, ethical, spiritual, and academic development for Muslim students in Bangladesh. The chapter, therefore, aims to provide the philosophical grounding necessary for understanding and conceptualising an integrated character education framework for Muslim students rooted in Islamic teachings and relevant to the socio-cultural, religious, and educational realities of Bangladesh.

2.2 ISLAMIC METAPHYSICAL DIMENSIONS AND THE FOUNDATION OF EDUCATION

Metaphysics, as a branch of philosophy, deals with the nature of being, reality, and existence. Islam has an extremely obvious and fundamental understanding of the ultimate reality, which is Allah, the only holy being. Accordingly, Islamic philosophy portrays Allah as the ultimate reality as an eternal, transcendent, sole, almighty, and infinite existence. It is firmly based on *Tawheed*, the absolute Oneness of Allah (*Al-Ikhlās: 1-4*, n.d.), which is the cornerstone of Islamic philosophy. The Islamic concept of Ultimate Reality provides a comprehensive framework and guidelines for every aspect of human life, including worship, moral conduct, and preparation for the afterlife. Moreover, it encompasses all the branches of knowledge, such as theology, cosmology, ontology, epistemology, ethics, morality, and spirituality, as well as social and environmental dimensions, all centred on the belief in one God, Allah, as the ultimate source of existence and meaning. Accordingly, it also shapes the concept of man, his existence, and essence, since humans are the most distinct and enigmatic species on the planet. Consequently, the Islamic perspective on their nature, origin, development, purpose, role, and ultimate goal is significant to provide the basis for his knowledge acquisition in addition to shaping his learning processes. Thus, the greatest concern of Islamic metaphysics is humans' ontological, teleological, and cosmological dimensions to provide a comprehensive understanding of human nature and needs that ultimately make possible all related components of their life, including knowledge and its acquisition—education.

2.2.1 Ontological Dimension: The Nature and Existence of Mankind

The Islamic concept of human (*insan*) is comprehensive and rooted in its belief system. According to this tradition, man, with his body (*jasad*), soul (*nafs*), reason (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), spirit (*rūh*) (al-Attas, 1979, p. 157), and free will, is stated as the greatest creation of Allah "*Ashraf al-Makhluqat*" (Bhat, 2016, p. 62) on earth. Since Muslims acknowledge the Qur'an and Hadith as the only reliable and ultimate sources of knowledge, this view is shared across the world. Al-Farabi's (874-950) philosophy portrays a man with two fundamental components: a body and a soul. According to him, the human soul is distinct from the body and is a part of the final independent

intellect of the supersensible universe. In contrast, the body is comprised of components, confined by space, quantifiable, and dividable, and the creation of the created world. He contends that man's ultimate good is achieving knowledge (Sheikh, 1962/1982, p. 64). Al-Farabi's view acknowledges man's both spiritual and material aspects, and knowledge plays a crucial role in humans and their experience. With a combination of a material body and a spiritual soul (Al-Ghazzali, 1910, p. 17), al-Ghazali's philosophy highlights the dual nature of man, like other Muslim philosophers. However, to explore the true nature of man, particularly the spiritual nature, he utilises several Qur'anic terms, including *rūh* (soul/spirit), *nafs* (self), *qalb* (heart), and *'aql* (intellect). In his exploration of the human *nafs* (self), he looked at correlations between man and God, man and man, his worship, knowledge, as well as purification of the body and soul (Bhat, 2016, p. 68), which demonstrates the strength and comprehensiveness of his understanding of man since it touches all aspects of human life. He further goes on to state that Man's nature and conduct can be limited to four natures: Godly, devilish, beastly propensity, and propensity of ferocious beasts. Each nature has its influence, resulting in a complex and multifaceted nature due to the creation of different elements (al-Ghazali, 1993b, vol. IV, pp. 22-23), clearly stating the complexities of human nature. Consequently, man, according to him, is a unique creation of Allah with roles, responsibilities, and qualities. However, his main focus is the soul (heart) since all of man's behaviour originates from it, determining one's behaviour (Ateşçi 2019, p. iv). Similarly, al-Attas (1978/1993) states that man is a "double associate," having a soul and body that are both spiritual and material. Thus, all of the aforementioned notions of man illustrate human nature as composed inherently with the combination of spiritual and physical dimensions having distinct qualities.

Consequently, the body (*jasad*) is the physical form of humans, and it is made from clay through which they interact with the material world, yet it is temporary and will return to earth after their death. The soul (*nafs*) is the essence of an individual's identity. Although it can incline toward good or bad, it can be purified through spiritual and moral development. Intellect (*'aql*) is the intellectual function of human beings, having the ability to make rational decisions in addition to distinguishing right and wrong. Moreover, it works as the centre in understanding and receiving divine

guidance and making moral and ethical decisions. The human heart (*qalb*) is a faculty of emotions and intentions having the quality of moral feelings. Moreover, its condition can affect humans' behaviour, beliefs, and intentions. A pure heart is a necessity for both moral and spiritual development. The divine essence for humans is the spirit (*rūh*) that Allah breathed into humans, having the quality of the eternal to help maintain a connection with Allah. The ultimate purpose of it is to worship Allah in fulfilling the assigned role of *khalifah*, yet it will return to the realm of the spirit whenever people die. Although free will is the function of the intellect, it ensures the quality of making decisions in doing good or bad, making humans accountable for their actions both in the world and in the hereafter.

Accordingly, when it comes to the nature of man, the study advocated the Islamic concept of the creation of man, beginning with Adam, whom Allah (God) created by hand (*Sad*: 75, n.d.). Additionally, it is believed that the innate knowledge that Allah bestowed on Adam (*Al-Baqarah*: 31, n.d.) is likewise preserved, from which his descendants have also been carrying innately. As humans are born composed of both spiritual and physical aspects encompassing body (*jasad*), soul (*nafs*), reason (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), spirit (*rūh*), and free will, hence when it comes to education, particularly character education, it is crucial to develop all of them in a balanced way since all are interconnected (Zulkipli et al., 2022). Each of the dimensions is equally important, so they must be nurtured simultaneously for the development of a balanced and good character. So his spiritual aspects, such as the soul, must be purified through spiritual teachings and practices. On the other hand, his intellect must be nurtured through knowledge and wisdom. In doing so, an integrated, holistic, and balanced approach is required to cultivate character.

2.2.2 Teleological Dimension: Purpose and Role of Man

Teleology deals with the role and purpose of human existence. Islamic teleology concerning the role and purpose of human existence is rooted in the belief that humans are created to serve and worship Allah as His vicegerent (*khalifah*) on earth (*Al-Baqarah*: 30, n.d.; *Fatir*: 39, n.d.), maintaining justice and balance of it. Al-Farabi's *The Ideal City (al-Madinat al-Fiddilah)* contends that man's ultimate good is

achieving knowledge, and the world state's ultimate goal is to bring happiness to souls in the hereafter (Sheikh, 1962/1982, p. 64). However, al-Attas (2015) states that God creates man to be His *khalifa* (vicegerent) on the earth (p. 41). Nevertheless, al-Ghazali believes that the ultimate goal for man should be to become closer to Allah. He strongly posits that the alchemy of happiness is transferring one's attention from the world to Allah (God) through the true understanding of oneself, Allah (God), the universe, and the afterlife, and their precise nature (Al-Ghazzali, 1910, p. 18). His understanding depicts human purpose in line with Islamic principles, including the process of how to achieve it. In addition, Islamic teleology also advocates human responsibility to contribute positively to humanity and society through good actions based on moral and ethical behaviour guided by divine principles. Ultimately, it integrates both theological and moral purposes of human existence, providing a comprehensive framework of human purposes and role on the earth. Therefore, since humans are created with the ultimate purpose of worshipping and acting as vicegerents of Allah on the earth (*Adh-Dhariyat*: 56, n.d.; *Al-Baqarah*: 30, n.d.; *Fatir*: 39, n.d.) with both physical and spiritual needs, their education should be a means of nurturing all aspects and guiding them toward achieving their balance and fulfilling the role of *khalifah*.

2.2.3 Cosmological Dimension: The Human Station Within the Universe

Islamic cosmology offers a comprehensive understanding of creation, humans' purposes, and their moral and ethical responsibility on the earth, covering both their metaphysical and physical concepts. In Islam, it is believed that Allah has created everything, including humans and universes, and He is the Lord of it (*Al-Fatihah*: 2, n.d.; *Al-Baqarah*: 29, n.d.; *Al-A'raf*: 54, n.d.). Islamic cosmology encompasses spiritual, material, and ethical aspects of humans concerning the cosmos. It ultimately deals with the divine creation and cosmological order of the universe, such as the relationship between man and the universe where they are living, including nature, environment, and other living beings within the wider context of the creation of Allah (*Al-Baqarah*: 29, n.d.; *Al-A'raf*: 54, n.d.). The relationship between *khalifah*, amanah (al-Attas, 1979) and Sustainability can be observed as the Islamic metaphysical

principles that offer guidance for humans' roles in the universe since Allah created the cosmos for an intention (Cholidi & Fadlulah, 2022).

2.2.3.1 Human as Khalifah (Vicegerency)

In Islamic cosmology, it is believed that Allah has created the universe, including humans, with a specific purpose, which is why He placed human beings in its centre as His *Khalifah* (*Al-Baqarah*: 30, n.d.; *Fatir*: 39, n.d.; al-Attas 2015). It ultimately illustrates humans' great role and responsibility on the earth to maintain it following divine will and commands (Shaleh & Islam, 2024). It demonstrates that human beings are not the absolute owners of the universe but rather representatives of their creator to look after and live following his commands and guidance; however, they are not allowed to abuse its resources (Shaleh & Islam, 2024) instead of fulfilling their only needs. The concept of *khalifah* is ultimately grounded in the understanding that they are an integral part of a broader cosmic order where their every action has consequences not only for themselves but also for other living and non-living things, including the environment and the cosmos at large. According to al-Attas (1979), humans have received authority over the cosmos from Allah; they must attain consciousness concerning it, indicating that they have to earn consciousness both for themselves and the universe (pp. 157-159). Kadir et al. (2023) highlight that human beings as Caliphs have an active responsibility of protecting the environment. Thus, human responsibility is to defend and preserve the components of the universe for themselves as well as for future generations, aligning their actions and activities with divine commands and commitments.

2.2.3.2 Amanah (Trustworthiness) in Human-Universe Relationship

Amanah (trustworthiness) is another core concept in Islamic cosmology where humans are assigned to uphold religious, moral, and ethical duties aligned with the divine commands of Allah. Islam perceives the resources of the universe as gifts of Allah; hence, the collective accountability of humans is to undertake these properly as *amanah*, highlighting the responsibility of caring for resources and social duties in the

universe (Shaleh & Islam, 2024). As al-Attas mentioned knowledge is amanah (al-Attas, 1979, p. 157), hence it must go together about man and universes with accountability, knowledge, and fairness. These guiding principles instruct one to fulfil one's duties with integrity. According to Islam, Human beings willingly accept the *amanah* of Allah (*Al-Ahzab*: 72, n.d.). Thus, Allah bestows resources in the universe for humankind, and these resources are observed as *Amanah* to human beings, including the duty of the *khalifah*. Hence, this concept extends to managing the resources of the universe with utmost ethics and responsibility and ensuring their wise and fair use as well as avoiding waste and abuse following Allah's command (*An-Nisa*: 58, n.d.). This concept reflects the larger cosmological philosophy that creations are interconnected and must be treated with respect, fairness, and care. According to Islam and Samsudin (2018), *Amanah* plays a significant role in creating a more peaceful environment by enabling human beings to eliminate harmful qualities and actions such as injustice and ignorance from society.

2.2.3.3 Sustainability and Cosmological Balance

In Islamic cosmology, sustainability is understood as maintaining balance in utilising the bestowed resources of Allah with great ethics and responsibility, aligning with Allah's purpose of creation. The Islamic teachings are that Allah has created the cosmos in balance and harmony without any inconsistency (*Al-Mulk*: 3, n.d.), so it is the human beings' utmost responsibility to uphold this balance since Allah emphasises its moderate treatment (*Al-Furqan*: 67, n.d.; *An-Nahl*: 14, n.d.). According to Bsoul et al. (2022), the principle drawn from Islam concerning sustainability is "guardianship" since a person is a caliph or "guardian", indicating that his responsibility is not only using the resources but also preserving them for others, including the present and future. Thus, human responsibility is to defend and preserve the components of the universe for themselves as well as for future generations, in addition to preventing waste and abuse, aligning their actions and activities with divine commands and commitments (Shaleh & Islam, 2024). In Islamic cosmology, men are observed as one of the important parts of a balanced and interconnected universe, and their intellect plays a critical role in guiding their activities on the earth (Shaleh & Islam, 2024). Their role as *khalifah* with *Amanah* for Sustainability ultimately offers guidance on

how they will interact with the universe and manage its resources by fulfilling their religious, moral, ethical, and rational needs and responsibilities as *khalifah* on the Earth from Allah. However, all of the mischief in the universe, both on land and sea, is the consequence of human deeds (*Ar-Rum: 41*, n.d.), hence humans are the most critical players who are accountable for it and can further damage or protect it. According to Shaleh and Islam (2024), self-interest and individualistic attitudes toward the universe are greatly responsible for the environmental crisis, since they lead to the abuse of its resources, including land. However, these concepts, *khalifah*, *amanah*, and sustainability, can be integrated into education, particularly in character education, since character education deals with the development of moral and ethical dimensions of human beings to develop their noble character to be a decent individual as well as a responsible citizen. Additionally, it fosters human beings' ethical behaviour towards the environment and the universe at large. Accordingly, the Islamic concept and understanding of man can be summarised in Figure 2.1.

The Comprehensive Conception of Man in Islam

Man	Components	Attributes	Implications	Destiny
Spiritual Dimension	● <i>nafs</i> (soul) ● <i>ruh</i> (spirit) ● <i>qalb</i> (non-physical heart)	● Metaphysical, primordial, and transcendental existence ● intrinsically good (<i>fitrah</i>) ● permanence, eternity, infinite ● <i>amānah</i>, <i>mithāq</i> and <i>hikmah</i> (moral responsibility) ● dynamic and active ● justice, knowledge etc	● Unity in multiplicity ● double capacity, for moral success and for moral failure ● a microcosm of the whole universe ● free-will ● grandness of responsibility of man	● '<i>abd Allah</i>: multi-faceted forms of '<i>ibādah</i> (worship), beside obligatory ones ● <i>khalifat Allah</i> (collective identity)
Psychological Dimensions	● '<i>aql</i> (intellect) ● Mind	● Rational, Intellectual ● Creative ● Social, Cultural ● Conscious ● Cognitive ● Emotional ● Educable, etc		
Physical Dimension	● Body ● Five Senses	● Carnal, Finite ● sensual observations ● susceptible to error ● Contingent existence ● Changing, Plastic, Physical differences ● Strength, speed, cleanliness, etc		

Figure 2.1 The Comprehensive Conception of Man in Islam (Source: Vazhathodi, 2011)

2.2.4 Islamic Concept of Good Character

The Islamic concept of good character places a strong emphasis on a combination of divine direction, prophetic role models, and individual endeavours that integrate moral and social obligations with spiritual awareness. According to Tabataba'i (2007), *adab* forms the traits of a person's actions in the real world, while *akhlaq* consists of the attributes of the inner self (Tabataba'i, 2007, p. 12). More broadly, the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)—who is mentioned as the ideal example of *akhlaq* in the Qur'an (*Al-Ahzab*: 21, n.d.) and whom Muslims are urged to imitate—are the cornerstones of the Islamic concept of good character. Good character is therefore not only a social demand but also a divine mandate. Since Allah commands all virtues—including *taqwa* (god-consciousness), *ikhlas* (sincerity), justice (*adal*), trustworthiness, patience (*sabr*), forgiveness, gratitude (*shukr*), modesty, steadfastness in worship, respect for parents, charity (*sadaqah*), avoidance of backbiting and slander, honesty and truthfulness—they form the foundation of good character in Islam. Following heavenly commands—which include keeping promises, acting justly, doing good deeds, and upholding moral principles—is the foundation of good character.

Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) clearly expresses his mission rather plainly by signifying, “Surely, I have been sent to perfect good manners” (al-Bukhari, 2004/2015, p. 228). This declaration is also affirmed in the Qur'an. Allah says, “And you are truly ‘a man’ of outstanding character” (*Al-Qalam*: 4, n.d.). The fact that the primary objective of the Prophet was to teach and set an example of the highest moral standards highlights the significance of this endeavour to the Prophetic mission and the value of excellent character to Islam. Moreover, al-Ghazali believes that “...good conduct is the name of bringing greed and anger under the control of intellect and Shariat” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 52). For al-Attas (1995), it is the action of the soul (pp. 32-33). Accordingly, since humans are inherently composed of both spiritual and material dimensions encompassing soul, heart, and free will, they are oriented toward a dual moral and spiritual purpose. All these human faculties are interconnected and collectively influence human actions, such as thinking, feeling, and willingness. He is prone to good character as a *fitrah*, but the influence of external factors leads him to adopt and display bad character. Therefore, they need education,

particularly character education, to mould their moral and ethical development to behave properly in line with divine will.

Islamic good character includes a long list of character traits such as justice, patience, kindness, forgiveness, compassion, integrity (Sule & Mainiyo, 2024), and so on, that ensure an outstanding and comprehensive positive character development framework. All of the good character traits logically reflect the person's internal state of the soul. Hence, Islam emphasises the cultivation of virtues and moral responsibility, encouraging doing right actions and discouraging wrongdoing. From an Islamic perspective, all of the character traits are observed as Allah's creation, and are connected with a highly divine purpose, indicating that humans are created with certain religious, moral, and ethical potentials and responsibilities. It is also believed that character is not just moral, social, ethical, or psychological, but also a complete spiritual matter that relates to the person's relationship with his Creator, Allah, the universe, and themselves. As al-Ghazali highlights, the alchemy of happiness is transferring one's attention from the world to Allah (God) through the true understanding of oneself, Allah, the universe, and the afterlife, and their precise nature (Al-Ghazzali, 1910, p. 18). Consequently, the sanctification of the soul and the heart, known in Islam as *tazkiyah*, is one of the fundamental aspects of character development for Muslims in the world, highlighting the necessity of aligning one's actions and character with Islamic teachings to achieve righteousness and fulfil the purpose of creation.

2.2.5 Islamic Metaphysical Foundations of Education

Islamic metaphysical dimensions provide a framework for Islamic education that goes beyond merely knowledge acquisition, training, or enriching skills and worldly development of individuals. Education, therefore, from this perspective, becomes a means of cultivating an individual holistically, ensuring the development of spiritual and physical aspects towards executing their divine purpose assigned by Allah (al-Attas, 1979).

Thus, human education within an Islamic worldview should be aimed at nurturing their body (*jasad*), soul (*nafs*), reason (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), spirit (*rūh*), and free will simultaneously since all of them are essential and interconnected (Zulkipli et al., 2022). Accordingly, the education must be holistic and in line with divine guidance and sources to ensure comprehensive education, prioritising moral and character development, as well as ensuring guidance toward the divine purpose. It must facilitate balanced development rather than focusing merely on intellectual or vocational training or the development of skills. Education must guide individuals toward spiritual and physical development simultaneously to make them aware of their role and responsibilities as *khalifah* on earth.

Moreover, education must focus on their moral and character development since they have both theological and moral purposes and responsibilities to fulfil on the earth according to the divine commands. Such education facilitates the production of a “good man,” defined by al-Attas (1995, p. 74) as a person of *adab*. It means education must cultivate good character qualities that are essential for observing the roles of worship, moral agent, and vicegerency (*khalifah*) of Allah. Ultimately, education for humans must serve as a guide to aid everyone in recognising their role and divine purpose of existence on the earth, since only through education can humans be perfected (Setiawan et al., 2019). Therefore, the aim of education is not only to create employment opportunities or produce skilled workers, but also to foster spiritual development. Hence, it must integrate instructions not only on what to know but also on why it matters to drive students to consider their learning and knowledge as a part of a broader journey toward their fulfilment of divine duty as *khalifah* and submission to Allah.

These Islamic metaphysical principles hence outline the philosophical foundations and objectives of education. Accordingly, education must emphasise moral character development as an integral component of holistic development and the fulfilment of humanity’s divine purposes. This perspective offers a framework for understanding what education ought to be and aim for from an Islamic metaphysical perspective. Accordingly, this framework does not necessarily require all educational programs to be formally labelled as “Islamic education.” Still, it provides a

foundational metaphysical orientation that can guide educational aims, values, and practices in general.

2.3 ISLAMIC EPISTEMOLOGY: THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (*‘ILM*)

The theory of knowledge, often known as epistemology, is derived from the Greek words *epistēmē* (knowledge) and *logos* (reason) and is the branch of philosophy that explores the nature, scope, origin, and limits of human knowledge. According to Stroll and Martinich (2024), epistemology is the philosophical study of human knowledge. It addresses fundamental questions about knowledge, such as what knowledge is, how to acquire it, and what people know. Hence, Islamic metaphysical aspects of humans and epistemology are thoroughly linked since acquiring knowledge is the utmost and unique quality of humans bestowed by Allah to guide and fulfil their duty as a *khalifah* on earth. Accordingly, Islamic epistemology is based on the conviction that Allah (God) is the ultimate source of knowledge and that human understanding is a process of discovering divine truths concealed throughout the cosmos, employing knowledge bestowed by Allah (Nasution et al., 2023). It integrates theological, philosophical, and scientific approaches to knowledge, emphasising the harmony between divine revelation and other approaches to knowledge to preserve the balance between faith, reason, and reality.

2.3.1 Concept and Nature of Knowledge (*‘Ilm*) in Islam

When it comes to knowledge, Islamic tradition often uses the Arabic word *‘ilm*, which is a comprehensive phrase that encompasses ideas, practices, actions, teaching, learning, and education that are associated with knowledge, its acquisition, as well as its implementation. The Qur’an states that Adam, as the first man, received his first knowledge or instruction (*‘ilm*) shortly after creation, from Allah, who served as his first teacher and imparted to him “all the Names” (*Al-Baqarah*: 31-33, n.d.). However, other words for knowledge and related topics are also employed, such as *tadabbur*, *fiqh*, *basiran*, *tazakkur*, and *tafakkur* (Ashimi, 2022, p. 78). Moreover, knowledge is seen in Islam as a divine gift (al-Attas, 1979), a matter of respect and status (*Al-*

Mujadila: 11, n.d.; Ali 'Imran: 18, n.d.; Az-Zumar: 9, n.d.; Fatir: 28, n.d.; Al-'Ankabut: 43, n.d.), as well as a means of understanding the creator and his creation. Beneficial knowledge is also regarded as an act of worship as a ceaseless charity (Riyad As-Salihin-the Book of Knowledge - كتاب العلم - Hadith 1383, n.d.).

Al-Ghazali states, “*ILM* is the science of religion, the science of the knowledge of God and His verses” (al-Ghazali, 1993c, Vol. 1, p. 46). Al-Ghazali posits that knowledge is a unique attribute of man that may either bring him down to the level of an animal or raise him to the level of an angel, facilitating the development of both physical and spiritual aspects to the achievement of the ultimate pleasure. On the other hand, if the meaning of a thing or an object of knowledge arrives in the soul, al-Attas (1980/1999) defines it as knowledge. Moreover, he thinks that it is the combination of belief and action (al-Attas, 1980/1999, pp. 33-34); his understanding covers both the theoretical and practical aspects of knowledge since he emphasised putting it into practice by acts and works of service to God (Al-Attas, 1995, p. 69). Moreover, when it comes to the object of knowledge, Islamic perspectives adopt all of the realities, including metaphysical, cosmological, and physical, in addition to all matters related to human life, purpose, and existence on earth (Sulaiman, 2022, p. 204).

2.3.2 Sources of Knowledge in Islamic Epistemology

When it comes to the sources of knowledge, the ultimate source of knowledge in Islamic epistemology is the Qur'an, which Muslims embrace without questioning as the revelation (*wahy*). In addition, the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), known as *hadith*, are also regarded as the principal source of knowledge. Additionally, Islamic epistemology emphasises and acknowledges other knowledge sources, including reason (*'aql*), empirical observation, and their synthesis. Accordingly, it places a great emphasis on the role that reason and empirical observation, or sense, play in the development and application of knowledge, as reason and sense are the primary human faculties that help to enable comprehension of the world and the hereafter. Thus, Islamic scholars have long pursued systematic investigation to comprehend Allah's wisdom and His creation, using both reason and empirical observation as sources of knowledge, since they believe that the natural world is a repository of

knowledge that reflects Allah's signs. Accordingly, Ibn al-Haytham (965-1040) highlighted the importance of empirical evidence and experimentation in Muslim scientific inquiry encompassing reflection on Al-Qur'an (Alias & Hanapi, 2016, p. 89; Tbakhi & Amr, 2007). "According to the Qur'an, the general tools for the study of nature are our senses and our intellect" (Golshani, 1989/1995, p. 75).

Acknowledging and appreciating Allah's wisdom through the study of the physical world by the integration of sense and reason, as well as their inward reflection (reflection in the heart), demonstrates the importance of both reason and empirical methodologies in comprehending the material world and searching for ultimate reality. Ikhwn al-Safa, an influential Islamic school of thought in the tenth or eleventh century, proposed three methods of knowledge acquisition: through the senses (*hiss*), reason (*'aql*), and proof (*burhn*). However, Kaya (2019) claimed their reasons (*'aql*) were a comprehensive concept that included intuitive knowledge as well as all forms of knowledge, particularly revelation (*wahy*). Golshani (1989/1995) highlights that while observation and experimentation are critical for understanding the physical world, not all knowledge is derived from sensory experiences (p. 78). Nonetheless, the Mutazilite school of thought put their ultimate trust in reason as the foundation of knowledge. Without nullifying the importance of revelation, primarily, the school aimed to defend reason above divine revelation (Rahman, 2002).

On the other hand, a different view was coined by Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) advocating for rational philosophy within an Islamic framework, arguing that reason (*'aql*) and revelation (*wahy*) are complementary and not contradictory (Islam, 2018; Tbakhi & Amr, 2008; Al-Rsa'i, 2018; Butt, 2016). However, some parts of our knowledge we achieve using our senses, and some parts were revealed to prophets who transmitted to us, particularly about the hidden objects and information, including angels, resurrection, heaven, and hell (Sulaiman, 2022, p. 226). Ultimately, Islamic epistemology acknowledges both reason and empirical observation as the essential sources of knowledge, as long as they are consistent with divine principles (*wahy*). Islamic epistemology defends both as vital forms of knowledge.

Moreover, Al-Ghazali (1058–1111) acknowledged several sources of knowledge, such as intellect, authority, intuition, and revelation. He employs “intellect (*‘aql*)” to indicate perception, reasoning, and their synthesis. Nevertheless, he highlights revelation as the ultimate source, stating that the Holy Prophets provide true knowledge, which transcends the intellect (al-Ghazzali, 1993c). Consequently, al-Ghazali’s perspective shapes the framework and boundaries of Islamic perspectives on epistemology and influences people’s understanding and behaviour to apprehend the world as well as the hereafter. Thus, his epistemology provides a comprehensive framework based on the Islamic metaphysical perspective encompassing the existing sources of knowledge, while placing the revelation that informs the study that Muslim education must be based on Islamic epistemology, such as that of al-Ghazali.

2.3.3 Classification of Knowledge in Islamic Thought

Al-Ghazali has a highly esteemed position, as his conception of knowledge aims to provide a fair classification of knowledge that is in line with Islam and facilitates understanding of the hereafter by evaluating the ethical and legal status of the sciences in light of the Islamic concept and understanding of knowledge. Accordingly, al-Ghazali distinguished between two categories of knowledge, known as *fard ‘ayn* and *fard kifayah* knowledge, according to the obligations associated with their acquisition (Bakar & Nasr, 1992/1998). For him, the science of the way to the afterlife, or *‘ilm tariq al-akhirah*, is what the Prophet wanted every Muslim to know and possess *fard ‘ayn*. *Fard kifayah* encompasses the science of religious knowledge sources, jurisprudence, prophetic traditions, Qur’anic interpretation, and Kalam, among other religious sciences. However, it encompasses the intellectual sciences such as mathematics, medicine, and the inheritance and legacy division (Bakar & Nasr, 1992/1998, p. 211). Al-Attas (1995) also posits a similar view (p. 73) that is consistent with al-Ghazali.

Nevertheless, the 1977 Makkah conference classified knowledge in a wider sense, acknowledging “Perennial” drawn from the Qur’an and Sunnah (Sharia) and “Acquired” compliant with Sharia (Al-Attas, 1979, p. 159). This study upheld the 1977 Makkah conference’s classification of accepting knowledge in a broader sense;

1. Religious (divine) knowledge: understanding the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Sharia through the sources of revelation, and 2. Worldly (human) knowledge: knowledge about the physical world that is beneficial to society, humanity, and the universe at large through intellect and sensory observation, as well as their combination in line with religious knowledge (Al-Attas, 1979).

However, in Islamic epistemology, knowledge of Shariah is categorised as *fard Ayin*, and other knowledge is *fard kifayah*, where it is compulsory for some members of the Muslim community to master them (Al-Attas, 1995, p. 73). Nonetheless, if we look at the Qur'an, we do not see any order or discussion regarding separation in knowledge. When Allah orders to '*Iqra*' (Read) (*Al-'Alaq: 1*, n.d.), it refers to reading or mastery of all fields of knowledge. Moreover, when Allah taught Adam, HE taught everything (*Al-Baqarah: 31*, n.d.). Hence, we have to give equal importance to both kinds of knowledge to shape a comprehensive framework of epistemology, knowledge, and education for Muslims so that it would be a means to understand the divine will, truth, command, universe, as well as their roles and responsibilities in it.

2.3.4 Curriculum Foundations in Islamic Education

Curriculum plays an important role in outlining content, goals, teaching and learning approaches, as well as assessment strategies for the educational system. It ultimately answers questions such as what can be learned and how, in addition to how the learning will be evaluated. A curriculum often provides a structure or framework for each area of study, offering subjects, topics to be covered, and the outcomes. It "is a tool to achieve the educational purpose" (Barni & Mahdany, 2017, p. 253). Curriculum can be different from level to level and subject to subject. However, religion, moral and cultural values, societal norms and needs, and educational demands as well as political ideologies can influence curriculum development (Norlianti et al., 2024; Al-Farisy et al., 2024; Alam et al., 2023). Nonetheless, it aims to offer a consistent and comprehensive educational experience, guiding teachers' teaching approach. Accordingly, the Islamic curriculum fulfils Islamic principles in the formulation of curriculum to connect the relationship with religion and subject

matter (Barni & Mahdany, 2017, p. 254) as well as the content and instructions. It is the curriculum that is based on one Islamic worldview (Ramdane & Souad, 2020). Hence, it focuses on students' spiritual, moral, social, and character development, including academic achievement through knowledge and skills development (Norlianti et al., 2024). Consequently, the curriculum foundation is greatly important since it ultimately provides inputs and guidelines to shape the educational framework in a structured way consistent with religious, moral, ethical, cultural, and social values as well as educational needs.

From an Islamic perspective, the curriculum foundation emphasises the integration of spiritual, moral, and social values in the curriculum to ensure spiritual and intellectual growth simultaneously within the formal educational process. Aziz (2018) thinks that the curriculum foundations can be different from society to society based on their belief and values. Accordingly, the Islamic curriculum foundation is deeply rooted in Islamic belief and philosophy that ultimately guide the development of content as well as the instruction approaches of Muslim education. It aims to cultivate a holistic individual nurturing all of his aspects, such as body (*jasad*), soul (*nafs*), reason (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), and spirit (*rūh*), that compose his both spiritual and physical existence, including religious awareness, moral and ethical conduct and a social sensibility to live as the *khalifah* of Allah on earth. Aziz (2018) states that education systems often design and develop curricula following a consistent approach, as outlined in Maksoud and Suhailah (2016), putting the belief in the initial, followed by the worldview, philosophy, and objective of education. Hence, the Islamic curriculum foundation informs that the Islamic curriculum development must consider that students are not only required to achieve academic knowledge but also to develop a deeper understanding of their identity as Muslims as well as their roles and responsibilities in society and the universe at large. Consequently, it emphasises balancing the growth of students, ensuring the integration of revelation and intellect in advocating all kinds of development. Moreover, Maksoud and Suhailah (2016) emphasise the significance of curriculum foundations in designing an integrated, value-based curriculum by outlining a comprehensive foundation and curriculum components as presented in Figure 2.2. Accordingly, Islamic curriculum foundations inform that the curriculum for Muslims must be grounded in Islamic beliefs, such as

the oneness of Allah, God-consciousness, Worldview, and philosophy of education, to prepare students to contribute beneficially to family, community, and humanity, upholding Islamic beliefs and values such as justice, sensibility, honesty, and compassion both in private and public spheres. Ultimately, it must be promoted to foster such individuals who are religiously pious, intellectually knowledgeable, morally sound, ethically upright, socially bonded, and spiritually having strong relationships with Allah, rooted in a sense of purpose of His *khalifah*.

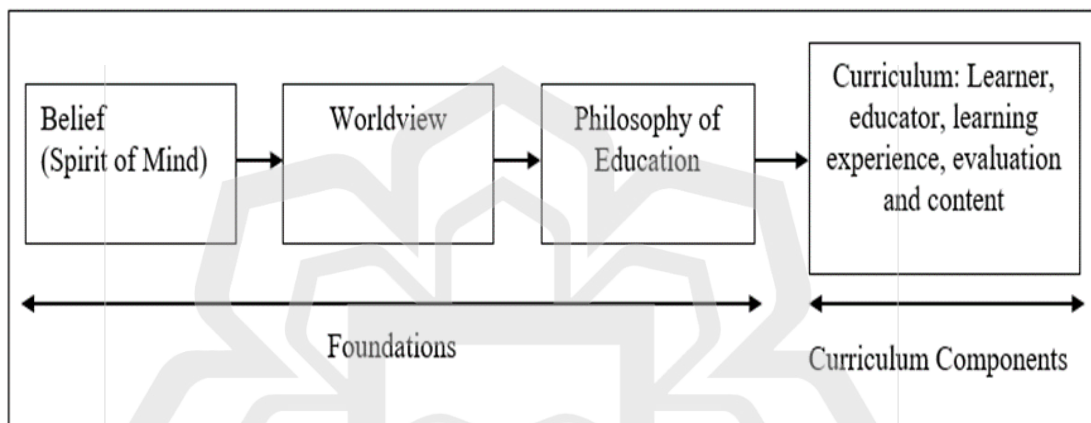


Figure 2.2 Foundations and Curriculum Components (Source: Maksoud & Suhailah, 2016), as cited in Aziz, 2018)

2.3.5 Islamic Pedagogical Principles and Approaches

Pedagogy in this study refers to the theory and practice of education as understood within Islamic educational philosophy, where teaching and learning are grounded in the Islamic worldview and its metaphysical foundations. The philosophical foundations of Islamic pedagogy, including Islamic metaphysical aspects such as ultimate reality, the concept of human, teleology, cosmology, and epistemology, inform and guide its principles and practices. Accordingly, it is a philosophical approach that shapes how a teacher perceives the learner, learning purpose, as well as their role and practices as a teacher (Memon et al., 2024). It aims at nurturing students' holistic development, including spiritual, ethical, and intellectual, thus emphasising the integration of faith, moral, and academic development within formal educational programs (*What Is Islamic Pedagogy?*, n.d.).

Additionally, Islamic pedagogy advocates an integrated and comprehensive educational experience and setting so that students can not only receive academic instruction but also develop a strong basis of spiritual and moral integrity, social responsibility, and justice. Consequently, it encompasses several core approaches such as Mentoring, Lecturing, Asking and Responding, Narration (storytelling), Metaphor, Remembrance (*tajkira*), Training, Practising, Habituation, Reward and Punishment and Modelling in teaching and learning (Wiyani, 2014; Khofiati, 2018). However, Islamic pedagogy is not merely a teaching approach; it rationally forms notions of instruction from Islamic principles (Memon, 2021). Additionally, Islamic pedagogy outlines the role of the educator and student in the process of teaching and learning. Thus, it advocates a respect-based mutual relationship between teachers and students where educational activities are perceived as lifelong pursuits and means to come closer to Allah and fulfil an individual's roles as His *khalifah* (al-Ghazali, 1993a, vol. III).

Consequently, Islamic pedagogical focus is guided by Islamic principles, centred on the cultivation of students' holistic development, including spiritual, moral, and intellectual, rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah as well as Islamic educational philosophy. Hence, it emphasises instructing and acquiring both religious knowledge and worldly knowledge to fulfil students' total needs. It promotes teachers as facilitators, instructors, and role models in guiding students in the practical application and demonstration of Islamic values. Additionally, it encourages students to be proactive and play their role in developing outstanding character, as the al-Ghazali emphasis on (Al-Ghazali, 1962; Alkanderi, 2001; Zulqarnain, 2017), including self-discipline and academic achievements, as the preparation for future life is grounded in their faith and contributes positively to humanity. Figure 2.3 presents the pedagogical focus of Islamic education.

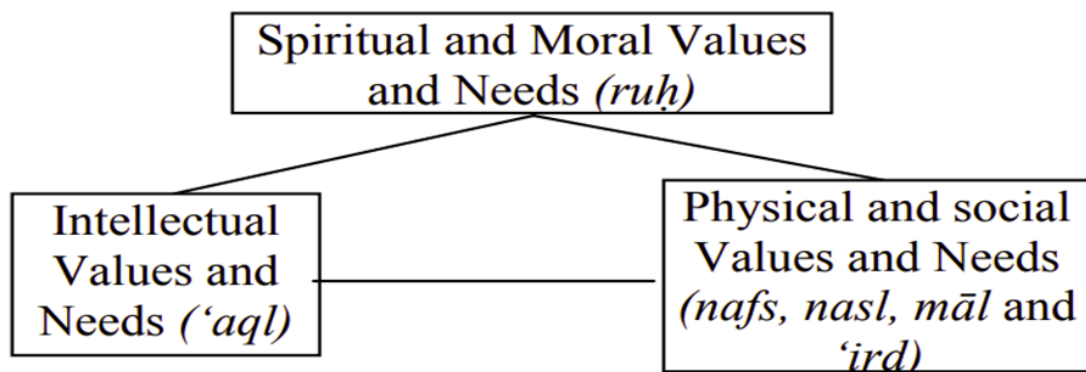


Figure 2.3 The Islamic Education’s Pedagogical Focus (Source: Vazhathodi, 2011)

2.4 ISLAMIC AXIOLOGY: ETHICS, VALUES, AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION

Axiology deals with ethics, values, and aesthetics from philosophical perspectives. It contributes to the debate of types of values, such as physical and spiritual, values that are subjective or objective, universal or comparative (Matin, 1968/2006). Since Allah commands all virtues—including *taqwa* (god-consciousness), *ikhlas* (sincerity), justice (*adal*), trustworthiness, patience (*sabr*), forgiveness, gratitude (*shukr*), modesty, steadfastness in worship, respect for parents, charity (*sadaqah*), avoidance of backbiting and slander, honesty and truthfulness—they are fundamental to the development of good character in Islam. Following heavenly commands—which include keeping promises, acting justly, doing good deeds, and upholding moral principles—is the foundation of good character. However, from an Islamic perspective, it is the study of Islamic values, notably concentrating on what is believed to be valuable, good, and moral concerning knowledge, teaching, and learning. Matin (1968/2006) believes that values are the absolute standards of the act, the ultimate ends to which human beings’ endeavours are directed. Accordingly, the Islamic value system provides a comprehensive framework for values and ethics based on Islamic belief and contributes to shaping every aspect of life to act accordingly. Thus, a value system is significant since it ultimately offers insight into education to inculcate values and virtues into people for their balanced growth. Islamic axiology, in this sense, is grounded in Islamic principles and focuses on the development of good

character, moral and ethical values and conduct, spiritual growth, as well as their demonstration in daily life.

Values are central to Islamic beliefs that also translate into educational processes and activities as one of the fundamental components, and Islamic axiology facilitates it by directing educational activities, including both teachers and students, towards Islamic values. Within Islamic axiology, a knowledgeable individual should be morally upright and well-mannered (Hassan et al., 2010, p. 2115). This aspect is significant since it ensures that education not only transmits knowledge but also inculcates spiritual, moral, and social responsibilities to prepare them positively in the community. Consequently, the Qur'an and Sunnah serve as the cornerstones for values in Islamic axiology. This integrated framework (Figure 2.4) presents the Islamic holistic integrated value structure based on Islamic principles. Accordingly, Islamic axiology plays a significant role in integrating utmost Islamic essential values such as religion, self, intellect, progeny, property, and honour (Vazhathodi, 2011, pp. 113, 118; Aziz, 2018, pp. 87-88) into the formal education, including curricular, co-curricular, pedagogy, and student-teacher-parents relationships to set up a value-based live educational setting focusing on translating the learned values into practice. Ultimately, the Qur'an and Sunnah, particularly the practical life of the Prophet, inform Islamic axiology in addition to Islamic scholars' contribution to developing it to guide the educational system towards a comprehensive approach and students' holistic development.

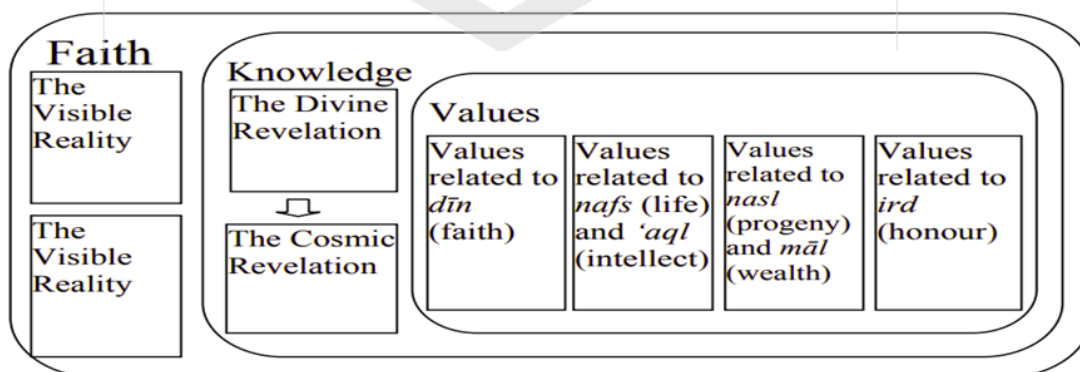


Figure 2.4 The Islamic Holistic Integrated Value-structure (Source: Vazhathodi, 2011)

Hence, Islamic education, particularly character education, fosters the inner beauty of individuals through nurturing good character and ethical living toward the understanding of divine purpose. Accordingly, Islamic axiology provides insight into the Muslim education's assessment system based on Islamic values and principles to assess the student's holistic development, where character plays a crucial role.

2.5 REASON AND INTELLECT ('*AQL*) IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

In Islamic philosophy, logic refers to the use of intellect for reasoning and critical thinking. Islam's emphasis on rational thought and reasoning must be in line with Islamic principles, balancing belief and spiritual understanding of divine wisdom, since it is an essential tool in understanding divine purposes as well as moral and ethical decision-making. As al-Ghazali posits, divine revelation is the ultimate source of knowledge, contending that human reason and sense are only gifts from Allah into the human heart and should be guided by it (al-Ghazali, 1993c, Watt, 1953). Thus, logic in the Islamic context is employed as one of the essential instruments that facilitate the understanding of both the material universe and the divine worlds, making the possibility of the study of worldly knowledge, including sciences. Golshani (1989/1995) states that the Qur'an advocates the intellect as the general tool for the study of nature (p. 75). However, in Islam, all knowledge can not be gained through pure reasoning or logic; therefore, guidance and support of revelation are needed to achieve holistic knowledge to promote and ensure both religious and worldly knowledge. Consequently, Islamic education promotes logical reasoning, critical thinking, ethics, and self-reflection in exploring and understanding the ultimate truth as well as the worldly truth under the direction of revelation. It ultimately contributes to the development of good character. Hence, Islamic education emphasises and integrates logic in education to encourage the balanced growth of a sound mind with the intellectual capability to distinguish between right and wrong to act rightly in line with Islamic principles.

2.6 THE ROLE OF CHARACTER AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN ISLAM

Islamic philosophical perspectives, including metaphysical—ultimate reality, the concept of man, teleology, cosmology—epistemological, axiological, and logical dimensions, place a strong significance on character development as it is directly connected to the fulfilment of human purpose assigned as *khalifah* of Allah on earth (*Al-Baqarah*: 30, n.d.; *Fatir*: 39, n.d.). Character in this context is not merely about outward conduct; it means an arrangement of thoughts, intentions, and actions with the spiritual and moral purpose encompassing humans' thinking, feeling and willing as assigned by Allah for their existence in the universe. Accordingly, this development must be balanced with the ultimate consequences of religious, moral, and ethical actions. Therefore, to achieve balanced growth and virtuous character, all aspects, including body (*jasad*), soul (*nafs*), reason (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), spirit (*rūh*), and free will of an individual, must work in harmony. Hence, the person's character is not merely an outcome of his intellect, psychology, or environment but includes the cultivation of spirituality toward the sanctification of the soul. Accordingly, the ultimate goal of excellent character and conduct according to al-Ghazali (1993a) is to limit one to Allah's love, which may be accomplished by breaking ties to the world's attachments (v-III, p. 53).

Al-Attas (1979) states that in Islam humans are composed of both soul and body with rationality and animality, once spirit and once matter, united as a self with attributes given by Allah. Thus, humans possess spiritual and rational cognition organs such as the heart and intellect, including faculties related to physical, intellectual, and spiritual vision, experience, and consciousness. Consequently, in terms of character development in Islam, the faculties of the human play a significant role in shaping character, such as his *'aql* (intellect), having the ability to rational understanding and wisdom of divine and moral principles through the acquisition of knowledge and information. The *qalb* (heart) must be purified to be inclined to goodness and right doings in addition to being close to Allah, since it is the centre of emotions and essential for spiritual development. The human soul (*nafs*) is the internal identity needed to nurture and discipline it to save it from indecent desires and tendencies. Their *jasad* (body) is the visible physical aspect requiring utmost care and respect in line with Islamic teachings and values to keep it clean, pure, fit, and

healthy. The ultimate spiritual aspect of humans is the spirit (*rūh*) needed to be active and live through worshipping and activities in line with divine teachings to uphold a strong relationship with Allah, ensuring inner peace. Accordingly, the development of good character is closely linked to the balance and harmonious growth of body (*jasad*), soul (*nafs*), reason (*‘aql*), heart (*qalb*), and spirit (*rūh*) as exemplified in the life of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). As al-Attas outlines, humans need training in total personality, including “spirit, intellect, and rational self, imagination, and bodily senses” simultaneously (al-Attas, 1979, p. 158). Consequently, Islamic education, particularly character education, must be integrated and comprehensive and aimed at developing all aspects of human spiritual and material, going beyond the conventional focus on academic, professional, or technical skills development. The ultimate goal of education must be to develop a balanced Nobel character grounded in both spiritual and intellectual virtues to guide people to act as *khalifah* in the universe toward achieving the ultimate purpose through worship, activities, and complete submission. Thus, education would become a means for humans not only for learning or acquiring knowledge and information or training skills but also for guiding and directing individuals towards attaining “a consciousness of himself as *Khalifatullah*” (al-Attas, 1979, p. 158).

2.7 KNOWLEDGE (*‘ILM*) AND ITS ROLE IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The Islamic concept of education is deeply rooted in the Islamic perspective of knowledge (*‘ilm*). In Islamic tradition, *‘ilm* is a thorough phrase that encompasses approaches to teaching and learning, ideas, and education that are connected with knowledge, its gaining, and its execution. According to the Qur’an, Adam, as the first human, obtained his first knowledge or lessons (*‘ilm*) shortly after creation, from Allah, who served as his first teacher and instilled in him “all the Names” (*Al-Baqarah: 31-33*, n.d.). However, knowledge in Islam is not simply the acquisition and accumulation of information but a unique and unified means to comprehend divine wisdom, and the purpose to fulfil and implement in life on earth to live righteously. As al-Ghazali (1993c) states, “*ILM* is the science of religion, the science of the knowledge of God and His verses” (Vol. 1, p. 46). Thus, it is the ultimate means

to develop a closer relationship with Allah. In Islam, knowledge is understood as a divine gift, a matter of respect and status (*Al-Mujadila: 11*, n.d.; *Ali 'Imran: 18*, n.d.; *Az-Zumar: 9*, n.d.; *Fatir: 28*, n.d.; *Al-'Ankabut: 43*, n.d.), as well as a means of understanding the creator and his creation, thus it needs modesty and sanctification to fully appreciate, understand and apply. Prophet (ﷺ) states that “When Allah wishes good for someone, He bestows upon him the understanding of Deen (*Riyad As-Salihin-the Book of Knowledge - كتاب العلم Hadith 1376*, n.d.).” Throughout the Qur’an and Hadith, the relevance of knowledge and the necessity to acquire it have been emphasised (*At-Tawbah: 122*, n.d.; *An-Nahl: 43*, n.d.). Furthermore, beneficial knowledge is observed as a form of ceaseless charity” (*Riyad As-Salihin-the Book of Knowledge - كتاب العلم Hadith 1383*, n.d.). Islamic knowledge provides complete spiritual, ethical, political, and social guidelines touching every aspect of human life and needs. Thus, knowledge in Islam is the tool to defend the religion (Islam) as well as to defend the self as *khalifa* of Allah on the earth.

Accordingly, Islamic teaching and learning are essentially centred on the concept of *Tawheed*, which is the belief in the oneness of Allah since this principle was emphasized from the very beginning when Allah revealed the first words to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), with an emphasis on “reading” in the name of Allah alone (*Al-'Alaq: 1-5*, n.d.), stressing writing as well (*Al-Baqarah: 283*, n.d.). The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Convey from me even an Ayah of the Qur’an...” (*Riyad As-Salihin-the Book of Knowledge - كتاب العلم Hadith 1380*, n.d.). Additionally, He stated that knowledge acquisition is compulsory for Muslims. Therefore, the acquisition of knowledge is a religious obligation for all Muslims, irrespective of gender, as it facilitates understanding of Allah, appropriate worship, and ethical behaviour, ultimately leading to the attainment of righteousness, wisdom, and a close relationship with the Almighty. As a result, Islamic scholars place great importance on knowledge, making it, to some extent, compelling for followers, and that can be done through education. Thus, all of the aforementioned sources, including Islamic philosophical foundations such as metaphysical—ultimate reality, concept of man, teleology, cosmology, epistemological, axiological, and logical perspectives, inform Islamic education.

The Islamic concept of knowledge is fundamental to the Islamic concept of education since it is the systematic process of teaching and learning, transfer and infusion, internalisation, and manifestation of knowledge and experiences that contribute to spiritual, moral, social, and intellectual development. In this process, both religious and worldly knowledge are observed as interconnected and mutually beneficial and reinforcing, both of which are necessary for leading a balanced existence and life. Therefore, Islamic education integrates the study of the Qur'an, Hadith, and sciences and logic with otherworldly disciplines to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of the universe in a balanced way, developing simultaneously spiritually, morally, and intellectually. Thus, Islamic education takes the responsibility of guiding individuals towards fulfilling their metaphysical—Spiritual and Worldly—purpose (teleology). The Islamic education of Al-Ghazali endorses a thorough approach to human development that encompasses religious, rational, good character, and spiritual development to bring individuals closer to Allah and ensure their pleasure in this life as well as the hereafter (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 53). Consistent thinking can be found in al-Attas (1980/1999) as he thinks that education in Islam entails instilling *adab* (al-Attas, 1980/1999, pp. 33-34), which involves the discipline of mind, body, and soul (1979). According to him, the acquisition of knowledge is not considered education unless it includes moral purpose, which is called *adab*, which is “right action” that is derived from self-discipline and wisdom (Al-Attas, 1995, p. 16). Consequently, the role of knowledge in Islamic education is significant. Eventually, the 1977 Makkah conference officially established the comprehensive aim of Islamic education that outlines all of the questions—what: the balanced development of the whole personality of Man, how: through the training of Man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings, and bodily senses, why: to advance to the realization of his status as *Khalifatullah* to whom Allah has undertaken the authority of the universe—answer concerning Islamic education (Al-Attas, 1979, pp.158-159). Since learning, reflection, knowledge, and wisdom are highly valued in the lives of each individual, as seen in the Qur'an and Hadith, upon which Islamic education is founded. This approach not only promotes the growth of the intellect and character (*akhlaq*), but it also works to harmonise religious knowledge with life and worldly practical skills.

Husain and Ashraf (1979) strongly uphold that as a religion, Islam provides an objective norm for educators, as it provides a clear guideline for educators to follow in their educational planning (p. 1). Accordingly, Islamic education not only emphasises teachers' roles to foster teacher-student friendly educational settings but also the active engagement of students and parents to play a role in its effective implementation within the comprehensive educational settings (Al-Ghazali, 1962; Al-Ghazali, 1993a, vol. III, p. 53, Alkanderi, 2001; Zulqarnain, 2017). Additionally, it emphasises early education as al-Ghazali believes that it is the ideal time to transform children into good characters as their hearts are "bright like a jewel and soft like a candle and free from all impressions" (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 64).

Islamic education promotes teaching and learning of religious knowledge through the source of revelation, such as the Qur'an and Hadith, and the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), in addition to his companions' understanding. On the other hand, worldly knowledge such as sciences through experimental reasoning and sensory observation, as well as their synthesis-based sources. However, al-Ghazali (1993a) thinks that "The children should be given at the beginning to learn the reading of the Holy Quran and thereafter Hadis or the sayings of the Prophet and the histories and lives of the Prophets, saints, and sages" (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p 65). Nonetheless, Islamic knowledge emphasises the integration of sources such as revelation, intellect, and its components to gain comprehensive knowledge and understanding. Some parts of our knowledge we can achieve using our senses, and some parts were revealed to prophets who transmitted to us, including angels, resurrection, heaven, and hell (Sulaiman, 2022, p. 226). Consequently, Islamic education must integrate and promote teaching and learning knowledge using all the sources in line with Islamic principles since it is observed as a tool for spiritual, moral, and intellectual development. As Husain and Ashraf (1979) emphasise, a deep faith in God and a wholehearted acceptance of a God-given moral code (p. 1). Islamic education, particularly al-Ghazali's educational idea, strongly advocates for censorship of teaching and learning subjects as well as their acquisition limit in line with Islamic ethical and legal principles (Bakar & Nasr, 1992/1998, pp. 212-214), to avoid contradictions and confusions. Furthermore, Islamic education not only emphasises knowledge acquisition but also emphasises its practical execution through

actions since it is opined as the combination of belief and action (Al-Attas, 1995, p. 69).

Rahman (2023) asserts that education should not only prepare students for the workforce but also inculcate in them a holistic mindset, justice, honesty, dignity, and a high standard and responsibility in life (pp. 1-2). Accordingly, it plays a crucial role in helping people distinguish between good and wrong and steer their lives towards the correct path (Rahman, 2023, p. 1). Islamic education plays this role by incorporating both worldly and afterlife aspects into its educational process and emphasising the inculcation of theological and philosophical principles through the dissemination of knowledge and information, ultimately forming individuals' ultimate goal of pleasing Allah. Nonetheless, Al-Attas (1995) thinks that the goal of knowledge acquisition in Islam is to produce a good man, not merely a good citizen, and a good man has to be good to himself since injustice to oneself can impede justice to others (Al-Attas, 1995, p. 74). Additionally, the Prophet (ﷺ) says, "He who does not acquire knowledge with the sole intention of seeking the Pleasure of Allah but for worldly gain, will not smell the fragrance of Jannah on the Day of Resurrection" (*Riyad As-Salihin-the Book of Knowledge - كتاب العلم Hadith 1391*, n.d.). Therefore, the ultimate purpose of knowledge and educational activities in Islam must be to please Allah alone.

2.7.1 Conceptual Foundations of Islamic Education

Islamic education not only promotes the transmission, acquisition, accumulation, and application of knowledge but also focuses on the development of the good character of the learners to prepare holistic individuals to serve their religion, self, family, society, country, as well as humanity and the universe at large. Moreover, the individuals would be capable of living as true vicegerents of Allah and critically handle the challenges of contemporary societal and global issues. Consequently, the concept of Islamic education is coherently rooted in terminology such as *tarbiyyah*, *ta'dīb*, and *ta'līm* used by Islamic scholars that signify and highlight different aspects of Islamic education. Hence, *Tarbiyyah* refers to the educational process that emphasizes greatly on the intellectual and physical development of learners, *ta'dīb* refers to the educational process which emphasis greatly on cultivating good

behaviors of humans with religious (faith) knowledge, noble character, and etiquette as well as morally upright personality rooted in Islam who is capable to interact with other people both privately and publicly with justice, and *ta'lim* refers to the educational process which is based on teaching and learning focusing on transmission of knowledge and intellectual development (Aziz, 2018, p. 79). Yasin and Jani (2013) argue that when discussing the systematic teaching and learning process, which is known as education, Islamic scholars employ these—*tarbiyyah*, *ta'dīb*, and *ta'lim*—Arabic terminologies (p. 1). Despite their differences in using terminology to address educational issues, their ultimate aims, however, are to effectively address the challenges associated with the systematic process of educating pupils following certain approaches and goals that are in line with Islamic principles.

Nevertheless, according to al-Attas (1979), the connotations of these terms—*Tarbiyyah*, *Ta'lim*, and *Ta'dīb*—together constitute the entirety of Islamic education's meaning (p. 157). Thus, his emphasis is on their combination in approaching Islamic education comprehensively. Accordingly, he advocated *ta'dīb*, as the Islamic term for education, encompasses knowledge (*'ilm*), instruction (*ta'lim*), and good breeding (*tarbiyah*), eliminating the need to refer to it as *tarbiyah-ta'lim-ta'dīb*, making it the correct term to denote education in the Islamic sense (al-Attas, 1980/1999, p. 33). Thus, Islamic education may be defined as that which incorporates the goal of teaching and studying how to instil goodness in an individual to produce a good man—that is, the man whom al-Attas refers to as “the man of adab.” Consequently, when these notions integrate and work together in developing an educational system, it will facilitate the development of an individual who is religiously spiritual, morally upright, ethically sound, socially responsible, and intellectually knowledgeable.

2.8 ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW: A FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION AND HUMAN PURPOSE

An Islamic worldview is a perspective on the world and how Muslims should see and interact with it. It ultimately shapes the outlooks of people on how to observe self, their accountabilities, and their correlation with Allah, as well as the universe at large. It is the comprehensive worldview (Abul-Fadl, 1991, p. 13; Berghout, 2006, p. 138),

and the most predominant theocentric worldview on the earth, as Abusulayman (2011) claims, “A genuinely Islamic worldview is down-to-earth, comprehensive, law-governed, positive, and disciplined” (p. 99). Similarly, Al-Attas (1995) states that the essence of the Islamic worldview is everlasting, stable, and unalterable (p. 75). Thus, the Islamic worldview makes a compelling case for the belief in Allah as the one God (*Al-Ikhlās: 1*, n.d.) (*tawhid*) and maintains that humans are vicegerents (*khalifah*) on Earth (*Al-Baqarah: 30*, n.d.; *Fatir: 39*, n.d.), entrusted with the duty to live according to His direction as given in the Qur’an and demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). It upholds that the Qur’an and Hadith are the ultimate sources of knowledge (Al-Attas, 1995, p. 20), for everything related to life and the world, including beliefs and worship, ethics and morality, knowledge and education, and all other theories and practices.

The Islamic worldview covers both perspectives of life: the worldly (*dunya*) and the hereafter (*akhirah*) (Al-Attas, 1995, p. 1). Islamic education develops all of its components to cover them simultaneously. However, Al-Attas (1995) is convinced that when we refer to a worldview, we must imply “*ru’yat al-islam li al-wujud*” (p. 2). Consequently, it integrates and addresses all of the needs and questions regarding man’s life and world, especially his knowledge and education, which are the cornerstones for further development and progress. Accordingly, the Islamic worldview is comprehensive, coherent, relevant, deeply value-laden, and universally applicable—regardless of context. That is why remarkable progress in every aspect of life and the world has been observed, especially in the early ages of Islam, including the “Golden Age.”

When it comes to education, central to the Islamic worldview is the belief in the oneness of Allah (*tawhid*), and the concept of his vicegerent (*khalifah*) simultaneously contributes to shaping the outlook. Its approach to education provides a framework for educational roles in developing individuals to prepare students for their divine responsibility. Accordingly, education is perceived as a means to facilitate understanding of humans’ role as vicegerents of Allah on the earth (al-Attas, 1979). Moreover, the Islamic worldview informs that Islamic education is not only to approach academic achievements but also to develop personalities who understand their ultimate purpose in life and develop themselves and their character accordingly.

On the other hand, the concept of *tawhid* must be reflected in education, as Allah is the source of all knowledge (Kurniawan, 2024); thus, based on the concept of unity, Islamic education integrates both religious and worldly knowledge and their sources and translates them into education.

Accordingly, when it comes to Islamic character development and education, it is rooted in the Islamic worldview, which ultimately forms the basis for character education, which is observed as a means of developing moral, social, and ethical values of individuals and their actions to understand and fulfil the purpose of life. The Islamic worldview has a great impact on how teaching is approached (Ramdane & Souad, 2020) and character is developed. Consequently, Islamic education, particularly character education, must incorporate and instruct Islamic values to facilitate students in understanding and fulfilling the divine role of *khalifah* magnificently. Thus, the Islamic worldview serves as the foundation for human purpose and Islamic education; education becomes the most significant tool for the practical implementation of the Islamic Worldview.

2.8.1 Islamic Worldview in Relation to Contemporary Educational Perspectives

The Islamic worldview presents a comprehensive understanding of life, knowledge, and human existence based on the concept of *tawhid*. In the Islamic Worldview, the unity of God is firmly established based on the concept of *tawhid* (Kurniawan, 2024). The Islamic worldview focuses on the all-around development of individuals, including spiritual, moral, and physical aspects of life. In relation to contemporary educational perspectives, the Islamic worldview emphasises moral responsibility, balanced development, and the integration of religious and worldly knowledge. Accordingly, it focuses on success in both worldly life (*dunya*) and the hereafter (*akhirah*) through integrated (religious and worldly) educational development.

Contemporary educational perspectives often perceive individuals as the central focus, highlighting the purpose of teaching and learning activities for academic excellence, intellectual growth, and individual success in the world. On the other hand, Islamic worldview-based education focuses on individuals, and the key

objective is their holistic development, where all aspects, such as body (*jasad*), soul (*nafs*), reason (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), and spirit (*rūh*), are emphasised to develop simultaneously. Accordingly, the ultimate purpose of Islamic worldview-based education is to cultivate a good moral character rooted in Islamic principles to prepare students to fulfil their obligations as *khalifah* of Allah in the universe to attain success and pleasure here in the world and hereafter.

2.8.2 Relevance of Islamic Worldview to Education in Bangladesh

Although Bangladesh is a Muslim-majority country (*Census 2022: Number of Muslims Increased in the Country*, 2022), its education system is greatly guided by the Western worldview-based educational concept in terms of significance, domination, and implementation of education. However, the Islamic worldview has been influencing its education, but this is not dominant as it demands. There is a need to integrate the Islamic worldview strongly into education to create a more cohesive, balanced, and comprehensive approach to education, particularly character education for Muslim students. Character education grounded in the Islamic worldview and principles can facilitate the cultivation of spiritual, ethical, and socially aware individuals. Moreover, by addressing local challenges, it can expedite the process of holistic individual development. Since Islamic worldview-based education promotes social accountability and contributes benefits to humanity, society, and the universe at large, this is especially pertinent in the context of Bangladesh, where issues such as corruption, inequality, and social injustice need to be addressed through character education.

2.9 ISLAMIC AND CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES

Islamic philosophy of education is distinct from others, particularly Western educational philosophies, in terms of metaphysical, teleological, epistemological, and axiological. Accordingly, it shapes differing understandings of ultimate reality, human nature, and purpose, sources of knowledge and their acquisition, purpose of education, role of character and moral development. Hence, Islamic education adopts a holistic

approach to teaching and learning, emphasising the spiritual, moral, social, and intellectual development of students concurrently (al-Attas, 1979). Islamic education is rooted in the belief that Allah has created human beings only for his worship towards the fulfilment of his duties as *khalifah* (*Adh-Dhariyat*: 56, n.d.; *Al-Baqarah*: 30, n.d.; *Fatir*: 39, n.d.); therefore, education is also perceived as an act of worship in Islam. Within this framework, good character development is focused, and education is viewed as a lifelong endeavour of teaching and learning, encouraging both personal and professional development in line with Islamic principles.

On the other hand, Western educational philosophies focused on rational thinking and investigation, scientific inquiry and knowledge, individual autonomy, and freedom influenced by humanism, individualism, secularism, rationalism, idealism, and pragmatism. The ultimate aim of educational activities is focused on academic achievements, professional experience, economic development, and individual success. Although the significance of ethics, morality, values, and character development is acknowledged, they are often treated separately and overlooked. There is a greater emphasis on intellectual development and economic productivity. Accordingly, the key differences between Islamic and contemporary educational philosophies can be summarised as follows: 1. metaphysical: Islamic education is based on the belief that the ultimate reality is one and only Allah, having sources of everything. Human beings are inherently composed of the body (*jasad*), soul (*nafs*), reason (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), and spirit (*rūh*); they need comprehensive development for balanced growth. In contrast, contemporary Western education often keeps aside the metaphysical aspects of education; therefore, they focus on physical and intellectual development, neglecting the spiritual aspects of human nature. 2. teleological: Islamic education perceived the purpose of human life with great significance as to fulfil the divine assigned duties towards becoming *khalifah* of Allah. On the other hand, Western education greatly focuses on worldly success, academic achievements, and self-realisation as its primary goals. 3. epistemological: Islamic education integrates both religious and worldly knowledge in its teaching and learning approaches, emphasising both revelation and other sources of knowledge, placing the revelation as the ultimate source and guiding framework for knowledge and educational activities. In contrast, contemporary Western education often neglects the importance of

revelation as a valid source of knowledge. Therefore, it often excludes the relevance and need for revelation in education. Additionally, it often separates spiritual knowledge from worldly knowledge based on a secular and empirical viewpoint. 4. axiological: Islamic education highlights the significance of values and virtues in moral and ethical development as well as in decision-making, placing this concept as the core of the educational activities and their goals. In contrast, contemporary Western education often focuses on democratic values, individual autonomy, personal freedom, and individual rights.

2.10 RELEVANCE OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

Since Bangladesh is a Muslim-majority country, the Islamic philosophy of education can offer a pertinent and robust educational framework for cultivating the spiritual, moral, ethical, social, intellectual, and character growth of students that can effectively address the existing challenges, particularly moral and ethical. Azher (2001) also highlights it by stating that Islam orders education for all, promoting education and enlightening both individuals and societies, and in the context of Bangladesh, the national educational and curriculum policies ought to manifest it. Although the Western philosophy of education greatly influences the existing education in Bangladesh, the integration of the Islamic philosophy of education can guide it towards the proper direction, which is the ultimate intention of education. Particularly in the context of this study, understanding, integration, and implementation of the Islamic philosophy of education can provide comprehensive insight into the character education of Muslim students in Bangladesh within the context of religious, social, cultural, and contemporary educational demands. As Islamic character education integrates values as a core educational component and objectives, it can directly contribute to addressing the existing challenges, such as corruption, injustice, deviation from religion, breaking religious and social norms, and inequality, particularly related to moral decay, to establish a more ethical, just and sustainable society. Thus, incorporating Islamic values into education and the curriculum can expedite holistic students' development, shaping all aspects of their lives, including spiritual dimensions that are essential for both individual and national

development. Accordingly, Bangladesh education can provide a cohesive and comprehensive educational approach and setting to address the demand for Muslim education, students, and society.

2.11 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ISLAMIC CHARACTER EDUCATION

Perspectives from both Islamic and Western backgrounds stress how important it is to develop excellent character. Their approaches and principles are rooted in distinct philosophical foundations and worldviews, albeit with certain commonalities. However, regarding the philosophical foundations of character education—such as the notions of metaphysics, teleology, cosmology, epistemology, axiology, and education—they diverge significantly. Islamic character education is divinely guided, rooted in Islamic principles, focusing on the harmony of morality, spirituality, rationality, and good character development to please Allah and succeed both here on earth and in the hereafter. On the other hand, Western perspectives typically centre on practical ethics, individual autonomy, social justice, and moral relativism, which have their roots in philosophy, psychology, secular humanism, or cultural traditions.

When it comes to ultimate reality, the Islamic and Western views differ greatly, and it ultimately shapes understandings of education and character formation. While Islamic perspectives maintain the absolute Oneness of Allah, that there is only one God, also known as *tawhid*, and that all other notions derive from it (Kurniawan, 2024), Western perspectives—especially those based in philosophy and psychology—generally lack a clear understanding of ultimate reality; instead, they believe in an all-powerful God and place their trust in reason.

The idea of human nature is essential to the education and development of character, as well as all other presumptions about man and his existence, as character education and development concentrate on teaching knowledge of human conduct and goodness to implant good character in a person. Beyond shared views on human intellect, the two perspectives differ fundamentally. The Islamic view believes that man is Allah's creation and that he must fulfil his covenants as the vicegerent of Allah (*Khalifatullah*) on earth (*Al-Baqarah*: 30, n.d.; *Fatir*: 39, n.d.). Furthermore, Islam

recognizes that human beings are inherently composed both of both spiritual and material (al-Attas, 1979) aspects, having body (*jasad*), soul (*nafs*), reason (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), and spirit (*rūh*), and that the soul is the more divine essence having innate knowledge. It is also believed that everyone will be accountable for their deeds on the Day of Judgment. Accordingly, Islamic perspectives emphasise humankind's all-round development (al-Attas, 1979).

However, the Western conception of man has a variety of viewpoints that are opposed to the Islamic conception of man and its underlying presumptions, as Western philosophers Aristotle and Plato both view man as a rational being with dual natures. Plato describes humans as having an everlasting soul and a fleeting body (Özkan, 2020; Kamtekar, 2022), while Aristotle emphasises man's reason to promote happiness through morality and rational activity (Deslauriers & Filotas, 2022; Aristotle & Brown, 2009). The Islamic concept of man is universal and comprehensive. It offers a universal framework for understanding human nature.

Another essential foundation of character education and development is epistemology, which addresses knowledge and related topics. It also provides the foundational elements of character education, such as the sources of knowledge, moral authorities, and virtues, as well as the goals and standards of character education. Although epistemology is a fundamental component of character education and development, Islamic and Western perspectives on the subject differ greatly from one another. While acknowledging and placing other sources of knowledge and approaches in their proper place without diminishing their significance, Islamic epistemology maintains that revelation is the ultimate and unquestionable source of knowledge. Nonetheless, the revelation is typically excluded from Western epistemologies as a source of knowledge. Islam, therefore, recognises the sacred text and hadith as sources of knowledge and wisdom, and divine guidance, especially concerning morality, virtues, and principles, as well as the development of good character. However, Western perspectives downplay the significance of religion or religious texts for character development, ultimately relying on rational arguments and other sources, which causes them to diverge significantly from Islamic perspectives.

The concept of good character is crucial for character education and development, offering values and virtues. However, the concepts of good character in Islamic and Western contexts differ significantly due to differences in fundamental foundations. Islam emphasises human effort, prophetic role models, and divine direction in defining good character. Additionally, it combines morality and social responsibility with spiritual knowledge, with the Qur'an and Hadith serving as foundational texts for defining necessary qualities, virtues, and conduct. Western frameworks substitute religious revelation with individual choice, moral reasoning, and psychological growth. Islamic education differs fundamentally, asserting that a "good citizen" does not automatically equate to a "good man."

Though the development of moral individuals having good character is the goal of both Islamic and Western perspectives, their motivations and approaches to character development are diverse. Furthermore, both of their values or virtues framework, and origins of moral authority, moral obligations and ultimate accountability, role models and examples also differ. The role of religion, revelation and spirituality, the unification of moral and legal systems, and the ultimate goal of character development finally demonstrate their underlying differences. Nonetheless, Islamic and Western perspectives on character education maintain the promotion of character education key components such as moral virtues, ethical behaviour, philanthropy, responsibility, compassion, self-discipline, and community welfare, despite differences in their philosophical foundations. These common ideals give society a common ground for encouraging moral behaviour and producing morally upright and just individuals. In general, both perspectives advocate the idea that character-building through education is feasible and that it can expedite the process of developing positive character traits.

2.12 CHARACTER EDUCATION IN ISLAM: INTEGRATION OF PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS

All of the aforementioned Islamic philosophical dimensions contribute together in conceptualising education that ultimately shapes Islamic character education to approach the good character development of Muslim students comprehensively. Accordingly, it places a strong emphasis on the integration of all aspects of students' development, including spiritual, moral, social, and intellectual, to foster holistic development that can fulfil the divine command and purpose as *Khalifatullah* in the community. Thus, the Islamic philosophical foundation of education is comprehensive and rational and provides the basis of Islamic education that is also necessary, relevant, and applicable to character education regardless of contexts such as Bangladesh. Since the Islamic philosophical foundation of education integrates all philosophical dimensions of humans as well as Islamic education—*tarbiyyah* (nurturing), *ta'dīb* (discipline), and *ta'līm* (teaching), and *khalifah*, *amanah* (trustworthiness) (al-Attas, 1979), and sustainability—provides a robust educational framework for Muslim students, thus these foundations offer significant inputs into the conceptualisation of character education programs. Accordingly, Figure 2.5 presents the conceptual basis of Islamic character education.

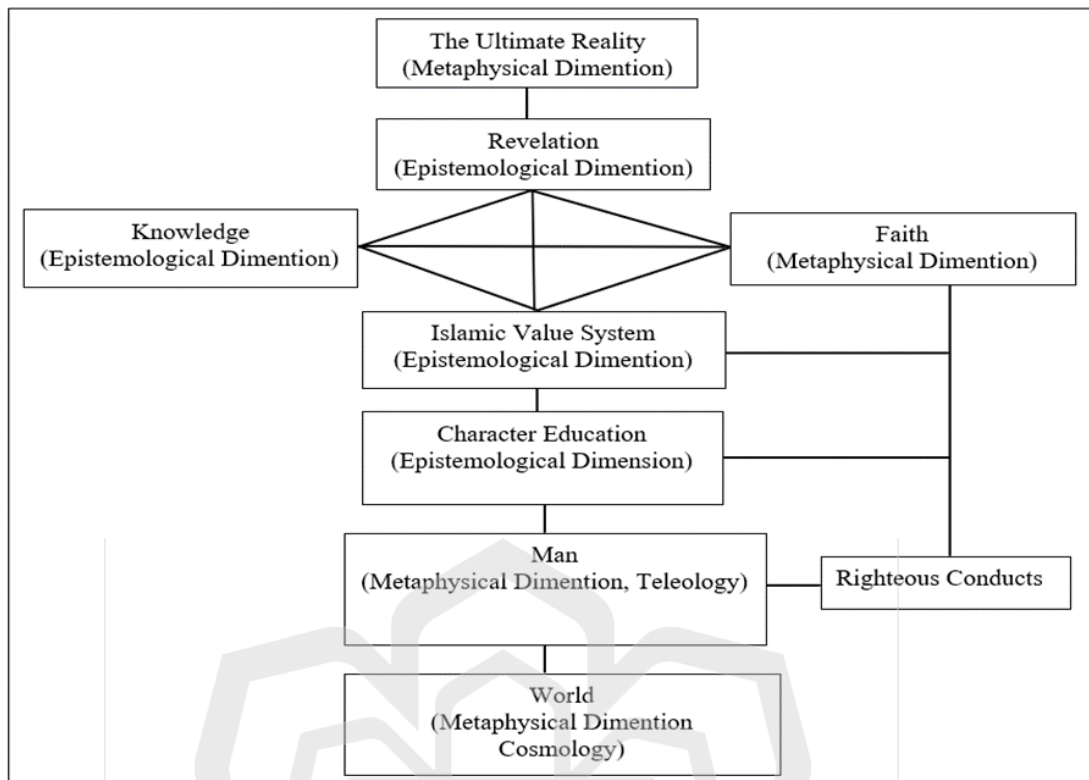


Figure 2.5 The Conceptual Basis of Islamic Character Education (adapted from Vazhathodi, 2011)

2.13 RELEVANCE OF FOUNDATIONS FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

The fundamental philosophical concepts that advocate the development of character education—which aims to educate morally upright people with good character—are known as the foundations. Accordingly, Islamic character education is based on the Islamic philosophy of education, which affirms Allah’s unity and is thus integrated, comprehensive, and universal. As a result, Islamic character education foundations are generally the same for Muslims all over the world. Bangladesh has a huge Muslim population, and moral deterioration is rampant, making character education especially crucial there. Consequently, the Islamic philosophical foundation of character education is relevant and necessary in Bangladesh, a country where Muslims make up the majority. Moreover, it places a strong emphasis on the development of moral qualities, including patience, humility, honesty, and fairness. These principles, which are consistent with the nation’s educational policies (*National Education Policy 2010*,

2010), inclining religious, social, and cultural identity as well as educational demands of Muslim students, not only direct individual behaviour but also promote societal peace and moral leadership. Incorporating Islamic character education into communities, educational institutions, and educational systems as a whole might promote spiritual and moral values, address social challenges, and ultimately guide students to develop a good character so that they can become good human beings to lead a balanced life.

Furthermore, the Islamic foundation of character education focuses on the integration of both worldly and religious knowledge to develop good character for the life of this world and the hereafter. It provides a comprehensive framework for addressing ethical issues and challenges, fostering good character consistent with Islamic values and conduct through character education and related activities that ensure that education not only imparts knowledge but also cultivates character aligned with Islamic principles. This approach is also in line with the national goals of creating responsible citizens and addressing challenges such as corruption, social injustice, and moral turpitude, making it relevant and necessary in Bangladesh. However, Western fundamental foundations of character education can offer insights into virtues and ethics, but since Muslims dominate Bangladesh and Muslim students' character development and education are concerned, they should be filtered through Islamic principles to avoid contradiction with Islamic philosophical principles, ensuring pure Islamic foundations and educational settings for character education.

Therefore, a conceptual model of integrated character education should be developed in Bangladesh, which balances the interaction of Islamic principles, values, and good character with contemporary educational goals, policy, ethics, social virtue, and morality for the comprehensive development of Muslim students. In doing so, the study found that the Islamic philosophical foundation of character education was the most appropriate, necessary, and relevant.

2.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explored the philosophical foundations of character education through the examination of the core ontological, teleological, cosmological, and axiological dimensions from an Islamic perspective. It establishes the three central philosophical foundations (i) metaphysical (concept of reality and human existence), (ii) epistemological (sources and nature of knowledge), and (iii) axiological (ethical and value system) as the root for conceptualising the integrated character education model. The chapter delved into the concept of ultimate reality and human nature from an Islamic perspective. It stresses the roles of human beings in relation to *khalifah*, *amanah* and sustainability and their accountability to Allah, fellow human beings and other components of the cosmos. It also touched upon the purpose of human life and existence, and the Islamic concept of good character. It emphasised the values of integrity, justice and honesty, which are the foundation of human development.

The epistemological discussion of this chapter was focused on the Islamic theory of knowledge (*'ilm*), and its nature, sources, classification, and role in shaping the Islamic education (*tarbiyah-ta'lim-ta'dib*) and curriculum. Accordingly, this included a discussion on Islamic pedagogical principles and approaches with an emphasis on their significance and foundations. In this chapter, a holistic and balanced approach to education has been presented, encompassing the spiritual, moral, social and intellectual development of students. Furthermore, the Islamic ethical framework in Islamic education based on Islamic axiology was explored, which had the importance of values based on Islamic principles such as honesty, justice and compassion. Moreover, it emphasised the role of reason and intellect (*'aql*) in Islamic knowledge and education in reinforcing critical thinking according to Islamic spiritual guidance and ethical limits.

Furthermore, the chapter discussed the role of Islamic education in character building and the most significant influence of the Islamic worldview on teaching and learning activities in Muslim educational institutions. An in-depth analysis was carried out to demonstrate the distinctiveness of Islam in conceptualising character education. It examined Islamic and modern philosophies and worldviews of education and their relation to character building and education. Finally, the chapter ended with a

discussion regarding the importance and applicability of these basic principles in Bangladesh. It focused on developing a conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students within Bangladeshi religious, social, cultural and educational settings, while being sensitive to broader educational standards and contemporary expectations.



CHAPTER THREE

CHARACTER EDUCATION IN NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Education plays an essential role in Bangladesh as it is perceived as the single most significant and potential tool to foster holistic individual and societal development. Since the character development of students is the inherent focus of worldwide education, these efforts can be traced in Bangladesh. Character education in Bangladesh, known as moral education, is deeply grounded in its religious, cultural, and historical traditions. However, the education system in Bangladesh has transformed from an Islamic to a more secular perspective, influenced by constitutional ideologies such as nationalism, democracy, socialism, and secularism. Consequently, teaching, learning, and transmission of moral values across generations have been reshaped, and character education has evolved accordingly. This chapter discussed the diverse educational systems of Bangladesh, such as general education (secular-based national education) and Alia madrasah education (Islamic-based national education), focusing on character education. Moreover, it discussed the education reforms, including the 2010 Education Policy and the new curriculum introduced in 2023, and outlined challenges in integrating Islamic character education into the Bangladeshi education system.

3.2 EDUCATION SYSTEM IN BANGLADESH

Although secularism is prevalent in Bangladesh, Islam remains one of the main influential factors (Wohab, 2021) and a source of moral values for the nation and its education system. To provide a comprehensive overview of the country's educational landscape concerning character education, it is necessary to analyse the development of the Bangladeshi education system from independence until today.

3.2.1 Educational Reforms in Independent Bangladesh

Political, economic, and cultural differences were major contributors to political unrest, provincial economic discrimination, and educational disparities in East Pakistan (modern-day Bangladesh) (Asadullah, 2010), which ultimately led to the breakdown of the relationship between East and West Pakistan. Consequently, Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan in 1971 through a bloody war that caused huge casualties and destruction of life and infrastructure. In 1972, Bangladesh evolved into a sovereign nation known as the People's Republic of Bangladesh, with a constitution based on nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism.

Knowing the fundamentals of the constitution is crucial, especially parts 1 and 2: The Republic and Fundamental Principles of State Policy, to know in depth about Bangladesh's educational system. In Part 1: The Republic, although it recognises the equality and rights of other religions, Islam is the state religion of Bangladesh (*The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, 2019a). Since national education policies are derived from Part 2: Fundamental Principles of State Policy, which is based on nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism, it is the most important section (Section 8: Fundamental principles) of the constitution, particularly for education (*The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, 2019b). Bangladeshi constitution of 1972 additionally included an article titled "Free and compulsory education" for all children up to the age designated by legislation (*The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, 2019c).

Following the constitution, Bangladesh began to minimise flaws and limitations in education, notably in primary education; in this situation, Bangladesh primarily adhered to the education program designed during the Pakistan era (Mukerji, n.d.), since Bangladesh shared educational history with Pakistan as its Eastern Province, previously known as East Bengal. This period is significant for Bangladesh's education system since it has experienced many major changes and reformations, with difficulties in educational policy development, curriculum creation, textbook production, and assessment systems. However, several attempts were made after Bangladesh's independence to reform and develop its educational policies and system. As a result, Bangladesh has formed numerous committees and commissions, the most noteworthy of which are: the National Education Commission (1972), also

known as the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission (Qudrat-e-Khuda, 1974), and Kabir Chowdhury Education Commission (2009) (M. H. Khan, 2012).

Accordingly, the National Education Commission in 1972 submitted its report in 1974 (Qudrat-e-Khuda, 1974; Ali, 1983; “National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021). The Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission proposed extensive changes at all levels of education, notably at the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels. According to the Commission report, primary education would last eight years (classes I-VIII), and secondary education would last four years (classes IX-XII). For higher education, they proposed that universities provide a four-year combined degree program and a one-year master’s program. The commission also proposed free and universal compulsory primary education classes I-V by 1980, and up to VIII by 1983 (Qudrat-e-Khuda, 1974; Ali, 1983). In terms of curriculum, syllabus, and textbooks, the commission proposed a competency-based unified elementary curriculum.

Furthermore, it was suggested that night schools be developed to provide instruction to youngsters up to the age of fifteen. The Commission placed significant attention on improving the assessment system and proposed letter grading in the evaluation of student achievement at all levels of education in Bangladesh (Qudrat-e-Khuda, 1974; M. H. Khan, 2012). Hence, in response to the commission’s recommendations, a committee for establishing National Curricula and Syllabi was also formed in 1976, led by Prof. Shamsul Hoque. In 1976, 1977, and 1978, the National Curriculum Syllabus Committee (NCSC) gave its findings to the government in seven volumes. Their findings include a comprehensive method and process for developing national curricula and syllabi (M. H. Khan, 2012).

However, at first, the curriculum recommended by the Commission did not have religious education as a subject of teaching for classes I-VIII. It was recommended only for the humanities group as a mere elective subject for classes IX-XII (Qudrat-e-Khuda, 1974). As a result of the public’s religious sentiment, the report was revised to include religious education from classes VI-VIII and IX-XI, and religious education was categorised under vocational courses. The Commission’s policies were consistent with the constitutional provisions of secularism and socialism

(Islam, 2001). While some of the recommendations of the Quadrat-e-Khuda Commission were outstanding in that situation to establish a well-grounded education system in a broken land, the parting of religion from the education scheme was forced to bring it down and was even abandoned by the succeeding government (Aziz, 2015; 2018).

Following independence, Bangladesh took initiatives to reform the madrasah education system, which resulted in the incorporation of more secular-based national education subjects such as literature, science, and some life-related subjects, as well as the development of policies to integrate the religious (Islamic-based) education system into mainstream education in Bangladesh. Following these strategies, the Alia Madrasah Education Board was established in 1978 under the Ordinance for the Modernisation of Madrasah (Alia) Education. Not only that, but other notable reforms have been implemented, such as the recognition of Dakhil since 1985 as equivalent to a Secondary School Certificate (SSC), and Alim as a higher secondary in 1987. Fazil has a degree, and Kamil has a Master's since 2006 under the Islamic University Kushtia (Kamruzzaman, 2021; Haque, 2006). Fazil, at present, mostly offers a four-year bachelor's degree, whereas Kamil offers a one-year master's degree and has been affiliated with Islamic Arabic University since 2013 (Rashid, 2017; Trines, 2019). The Bangladeshi government, as part of policy and reform, removed Jihad-related allusions and themes from Madrasah Education Board textbooks in 2017 (Miaze, 2017).

In addition to Alia Madrasah, the government placed Qawmi Madrasahs under reformation and educational policies in 2017 by recognising *Takmil* (Dawrah-e-Hadith) from Qawmi Madrasah as a Master's in Islamic Studies and Arabic (*Qawmi Degree Recognised*, 2017; Kamruzzaman, 2021). The historical reformation in education, including Madrasah education, occurred in 2010 through the National Educational Policy-2010, which resulted in enormous reforms in the education system in all streams with a new and unified curriculum, essentially reflecting the National Education Commission (1972), also known as the Quadrat-e-Khuda Education Commission (*National Education Policy 2010*, 2010; Quadrat-e-Khuda, 1974). Thus, among all committees and commissions concerned with the reformation of Bangladesh's educational policies and system, the National Education Commission of

1972 is the most significant and has served as a foundation for the rest of the committees and commissions until today. Accordingly, the remainder of the committees and commissions are constituted to either examine or amend their execution or to reconstruct policies based on the Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission's suggestions. Thus, the post-independence educational reforms in Bangladesh are a reflection of the continuous contradiction between the secular state educational programs and the religious values of the Muslim majority population. These reforms also illustrate that the growth of curriculum and policy in Bangladesh has consistently affected the place of moral, religious and character education in both general and madrasah education systems.

3.2.2 Present Education in Bangladesh

Since nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism serve as the cornerstones of state policy, these same tenets also serve as the foundation for educational programs, which is why secularism in particular serves as the foundation for mainstream education in Bangladesh (*The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, 2019b). In addition to the constitutional directions, the present curriculum framework is firmly grounded in philosophical foundations such as progressivism and reconstructivism, a psychological foundation such as social constructivism, a Historic foundation such as the spirit of the Liberation War, Global and national context and priorities, and an evidence-based foundation as it declared ("National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021, pp. 2-8). Post-independence Bangladesh has struggled to develop an acceptable educational philosophy as well as an educational system that represents the majority of Muslim people's religious, social, economic, and political views, values, and sentiments. However, present education in Bangladesh largely maintains post-independence policies outlined and recommended by the National Education Commission in 1972 (Qudrat-e-Khuda, 1974). Therefore, present education in Bangladesh is going through several stages of growth and advancement.

Accordingly, in Bangladesh, there are primarily two mainstream educational systems operating concurrently, namely the Madrasah Education System (Islamic-based education) and the General Education System (secular-based national education). It should be noted that both Madrasah Education, particularly Alia Madrasah (Islamic-based national education) and General Education (secular-based national education) are supported by the government and officially recognised as public education. However, there are some Madrasah Education in Bangladesh that are still not considered mainstream education as they are not officially recognised as public education, despite being partly recognised, very widespread and, in some cases, very dominant and contributing to religious, political, and societal reforms. Furthermore, there are technical or vocational education and tertiary education, which mainly fall under the general education system. Hence, the existing education system of Bangladesh has a dual education structure, where the secular-based national education and Islamic-based national (madrasah) education run in parallel with different philosophical orientations. This duality is crucial to this study, as it directly affects the conceptualisation and execution of character education for Muslim pupils in Bangladesh.

3.2.2.1 The 2010 Educational Policy and the New Curriculum for All

The National Education Commission, chaired by Kabir Chowdhury, was formed in 2009. They evaluated earlier proposals, particularly those of the Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission in 1974 and the Shamsul Huq Commission in 1997, and proclaimed that they had developed a comprehensive and contemporary scientific educational policy for the country. In 2010, the Commission delivered its findings, which were approved by the National Parliament the following year and known as the National Educational Policy 2010 (*National Education Policy 2010*, 2010; Aziz, 2015; Khan, 2012). The policy states that its primary objectives are the cultivation of human values (*National Education Policy 2010*, 2010, p. 8). One of the objectives of higher education is fostering citizens who will possess a “scientific, secular, liberal, humane, progressive and forward-looking mindset” (*National Education Policy 2010*, 2010, p. 31).

Based on the National Education Policy 2010, Bangladesh's education system has entered a new era, with a new curriculum introduced in January 2023. According to the *National Curriculum Framework 2021*, this curriculum framework was developed with this historical context and direction in mind; since the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission recommendations in 1974 ("National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021; Qudrat-e-Khuda, 1974), including a universal, scientific, and unified general education system was the result of directives of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ("National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021). Though the new curriculum has been introduced in phases, they have offered new textbooks for grades I and VI-VII in 2023. In 2024, in II, III, IV, VIII, and IX. V and X in 2025. In XI, it will be implemented in 2026, and in XII, it will be implemented in 2027 (Alamgir, 2023; Ahmed, 2023). However, the July Revolution in 2024 ("July Revolution (Bangladesh)," 2025) forced former prime minister and Bangladesh Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina to step down and escape from Bangladesh to India (Ethirajan, 2024; Ahmed & Bhattacharjee, 2024), leading to circulate mostly textbooks from the earlier government to students across the country (List of Textbooks for Academic Year-2025, 2025). Thus, the new curriculum that was initiated by the Sheikh Hasina government in 2023 was indirectly discarded. Accordingly, National Education Policy 2010 and National Curriculum Framework 2021 indicate that character building, values and competences are still major educational issues in Bangladesh. However, the curriculum is mostly a reflection of secular and constructivist education approaches, which becomes a significant factor in integrating Islamic character education in the mainstream national education.

3.2.2.2 Madrasah Education System

In Bangladesh, there are primarily two types of madrasah education (Alam, 2021): Alia Madrasah (Islamic-based national education) and Qawmi Madrasah (Traditional Islamic Education). Hence, the madrasah education system is the main institutional structure for the formal transmission of Islamic knowledge, values and character building in Bangladesh. At the same time, reforms underway point to increased pressures to reconcile Islamic educational identity with national educational aims and contemporary educational needs.

3.2.2.2.1 Alia Madrasah (Islamic-based national education)

Alia Madrasah, a fully recognised Madrasah education (Islamic-based national education) in Bangladesh, provides a blended education by sharing subjects of both Islamic and secular-based national education. The present Alia Madrasah education system of Bangladesh is the modified system of the Calcutta Madrasah (Muhammadan College), which was established by Warren Hastings in October 1780, the first institution of its kind in Bengal (Ali, 1983). After this, in 1873, the government of Bengal established three new Madrasahs at Dhaka, Chittagong, and Rajshahi (Ali, 1983). After the end of British rule in 1947, the Calcutta Madrasah shifted to Dhaka, the present capital of Bangladesh, in September 1947 and was named the Madrasah-i-Alia Dacca (Ali, 1983).

Alia Madrasah has different streams such as Arts, Science, Muzabbid, and Hifzul Qur'an. Initially, the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board regulated and formulated the curriculum for Alia Madrasah (*Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board*, 1979). Still, recently, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), National Curriculum, and Textbook Board (NCTB) have also engaged in this process as a result of the introduction of a new curriculum in Bangladesh that aims to develop a unified education, which in this process includes Alia Madrasha. In this approach, Alia Madrasha will keep its Islamic studies subjects while adding selected subjects from the general education stream, which is a secular-based national education. Alia Madrasah offered the Quran Majeed, Ilmu Tajwid, Hadith Sharif, Fiqh, Usul-al Fiqh, Arabic literature, Arabic Grammar, Ilmu al-Balagat, Ilmu al Mantiq, etc. as the main subjects (Obaidullah, 2021). According to the new curriculum, Alia Madrasah will offer Islamic Studies subjects such as Quran Majid and Tajweed; Hadith Sharif; Arabic; Aqeedah and Fiqh; and History of Islam including the selected subjects Bangla, English, Mathematics, Science, History and Social Sciences, Life and Livelihood, Digital Technology, Wellbeing, Arts and Culture ("National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021). Figure 3.1 presents the subjects of Alia Madrasah education in Bangladesh.

Learning area	Selected subjects by level		
	Ibtidai Grade 1-5	Dakhil	
		Grade 6-8	Grade 9-10
Islamic Studies	1. Quran Majid and Tajweed; 2. Hadith Sharif; 3. Arabic; 4. Aqeedah and Fiqh; and 5. History of Islam		
Language and Communication	1. Bangla 2. English	1. Bangla 2. English	1. Bangla 2. English
Mathematics and Logic	3. Mathematics	3. Mathematics	3. Mathematics
Science and Technology	4. Science	4. Science	4. Science
Digital Technology	5. History and Social Sciences	5. History and Social Sciences	5. History and Social Sciences
Social and Global Citizenship	6. Wellbeing	6. Life and Livelihood	6. Life and Livelihood
Life and Livelihood	7. Art and Culture	7. Digital Technology	7. Digital Technology
Environment and Climate		8. Wellbeing	8. Wellbeing
Religion, Values and Ethics		9. Arts and Culture	9. Arts and Culture
Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing			
Arts and Culture			
Please note: Although Digital Technology and Life and Livelihood are not separate subjects at the Ibtidai level, the learning competencies in the two subjects will be acquired in combination with other subjects.			

Figure 3.1 Subjects of Alia Madrasah Education in Bangladesh (Source: National Curriculum Framework 2021)

The Alia Madrasah Education System provides the following degrees and certificates: Dakhil, equivalent to a Secondary School Certificate (SSC), Alim, equivalent to the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC), Fazil, equivalent to a Bachelor's, and Kamil, equivalent to a Master's (Amin, 2013). According to the new curriculum, Ibtadaie will be an eight-year primary-level education from I-VIII, in the Madrasah system (Islamic-based national education) that parallels general primary education (Secular-based national education). According to the new curriculum, the Dakhil level will be a combination of classes IX-X, which is equivalent to SSC. Alim is a two-year program that is equivalent to HSC ("National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021). It has sections, such as General (Arts/Humanities), Science, and Muzabbid. Fazil is post-secondary education, and Kamil is the final and highest level of the Alia Madrasah education system. Kamil has four groups, including the Qur'an (Tafsir), Hadith, Arabic, and Fiqh. Fazil currently

mostly offers a four-year bachelor's degree. In contrast, Kamil offers a one-year master's degree equivalent to BA and MA degrees, respectively, and has been affiliated with Islamic Arabic University (IAU) since 2013 (Rashid, 2017; Trines, 2019; Al-Hasani, 2020; Obaidullah, 2021). Therefore, Alia Madrasah reflects an integrated educational model that combines Islamic studies with secular-based national education. This integration is particularly relevant to the present study because it demonstrates an existing institutional attempt to balance religious character formation with national educational requirements.

3.2.2.2.2 Qawmi Madrasah

Traditional Islamic education in Bangladesh is often referred to as Qawmi madrasah (Obaidullah, 2021), and there are a large number of Qawmi madrasahs accessible nowadays. In Bangladesh, Sheikhul Islam Maulana Habibullah, along with Deoband, fashioned Bengali scholars and Ulama^h established Madrasah Dar-ul-Ulum Moinul Islam at Hathazari in Chittagong in 1901, also known as Boro (big) Madrasah (Al-Hasani et al., 2017). They are also known as Khariji (unrecognised) Madrasahs because they are private and independent, run by a public charity, and do not take or receive aid from the government (Ali, 1983; Obaidullah, 2021). The old Dars-Nizami Course is usually followed in Qawmi madrasahs (Ali, 1983). According to the newspaper report (2017), they follow the curriculum of Darul Uloom Deoband of India, and their instructional focus is on Arabic, Urdu, and Persian languages (*Qawmi Degree Recognised*). However, their curriculum and instructions vary from institution to institution, using their own fashion and modifications.

Though Qawmi Madrasah focuses on Islamic traditional education after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, some of them began to modernise their teaching and syllabus. They teach Tafsir, Hadith, Shariyah, Nahaw (Arabic grammar), Arabic Literature, Balagat Mantiq (Logic), Fiqh, Usul-al Fiqh, Siratun Nabi, etc (Obaidullah, 2021; Akter, 2020). Recently, some Qawmi Madrasahs also taught Social Sciences, Geography, Bangla, English, Sciences, and Mathematics until class eight (Obaidullah, 2021), including ICT and computer studies (Akter, 2020). According to the information of Pathoo Talika (Syllabus of Qawmi Madrasah), there are five levels:

Ibtidiah (Primary), Mutawassitah (Secondary), Sanobiyah Uliya (Higher Secondary), Fazilat (Graduate), and Taqmil or Daurah (Postgraduate) levels, such as Aliya Madrasah (Al-Hasani et al., 2017; Akter, 2020). According to the report of the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) in 2008, there are two other sections, Qur'an and Tajwid (Qur'anic grammar), and Hifzul (memorisation) of the Quran, which are focused on in the system. Every Madrasah provides a certificate to a student who passes the Daurah levels examination. After this level, students can continue further 2/3 years in other courses such as Islamic Jurisprudence, Qur'an, and Hadith to become specialised so that they can go for higher education either in Bangladesh or outside of Bangladesh, such as India or Pakistan.

Qawmi Madrasahs are completely inclined to teach religious education, though there is a need for general worldly education, such as science and technology. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Bangladesh Jamat-e-Islami alliance government took steps to recognise and develop Qawmi Madrasah, but unfortunately could not complete the procedure (*Qawmi Madrasa Degree Gets Master's Status*, 2006; Haque, 2006). To establish control over them concerning reformation and bring them into the mainstream educational system, the government took steps to recognize the certificates of Dawra-e-Hadith of Qawmi madrasah as equivalent to master's in Islamic Studies and Arabic (*Qawmi Degree Recognised*, 2017, para. 6). However, the Qawmi Madrasah representatives do not want recognition of certificates of any other level due to the government's plan to reform the curriculum based on secular-based national education policy (Chandan, 2017), hence they do not adopt the prescribed new curriculum for their other levels of education. Consequently, Qawmi Madrasah education is more inclined toward traditional Islamic education and character-building than other types of education in Bangladesh. Its opposition to state-controlled curriculum change also echoes wider worries about the maintenance of Islamic educational identity and autonomy.

Besides these, there are independent private Tahfizul Qur'an Madrasahs, Maktabas (Obaidullah, 2021), Islamic-based Schools, Cadet Madrasahs, and Islamic English Medium Schools. In Bangladesh, Madrasah education particularly focuses on Islamic theological teachings and learning, though Alia Madrasah Education is a

combination of general (secular-based) education and Islamic education, and some other institutions, such as Cadet Madrasahs, also follow the Alia Madrasah trend and provide both religious and worldly education.

3.2.2.3 General Education (secular-based national education)

In Bangladesh, the general education (secular-based national education) system is the mainstream education and always gets more attention and more focus than others. This system emphasises worldly knowledge and education, and Islam and other religious disciplines are viewed as mere subjects. According to the new curriculum, the general stream offers selected subjects such as Bangla, English, Mathematics, Science, History and Social Sciences, Digital Technology, Life and Livelihood, Wellbeing, Religion Studies, as well as Arts and Culture (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021).

General education is the composition of primary, secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary levels of education. According to the new curriculum, primary-level education is I-VIII, an eight-year education, and Secondary School Certificate (SSC) is the combination of classes IX-X and a two-year program for Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC). Moreover, tertiary education covers diploma, technical, vocational, and university education. The NCTB formulates a curriculum for primary to higher secondary levels of the general education system. Diploma, Technical, and Vocational education are handled by the Bangladesh Technical Education Board, and the University Grants Commission (UGC) handles Universities. Therefore, the general education system stresses secular and competency-based educational growth in which religion is one of the numerous subjects. This approach is significant to the study as it reflects the limited incorporation of Islamic intellectual and character-based foundations in mainstream education.

3.2.2.4 Core Subjects and Competencies: Islamic Studies for Madrasah

The National Curriculum Framework 2021 identified 10 learning areas to attain 10 core competencies (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12”, 2021), and based on these it outlined 10 core subjects like Bangla, English, Mathematics, Science, History and Social Sciences, Digital Technology, Life and Livelihood, Well-being, Religion Studies, and Arts and Culture for both Alia madrasah and general education systems in Bangladesh. However, for Alia Madrasah, they used the term Islamic Studies instead of Religion Studies, and it covers five specific subjects such as Quran Majid and Tajweed; Hadith Sharif; Arabic; Aqeedah and Fiqh; and History of Islam to maintain its unique characteristics. Moreover, these are compulsory subjects for Madrasah education from Ibtedayi to Dakhil (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021, pp. 96-97). Nevertheless, Madrasah education has included “Islamic Studies” as a learning area with a great emphasis focusing on the competency outlined ‘to engage oneself in the welfare of nature and humanity through religious discipline, honesty and moral virtues and the practice of integrity’, accordingly Madrasah students should have correct knowledge of their individuality and the Creator. Moreover, Madrasah students need to recognise that without a creator, existence is unbelievable. It also emphasises the capacity to use the acquired knowledge of the Qur’an, Sunnah, as well as Fiqh, to resolve problems.

In addition to being competent in practising religious knowledge, including reciting the Qur’an. Ultimately, students from this stream must obtain and have the right and firm belief in Allah to completely submit themselves to Him. Thus, they must uphold Allah’s mandates and bars over the entirety of their life (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021, p. 96). Accordingly, it will be pertinent only to those who enrol in Madrasah education, even though these competencies are of utmost significance, particularly for Muslim students from and beyond all streams of education in Bangladesh. The existence of Islamic Studies competencies in the madrasah curriculum is a clear attempt to combine education with faith, morality, and character building. However, the scope of these competences is limited mostly to madrasah education, even if they are relevant for Muslim students in

other streams of education in Bangladesh. Figure 3.2 provides the competencies and subjects that are currently active in Bangladesh.

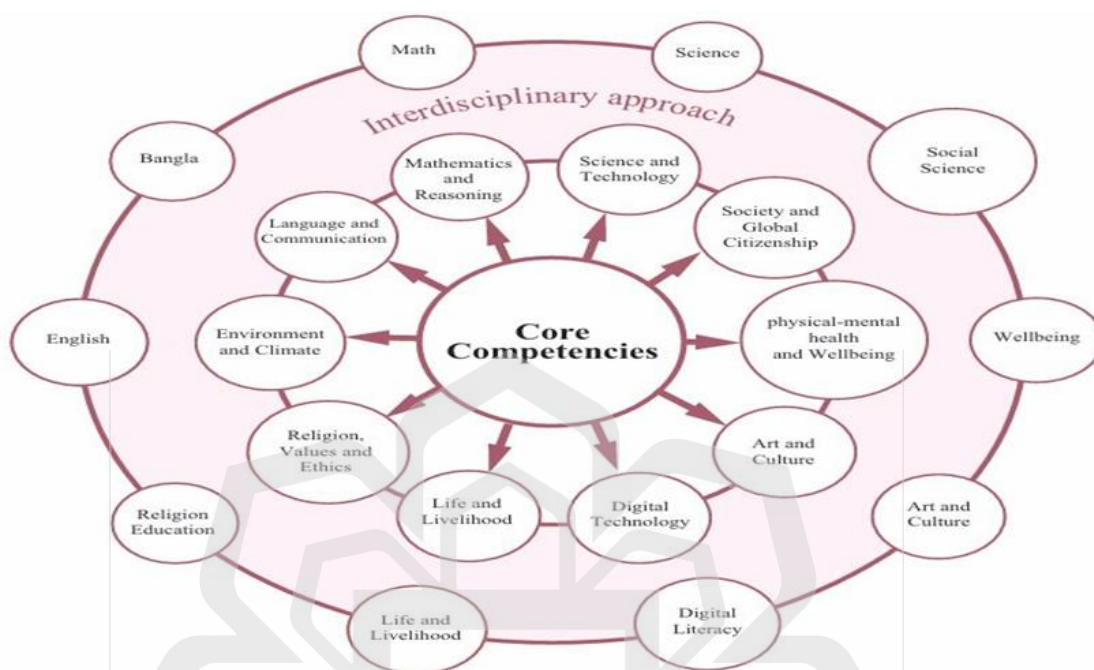


Figure 3.2 Core Competencies and Subjects in Bangladeshi Education (Source: “National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021)

3.2.2.5 Examination

According to the new curriculum, no examinations will be given to pupils up to grade III, no public exams will be given before grade X, all students up to X will have the same subjects, and the SSC exam will be given for just five subjects out of ten based on the X syllabus. Beginning with grade XI, students will have access to humanities, science, and business studies. The HSC examinations will be held in two parts, the first at the end of XI and the second at the end of XII depending on the curriculum of the corresponding grade, with the final HSC result integrating the results of both exams at the XI and XII grades (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021; Alamgir, 2023; Ahmed, 2023). In this respect, the new exam format presents a tendency from memory-based testing to competence-based assessment. This transition is important because the practices of evaluation have a

direct impact on the development and application of values, attitudes and character-related educational outcomes.

3.2.2.6 Assessment

Since there will be no standard examinations for pre-primary and primary students till III, the assessment will be purely real-time and focused on their regular learning and tasks. For five subjects: Bangla, English, mathematics, social sciences, and science, a real-time evaluation will be 60% for grades IV-VIII and 50% for grades IX-X, with summative assessment being 40% for grades IV-VIII and 50% for grades IX-X. Additionally, the remaining subjects will be assessed in real-time. The Real-time evaluation is 30%, and the summative assessment is 70% for compulsory subjects in grades XI-XII. Furthermore, for applied subjects, real-time assessment is 100% and will be done through first-hand tasks. For elective subjects, there will be both real-time and summative assessments as per the framework and conceptualisation. Figure 3.3 presents the assessment mechanism outlined in the National Curriculum Framework.

Pre-primary	Primary		Secondary		
	1st - 3rd grade	4th - 5th grade	6th - 8th grade	9th - 10th grade	11th - 12th grade
Real-time assessment (100%)	Real-time assessment (100%)	Bangla, English, Mathematics, Science, History and Social Sciences, Wellbeing, Religion Studies, Arts and Culture Real-time assessment 60% Summative assessment 40%	Bangla, English, Mathematics, Science, History and Social Sciences, Life and Livelihood, Digital Technology, Wellbeing, Religion Studies, Arts and Culture Real-time assessment 60% Summative assessment 40%	Bangla, English, Mathematics, Science, History and Social Sciences, Life and Livelihood, Digital Technology, Wellbeing, Religion Studies, Arts and Culture Real-time assessment 50% Summative assessment 50%	Compulsory subjects: Real-time assessment: 30% Summative assessment: 70%
					Elective/ specialised subjects: As per framework and conceptualisation, there will be scope for summative assessment as well as Real-time assessment in project-based, practical and other forms; Applied subjects: Real-time assessment: 100%
				Public examinations at the end of Grade 10 to assess competencies of Grade 10	Examinations at the end of every year on the curriculum of Grades 11 and 12. The final results will be calculated on the basis of the combined results of the Grade 11 and 12 examinations.

Figure 3.3 Assessment Mechanism (Source: “National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021)

However, the evaluation exam is not traditional. It incorporates a variety of approaches, such as assignments, practical work, communication, and presentations, and students will be assessed by competence, which will be divided into three stages: initial competence, medium competence, and competent stage (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021; Alamgir, 2023; Ahmed, 2023). Thus, the existing assessment methodology seeks to evaluate students based on practical, behavioural and competency-related characteristics in addition to academic performance. This approach is especially important for character education, as typical tests do not help measure moral behaviours, responsibilities and ideals.

3.2.2.7 Teaching-Learning Strategies

The present curriculum in Bangladesh employs a multidimensional experiential teaching-learning strategy where social constructivist tactics in teaching and learning, connectivism is the principal learning concept, and a practical tactic with experiential learning at its core. In this approach, the teacher’s role is significant as a facilitator, co-learner, and active contributor. The teacher’s roles also include making experiential learning effective, and ensuring that a student is supported in a learner-centred, integrated, democratic, comprehensive, and collaborative learning settings that motivate students to take part in the teaching and learning process proactively. Through this approach, students can learn independently, in pairs, or as part of a team. Additionally, students get the opportunity to learn real-life issues related to the subject as well as hands-on experience since the approach emphasises project, inquiry, context, and problem-based learning rather than the subject. The main objective of this approach is to develop students’ knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and consciousness (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021, p. 78).

According to the curriculum framework, for pre-primary to grade three, teaching and learning approaches are mainly play, activity, and exploratory-based, thus students will actively participate in various games and activities. However, team teaching or block teaching is encouraged (p. 78). Moreover, for 4-5 grades, more emphasis is encouraged on exploratory and problem-solving, besides playing and

hands-on activities. When it comes to grades 6-8, it suggests that the approach should be more structured and experiential, hence the teacher will conduct the class on numerous themes as well as focus on enriching students' higher-order thinking competencies. For 11-12 grades, specialist instructors will handle the classroom to implement the prescribed teaching and learning approach effectively. However, teachers are allowed to employ isolation or a combination of multiple teaching and learning approaches in the classroom. It has been suggested to ensure that students' work is completed at school rather than given homework.

Furthermore, it is declared that provision will be supplied as needed to projects while practising at home or in the societal environment ("National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021, p. 78). So, the multidimensional experiential teaching-learning technique points to an educational turn to collaborative, learner-centred and competency-based education. These techniques are pertinent to character education because they focus on participation, behaviour, interaction, responsibility and practical engagement within the learning process. Figure 3.4 presents the teaching and learning strategies in Bangladeshi education.

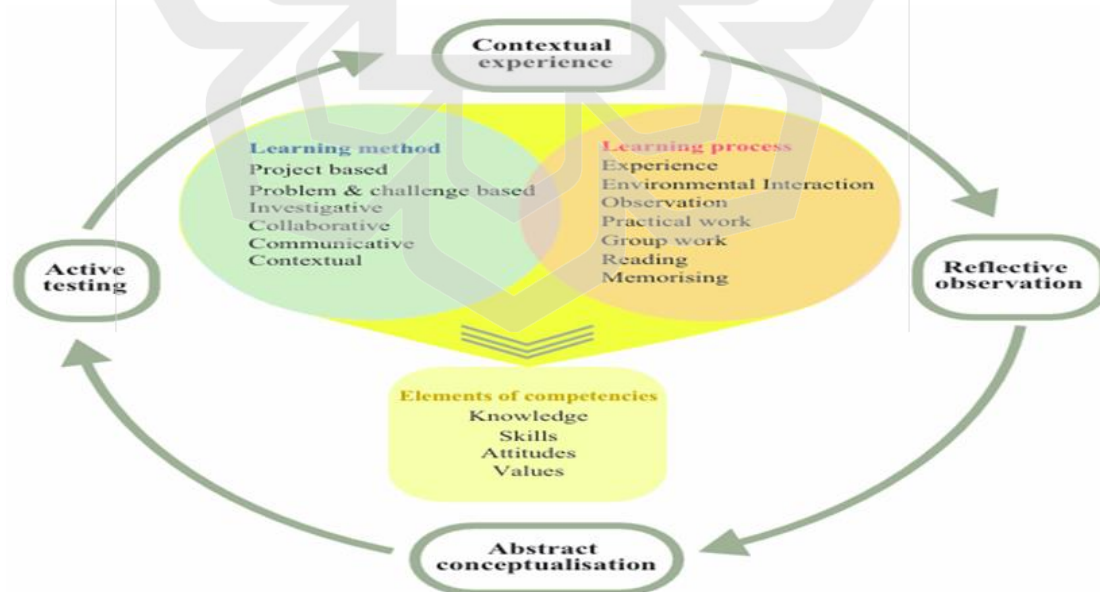


Figure 3.4 Multidimensional Experiential Teaching-learning Strategies (Source: "National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021)

3.3 CHARACTER EDUCATION IN BANGLADESHI EDUCATION

Bangladeshis are familiar with religious education in both formal and non-formal settings, which inevitably includes moral teaching and learning concerning the good character development of citizens. However, moral education is frequently referred to as character education in Bangladesh, even though the existing concept and teaching of moral education do not reflect the tone of character education. Accordingly, non-formal education—such as family, community, Nurani madrasah, Maktab, and Tahfijul Quran Madrasah—is a significant source of character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh. However, the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission (1974) laid the ground for loosening religious education from mainstream education, even though their recommendations were in line with the constitutional ideologies of democracy, nationalism, socialism, and secularism. As a result, their recommendations eagerly forwarded to isolate religious education; however, due to public religious sentiment, they later included religious or moral education in their recommendations beginning with grade VI. Nevertheless, at present in Bangladesh, there is no distinct and committed program or stand-alone subject in the education system or educational activities for character education, while there are some traces of character education and its components under various titles in educational policy, curriculum, and textbooks. Moreover, the concept of character education (*Character Education: Bangladesh Character Education Initiative*, 2010; Billah, 2016; Iqbal, 2022) is currently spreading throughout Bangladesh.

3.3.1 National Education Policy and Character Education

The education policy of Bangladesh in 2010 outlined “Religious and Moral Education” to convey knowledge of particular religions of students to build the moral character of students improving their behavior, and moral virtues in life and society for Muslim students instilling firm beliefs in Allah, Day of Judgment, in addition, to realize the true essence of Islam as well as encouraging obtaining righteous values (*National Education Policy 2010*, 2010, p. 29). On the other hand, concerning Moral Education, it stated that although religion is the root of morality, social, contextual, local, and cultural values also influence it significantly. Hence, it outlined that during

teaching and learning, moral education will address these aspects honestly through appropriate methods and materials (*National Education Policy 2010*, 2010, p. 30). These directions relate to character education since character education values and virtues in forming the good character of students through education. Furthermore, the National Education Policy 2010 mentioned in its objectives to facilitate students in inculcating moral and spiritual values, encouraging them to obtain scientific, cultural, as well as human values (*National Education Policy 2010*, 2010, p. 12), which aligns with the aim of character education, as character education aims at inculcating values through educational settings.

Furthermore, when the policy talks about curriculum, syllabus, and textbooks, it focuses on “social, human and moral values” (*National Education Policy 2010*, 2010, p. 69) to be reflected in all levels of education. Accordingly, educational policy’s emphasis on instilling moral values indicates that character education components exist. However, Chowdhury et al. (2019), Pereira (2016), and *Policy and Commission* (2016) argue that there are no precise guidelines on how or where to teach moral and ethical concepts to children in the National Education Policy 2010.

3.3.2 Character Education in Curriculum Framework

The present curriculum in Bangladesh states that it is a unified, comprehensive, value-based interdisciplinary approach to education. Its universal goals include students’ physical, intellectual, mental, linguistic, emotional, aesthetic, and holistic development, which is equally significant for all stages of schooling (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021, p. 32). Even though the curriculum framework theoretically incorporates components of character education, its implementation is inconsistent. Additionally, it emphasises values beyond Islamic and spiritual character development. However, other factors such as economic, social, local, and international contexts were taken into account in outlining the goals of each stage that facilitate achieving the main objectives of education. Accordingly, it outlines competency based on components such as values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge, drawing inspiration from observing and understanding the spirit of the Bangladeshi Liberation War. It was the ultimate aim to uphold both in

theory and practice the Bangladeshi Liberation War spirit and values related to it. Thus, it acknowledged it as one main source of values in addition to local and global values, historical and national identity, culture, and religious beliefs and practices. Hence, desired students' values such as solidarity, patriotism, harmony, tolerance, respect, empathy, and integrity were taken into account during the curriculum development ("National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021, p. 21). Consequently, it is expected that the values, shown in Figure 3.5, will logically reflect in students at the end (pre-primary to 12th grade) of their education.

Qualities	Description
Honesty	A moral quality that motivates one to practice truthfulness and justice
Enthusiasm	Long-lasting physical and mental capability
Democracy	Tolerant, aware, and respectful of one's right to expression
Non-communalism	Respect for the beliefs, culture, and traditions of all communities, including one's own
Initiative	Being interested in performing a task or solving a problem and remaining motivated until the end
Positivity	Taking decisions and steps considering the noble aspects of any work, word, event, or issue
Aesthetics	Having a thoughtful attitude to practicing creative works while realising their beauty
Humanity	Making efforts to love, care for, preserve, and provide security to human beings and the creation
Responsibility	Performing all duties and responsibilities in a timely, serious, and appropriate manner

Figure 3.5 Desired values of the Learner (Source: "National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021)

However, the study found that the National Curriculum Framework 2021 theoretically identified the desired students' values, but it did not provide structured and effective strategies to implement them. Additionally, it did not offer instructions on how these values should be taught, practised, or assessed in classrooms. The curriculum assumes that these values will gradually be cultivated in students through value-oriented subjects, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and social interactions. For instance, the curriculum aims to promote character components in secular-based national education through Religion Education and, for madrasah education, through Islamic Studies. Additionally, all the other themes and values outlined in the curriculum framework to foster character qualities and values reflect the broader objectives of character development among students ("National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021). However, the National Curriculum Framework relies mostly on theoretical interpretation and instruction rather than on integrated practical activities and training. This may lead to inconsistent and ineffective implementation of character education across academic institutions in Bangladesh.

Furthermore, since socialisation is one of the objectives of this curriculum (National Curriculum Framework 2021, p. 32), it could be achieved at secondary levels, which is one of the key aspects of character education, as character education promotes good citizenship. The curriculum Framework of 2021 explicitly outlined 10 learning areas to obtain 10 core competencies, among them the competencies "Religion, Values, and Ethics" (National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12, 2021, p. 29), and the learning area is closely related to character education, although it is not mentioned in it. This will be achieved in secular-based national education through Religion Education and for Madrasah "Islamic Studies". Hence, it aims to foster some values such as respect, tolerance of self-religion, and others in addition to acquiring knowledge concerning the significance of values such as honesty, cooperation, fairness, empathy, freedom of the individual, integrity, cultural values, sense of humanity and love for human, nature, and the universe and so on. These are aimed towards developing individuals capable of working towards the aim of establishing a safe and non-sectarian world by observing these values ("National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021, p. 31). The National

Curriculum Framework outlines these competencies. However, it does not provide specific guidance for teachers regarding lesson design and the integration of activities.

Additionally, it does not offer assessment mechanisms to evaluate the acquisition and practice of values among students. The National Curriculum Framework assumes that sustained engagement with these learning areas will facilitate the incorporation of values over time. Nevertheless, the practical understanding and implementation of these competencies may vary significantly without clear pedagogical guidance and adequate supervision. However, our understanding states that the learning area of Religion Studies is the primary source to acquire the competency of “Religion, Values and Ethics” which can relate to character education, particularly Islamic character education, since it promotes these explicitly. Although the framework focuses on moral and humane qualities rather than religious or spiritual qualities, it nevertheless mentions the significance of acquiring religious knowledge and practising religious norms in contributing to forming moral and humane qualities, ensuring peaceful coexistence. The framework calls for priority to be given to religious knowledge, norms, and values, as outlined in Figure 3.6.

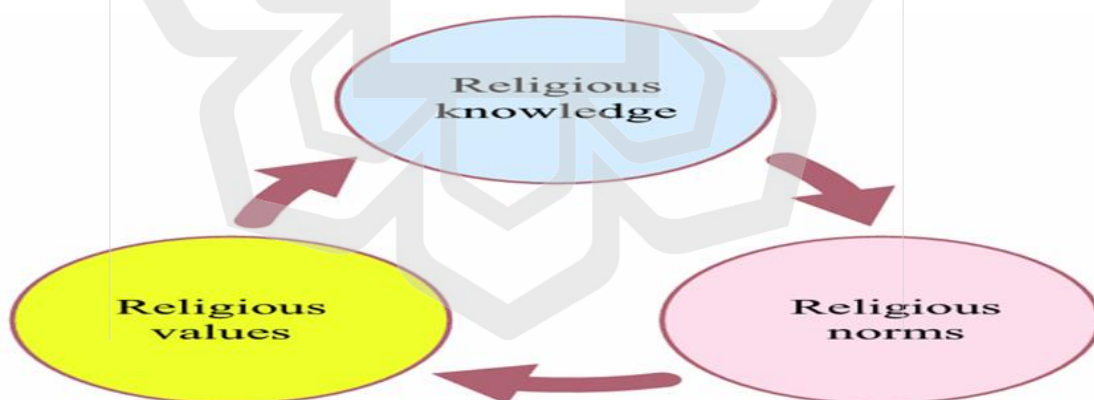


Figure 3.6 Religion Studies (Source: “National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021)

Nevertheless, for the Madrasah stream, *Taqwa* is added as an additional desired quality and attitude of students. Consequently, students from the Madrasah will obtain the qualities of how to live righteously and just with fear of Allah and the day of judgment. Thus, a Madrasah student will be motivated to maintain harmony not only with their customs, beliefs, and culture but also with other communities. The framework also mentioned that, in addition to acquiring outlined values, Islamic values such as *iman* (faith), *aqidah* (creed), *amal* (action), and *akhlaq* (practice of virtue and morals), rooted in Islam, will be significant for them. Thus, Madrasah students should have both Islamic values and values that are identified for all, including secular-based national education (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021, p. 95). These distinctions demonstrate the twofold focus of the curriculum. Values from a humanistic perspective are emphasised in secular-based education. Conversely, values from an Islamic perspective are emphasised in Madrasah education.

Additionally, the National Curriculum Framework assumes that, through religious education in institutions, these values will be gradually cultivated and manifested in students upon completion of their education. Nevertheless, clear guidelines for the systematic integration and implementation of subjects, activities, and assessment mechanisms to support and evaluate the development of Islamic values in students are absent. Consequently, the realisation and manifestation of character education rely entirely on teachers and institutions.

Moreover, they claimed that the framework is a unified, value-based, and interdisciplinary approach to education. Accordingly, they want to foster values through other subjects and themes under digital citizenship. The framework emphasises ethics and etiquette in using technologies, promoting societal values in digital platforms (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021, p. 55). Since the framework focuses on values through education, it can relate to character education, as character education has similar intentions. Although theoretically there are character education components in the present curriculum framework, the focus is not completely Islamic character or values-centred as it emphasises social values, human qualities, and ethics from secular and socio-scientific perspectives, focusing on worldly development (“National Curriculum Framework

2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021, pp. 48-51). The National Curriculum Framework 2021 theoretically identifies proposed values and competencies. However, the absence of explicit guidance for implementation and limited supervision and resource support, such as pedagogical strategies, classroom practices, and assessment mechanisms, may hinder the consistent integration and development of character education across different educational institutions and streams in Bangladesh. Although the National Curriculum Framework provides the theoretical direction and basis for character education, its practical implementation heavily relies on teachers’ interpretation and local institutional resources. This underscores a significant inconsistency between the intended goals of the Bangladeshi National Curriculum Framework 2021 and its actual implementation in practice.

3.3.3 Character Education in Textbooks

In Bangladesh, there is no separate subject (textbook) for character education in the general (secular-based national) education system. Religious studies, which is taught as a subject in schools from grades III-X (primary and secondary) (Puja, 2020) at secular-based national education, is the core formal setting of character education for Muslims and others that share chapters or themes related to it. For Muslim students from III-X it is taught through the *akhlaq* component sharing chapter, in *Islamic studies* subject both primary and secondary levels (Puja, 2020; Ahmad et al., 2023/2025, pp. 48–61; Tamizuddin, Mea, Ali, Siddique, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 40–54; Tamizuddin, Mea, Ali, Jabbar, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 64–85; Akhtaruzzaman, Tamizuddin, Malek, Rashid, Yusuf, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 84–103; Akhtaruzzaman, Tamizuddin, Malek, Rashid, Yousuf, Shaikh, Sharif, Rahman, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 82–103; Akhtaruzzaman, Tamizuddin, Malek, Rashid, Yousuf, Shaikh, Sharif, Ibrahim, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 91–118; Akhtaruzzaman, Malek, et al., 2012/2024, pp. 138–191).

For non-Muslim students, secular-based national education combines some moral and religious values, such as respect for others and justice related to their respective religious classes. Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian students learn their religious, moral, and ethical values through subjects such as *Hindu Religion Studies* (Biswas et al., 2023/2024; Adhikary et al., 2012/2024), *Buddhist Religion Studies* (Barua et al., 2023/2024; Barua et al., 2012/2024), and *Christian Religion Studies* (Rozario et al., 2023/2024; Pereira et al., 2012/2024) both at primary and secondary levels. However, they are fragmented and not focused on the character development of students since character education components are merely a small part of the *Religion Studies* subject. Non-Muslim students face a similar issue; while informal settings such as family, society, and religious institutions also aid in developing good character, they are often short and unstructured. Nevertheless, regarding grades I–II, the study did not find any separate subjects, nor any other subjects that share character education or any particular chapter linked to character education or moral character development of students. Moreover, there is no religious studies subject for grades I–II in the general (secular-based national) education system.

Similarly, in Madrasah (Islamic-based) education, there is no standalone subject for character education. However, it is covered in the Alia Madrasah (Islamic-based national) education system at the Ibtedaie (primary) levels (classes 1–5) and the Dakhil (secondary) levels (classes 6–10) sharing chapter in the textbook *Al Aqaid Wal Faiq* (Alim, Al-Maruf, et al., 2013/2025a, pp. 18–22; Alim, Al-Maruf, et al., 2013/2025b, pp. 27–30; Alim, Al-Maruf, et al., 2013/2025c, pp. 26–30; Alim, Alam, et al., 2013/2025a, pp. 48–58; Alim, Alam, et al., 2013/2025b, pp. 66–76; Hossain et al., 2013/2025, pp. 108–126; Khan et al., 2013/2025a, pp. 147–168; Khan et al., 2013/2025b, pp. 176–208; Khan et al., 2013/2025c, pp. 138–177).

Alia Madrasah also taught character through *akhlaq* components. For Ibtedaie (primary) levels, it is included in a single chapter under the topic “*Akhlaq* and Dua” in the textbook *Al Aqaid Wal Faiq*, which covers a variety of character traits, including both good and bad characters from an Islamic perspective. However, the chapter of the following classes goes into a slightly more detailed discussion of topics than the other chapters that are allocated to character education (*akhlaq*) in the textbook *Al Aqaid Wal Faiq* for Ibtedaie levels until 5th Grade. Furthermore, *Al Aqaid Wal Faiq*,

the textbook, includes character education at the Dakhil (secondary) levels (classes 6–10) under the heading “Third Part: *Akhlaq*”. This section covers “*Akhlaq* and Dua” under several subheadings to offer discussions on the topics from an Islamic viewpoint. However, Alia Madrasha’s education does not have a separate subject for character education (*akhlaq*) at the Dakhil levels, similar to Ibtedaie (primary) education. Accordingly, these findings illustrate that character education in Bangladesh is fragmented, both theoretically and practically. In secular-based national education, Religion Studies partially incorporates character education components but generally lacks a strong focus on Islamic-based character and spiritual development of students. In contrast, Madrasah education places greater emphasis on character education components from an Islamic perspective than secular-based national education. Ultimately, both still lack a standalone subject dedicated to Islamic-based character and spiritual development of Muslim students in Bangladesh.

3.4 CHALLENGES IN INTEGRATING ISLAMIC CHARACTER EDUCATION

Despite the growing significance and demand of character education (Kabir, 2017; Iftekhhar, 2021; Pakbir, 2025; Zaman, 2025), particularly Islamic character education in Bangladesh’s educational system for Muslim students, both the secular-based and Islamic-based national education face challenges in integrating Islamic character education effectively. The first and foremost key challenges for both systems are the lack of policy, an Islamic character-centred curriculum, and coherent, deliberate, systematic, and holistic approaches to implementing integrated character education across all institutions. Although the National Education Policy 2010 and Curriculum Framework 2021 emphasise values and morality, acknowledging that religion is the source of morality, it does not adequately reflect in the curriculum, as there is a deficiency of prioritisation of religious education in Bangladeshi educational policy (Aziz, 2024). Nevertheless, the educational activities in Bangladesh, particularly secular-based national education, are missing the spiritual aspect of Muslim students’ development that is rooted in Islam. Our understanding states that they want to accept only the moral and ethical parts of religion, not the most significant part of it, such as spirituality. Thus, they want to impart religious knowledge but not to develop

students' spiritual aspects, which are significant for Muslims both here in the world and in the hereafter. However, for Madrasah students, *taqwa* is an additional desired quality that can be preserved as a spiritual aspect of development ("National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12," 2021).

Furthermore, another crucial challenge in secular-based national education's overemphasis on academic achievement, intellectual development, scientific and secular mentality, individual identities, and worldly development often overlooks holistic character development that includes students' spiritual, moral, and academic development, obtaining both religious and worldly knowledge simultaneously. Moreover, the overwhelming focus on subject-based assessment, exams, and good grades, but not good man and their significance, often undermines the significance of character-building activities in schools, particularly in rural areas where quality education and resources are limited. In addition, socioeconomic inequalities always play a major role in unequal access to quality education, particularly character education activities. Consequently, learners from weak economic backgrounds often lack exposure to co-curricular and extracurricular activities related to character education and moral character building.

On the other hand, the Islamic-based national education known as Madrasah education faces its inherent challenges, including the challenges faced by the secular-based national education system. The first and foremost challenge inherently concerns the debate of the integration of secular values with Islamic values (Khondoker et al., 2024). However, there are ways to conclude without hanging it, since Islam emphasises both worldly and religious knowledge. Hence, values related to the world can be adopted if they do not conflict with Islamic principles. Additionally, Madrasah education's overemphasis on theology and rituals often overlooks the good character-building aspect of Islamic education, leaving the students lacking opportunities for good character-building. Moreover, there is often a challenge to reforming the Madrasah curriculum to balance worldly and religious knowledge-based subjects for teaching and learning that may facilitate students to prepare to face upcoming religious, moral, spiritual, material, and societal challenges.

Finally, the unique dualistic nature of Bangladeshi education presents the ultimate challenge in integrating Islamic character education into the curriculum. Efforts have been made to achieve a unified education based on constitutional ideologies such as nationalism, democracy, socialism, and secularism, which are incompatible with the religious sentiments of most of the Muslim population in Bangladesh. In 1974, the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission proposed unified, obligatory, universal, and free primary education classes I-V by 1980, and up to VIII by 1983 (Qudrat-e-Khuda, 1974; Ali, 1983). However, the commission recommends religious courses concerning Madrasah education after 8 years of compulsory primary education, but as an elective under vocational education of 3 years long (Ali 1983). This recommendation, from a neutral standpoint, was one of the earliest steps in the development of educational dualism in independent Bangladesh.

The coexistence of two distinct educational systems running concurrently with potentially incompatible educational ideologies is referred to as educational dualism. According to Hashim (1996), among the two systems, one is traditional religious, and the other is secular education in regard to Muslim countries. In Bangladesh, there are primarily two mainstream educational systems operating concurrently, namely the Madrasah Education System (Islamic-based education) and the General Education System (secular-based national education) (Aziz, 2015). Accordingly, there are some Madrasah Education in Bangladesh that are still not considered mainstream education as they are not officially recognised as public education, despite being very prevalent and, in some cases, very influential and contributing to religious, social, and political improvements. For example, Qawmi Madrasahs are traditional and have endured since the British period. They are independent and completely inclined to teach Islamic theology, though there is a need for general worldly education, such as science and technology. They are generally not treated as part of the mainstream educational system. However, recently the government took steps to recognise the certificates of Dawra-e-Hadith of Qawmi madrasah as equivalent to a master's in Islamic Studies and Arabic (*Qawmi Degree Recognised*, 2017, para. 6). The Qawmi Madrasah rejects the process of recognition of certificates of any other level due to the government's plan to reform the curriculum based on a secular-based national education policy of Bangladesh (Chandan, 2017).

Among Madrasah education, the Alia Madrasah (Islamic-based national education) system is entirely government-approved and officially recognised and equivalent to General Education (secular-based national education). Hence, both are official public education in Bangladesh (Aziz, 2015). However, when it comes to educational policy and curriculum development, the government maintains its inherent characteristics. According to the present curriculum, Alia Madrasah Education is offering all the subjects prescribed by the new curriculum in addition to its Islamic Studies learning areas: Quran Majid and Tajweed; Hadith Sharif; Arabic; Aqeedah and Fiqh; and History of Islam (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021). Consequently, Alia Madrasah's education is partly unified with the present curriculum of Bangladesh. Accordingly, when they develop policy, they treat it as a unique stream of education rather than as the same as General Education (secular-based national education). For example, Islamic studies is a learning area for Alia Madrasah students that covers 5 subjects; on the other hand, secular-based national education is Religious education and covers only one subject. Moreover, for Alia Madrasah, the curriculum *taqwa* is added as an additional desired quality that does not apply to other streams. Nonetheless, when it comes to textbooks, particularly regarding character education components and approaches, they significantly differ in terms of themes, character traits, and teaching and learning. For example, Madrasah students are taught with a focus on Islamic principles, and secular-based national education is taught focusing on secular and scientific humane values. This signifies the existence of unique dualism in Bangladeshi education.

In reality, the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission (1974) is an important factor in Bangladesh's continuous educational progress and improvement (“National Curriculum Framework 2021: Pre-Primary to Grade 12,” 2021), as well as promoting secularism and dualism, acting as a basis for educational policies and reforms and displaying its major impact on the country's education system. Even though there is a Madrasah education system (Islamic-based national education) in addition to General Education (secular-based national education), efforts have been made to develop a unified educational system based on the fundamental principles of state policy. As a result, the state religion of Bangladesh, Islam, does not accurately reflect the country's educational system.

The clearest evidence of this argument is seen through how influential religion-based (Islamic) groups, right-wing political parties, as well as pro-Islamic political parties and their supporters, continually demand a unified Islamic education system based on the Islamic philosophy of education (Molla, 2024; Nasim, 2024). On the other hand, the secularist mindset political parties and their supporters prefer a unified education based on Bangladesh's constitutional ideologies, namely nationalism, socialism, and communism (Barry & Manik, 2017). These circumstances indicate the pervasiveness of educational dualism in Bangladesh, which was enforced by the British colonial authority and was carried over to independent Bangladesh and is still in effect.

Even though Bangladesh, a country with a majority of Muslims, has a national education policy that encourages students to develop moral character, the majority of its educational goals, policies, practices, curriculum, and textbooks do not align with this policy or even with the Islamic worldview. Thus, the current educational system in Bangladesh is lacking in formal character education, which they refer to as moral education (Shahiduzzaman, 2016; Akhter, 2022). However, the recently partially adopted new curriculum (Alamgir, 2023; Ahmed, 2023) is founded on the National Educational Policy 2010, which reflects the Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission of 1974, which pushed to reduce Islamic instruction from mainstream education as well as a non-Islamic, "secularist mindset" will surely result from the curriculum and educational policy since it is founded on constitutional ideologies such as nationalism, democracy, socialism, and secularism. This is also explicitly stated in the educational policy as one of the policy's objectives, hence Islamic values, cultures, and thoughts are not fostered to facilitate marginalisation of Islamic identity to institutionalise a more secularist perspective (Aziz, 2015).

However, the July Revolution in 2024 (July Revolution (Bangladesh), 2025) forced former prime minister and Bangladesh Awami League president Sheikh Hasina to step down and flee from Bangladesh to India (Ethirajan, 2024; Ahmed & Bhattacharjee, 2024), leading to the dissemination of mostly textbooks from the previous government among students across the country (*List of Textbooks for Academic Year-2025*, 2025). Thus, the new curriculum that was introduced by the Sheikh Hasina government in 2023 was indirectly abandoned. Nevertheless, the

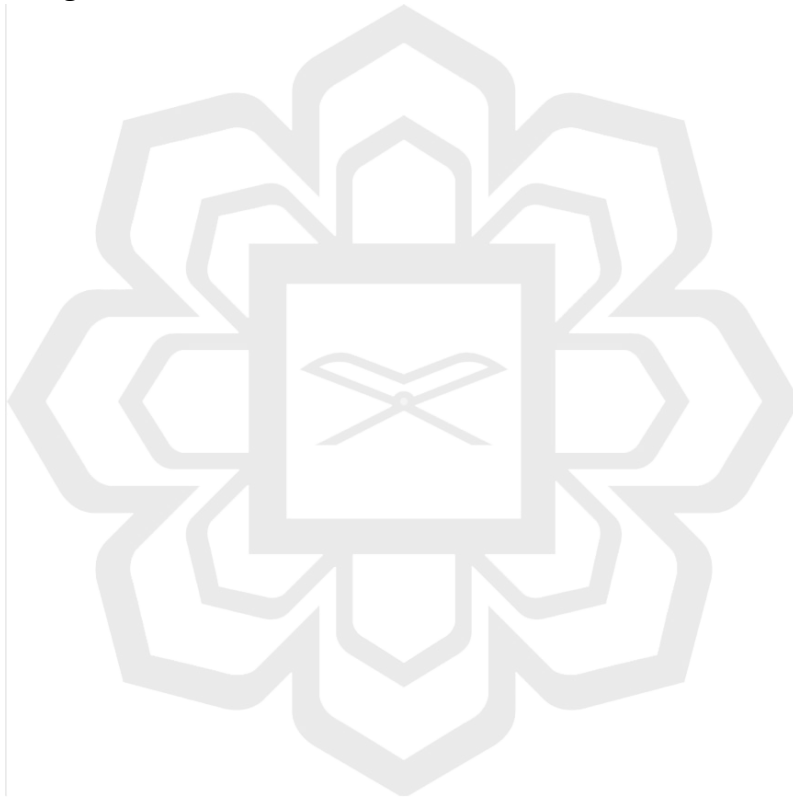
educational policy of Bangladesh is greatly influenced by secularism. Therefore, even if they ensure secularist values, moral or character education, or any other program for students' character development that is not based on Islam, there will undoubtedly be a vacuum because Muslim students, in particular, from all educational streams and levels, require an Islamic-based character education for their character development.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explores the development of the education system in Bangladesh. The evolution of Bangladeshi education from an Islamic to a more secular one is influenced by Bangladeshi constitutional ideologies such as nationalism, democracy, socialism, secularism, and globalisation. The chapter portrays the development of Bangladeshi education, shedding light on the advancement from independence to the present day. It also discusses the key educational reforms and indicators, including the recommendations of the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission in 1974 and the succeeding formulation of the National Education Policy in 2010. The Education Policy in 2010 led the country's education towards a unified, secular-based education system that encompasses mainstream education, especially Alia Madrasah (Islamic-based national) education. Accordingly, to implement educational reforms in alignment with educational goals, the new curriculum was introduced in January 2023, although forced to fall and flee former prime minister Sheikh Hasina in 2024. Through the distribution of textbooks to students from earlier governments, the present government of Bangladesh has indirectly abandoned the new curriculum.

Furthermore, the chapter explores the challenges encountered in Bangladesh in integrating Islamic character education within religious and national educational frameworks. It also focuses on the intricacies of retaining the Islamic worldview and heritage to represent its Muslim sentiments while shifting towards a more comprehensive and updated educational framework. Through this illustration, the chapter portrays a thorough overview of the development of the education system in Bangladesh and the ongoing challenges of integrating Islamic principles and values-based character education into Bangladesh's education. In conclusion, educational policies of Bangladesh theoretically support character development; however, in

practice, the educational system and its settings lack dedicated, formal, structured, standalone Islamic-based character education for Muslim students. Secular-based national education largely focuses on universal humanistic values, while religious-based national education, labelled as Madrasah education, places greater effort on Islamic-based character values. Both secular-based and religious-based national education systems in Bangladesh face challenges in the effective integration and implementation of holistic Islamic character education for Muslim students. This gap highlights the pressing need for a systematic approach to character education that ensures the balanced and holistic development of Muslim students, including moral and spiritual growth as well as excellence.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF INTEGRATED CHARACTER EDUCATION FOR MUSLIM STUDENTS IN BANGLADESH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Integrated Islamic character education is essential for good character development since it creates educational settings and opportunities that ultimately result in holistic individuals who possess knowledge related to the world, and are aware of both the world and the hereafter, and this is evident in their actions. According to the findings of the study, Bangladesh needs character education that is both integrated and capable of producing people with these qualities, as well as educational settings and opportunities that support students' character development. Accordingly, the purpose of this chapter is to present a conceptual model of integrated character education in Bangladesh to address the unique educational needs of Muslim students within the religious, social, and cultural context of that country. It represents the organisation of the elements of the model, including philosophy, vision, mission, goals, and objectives. As a crucial component of the model, it focuses on the integrated character-supportive and character-centric curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs that incorporate Islamic principles. The model also includes an assessment mechanism for regular performance audits, focusing on the development of a comprehensive approach. Moreover, this chapter examines and outlines the roles and strategies for stakeholders to effectively introduce and implement the proposed model in Bangladeshi educational institutions. This chapter concludes with a summary of the organisational components of the model, contending that the model is designed to be adaptable and universal, making it suitable for a variety of educational settings.

4.2 TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF INTEGRATED CHARACTER EDUCATION FOR MUSLIM STUDENTS IN BANGLADESH

The model is an integrated approach to character education for Muslim students who enrol in both secular-based and Islamic-based national education that is thoroughly tailored to the educational system in Bangladesh. Through the integration of diverse teaching and learning approaches in the context of religious, social, and cultural norms, the model seeks to provide a holistic educational experience that places equal emphasis on character development and academic achievements. In addition, it emphasises both spiritual purification and good character development, which aims to foster individuals who possess the best qualities in both their relationship with Allah and their interactions with others. The urgent need for an educational framework that emphasises good character development and not only enhances the academic performance of students but also equips them to handle the challenges, particularly moral and ethical challenges, of contemporary society serves as the justification for this model. The model is grounded in an Islamic philosophical foundation and guided by the character education and character-building concepts of both al-Ghazali (1993a) and Lickona (1991) within the Bangladeshi context and its educational needs. Hence, integrating character education into the curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities is essential for developing people who exhibit noble character and make valuable contributions to society. The aim is to bring both the inner self and external behaviour into line with Islamic ideals. Therefore, the model is designed for a holistic approach to character education so that students grow spiritually, morally, socially, and intellectually, preparing them to lead meaningful and virtuous lives beyond the school, fulfilling their role as the *khalifah* (vicegerent) of Allah. Figure 4.1 presents the theoretical guidance for developing the conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

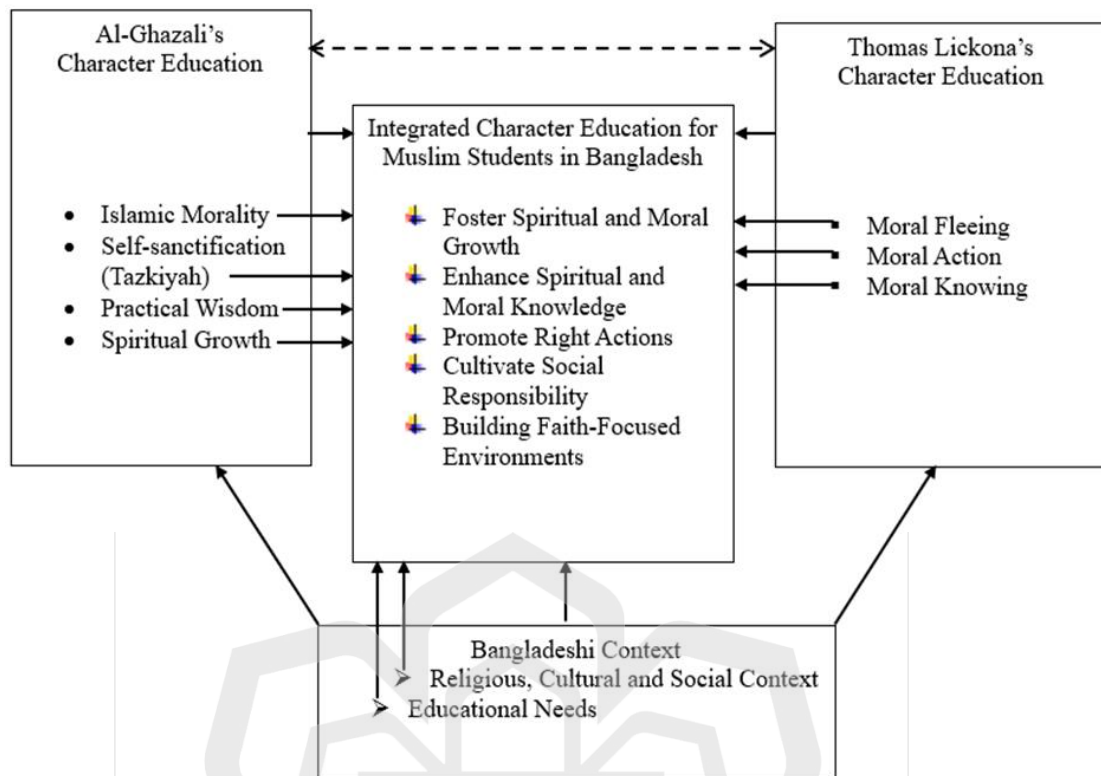


Figure 4.1 Theoretical Guidance of Integrated Character Education for Muslim Students in Bangladesh (developed based on al-Ghazali (1993a) and Lickona (1991))

4.2.1 Organisation of the Model

The model consists of several interconnected components that complement each other and work synergistically. This section presents the core components that ultimately shape the model, as well as how the model can be organised and executed in demonstrating the expected outcomes related to good character development of Muslim students in Bangladesh. To ensure coherence and analytical clarity in the development of the proposed conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh, the presentation and synthesis of the model components in this section are organised within a structured conceptual framework. Although the study is philosophical, conceptual and analytical in nature, the analysis is not limited to descriptive narration. Instead, the model is systematically developed through a clearly defined set of interrelated components derived from al-Ghazali's (1993a) character education and character-building concepts, Lickona's (1991) character education framework, and the educational, religious, cultural, and social

context of Bangladesh. Accordingly, the conceptual model is analytically structured into interconnected dimensions, including philosophical foundations, vision and mission, goals and objectives, values framework, curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, assessment mechanisms, integration and Islamisation of educational resources, holistic educational settings, and stakeholder roles in implementation. Each component is positioned as a distinct but interdependent element contributing to the overall coherence of the model and its aim of promoting holistic character education and character development of Bangladeshi Muslim students.

In this organised framework, special attention is given to the integration of Islamic principles in all dimensions of the model, including curriculum content, teaching and learning processes, assessment techniques, educational environments and stakeholder interaction. Similarly, the assessment component is systematically structured around several complementary strategies, such as teacher assessment, performance-based assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, parental assessment, neighbourhood assessment and community feedback assessment, to assess both the internalisation and practical demonstration of good character traits. Overall, the model is a coherent and systematically arranged conceptual framework where all the components are interlinked and work together to facilitate integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

Furthermore, the components of the conceptual model are designed to address the gaps highlighted in this study directly. The philosophical foundation, vision and mission address the missing link of a united Islamic-based philosophical direction for character education in Bangladesh. The goals and objectives respond to the requirement for a well-defined framework of character development that is contextually relevant. The curricular structure and educational approaches are aimed at filling the gap of fragmented and non-integrated character education practices. The assessment mechanisms are a response to the absence of holistic assessment procedures that measure knowledge and behavioural display of character. Similarly, integration and Islamisation of educational materials will fill the gap associated with inconsistency between educational content and Islamic values. The holistic educational settings component is a response to the gap in coordination between school, family, and community settings. This way, every model component is

systematically related to certain identified gaps, thereby assuring that the conceptual model is contextually grounded and responsive to the situation concerning moral degradation in Bangladesh.

4.2.1.1 Philosophy

The philosophy of this character education model is rooted in the belief that character education is a balanced blend of spiritual, moral, ethical, social, and intellectual development of individuals. It upholds that education should not be perceived merely as the dissemination of knowledge and information but also as the development of individuals' character to direct them towards an understanding of their duties as *khalifah* (vicegerent) of Allah. This philosophy underscores the significance of the integration of Islamic values and social and cultural traditions of Bangladesh to foster holistic development. The model seeks to nurture individuals who are spiritually grounded, ethically sound, morally upright, socially responsible, and intellectually knowledgeable. The model seeks to cultivate holistic individuals by promoting both character development and academic achievements, who can embody the moral and ethical values of Islam while respecting their social norms and cultural traditions in contributing positively to society.

The philosophy is grounded in the following principles. It draws on the insights of both al-Ghazali (1993a) and Lickona (1991). It simultaneously incorporates the researcher's original developments. However, specific principles are primarily derived from al-Ghazali's Islamic ethical framework, while others reflect Lickona's contemporary character education approach. Additionally, it adapts these principles to the specific context of Bangladesh to ensure both scholarly grounding and practical relevance.

- **Holistic Development:** education must focus on all aspects of students' development, including spiritual, moral, ethical, social, and intellectual. This principle is grounded in al-Ghazali's (1993a) Islamic concept of integrated human development and supported by Lickona's (1991) holistic character education framework.

- **Islamic Values as its Core:** the core values of Islam, including spiritual, moral, and ethical, must be the directional values for the character development of students. This principle is primarily derived from al-Ghazali's (1993a) Islamic worldview of moral and spiritual formation, which positions Islamic values as the foundation of character development.
- **Contextual Significance:** Local traditions, values, cultures, and religious teachings must be incorporated into character education to promote a sense of belonging and identity while respecting the rich cultural heritage of Bangladesh. This principle reflects al-Ghazali's (1993a) recognition of the role of social environment in moral formation. It aligns with Lickona's (1991) emphasis on the importance of culture and community context in character education. Both of them emphasise teaching values, and locally established values and norms have significant roles in shaping individuals' character.
- **Practical Application of Knowledge:** Only an understanding of spiritual, moral, and ethical principles is not adequate for students; they must be capable of applying these principles into practice in every aspect of life to embody Islamic ideals in their activities. This principle is strongly rooted in al-Ghazali's (1993a) emphasis on knowledge leading to action and is reinforced by Lickona's (1991) moral action component of character education. Both of their character-building concepts highlight the significance of good actions.
- **Character Development as a Lifelong Process:** Character development is an ongoing and lifelong effort. Character education and character development are interconnected; they should not be treated as a one-time effort or a series of isolated instructions. It must be a continuous and lifelong effort that extends beyond the school years and throughout an individual's life. This principle is strongly grounded in al-Ghazali's (1993a) concept of continuous spiritual purification (*tazkiyah*), as he emphasises attaining the love of Allah in both worlds through character

formation. This principle is also consistent with Lickona's (1991) view of character development as a lifelong moral process.

- **Collaborative Efforts:** Character education and character-building are not an isolated effort but rather a collaboration between stakeholders such as family, school, community, and religious institutions to create a character-supportive environment to reinforce values both inside and outside the classroom. This principle reflects al-Ghazali's (1993a) emphasis on the role of family and upbringing in moral formation and aligns with Lickona's (1991) triadic partnership model involving school, family, and community.
- **Self-sanctification (*Tazkiyah*):** Spiritual growth and character-building are intertwined, which is reinforced by self-sanctification, awareness, reflection, and the continuous enhancement of one's character. This principle is fundamentally derived from al-Ghazali's (1993a) concept of *tazkiyah* (spiritual purification), while Lickona (1991) provides complementary support through the moral habit formation dimension of character education.

4.2.1.2 Vision and Mission

Vision: To cultivate a holistic generation of individuals in Bangladesh who can cope with the challenges of modern society and serve as true vicegerents (*khalifah*) of Allah, whose primary purpose is to achieve Allah's pleasure in this world and hereafter. In addition to possessing the necessary knowledge and good character traits, they must integrate and incorporate Islamic values, ethics, and traditions into their daily lives as well as in their social, professional, and cultural domains.

Mission: To provide an integrated character education framework in Bangladesh to integrate character education into the academic curriculum of Bangladesh that can encompass character development in all aspects of education, prioritise character development as well as academic achievement, and incorporate faith-based values, and diverse and effective educational approaches to the needs of Bangladesh for

holistic educational settings. To empower students to embody Islamic values, morals, and traditions along with good character traits in the personal, social, professional, and cultural contexts, ensuring that students are equipped to serve as true vicegerent (*khalifa*) of Allah as well as contribute positively to society.

This vision and mission are operationally guided by the philosophical foundations and theoretical principles outlined in Section 4.2.1.1.

4.2.1.3 Goals and Objectives

The model believes that true character education and character-building initiatives must have specific and clear goals and objectives to effectively address the challenges related to moral degradation and the character development of students. Moreover, the model strongly emphasises a holistic approach to character education and character-building through an integrated curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities rooted in the philosophical foundation of Islamic education. The model outlined a total of five goals—Enhance Spiritual and Moral Knowledge, Foster Spiritual and Moral Growth, Cultivate Social Responsibility, Build Faith-Focused Environments, and Promote Right Actions—and each goal has several objectives. These goals and objectives are drawn from the model’s philosophy, vision, and mission aimed at facilitating holistic individual development in Bangladesh. The following goals and objectives outline the core elements and serve as the cornerstones of the model toward guiding the development and implementation of the conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh. Additionally, through clearly defined goals and objectives, the model provides a structured means for guiding stakeholders toward an effective character education in Bangladesh.

4.2.1.3.1 Goal 1 and Objectives

Goal 1 focuses on enhancing and enriching learners' understanding and knowledge of Islamic spiritual, moral, and ethical principles to guide their actions and decisions. It will equip students with an in-depth understanding of Islamic principles related to morals and ethics in the Qur'an, Hadiths, and Islamic literature and scholarship. Thus, students are empowered to face challenges in life while remaining morally and ethically rooted in Islamic principles. This goal aligns al-Ghazali's (1993a) Islamic epistemological and spiritual concept of knowledge–action unity and Lickona's (1991, 2001) moral knowing framework in character education. Al-Ghazali's spiritual epistemology emphasises the significance of self-knowledge in character development, as he mentioned: “the knowledge of the soul which is the root of the knowledge of God.” He further states, “When man does not know himself, he does not know God” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 7). Al-Ghazali's knowledge–action principle strongly acknowledged the relationship between knowledge and action, stating that “knowledge comes before action as it is the basis of action and action is the fruit of knowledge” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. IV, p. 319). Likewise, Lickona's moral knowing–feeling–action framework clarifies, “Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good—habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action” (1991, p. 51). However, this goal is more relevant to al-Ghazali's integrated knowledge framework since his focus combined with simultaneous importance on both Islamic spiritual and Moral Knowledge, stating “knowledge means knowledge of the material and spiritual world and reality of intellect” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 12). He further says, “the knowledge of Arabic language, Quran and Hadis will be a helping hand to that knowledge. These are materials to purify the soul” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 217). Al-Ghazali's theory of moral character components counts knowledge itself as one of the significant character qualities, as he states, “there are four basic qualities of good conduct: knowledge, bravery, patience and power of adjustment or judgment” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 50). However, within this goal, al-Ghazali's (1993a) framework is more dominant as it integrates both spiritual and intellectual dimensions of knowledge. In contrast, Lickona's (1991, 2001) contribution primarily supports the moral education structure through character development as habit formation. Moreover, objectives under this goal emphasise cultivating Islamic principles through

the integration of Islamic character education and a range of educational activities focused on both character development and academic achievements. The objectives underline that the aim of character education is not only individuals' holistic development as lifelong learning, but also guiding them towards understanding their divine duties as well as fulfilling these obligations as true vicegerents of Allah. The objectives are in line with al-Ghazali's (1993a) emphasis on knowledge as a means of fulfilling divine responsibility and Lickona's (1991) focus on character formation as a structured educational outcome. Table 4.1 presents goal 1 and the objectives of the model.

Table 4.1 Goal 1 and Objectives

Goal 1	
Enhance Spiritual and Moral Knowledge	Equip students with a comprehensive understanding of Islamic principles, spiritual components, and moral and ethical values to guide their activities.
Objectives	
1.1 Cultivate character traits in students that are coherent with Islamic principles to grow a sense of vicegerent to foster moral behaviour and inculcate virtues to direct their actions and choices.	
1.2 Combining Islamic character education into the curriculum to facilitate learning and engage students in a range of educational activities consistent with Islamic principles that foster both character-building and academic achievements.	
1.3 Promote character education as a means of promoting holistic individual, self-sanctification, and spiritual growth with a focus on lifelong learning that leads students to understand their duties as <i>khalifah</i> (vicegerent) of Allah.	

4.2.1.3.2 Goal 2 and Objectives

Goal 2 underlines the inward development of learners' consistency with Islamic morality and spirituality. It focuses on promoting personal growth in students through the instruction of Islamic ideals to direct them to self-sanctification and spiritual growth. The endeavour is for learners to develop the inner awareness necessary for their spiritual, moral, and ethical lives in addition to academic achievements. This goal is primarily grounded in al-Ghazali's (1993a) concept of self-sanctification (*tazkiyah*) and inward moral purification. In contrast, Lickona's (1991) moral development framework provides complementary support through habit formation of moral knowing, feeling, and action. Al-Ghazali's concept of self-sanctification (*tazkiyah*) explains and emphasises heavily on spiritual sanctification, uttering that "it becomes fortunate if it is purified and cleaned, and it becomes fortunate if it is kept impure" (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 7). Lickona's moral knowing–feeling–action framework character concept states, "Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good—habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action" (1991, p. 51). These come true with the moral growth of an individual (Lickona, 1991).

Furthermore, the objectives under this goal emphasise the integration of Islamic principles and ethics into the curriculum. This reflects al-Ghazali's (1993a) emphasis on integrating spiritual knowledge with moral purification, while also aligning with Lickona's (1991) view that moral development must be reinforced through contextual learning experiences. Moreover, the significance of local context in character education curriculum to make it more approachable and contextually pertinent to students by linking character education and character-building to both their faith and culture is in line with al-Ghazali's (1993a) recognition of contextual moral upbringing and Lickona's (1991) emphasis on community-relevant character education.

Additionally, al-Ghazali's *tazkiyah*-based moral purification model promotes self-sanctification (*tazkiyah*) through self-consciousness, self-reflection, and remembrance (*tajkira*) in students. Moreover, the objective under this goal also emphasises students' spiritual growth, focusing on the understanding and internalising that the ultimate aim of all efforts of forming good character is only to satisfy Allah to

earn his love and blessings both here in the world and in the hereafter, which is rooted in al-Ghazali's (1993a) spiritual teleology of moral development. Table 4.2 presents goal 2 and the objectives of the model.

Table 4.2 Goal 2 and Objectives

Goal 2	
Foster Spiritual and Moral Growth	Foster individual development in line with Islamic principles to guide students toward self-sanctification and moral and spiritual growth.
Objectives	
2.1 Integrate Islamic principles and ethical values into the character education curriculum.	
2.2 Incorporate traditions and values of Bangladesh that reinforce Islamic principles into character education through curricular integration to make it more approachable and relevant to students.	
2.3 Promote self-consciousness, self-reflection, and remembrance (<i>tajkira</i>) in students through activities that promote personal development, moral and ethical decision-making, and critical thinking, leading to self-sanctification (<i>tazkiyah</i>).	
2.4 Cultivate a sense of spiritual growth in students, concentrating that the ultimate aim for excellent character is to satisfy Allah both here on Earth and in the hereafter.	

4.2.1.3.3 Goal 3 and Objectives

Goal 3 emphasises not only the development of good citizens but also a good man who is accountable not only to society but also to Allah as his vicegerent. It emphasises preparing students to behave coherently to establish and maintain social harmony in the light of Islamic teachings. This goal is grounded in al-Ghazali's (1993a) Islamic conception of moral responsibility and accountability as vicegerent of Allah. It is complemented by Lickona's (1991, 2001) framework of moral action and

civic character formation. Al-Ghazali's moral psychology of action–character link states, “if good actions come out of the soul, it assumes good conduct, and if evil actions come out of it, it assumes bad conduct” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 50). For the development of socially responsible citizens, their actions are significant to evaluate them. He further highlights that individuals lack awareness of their inner moral condition, which causes their moral failures. Al-Ghazali's theory of moral self-awareness strongly believes “the majority of men are ignorant of soul and its attributes” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 7). Al-Ghazali's knowledge–responsibility principle via Abu Darda, “the more a man is wise, the more is his responsibility” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 258), highlights the significant relationship between knowledge and the responsibility of the individual.

Similarly, Lickona's moral knowing–feeling–action model states, “*Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good—habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action*” (1991, p. 51). Lickona's triadic character education model: school–family–community further states that character education is “the deliberate effort by schools, families, and communities to help young people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values” (as cited in Lickona, 1996, p. 93). The three main components of Lickona's ideas—knowledge of good, desire for good, and doing a good action—have been combined and emphasised, expanding the boundaries and space of character formation and education. This effectively reveals character education and how it can be maintained and demonstrated in one's life to be a socially responsible as well as a good citizen. Additionally, his focus on the dual goals of education: helping individuals become smart and good throughout history (Lickona, 1993), as well as moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, are significant elements for developing good and socially responsible citizens.

This goal is more strongly rooted in al-Ghazali's (1993a) concept of vicegerency (*khilafah*) and moral accountability before Allah, whereas Lickona's (1991, 2001) contribution functions as a supportive framework for structuring civic responsibility and moral action in educational settings. Al-Ghazali's vicegerency and ethical governance framework upholds “although placed below the *khilafat* and administrative works, it has no less responsibility. Administration of justice, if carried

out justly and with fairness, has unlimited rewards, but in case of injustice, there is grievous punishment” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 242). It highlights one of the greatest responsibilities of humankind as the vicegerent of Allah. Furthermore, the objectives under this goal emphasise the development of students holistically to contribute to society and humanity at large positively. This reflects al-Ghazali’s (1993a) emphasis on accountability before Allah as the foundation of social responsibility and aligns with Lickona’s (1991) focus on cultivating civic responsibility through active moral engagement. It promotes cultural diversity in the light of Islam. The objectives encourage students to actively participate in such activities, which focus on social cohesion to establish an inclusive society based on Islamic principles. However, the objectives also include the significance of integrating religious institutions and other organisations in character education to foster enduring bonds with the community and create volunteer opportunities, which are in line with al-Ghazali’s (1993a) concept of community-based moral responsibility and Lickona’s (1991) emphasis on stakeholder collaboration in character education. Table 4.3 presents goal 3 and the objectives of the model.

Table 4.3 Goal 3 and Objectives

Goal 3	
Cultivate Social Responsibility	Develop responsible citizens who contribute to the welfare of their communities and society at large as a vicegerent of Allah.
Objectives	
3.1 Inculcate social responsibility and a sense of belonging in students to prepare them to participate in the community and contribute positively to society in line with Islamic ideals.	
3.2 Foster respect, tolerance, and social cohesion by promoting an understanding of cultural diversity in the local context and encouraging students to engage in activities that strengthen social responsibility.	
3.3 Connect organisations and religious institutions in character education to foster enduring bonds with the community and create volunteer opportunities.	

4.2.1.3.4 Goal 4 and Objectives

Goal 4 emphasises the establishment of faith-focused character, supportive, holistic environments that encourage character-building of students in the light of Islamic principles to guide students toward virtuous conduct. It seeks to initiate collaborations between schools, families, and the broader community to adopt an integrated and holistic approach to character development. This goal is primarily derived from al-Ghazali's (1993a) theory of environmental and parental influence in moral development, while Lickona (1991, 1993, 2001) provides a complementary institutional framework based on school–family–community partnership. Al-Ghazali states, “When the little boys attain maturity, they hear from their parents and relatives that there is God, that He is almighty, Creator of everything, that He sent apostles with books. They believe them on hearing. This belief will be the cause of salvation in the next world” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, pp. 19-20). This reflects al-Ghazali's view on early faith formation through family environment. According to him, many are born without prior good conduct and virtues; they can acquire the desired virtues and good conduct “by education and training through spiritual guides” as well as “efforts” to make good qualities as habits by doing regularly (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 53). This demonstrates al-Ghazali's principle of habit formation through repeated moral training. He strongly believes the Prophet saying that children remain upon natural innate qualities, but their parents are responsible for making them “Jew, or a Christian or a Magian.” He thinks “the child acquires bad habits through his surroundings” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 55). This highlights al-Ghazali's environmental theory of moral development. Consequently, the environment around us is significant in developing good character qualities. Additionally, he states that the training of good character and conduct is significant for a child, and according to him, “God entrusted the children in the hands of their parents (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 64); therefore, they are the utmost responsible agents for the same. This supports al-Ghazali's concept of parental responsibility in character formation.

Furthermore, al-Ghazali upholds that at the very early ages children must begin their learning with “the reading of the Holy Quran and thereafter Hadis or the sayings of the Prophet and the histories and lives of the Prophets, saints and sages” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 65). In addition, he suggests at their early stage “they

should not be given literature and poems of love anecdotes” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 65). This reflects al-Ghazali’s emphasis on faith-centred early education curriculum. All of these directly support establishing faith-focused, holistic environments that promote character-building in the light of Islamic principles. Accordingly, without faith-focused, holistic environments, effective character development for Muslim students will be hampered.

Additionally, this goal also aligns with Lickona’s character education concept as he emphasises the significance of the partnership of stakeholders and their roles in effective character education (Lickona, 1991, 1993, 1997, 2001). He states that character education is “the deliberate effort by schools, families, and communities to help young people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values” (as cited in Lickona, 1996, p. 93). This reflects Lickona’s school-family-community partnership model. Lickona also promotes character education in schools and emphasises being teachers’ role models (1993; Travis, 2000). He also highlights the significance of supportive environments for character formation, maintaining that “effective character education creates a caring school community” (Lickona, 1996/2001, Principle 4). This reflects Lickona’s supportive school climate principle. Additionally, building faith-focused environments is supported by Lickona’s concept since he acknowledges the significance of religion and values in forming good character through curricula (1991; 1993; Travis, 2000; Lickona, 2001; 2012). However, this goal is more strongly grounded in al-Ghazali’s framework of faith-based environmental and parental formation. At the same time, Lickona provides a complementary emphasis on institutional collaboration between school, family, and community. The objectives of this goal operationalise al-Ghazali’s environmental and moral habit formation principles alongside Lickona’s institutional and collaborative character education framework.

Moreover, the objectives of this goal emphasise ensuring the educational settings inculcate and facilitate learners’ spiritual, ethical, moral, social, and intellectual development, which is inconsistent with Islamic principles and the religious, social, and cultural context of Bangladesh, in addition to developing educational materials. It also focuses on professional training for teachers to implement character education in the classroom in light of Islam. It also outlines the

significant need for an assessment system to assess and provide feedback for students' development. The emphasis on building strong relations among stakeholders is notable. It also highlights the significance of family programs to reinforce character education at home, making it a more holistic and efficient approach. Finally, it underscores the significance of role models in character education, encouraging stakeholders to serve as role models for students concerning character-building. Table 4.4 presents goal 4 and the objectives of the model.

Table 4.4 Goal 4 and Objectives

Goal 4	
Building Faith-Focused Environments	Establish faith-focused, holistic environments that promote character-building in the light of Islamic principles.
Objectives	
4.1 Create a supportive educational environment that nurtures spiritual, moral, and intellectual development in a way that aligns with Islamic values and the cultural context of Bangladesh.	
4.2 Develop educational resources that prioritise the formation of good character in line with Islamic principles within the context of Bangladesh.	
4.3 Provide workshops and training for professional development to empower teachers using innovative strategies and resources to instil good character in students.	
4.4 Provide an efficient assessment mechanism to evaluate students' good character development.	
4.5 Foster collaboration and a sense of belonging between teachers, students, families, and community members, and introduce family-friendly programs that inculcate moral values and reinforce good character in the home.	
4.6 Inspire stakeholders, particularly teachers, to serve as role models of good character inside and outside of the classroom.	

4.2.1.3.5 Goal 5 and Objectives

Goal 5 focuses on taking the right action, which means enabling students to have the capacity to apply the learned values and moral knowledge in real-life situations. It emphasises facilitating learners' learned values and moral knowledge into practical behaviours concerning moral and ethical decision-making in everyday life. This goal is grounded in al-Ghazali's (1993a, 1993b) integration of knowledge, intention, and action, while Lickona's (1991, 2001) framework emphasises moral knowing, feeling, and action as interconnected dimensions. Al-Ghazali states, "if good actions come out of the soul, it assumes good conduct, and if evil actions come out of it, it assumes bad conduct" (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 50). According to him, actions can be one of the greatest mechanisms to evaluate our conduct and character. He further states, "action is the fruit of will and will is the fruit of knowledge" (al-Ghazali, 1993b, Vol. IV, p. 319). He strongly believes that knowledge is significant for actions alongside intention, which is why he says, "examine your intention in all affairs and do not do any action without intention" (al-Ghazali, 1993b, Vol. IV, p. 323). According to him, "when purpose, and will are the same, the action which flows from them is called sincere work" (al-Ghazali, 1993b, Vol. IV, p. 328). Additionally, he argues that "to intend to do a pious action with an illegal thing" is a sin (al-Ghazali, 1993b, Vol. IV, p. 321), highlighting that righteous deeds must be performed with both sincere intentions and lawful means. He maintains the Prophet as the example regarding this since "the people around him were surprised to see the action of the Prophet as he was too much reported for his generosity and asceticism" (al-Ghazali, 1993b, Vol. IV, p. 323). However, he prefers such actions that bring humankind closer to Allah. Accordingly, he admits that there is a relationship between knowledge and actions, and knowledge comes first and then actions follow it (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. IV, p. 319). His understanding directly aligns with this goal that moral knowledge is to translate into good actions. This confirms al-Ghazali's integration of knowledge, intention, and action as a unified moral process.

Lickona similarly emphasises that character education seeks to help students foster good actions. He states, "*Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good*—habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action" (Lickona, 1991, p. 51). His concept strongly emphasises that moral knowledge

should translate into good actions. The objectives of this goal operationalise al-Ghazali's emphasis on the unity of knowledge, intention, and action alongside Lickona's model of translating moral knowing into moral behaviour. Furthermore, the objectives under this goal highlight the significance of the practical application of knowledge in empowering students with practical wisdom. Thus, it aims to equip students through engaging in activities with the capacity to translate moral knowledge into practical applications in real-life situations, in making more righteous decisions concerning social, moral, ethical, intellectual, and spiritual dilemmas. The objective also emphasises developing the sense of consciousness of Allah (*taqwa*) in students to encourage them to proactively uphold and practice the learned principles in every sphere of life. Overall, al-Ghazali provides the epistemological and spiritual foundation of knowledge-action unity, while Lickona provides the instructional structure for observable moral behaviour. Table 4.5 presents goal 5 and the objectives of the model.

Table 4.5 Goal 5 and Objectives

Goal 5	
Promote Right Actions	Enable students to translate their spiritual, moral, and ethical knowledge into practice through ethical decisions and performing the right actions in their daily lives.
Objectives	
5.1 Offer prospects for community service and leadership to help students apply their ethical, moral, social, and spiritual values in real-world contexts.	
5.2 Empower students with practical insight (wisdom) and guide them in resolving moral, ethical, social, and spiritual dilemmas through a balanced understanding of religious principles and societal needs.	
5.3 Inculcate consciousness of Allah (<i>taqwa</i>) in learners, encouraging them to maintain and exhibit the values they have acquired both in the public and private domains.	

4.2.1.4 Curriculum Framework of the Model

Curriculum is essential for an educational system that aims to educate systematically to achieve the educational goals and objectives, since it ultimately answers questions such as what is to be learned and how, in addition to how the learning will be assessed. Thus, it plays a crucial role in developing content, goals, teaching, and learning approaches in addition to assessment strategies. Barni and Mahdany (2017) describe it as a tool to accomplish educational purposes. Furthermore, Maksoud and Suhailah (2016) underline the importance of curriculum foundations in designing an integrated, value-based curriculum by sketching a thorough foundation and curriculum components that signify belief, worldview, and philosophy of education as the foundation in designing curriculum components. Since the aim of this model is to develop a character education model for Muslim students it must be rooted in Islamic philosophical foundations to address the holistic needs of Muslim students in Bangladesh to cultivate a holistic individual developing all of his features such as body (*jasad*), soul (*nafs*), reason (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), and spirit (*rūh*) that composed his both spiritual and physical existence comprising religious awareness, moral and ethical behaviour and a social feeling to live as the *khalifah* of Allah on earth. Consequently, the model advocates a curriculum that deliberately addresses the Islamic philosophy of education as well as the Islamic philosophy of character education based on the Islamic philosophical foundations so that they can ultimately be reflected in the curriculum and its components. Thus, based on Maksoud and Suhailah's (2016) concept, the study developed foundation and curriculum components for its model, presented in Figure 4.2. Accordingly, it informs that the curriculum for this model must be rooted in Islamic beliefs such as the oneness of Allah (*tawhid*), God-consciousness (*taqwa*), vicegerent of Allah (*khalifatullah*), worldview, and philosophy of education and character education to prepare students to contribute positively to family, community, and humanity upholding Islamic belief and principles such as righteousness, accountability, and trustworthiness both in private and public domains.

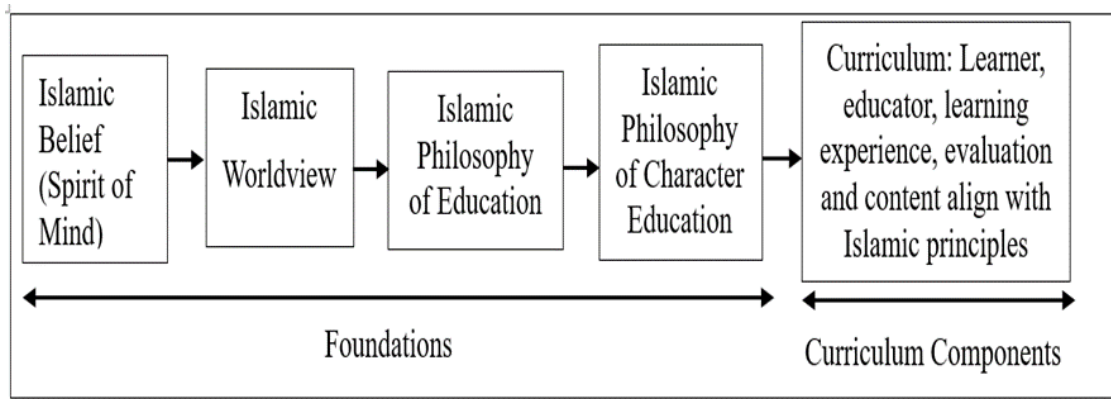


Figure 4.2 Foundations and Curriculum Components of Islamic Character Education
(Source: Adapted from Maksoud & Suhailah, 2016, as cited in Aziz, 2018)

Ultimately, the curriculum must be nurtured by persons who are religiously pious, ethically upright, morally sound, socially bonded, intellectually well-informed, and spiritually having hearty associations with Allah, ingrained in a sense of purpose of His *khalifah*. Consequently, the model also advocates the development of a curriculum that integrates character education within existing subjects and co-curricular and extracurricular activities in addition to standalone subjects. Eventually, this model advocates for a character-supportive and character-centric integrated curriculum for Muslim students in line with Islamic principles, national education standards, and the local cultural context of Bangladesh.

4.2.1.4.1 Islamic Value Framework of the Model

Since the ultimate goal of Islamic character education is to implant Islamic values within the local context and educational needs, this model advocates establishing a clear framework of core values that is consistent with the cultural and Islamic teachings prevalent in Bangladesh to integrate values into the curriculum. Thus, the curriculum must incorporate the core values and ethics across all subjects, ensuring that character education is intrinsic to academic teaching and learning experience. In this study, Islamic values are understood as the foundational ethical and spiritual principles derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah that guide human conduct and educational orientation. Islamic character, on the other hand, refers to the embodiment

and manifestation of those values through attitudes, behaviour, and moral practice. Accordingly, the framework of values serves as the foundational basis upon which character formation and character-building processes are developed within the proposed model. Consequently, the Qur'an and Sunnah serve as the foundations for values for this character education model for the character-building of Muslim students in Bangladesh. Figure 4.3 presents the Islamic holistic integrated value structure based on Islamic principles. Accordingly, core Islamic value domains, including the protection of religion, self, intellect, progeny, property, and honour (Vazhathodi, 2011, pp. 113, 118; Aziz, 2018, pp. 87-88), are significant in the formal education, including character education curricula, pedagogy, and student-teacher-parents relationships to set up a value-based life in an Islamic educational environment.

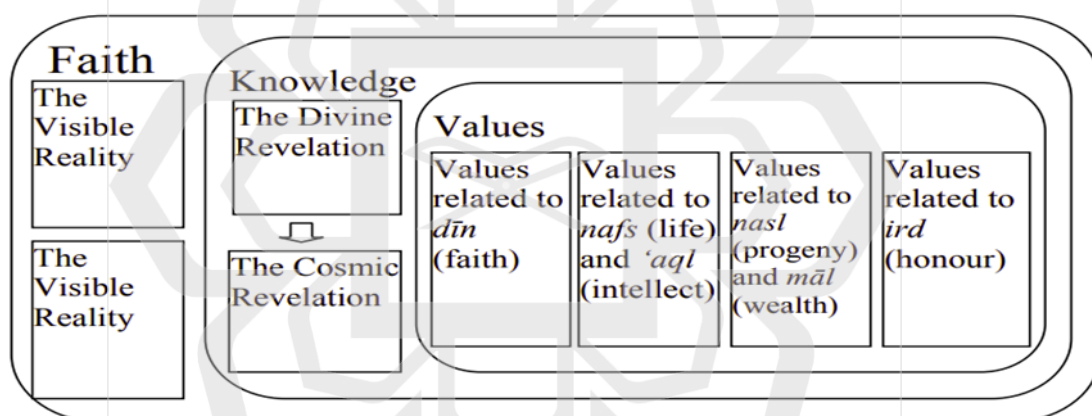


Figure 4.3 The Islamic Holistic Integrated Value-structure for Islamic Character Education, adopted from Vazhathodi (2011)

However, the Islamic value framework not only outlines core values but also emphasises their practice in real-life situations following the practical life of the Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) as the ultimate role model. The model promotes God-consciousness (*taqwa*), Prayer (*salat*), Intention (*niyyah*), Obligation to Parents, justice (*adl*), doing good (*ihsan*), patience (*sabar*), respect, accountability, integrity, and empathy as the core values. However, the model prioritises God-consciousness (*taqwa*), Prayer (*salat*), and Intention (*niyyah*) in the hierarchy of values since both the

Qur'an and Hadith place the highest emphasis on them, and they are the basis that ultimately leads to good actions. According to the Qur'an, *taqwa* is the measurement of a human's position to Allah (*Al-Hujurat: 13*, n.d.), and *salat* prohibits immorality and wrongdoing (*Al-'Ankabut: 45*, n.d.). According to Hadith, *niyyah* is the measurement of any action (*Sahih Al-Bukhari 6689*, n.d.). These can be translated into the ultimate postulate of universal morality, fostering the intention of righteous doings towards self-sanctification. Accordingly, this character education model seeks to nurture the internal beauty of individuals through developing good character and ethical living guided by Islamic principles toward the understanding of divine purpose.

4.2.1.4.2 Conceptual Foundations of Character Education Curriculum: al-Ghazali and Lickona

Both al-Ghazali and Thomas Lickona are influential figures in the field of character education and character-building ideas to instil good character and values in students. However, neither of them has outlined a structured form of the curriculum for character education. However, al-Ghazali's character education concept, as delineated particularly in his *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (al-Ghazali, 1993a), informs the study of how it should be for Muslim students. Similarly, Lickona's character education concept also informs the study of how to integrate character values into the curriculum. However, Lickona's focus is not on Islamic values, though he promotes Christian religious values (Lickona, 2012; Travis, 2000). Al-Ghazali's character education and character-building concept are absolutely from an Islamic perspective, which is mostly pertinent for the model since it aims at nurturing holistic character development of Muslim students in Bangladesh. For him, man is composed of both spiritual *rūh* and physical body, and when it comes to his conduct, some are inherent, and some are acquired by man (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III); therefore, man's character education and character-building need a combination of religious and worldly knowledge to fill man's both spiritual and physical needs. Lickona's concept supports this idea since he acknowledges the significance of religion and values in forming good character through curricula (1991; 1993; Travis, 2000; Lickona, 2001; 2012). Moreover, al-Ghazali emphasises educating students under spiritual teachers to shape

the good character of students (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III). Lickona also promotes character education in schools and emphasises being teachers' role models (1993; Travis, 2000). Al-Ghazali focuses on the sanctification of the soul since it is the utmost component that ultimately regulates human activities, as he says, “If good actions come out of the soul, it assumes good conduct, and if evil actions come out of it, it assumes bad conduct” (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, p. 50). Similarly, Lickona emphasises moral actions and doing the good (1991, 2001). Thus, based on their complementary character education concepts, the study derives guiding principles for the curriculum component of the proposed model, which is presented in Figure 4.4. Hence, the discussion does not propose a separate curriculum by al-Ghazali or Lickona, but rather draws upon their complementary character education principles as a theoretical and conceptual foundation for designing the integrated curriculum component of the proposed model.

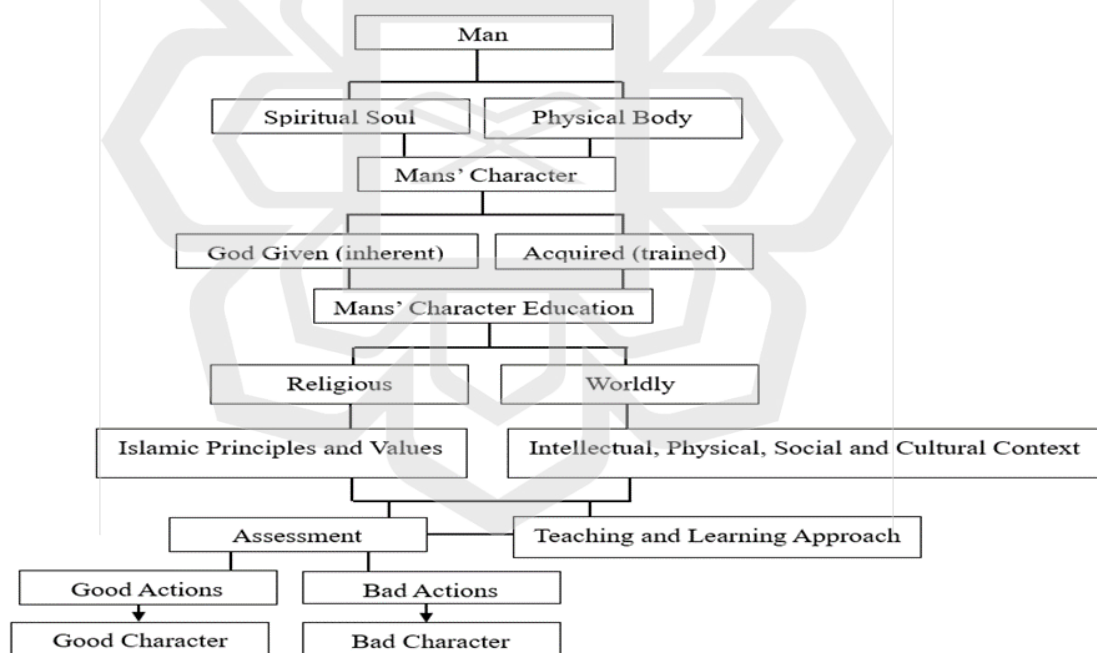


Figure 4.4 Conceptual Synthesis of Character Education Principles for Curriculum Design Derived from al-Ghazali and Lickona (developed from al-Ghazali, 1993a, and Lickona, 1991)

4.2.1.4.3 Conceptual Curriculum Framework for Integrated Character Education of Muslim Students in Bangladesh

Hence, based on the outlined foundations and curriculum components, and the Islamic holistic integrated value-structure for Islamic character education, as well as the Islamic education's pedagogical focus, in addition to the developed character education curriculum of al-Ghazali and Lickona, the study further outlines a conceptual process of curriculum decision-making for Islamic character education presented in Figure 5.5. Meanwhile, the Islamic philosophical foundation of education incorporates philosophical proportions of individuals and Islamic education—*tarbiyyah* (nurturing), *ta'dīb* (discipline), and *ta'līm* (teaching)—and *khalifah*, *amanah* (trustworthiness) (al-Attas, 1979), sustainability—offer a robust educational framework for Muslim students, thus these foundations provide significant inputs into the conceptualisation of the curriculum framework for integrated character education in Bangladesh.

In Figure 4.5, layer one presents the conceptual basis of Islamic character education, layer two presents its pedagogical focus, and layer three presents its curriculum process, and they are interconnected. This indicates that the proposed curriculum framework for Islamic character education must be rooted in the Islamic concept of character education, its curriculum contents and co-curricular and extracurricular activities, as well as pedagogical focus must be guided by Islamic principles that address the total needs of students within the educational system. The figure also outlines the teaching and learning approach and assessment system as essential components of the curriculum process. Based on the process of curriculum decision-making for Islamic character education, the proposed model outlines a conceptual curriculum framework that incorporates character education in all subjects and adheres to Islamic traditions and principles, national education standards, and the local cultural context of Bangladesh. It first calls for the development of a curriculum that emphasises character education as a defined place in the curriculum as a standalone and integrated subject to ensure character education in teaching and learning is facilitated and strengthened both in secular-based and Islamic-based national education in Bangladesh.

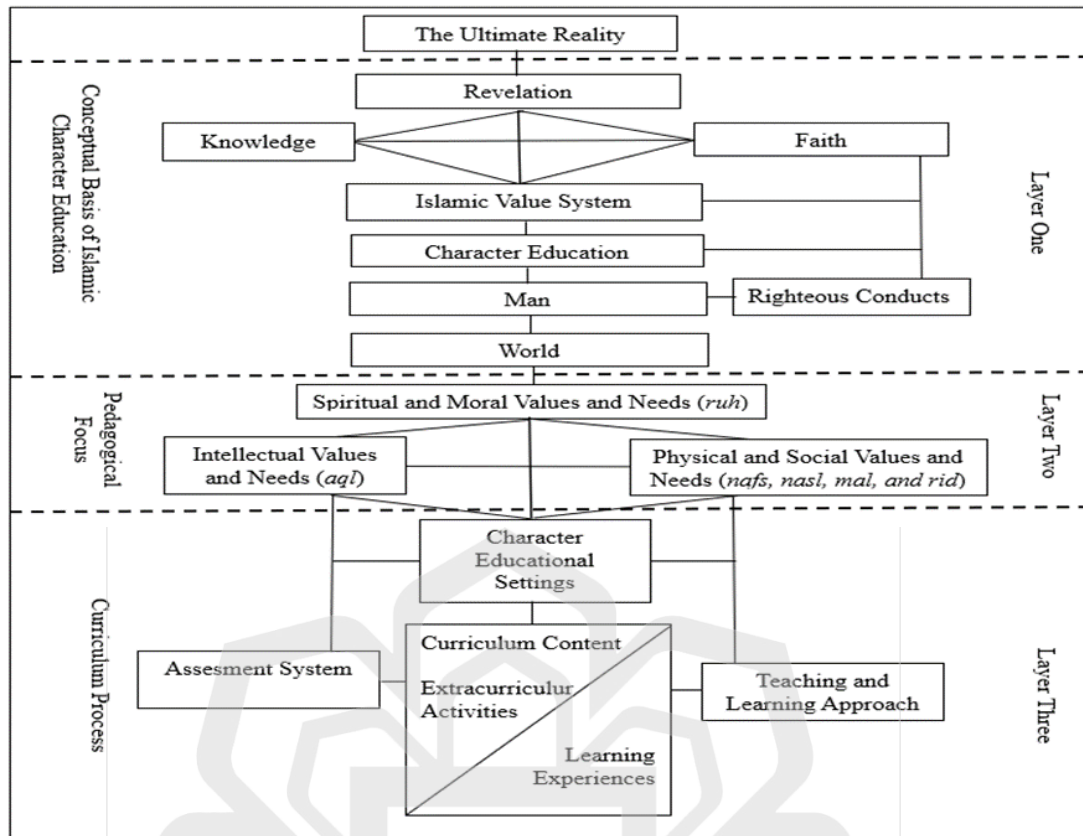


Figure 4.5 The Process of Curriculum Decision-making for Islamic Character Education Adapted from Vazhathodi (2011)

Accordingly, the contents of the curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities must be in line with the model's philosophy, vision, mission, goals, and objectives. In this case, al-Ghazali's statement is pertinent as he thinks that "The children should be given at the beginning to learn the reading of the Holy Qur'an and thereafter Hadis or the sayings of the Prophet and the histories and lives of the Prophets, saints, and sages (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III, pp. 54-55, 65-66). Nonetheless, the study firmly upholds that the contents of the proposed curriculum framework for Muslim students must be developed by the assembly of Islamic educators and specialists, theologians and scholars, curricular specialists, Islamic psychologists, and social and human scientists, considering the time and needs as similarly advocated by Vazhathodi (2011) for the Islamic religious higher education curriculum. Moreover, the model promotes the curriculum, and its contents must align with Islamic principles, local cultural context, and national educational standards,

incorporating spiritual, moral, ethical, and social values and character qualities. The curriculum must be organised focusing on students' various faculties and needs such as *rūh* (spiritual/intellectual), *'aql* (intellectual/psychic), and *jism* (physical/social) (Vazhathodi, 2011, p. 211).

Additionally, it recommends that each lesson plan include explicit character education objectives and that each discipline include modules that highlight character traits relevant to the subject matter being taught. To ensure that the curriculum is holistic and that the moral and ethical lessons are integrated into the broader educational experience without being isolated, the model proposes that the curriculum should be character-centric and use character-supportive resources in both teaching and learning. This holistic approach to the curriculum ensures that ethical principles and good character are consistently reinforced throughout the curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, aligning with its philosophy, vision, mission, goals, and objectives to help students develop good character and incorporate values into real-life contexts for holistic individual growth. The model strongly recommends carefully planned and employed curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities for character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh so that the whole educational environment ensures a “live” Islamic setting that simultaneously encourages the cultivation of students' both spiritual and intellectual ability as well as physical well-being, as recommended by Vazhathodi (2011) for Islamic religious higher education. Accordingly, the discussion does not present a complete formal curriculum, but rather outlines the conceptual curriculum framework and guiding principles of integrated Islamic character education within the proposed model.

4.2.1.4.4 Islamic Pedagogical Foundation of the Model

Islamic pedagogical focus is directed by Islamic ideologies, focusing on the cultivation of students' holistic growth, including spiritual, moral, social, ethical, and intellectual, ingrained in the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as Islamic educational philosophy. Thus emphasising the integration of faith, moral, and academic development within formal educational programs (*What Is Islamic Pedagogy?*, n.d.). Accordingly, Islamic pedagogical focus is pertinent for this character education model

for Muslim students in Bangladesh since Islamic pedagogical focus is aligned with the model's philosophy, vision, mission, goals, and objectives. Figure 4.6 presents the pedagogical focus of Islamic education, which is relevant to Islamic character education, offering the model.

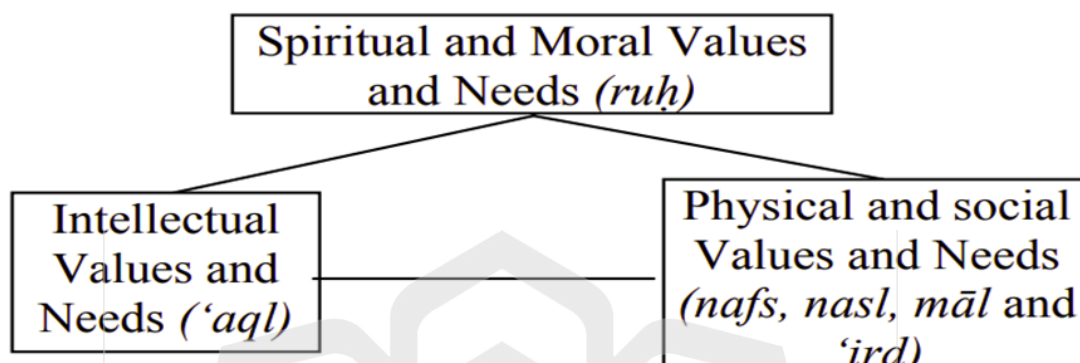


Figure 4.6 The Islamic Education's Pedagogical Focus Adopted from Vazhathodi (2011)

While the pedagogical focus of the model outlines the overarching Islamic educational orientation and philosophical direction guiding teaching and learning, the following section operationalises this pedagogical focus through practical educational approaches and instructional strategies for character education. Thus, the pedagogical focus explains the conceptual foundation of teaching and learning within the model. In contrast, the holistic educational approaches demonstrate how the model's philosophy, vision, mission, goals, and objectives can be translated into classroom practices, learning experiences, character formation processes, and real-life application within the context of Muslim students in Bangladesh.

4.2.1.4.5 Holistic Educational Approaches to Character Education

To transform the philosophical and pedagogical foundations of the model into practical educational implementation, the model proposes to include and integrate different teaching techniques and learning strategies for the development of a comprehensive educational approach to character education. These techniques aim to

operationalise the philosophy, vision, mission, aims and objectives of the model in classroom instruction, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, assessment processes and in the broader educational contexts in Bangladesh. Since the model is established for the Muslim students in Bangladesh, the offered techniques are developed to align with the national educational requirements along with Islamic values, principles and the socio-cultural environment of the nation. Moreover, Islamic pedagogy is not just a teaching approach, but it also produces ideas of teaching from Islamic principles (Memon, 2021).

Hence, the model ultimately advocates the integration and Islamisation of existing approaches and strategies to develop appropriate and effective holistic approaches in character education, which emphasises educational resources in teaching and learning that are consistent with the goals of cultivating good character following Islamic principles. Through the integration of multiple teaching approaches and coordination with local cultural and religious contexts, the model seeks to ensure a holistic learning experience that fosters both academic achievement and character development. In addition, it encourages students to be proactive and play their role in forming excellent character, as al-Ghazali emphasises (Al-Ghazali, 1962; Alkanderi, 2001; Zulqarnain, 2017), including self-discipline and academic achievements as preparation for future life, which is rooted in their faith and contributes positively to humanity. Moreover, the model promotes the use of both traditional and multi-modal teaching and learning approaches that emphasise the integration of multimedia and educational technology as well as innovative learning tools to make character education engaging, appealing, dynamic, and participatory for students. Although approaches to character education and the development of good character may vary from nation to nation, their ultimate objective is to inculcate morality, virtues, ethics, desirable character traits, and values in individuals. The widely used approaches in teaching, learning, and instilling moral values and good character in students are;

4.2.1.4.5.1 Teaching, Training and Mentoring

As an approach to character education and development, teaching and training place equal emphasis on transmitting knowledge concerning good character and virtues, and on offering hands-on experiences that help students understand and put these good qualities into practice. In Islamic traditions, teaching, training, practising, and habituation are all valued, particularly in good character-building. The reported hadith by ‘Aisha emphasizes the significance of regular practice in cultivating virtuous deeds and conduct as Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately and know that your deeds will not make you enter Paradise, and that the most beloved deed to Allah is the most regular and constant even if it were little (*Sahih Al-Bukhari* 6464, n.d.).” The importance of teaching and training values and virtues in the formation of excellent character has been highlighted by academics from antiquity to the present, including Aristotle (Aristotle & Brown, 2009), Al-Ghazali (1993a, v-III), Bandura (1977), Lickona (1991) and Berkowitz and Bier (2005). This approach to forming moral behaviour and character emphasises the integration of theoretical knowledge and understanding of virtues, values, and good character through instruction with practical application by offering hands-on training to strike a balance between cognitive learning—which teaches them about values—and behavioural learning—which teaches students how to practice those values. Aristotle emphasises both teaching and habit in forming virtues, as he said, “virtues are made perfect by habit” (Aristotle & Brown, 2009). It upholds the notion that having good character entails doing more than simply understanding what is right; it also entails attempting to uphold moral behaviour throughout time via regular behaviours, acts, and activities. Al-Ghazali also emphasises the importance of knowledge and practice in character refinement, advocating that regular practice of values leads to lasting character development (1993a). Lickona (1991) likewise emphasises both teaching and habit in forming good character, advocating that effective character education requires teaching moral reasoning so that students understand both the “why” and “how” of virtuous actions.

Furthermore, close mentoring is a common component of training (Arnesson & Albinsson, 2017), in which mentors or instructors assist students in creating positive behaviours. Islamic traditions also defend mentoring as a teaching and

learning approach since, according to the Qur'an, Allah himself is the mentor, as Allah states, "Who taught by the pen—, taught humanity what they knew not" (*Al-'Alaq: 4-5*, n.d.). In another place, Allah says, "He taught Adam the names of all things, (*Al-Baqarah: 31*, n.d.). Furthermore, it is evident from the words of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that one of his roles was also mentoring, as He said, "...Verily I have been sent as a teacher" (*Sunan Ibn Majah 229*, n.d.). He also commented, "I was sent to perfect good character" (*Excellence in Character*, n.d.), which is relevant to this claim as well as the mentorship function in character development and education.

Consequently, this approach strongly upholds the role of teachers as moral mentors, instructors, and role models in helping students develop good character since they rationalise moral principles and values through lessons, discussions, and real-world examples. They also facilitate students to put what they have learned into practice by working in groups on projects or as part of a team on curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

4.2.1.4.5.2 Lecturing

Lecturing, a classic method of teaching, in character education refers to the official dissemination of moral standards, ethical guidelines, and behavioural expectations by a teacher or other expert. It seeks to provide children with a firm understanding of what good character is and why particular activities are important for their own and their community's well-being. Islamic traditions employ it as an essential approach as Allah states that Lukman lectured his son on etiquette and, through this method, taught him about Allah, his authority, and his rights in addition to good morals (*Luqman: 13, 16-19*, n.d.). The hadith demonstrates how frequently the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) also imparted moral lessons that were consistent with this approach: "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother" or he said, "for his neighbour, what he loves for himself" (*Sunan Ibn Majah 66*, n.d.). Scholars such as Aristotle (Aristotle & Brown, 2009), Al-Ghazali (1993a), and Lickona (1991) stress the importance of lecturing as a means of fostering moral education in students

because it enables teachers to explore the theoretical ideas and moral philosophies that are the foundation of character education.

When it comes to the lecturing approach to character education and development, the teacher or instructor serves as a moral mentor to convey knowledge on the development of positive character traits. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) also draw attention to the importance of lectures and other specific teaching in assisting students in gaining a comprehensive knowledge of moral principles. They contend that while activities that promote moral practice and active engagement should be added to direct instruction, the latter should nonetheless serve as the cornerstone of moral education.

4.2.1.4.5.3 Memorisation and Manifestation

Memorisation and manifestation, which entail internalising values, virtues, and components of good character through memory and putting them into practice in day-to-day living, are effective approaches to character education. According to Kember (1996), memorisation and understanding are often thought to be almost mutually exclusive in terms of intention (p. 341). With this method, students quickly recall (Pastore, 2024) and actively demonstrate the qualities they have learned through their conduct and choices after committing these lessons, ideas, or texts to memory. With this approach, teachers and mentors play a crucial role as role models, assisting students in making the shift from memory to manifestation. Students who get this mentoring learn how excellent practical character traits may be derived from memory. This approach places a strong emphasis on the responsibility that learners have to use their initiative to cultivate virtues—a point that al-Ghazali and other scholars also maintained.

4.2.1.4.5.4 Storytelling

When it comes to character education, storytelling is a potent teaching method that works well (Landrum et al., 2019). Stories have the power to effectively communicate moral lessons, cultural values, and ethical concepts to children through storytelling. According to Salehi et al. (2023), a traditional form of storytelling involves the storyteller conjuring mental images and re-creating them through vocal expressions and movements, establishing a direct connection with the audience. Islamic traditions also employ this technique for teaching and learning since all of the stories recounted in the Qur'an have lessons, as Allah says, "In their stories there is truly a lesson for people of reason..." (*Yusuf: 111*, n.d.). When it comes to character education, the lectures become more relevant and remembered when this method involves pupils on both an academic and an emotional level. Teachers may promote characteristics such as honesty, compassion, resilience, and empathy and help students develop a deeper knowledge of ethical ideas by dipping them in stories.

4.2.1.4.5.5 Audio-visual Display

An engaging and dynamic approach to character education is the audio-visual display, which uses a variety of media to teach moral teachings and values to pupils. According to Waad and Younus (2022), teachers use audio-visual tools to enhance the teaching and learning process, making it easier and more interesting for students (p. 10616). These media include films, videos, slideshows, audio recordings, infographics, and digital presentations (Azwar et al., 2022; Ashikuzzaman, 2024). This strategy uses both visual and auditory stimuli to appeal to a variety of learning styles, improve retention, and foster deeper understanding. Thus, it upholds instructors' role as moral mentors and their obligations to make use of relevant tools of instructional technology and resources, particularly multimedia resources, to enhance character education approaches in light of students' character development.

4.2.1.4.5.6 Modelling

Modelling is a potent method of character education that includes setting an example of morality, values, and desirable behaviours for pupils to see and follow. This approach acknowledges that people frequently learn best by imitation; parents, teachers, and other role models must exhibit the moral qualities they want their students to acquire. Islam views the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as the ultimate role model (Osman, 2024), especially when it comes to character education. His life is a source of instructive material as well as real-world examples for character development. Allah declares in the Qur'an, "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day" (*Al-Ahzab: 21*, n.d.). In another verse of the Qur'an, Allah declares the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to be the best character (*Al-'Alaq: 4*, n.d.)." Additionally, Allah's messenger declared his obligation by stating, "I was sent to perfect good character" (*Excellence in Character*, n.d.).

Modelling includes teaching via everyday encounters and activities, both explicit and implicit. It is based on the idea that learning occurs not just via direct instruction but also by observing and copying others. Consequently, it is an essential approach to teaching character because it gives specific instances of moral and ethical behaviour. Additionally, it provides students with a real-world example to observe and replicate. According to Osman (2024), children learn about virtues from role models, which need cognitive, emotional, and conative components to elicit feelings and encourage developmental alignment. This approach upholds that teachers and mentors are essential in both teaching and training because they help students internalise and demonstrate the values they are taught by modelling virtues (Ramadhani et al., 2024; Sanderse, 2024) such as practising justice, exhibiting respect, cooperating with others, upholding honesty and integrity, participating in community service, and guiding students through difficult situations. According to Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), people pick up knowledge through modelling and observation. He argues that conduct may be learned by watching other people, which is why modelling is such an important part of education.

Consequently, to ensure an effective character education in Bangladesh, this model advocates the above core approaches, their integration, and Islamisation within the context of Bangladesh. Additionally, it fosters teachers as facilitators, instructors, and role models in directing learners to apply and demonstrate Islamic values in real-life activities, which aligns with al-Ghazali's concept (al-Ghazali, 1993a, Vol. III).

4.2.1.4.6 Development of Holistic Assessment Mechanism

The model places a strong emphasis on the development of a holistic assessment mechanism to ensure that holistic character development is emphasised in education, along with academic achievement. In addition to assessing students' knowledge and understanding of values and good character, the ultimate goal of the model is to assess their ability to demonstrate the learned values and good character in both private and public spheres of life. Accordingly, to assess how well students apply internalized values and good character to their interactions in daily lives both within and beyond the classroom, the model calls for integrating and incorporating a variety of assessment strategies focusing on both formative assessments such as quizzes, discussions and observation (Trumbull & Lash, 2013), and summative assessment such as test, presentation, and project (Olwan, 2024) and their blended. Both formative and summative assessments can greatly contribute to the assessment process (Nazeef & Fareed, 2024; Hummel, 2024; Ismail et al., 2022); nevertheless, Adarkwah (2021) found that their blending works well. Thus, the model recommends incorporating the assessments by teacher, performance-based assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, parental assessment (assessment of parents), Neighbourhood assessment, and community feedback assessment strategies for the holistic assessment mechanisms for effective character education in Bangladesh.

Teachers' assessment strategy can facilitate the assessment of students' good character learning, as well as their demonstration in the classroom and their application in academic content. Thus, teachers will assess students' ability to apply moral reasoning to academic subjects and solve moral problems as academic themes. Additionally, teachers may offer feedback based on their observations and handling of students' classroom behaviour and attitudes, such as value demonstration, class

participation, ethical decision-making, teamwork, cleanliness, and discipline, to encourage students to embody good character. Nonetheless, teachers can employ Revised Bloom's Taxonomy for assessment, which covers six levels of cognitive learning, including Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyse, Evaluate, and Create (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Ruhl, 2024). Here is an example of how justice from an Islamic perspective can be incorporated at each level of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy for assessment. In this case, to incorporate justice from an Islamic perspective, such as fairness and equal opportunity, into Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, it must align with the core principles of Islamic justice into the cognitive processes as described in Bloom's framework in Figure 4.7.

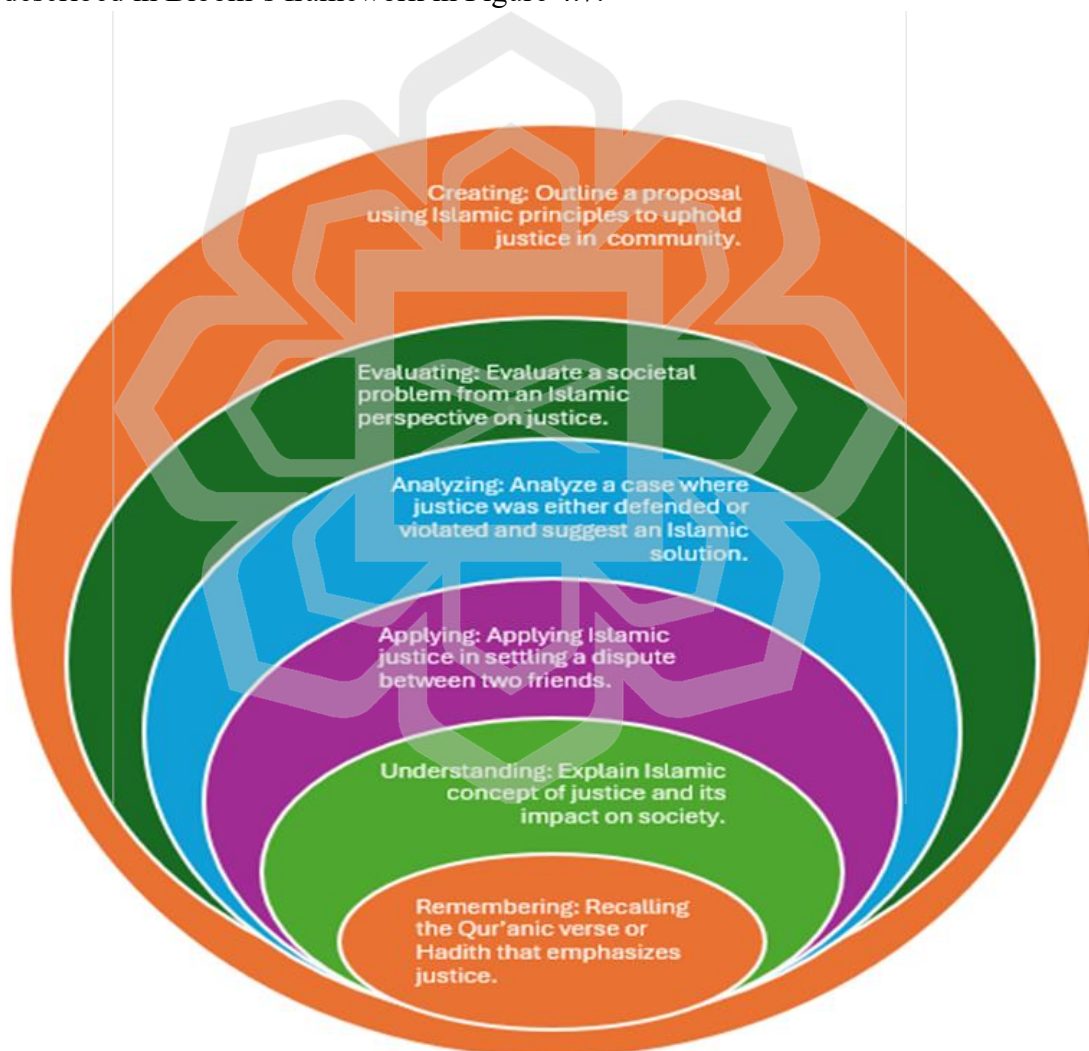


Figure 4.7 Assessment of Justice using Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Source: Developed using Revised Bloom's Taxonomy by Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)

For remembering, students need to develop the ability to recall the Qur'anic verse or Hadith that emphasises justice. For Understanding, students are required to develop the skills to explain the Islamic concept of justice and its impact on society. To apply, learners must have the capability to apply Islamic justice in settling a dispute between two friends. For analysing, students must develop the competence to analyse a real-life incident where justice was either defended or violated and suggest an Islamic solution. For evaluating, students need to enhance the ability to evaluate a societal problem from an Islamic perspective on justice, and finally, for creating, students must develop the capacity to outline a proposal using Islamic principles to uphold justice in the community. Furthermore, assigned instructors or teachers can assess students' excellent character development based on their performance using performance-based assessment, including the presentation of projects that demonstrate their ability to comprehend and apply values and good character traits, as well as their active participation and involvement in projects. This assessment strategy directly ties with character assessing concepts both of al-Ghazali (1993a) and Lickona (1991, 2001) since they emphasise students' right actions in assessing the growth of good character in students.

Additionally, a self-assessment strategy would facilitate and motivate students to assess their character development and to set goals for further improvement, since both Yan et al. (2022) and Zou et al. (2024) found it an effective assessment mechanism in education. It would also assist students in recording, reviewing, analysing, and reporting on their values and behaviours. Thus, this model recommends using a daily-based diary-keeping strategy (National Childhood Network (NCN), 2009) as self-assessment on several themes that students tackle particularly beyond the classroom such as helping others (parents, family members, or anybody else), engaging in social work, recitation the Qur'an and Hadiths, visiting ill people (family members, relatives, neighbours, or anybody else), telling the truth or not, praying, giving to charity, and so forth. This strategy is directly tied to al-Ghazali's (1993a) character-building concept, where he emphasises students' proactive role in developing good character. The designated teachers or instructors will guide, cooperate, encourage, and motivate students in maintaining diary-keeping regularly, as well as check and ensure that their remarks and suggestions for students and their

parents reinforce the cultivation of good character. In addition, reflective journaling can enable students to record their thoughts, experiences, comprehension of good character traits, and improvement concerning character education and good character development through time, and self-assessment can be reinforced.

Furthermore, the peer-assessment strategy can also facilitate the assessment of good character development in students, as both Yan et al. (2022) and Zou et al. (2024) found it a valuable assessment process in education. It allows and encourages students to assess each other's behaviours, particularly in school, including classroom interactions, contributions in group activities, cooperation, collaboration, good manners, and personality, as well as other good character development themes added by teachers or instructors. This strategy is supported by al-Ghazali's (1993a) character-building concept since he believes that children's behaviour is influenced by individuals and things surrounding them. However, peers are the real witnesses of our conduct; their feedback may be useful in improving character development processes.

Teachers may utilise the parental assessment (assessment of parents) strategy (*Early Childhood Assessment*, 2014; Tjondro & Ismanto, 2023; Sarsale et al., 2024) to offer parents the opportunity to assess their children's good character development by providing them with unbiased assessment cards that are focused on themes related to good character development. Sarsale et al. (2024) findings explored that involving parents in assessments facilitates teachers' better understanding of learners' needs, strengths, and home environment to offer valuable insights. Moreover, Uslu and Gizir's (2017) and Hughes and Kwok's (2007) findings explored that parental participation both at school and at home boosts learners' stimulus to exhibit greater points of emotive, societal, and behavioural adjustment to foster a stronger connection to the school. Given that students spend most of their time with their parents outside of school, an unbiased parental assessment can be an effective strategy for monitoring how well students are developing good character traits. This strategy is supported by al-Ghazali's (1993a) character-building concepts since he outlined the role of parents in developing good character in their children at an early age. It also aligns with Lickona's (1991, 1997, 2001) character education concept since he also emphasises the role of family and parents in the good character development of their children.

Consequently, teachers can cooperate, encourage, and ensure unbiased parental assessment every month as part of the holistic assessment mechanism.

Additionally, teachers may employ neighbourhood assessment strategies to give neighbours the chance to assess their neighbours' children's good character development by distributing them unbiased assessment cards that are specifically connected to good character development. Boardman and Onge (2005) suggest that neighbourhoods impact teenage outcomes differently and play an important role throughout life. Thus, an unbiased neighbourhood assessment can be a useful tool for tracking how effectively students are acquiring and demonstrating good character because, aside from parents and relatives, our neighbours are the closest individuals who closely observe our children's activities, behaviour, and attitudes beyond the home and school. This strategy is supported by al-Ghazali's (1993a) character-building concept since he believes that children's behaviour is influenced by persons and things neighbouring them. However, the neighbour is the real witness of our behaviours, hence their feedback may be effective in improving character growth. Thus, as part of the holistic assessment mechanism, teachers can collaborate, support, and ensure an unbiased neighbourhood assessment twice a year.

Moreover, the model recommends using a community feedback assessment strategy to incorporate community members and stakeholders in students' good character development assessments. This strategy is supported by both al-Ghazali (1993a) and Lickona's (1991, 1997, 2001) character development concept, as they emphasise stakeholders' roles in this process. This strategy will serve to obtain feedback from community members and stakeholders that will facilitate and analyse the assessment of students' good character development, as well as assess the effectiveness of the proposed holistic assessment mechanism for the future development and improvement of this model.

4.2.1.5 Censoring Educational Resources for Integration and Islamisation

This model strongly advocates censorship of educational resources to ensure that educational resources are appropriate, effective, relational, meaningful, true, and transferable as well as consistent with Islamic principles. This component is directly tied to al-Ghazali's (1993a) character education and character-building concept since his educational idea strongly advocates for censorship of teaching and learning subjects as well as their acquisition limit in line with Islamic ethical and legal principles. Thus, he identified three degrees of knowledge acquisition: limitation (*iqtisar*), moderation (*iqtisad*), and thoroughness (*istiqsa*), and emphasised its implementation concerning knowledge and education (Bakar & Nasr, 1992/1998). He also strongly defended the exclusion of certain subjects, such as magic, talismans, and judicial astrology, from the educational system (Bakar & Nasr, 1992/1998).

Censoring educational resources is also supported by Lickona's (1991, 2001) concepts since he promotes values and virtues but not evil through curriculum, and through censoring the model seeks to ensure appropriate values and virtues are instilled in students. Accordingly, the model recommends screening current educational materials, particularly those that highlight values and character qualities that are incorporated into the curriculum to facilitate students' good character development. Censorship also includes eliminating improper content from the curriculum, such as inaccurate facts, fallacious stories, irrelevant poems, and adult content, in addition to prohibiting the dissemination of inappropriate content in any medium, including written and audiovisual. Under this model, it is strongly recommended that local cultures, customs, values, beliefs, and traditions—as well as universal values—should be appropriately integrated into the curriculum through the process of censorship, integration, and Islamisation of knowledge and education.

4.2.1.6 Holistic Islamic Character Educational Settings

The establishment of a character-supportive educational setting that promotes teaching, learning, developing, instilling, practising, cultivating, and demonstrating good character traits is a key component of this model for effective, holistic character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh. Hence, the model calls for a holistic

character educational setting in Bangladesh aligned with Islamic principles, which encompasses the school, family, community, and national setting to develop a holistic educational setting for character education to cultivate good character among Muslim students of Bangladesh. Consequently, the holistic educational settings will facilitate and accelerate the integration, Islamisation, and synchronisation of the existing educational resources to align with Islamic character education to ensure a holistic character education in Bangladesh.

In order to enhance the analytical rigour and display the direct relation between the identified research gaps and the development of the conceptual model, Table 4.6 shows a systematic mapping of each gap with its model component. This ensures that the model is explicitly grounded in the identified gaps as well as maintains coherence between the identification of the problem and the development of the conceptual model.

Table 4.6 Mapping of Research Gaps to Model Components

Identified Research Gap	Corresponding Model Component	How the Model Addresses the Gap
Lack of a unified philosophical foundation for character education grounded in Islamic principles in Bangladesh	4.2.1.1 Philosophy	Establishes a unified philosophical foundation based on al-Ghazali (1993a) and Lickona (1991), integrated with Islamic principles and the socio-cultural context of Bangladesh, providing the conceptual basis for the entire model.
Absence of a clearly defined direction for integrated character education	4.2.1.2 Vision and Mission	Provides a clear vision and mission that define the overall direction and purpose of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.
Lack of structured and contextually relevant character education outcomes	4.2.1.3 Goals and Objectives	Develops systematic goals and objectives that define expected outcomes of holistic character development and guide implementation within educational practice.

Identified Research Gap	Corresponding Model Component	How the Model Addresses the Gap
Fragmented and non-integrated approach to character education curriculum	4.2.1.4 Curriculum Framework of the Model	Establishes an integrated curriculum framework grounded in Islamic values and the educational theories of al-Ghazali and Lickona, ensuring coherence across learning areas.
Weak integration of values into teaching and learning practices	4.2.1.4.4–4.2.1.4.5 Islamic Pedagogical Foundation of the Model and Holistic Educational Approaches to Character Education	Integrates values into teaching and learning through structured approaches such as teaching, training, mentoring, lecturing, storytelling, memorisation, audio-visual learning, and modelling to ensure practical application of character values.
Limited assessment of behavioural demonstration of character traits	4.2.1.4.6 Development of Holistic Assessment Mechanism	Introduces a blended assessment system including teacher, performance-based, self, peer, parental, neighbourhood, and community feedback assessments to evaluate both knowledge and behavioural expression of character.
Misalignment between educational content and Islamic principles	4.2.1.5 Censoring Educational Resources for Integration and Islamisation	Ensures educational materials are screened, refined, and aligned with Islamic principles to maintain ethical, moral, and contextual relevance in learning resources.
Weak integration between school-based learning and broader learning environments	4.2.1.6 Holistic Islamic Character Educational Settings	Establishes a holistic educational environment that connects school, family, and community contexts to support continuous character formation.

4.3 ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE DEVELOPED CONCEPTUAL MODEL IN BANGLADESH

The model acknowledges the roles of stakeholders, including teachers, educational administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers, concerning character education and character-building of Muslim students, since their collaborative roles and strategies within the framework of the model will reinforce the successful implementation of the proposed conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh. The study strongly believes that the character development of students is influenced by people as well as factors surrounding them, as al-Ghazali (1993a) thinks that a child picks up harmful habits from the people and things around him (Vol. III). Similarly, Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) theory of human ecology concerning human development informs us that different layers of environmental systems influence our growth. This theory helps to explain why individuals may behave differently in various contexts, such as within the family, compared to other settings, such as in a classroom or at the workplace. It illustrates in what way different systems—ranging from the immediate family environment to wider social contexts—influence the development of a child. The theory outlines these systems as the micro, meso, exo, macro, and chronosystem as individuals encounter diverse environments through their life cycle (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979), as presented in Figure 4.8. These can be implemented in character education and character-building of Muslim students in Bangladesh, concerning the successful implementation of the proposed model of the study.

Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) microsystem refers to the immediate settings of students, including family, peers, school, classmates, and neighbourhoods. As far as the character development of Muslim students in Bangladesh is concerned, in the context of Islamic principles, the family plays a central and crucial role in developing the good and moral character of a student, which is also emphasised by al-Ghazali (1993a). Thus, the study admits the family as the primary influence on a student's moral and ethical development in addition to school. Therefore, the microsystem must align with Islamic principles and play its role in providing a strong foundation of moral guidance concerning the character-building of Muslim students in Bangladesh.

His mesosystem refers to the interactions between various microsystems, such as the relationship between home and school (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979).

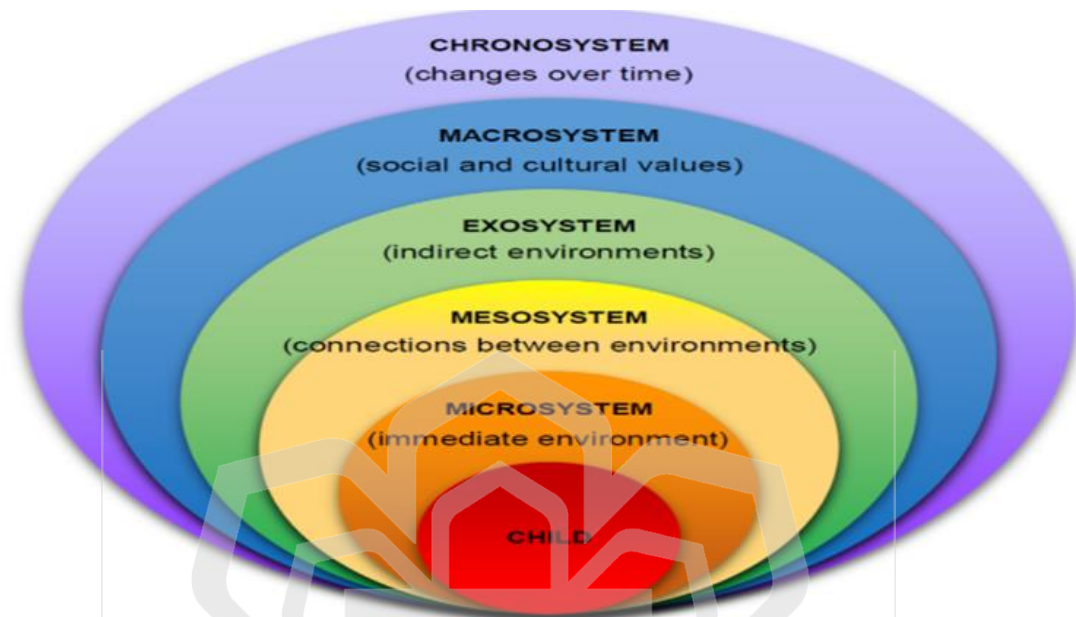


Figure 4.8 Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecology of Human Development (adopted from Buckley and Budzyna, 2023)

Accordingly, students' character development can be enhanced if the values and morals taught at home are reinforced in their school or community settings and vice versa. Islamic principles also highlight the significance and necessity of collaboration between family, school, community, and religious institutions to nurture and inculcate character development of students, as similar voices found in al-Ghazali (1993a). Consequently, the mesosystem must align with Islamic principles and play its role in ensuring a strong foundation of moral guidance and environment concerning the character-building of Muslim students in Bangladesh.

Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) exosystem refers to the broader societal systems that indirectly influence student development, such as the workplaces of parents, community structures, and mass media. Even though students may not be directly engaged with these systems' larger social systems, they still shape the broader environment in which students live and experience. As far as character education and

character-building of Muslim students are concerned, exosystem influence cannot be underestimated since it has an indirect impact on students' growth. Islam also emphasises and encourages the larger community (*Ummah*) to establish a supportive environment to ensure all its systems align with its moral and ethical standards to promote the character development of students. The Qur'an states that the believing men and women are allies with one another, so they order right and forbid wrong (*At-Tawbah: 71*, n.d.). It also orders that do not violate the rights of Allah as well as others, not cause corruption, and not cooperate in sin and aggression, but cooperate in doing good and righteous and fear Allah (*Al-Ma'idah: 2*, n.d.). Thus, the exosystem must align with Islam to reinforce students' character development.

However, macrosystem refers to the broader cultural and societal context as well as legal framework, including cultural values, societal norms, laws, and constitution, in which students grow up, which influence their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979). As far as Muslim students' character development is concerned, the macrosystem must be shaped and rooted in Islamic fundamental principles drawn from the Qur'an and Hadiths. Accordingly, the laws of the land and cultural practices are anticipated to reflect Islamic moral and ethical principles in cultivating values and virtues concerning character-building. Therefore, the macrosystem must be aligned with Islamic principles to provide a moral framework for both personal and social conduct for students' character development. Moreover, chronosystem refers to the dimension of time, such as life transitions and historical events, that influence students' development. For example, societal changes over time, such as technological advancements or shifts in social values and cultural norms, can impact the growth of students (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979). In addition, students' experiences and understanding change over time as they mature. However, when it comes to Islam, the principles of faith, morals, and ethics remain constant despite external changes, providing instructions to navigate social and cultural shifts with integrity and adherence to a faith that is coherent with Islamic principles. Islam emphasises maintaining moral values and virtues in all circumstances, following the Prophet and the companions who serve as models.

Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979) believes that these systems—micro, meso, exo, macro, and chrono—interact and influence one another to shape the growth of a child over time, which includes the development of good character. Hence, stakeholders within these systems have crucial roles and responsibilities in establishing a positive and supportive environment that promotes the holistic development of children. Figure 4.9 presents Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) different layers of the environment that have a direct or indirect influence on human development.

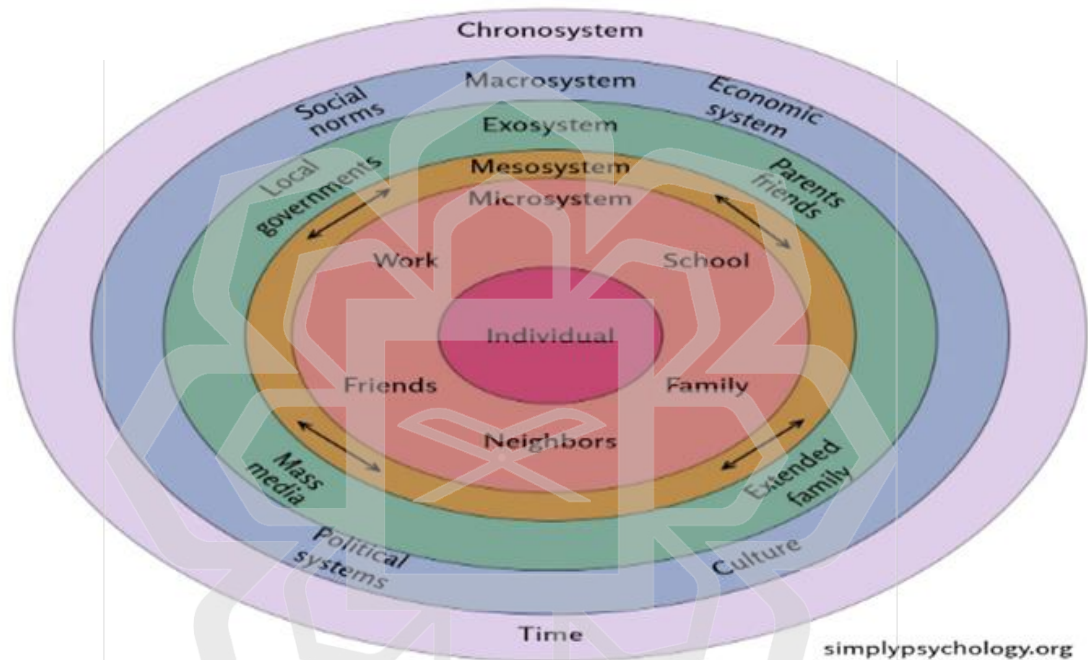


Figure 4.9 Bronfenbrenner’s (1977) Different Layers of Environmental Influence on Human Development (Adopted from Guy-Evans, 2024)

Accordingly, it is significant to comprehend the role each group plays in determining educational outcomes in outlining the strategies of stakeholders in the successful implementation of the proposed conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh. Character education for Muslim students focuses on the cultivation of Islamic values, virtues, morals, ethics, good character traits, and citizenship to foster the holistic development of individuals. Integrating these values into the educational framework of Bangladesh requires a holistic and collaborative effort of different stakeholders, including teachers,

educational administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers. Each of these stakeholders plays a significant role in promoting an environment that fosters character development among students since different factors, such as family, community, education, culture, and other social settings, influence the development of students as well as their character.

When it comes to the implementation of the proposed conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh, the guiding concepts and theories of character education and character-building from both al-Ghazali and Lickona inform the roles and strategies of the stakeholders. However, to ensure the efficacy of these implementation strategies, the study also integrates and adapts Berkowitz and Bier's (2005) findings and suggestions (pp. 19-22). Under content and pedagogical categories, they found and listed eleven key strategies that were employed by effective character education programs in the US (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Furthermore, they revealed that some findings were parallel to those drawn by Solomon et al. (2000). There were some general strategies, such as integration of character education into the curriculum, as well as active engagement of stakeholders. Hence, although their research sites were in the US, these strategies can be deemed universal and adaptable in their application. Therefore, based on their strategies and the unique educational context of Bangladesh, the researcher adapted and adopted their strategies as the guiding strategies in developing the effective implementation strategies for the proposed model within the context of religious, social, and cultural values and educational needs in Bangladesh. Figure 4.10 presents implementation strategies for integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

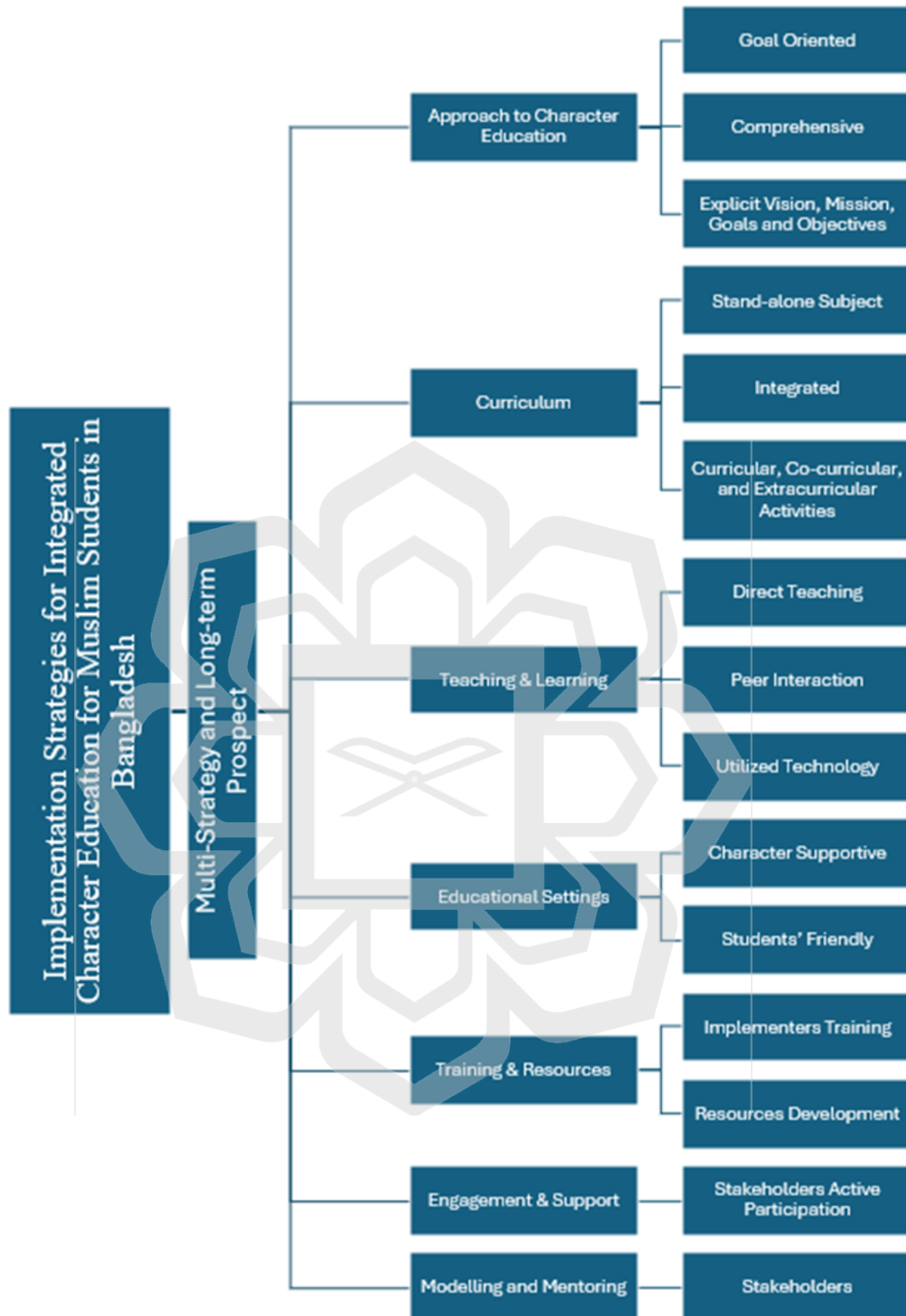


Figure 4.10 Implementation Strategies for Integrated Character Education for Muslim Students in Bangladesh (adapted from Berkowitz and Bier, 2005)

The following key roles and strategies that stakeholders, including teachers, educational administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers, can play to successfully implement the proposed conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

4.3.1 Teachers

Teachers are crucial, particularly when it comes to education, more especially, the character education of Muslim students, since they serve as educators, mentors, facilitators, motivators, role models, and exemplary characters for students. Their education and training are crucial for assisting students in developing good character, especially through formal education. They have the opportunity to inculcate morals, values, and behaviours in students through their interactions and teaching practices in the classroom since students spend a large amount of time with them in school. Both al-Ghazali (1993a) and Lickona (1991) underlined teachers' role in character education and character-building of students; however, al-Ghazali emphasised education and training under the direction of spiritual mentors.

One of the key strategies for the successful implementation of the proposed model in Bangladesh is integrating character education into the curriculum and classroom so that teachers can employ it effectively (al-Ghazali 1993a; Lickona, 1991, Lickona et al., 2002) since research shows that it is effective (Pala, 2011; Sarkadi et al., 2022; Supriyadi et al., 2024) as well as it helps to decrease behavioural concerns, and increases academic achievement (Lickona, 1991; Benninga et al., 2003; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Agboola & Tsai, 2012; Jeynes, 2017; Mawaddah et al., 2025; Olatunji, 2025). By integrating values such as integrity, justice, doing good, respect, and accountability into lesson plans, they can directly influence and contribute to the spiritual, moral, and ethical development of students. Teachers can use real-life examples, local narratives, historical events, and stories from Islamic traditions to explain moral and ethical lessons (Gayatri et al., 2023; Faizin & Helandri, 2023; Asmaa Tech Content, 2024). Additionally, establishing a character-supportive and positive classroom environment is another significant strategy (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Benninga et al., 2006; Pala, 2011). A character-supportive and comprehensive

classroom setting encourages students to concentrate on the development of self-esteem and responsibilities to play their role in developing good character and values. There is the role of the students (Al-Ghazali, 1962; Alkanderi, 2001; Zulqarnain, 2017), which entails efforts, good deed-doing habits, and behaviours that display good habits. Furthermore, teachers can employ student-centred learning activities as interactive teaching and learning methods to accelerate character education in the classroom, which can be another central strategy (Pala, 2011). Group discussions, role-playing, projects, and teamwork can be facilitated using this strategy to involve students in character education to foster character-building experiences actively (Lickona et al., 2002). Teachers can employ extracurricular activities (Marini, 2018; Rahayu & Dong, 2023) within the framework of the model as well.

Moreover, the assessment mechanism and evaluation criteria are crucial for the effective implementation of the character education model and for achieving the intended outcomes (Lickona et al., 2002). Barus (2017) found that most of the teachers know the crucial role of assessment in character education, and they also carried it out routinely. Hence, teachers can employ multiple assessment methods within the model's framework, including performance-based assessments, self-assessments, peer assessments, parental assessments, neighbourhood assessments, and community feedback to assess students not only their academic performance but also their character growth simultaneously. Teachers' constructive feedback on behaviour, social skills, spirituality, and moral and ethical conduct helps reinforce the significance of character in students' personal development. Olatunji (2025) states that regular feedback mechanisms are crucial for character education.

The model promotes that character education should focus on cultivating fundamental values and good character qualities, rather than merely grading them, as research has found that an overwhelming 94.6% of lower secondary school teachers believe that character education is more significant than exam results for students aged 10-14 (Kropfreiter et al., 2024). Hence, character development should be assessed to improve rather than punish or merely academic achievement. In Ki Hajar Dewantara's perspective, each teacher is the servant of the child, the servant of the student, not the ruler of the children's souls (Asnawan, 2020).

Finally, teachers should act as role models of positive behaviour (al-Ghazali, 1993a; Lickona, 1991, 1997; Berkowitz & Bier, 2004, 2005; Pala, 2011; Olatunji, 2025). Ki Hajar Dewantara believes that instructors should represent likeable personalities and set excellent models for pupils, promoting future conduct in school, home, and community (Asnawan, 2020). They must embody the values and virtues they wish to instil in students by demonstrating honesty, patience, and fairness in their interactions with students in the classroom and beyond. They must set examples through their actions, attitudes, and decisions. Students tend to imitate the behaviours they observe in their teachers, as research has shown, which reinforces the significance of educators embodying the values they wish to instil in students. Since Muslim students' character education is concerned, Islamic traditions emphasise role models, affirming that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is the ultimate role model as Allah declared in the Qur'an (*Al-Ahzab: 21*, n.d.; *Al-Qalam: 4*, n.d.). The Prophet Muhammad's (ﷺ) instructions, behaviour, and interactions exemplify how Muslims should act in daily life to foster good character such as patience, justice, accountability, empathy, respect, integrity, and forgiveness. In addition, a prophetic utterance declared that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent as a teacher (Qasmi, 2023), which signifies that the role of a teacher is highly important for teaching and learning, especially when it comes to teaching and developing good character in line with Islam. However, Cahyanto et al. (2024) show that teachers' role modelling significantly influences instilling Islamic characters in students. Hence, the model encourages teachers to play their role effectively in guiding students and helping them reflect on their lives while developing values and good character in their students through both academic and co-curricular and extracurricular teaching and learning activities.

4.3.2 Educational Administrators

Educational administrators play a crucial role in ensuring and fostering that character education is integrated into the school culture and operations (Lickona, 1991; Lickona et al., 2002). They promote a character-supportive environment through curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, programs, assessment, community participation, and communication, as well as a culture that inspires teachers, staff,

parents, and students (Lickona et al., 2002). The primary strategy for them is to develop school policies that prioritise character education and character-building alongside academic achievements to motivate team members and set clear goals to ensure effective and qualitative character education. Lickona (1991) emphasised that school leaders must prioritise students' moral development; they need to create a clear framework for teaching and learning values along with academic knowledge. Through developing school policies that emphasise values and virtues such as honesty, patience, god consciousness, respect, integrity, fairness, and forgiveness, administrators can create a character-supportive school culture and setting where the character-building of students is taken seriously (Lickona 1991). This includes promoting an environment of ethical behaviour, mutual respect, and tolerance among students, teachers, and school staff, where inappropriate behaviours such as bullying, injustice, disrespect, discrimination, and unethical conduct are not promoted and tolerated. Cahyanto et al. (2024) argue that school culture and environment play a significant role in developing and inculcating Islamic character in students.

Furthermore, educational administrators can ensure that teachers are adequately trained and qualified in character education strategies through professional development and training programs for teachers, which are essential to equip them with the capabilities and knowledge necessary to effectively implement character education in the classroom and beyond (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004, 2005). Hence, educators must be well-versed in character education concepts, approaches, and strategies to facilitate the proposed model implementation successfully in Bangladesh. With the support of professional development and training, teachers can gain a better understanding of character education and how it is used in the classroom. This includes training sessions, workshops, seminars, resources and technologies utilisation, best practices, experience, and character development initiatives that highlight innovative teaching approaches and character education strategies. The training sessions needed to address moral reasoning, dispute resolution, character education strategies, the importance of their role as role models, and classroom management, including handling student conduct effectively, as well as how to create a character-supportive school culture. Hence, professional development programs that prioritise effective teaching and learning approaches, religious and culturally relevant

practices related to character education, and good character development are highly valued in the model.

Additionally, administrators can develop mentorship programs where experienced educators work with new teachers to share best practices and experiences concerning character education, as well as to provide teachers with resources and continuous support. The objective must be to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively integrate character education goals into their lesson plans and in their classrooms (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004), as well as offer strategies to address students' spiritual, moral, and social learning needs. Furthermore, educational administrators can develop and implement school-wide character education and character-building programs (Lickona et al., 2002) within the framework of the model to facilitate the successful implementation of the proposed model in Bangladesh. This strategy could involve a dedicated time slot for character education and character-building in the curriculum or a cross-curricular approach where teachers from different subjects collaborate to embed good character lessons. In addition, educational administrators can foster community involvement in character education and character-building programs by establishing partnerships with parents, community members, local organisations, and other stakeholders to expand it beyond the school premises (Lickona 1991; Lickona et al., 2002). Research has shown that collaborative efforts of stakeholders enhance the effectiveness of character education programs in developing the good character of students (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004, 2005; Shruthi & Padmanabha, 2024). This strategy may help to reinforce the character development of students at home and beyond, and create more space and opportunities for parents to play their roles since both al-Ghazali (1993a), Lickona (1991, 2001), and Lickona et al. (2002) emphasise parents' roles in character education of their children.

Character education programs' success depends on their regular monitoring and evaluation by assessing the effect of character education programs and making necessary modifications to enhance outcomes (Lickona et al., 2002). Was et al. (2006) emphasised the assessment of character education programs for effective implementation in schools. Therefore, educational administrators should be involved in monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of the proposed character education model for Muslim students in Bangladesh and make recommendations for necessary

adjustments based on shifting educational and societal needs in Bangladesh to improve outcomes. Administrators can gather feedback from teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and make necessary adjustments within the model's framework to ensure its sustainability. Hence, the model encourages staying true and transparent while maintaining robust qualitative and quantitative approaches in evaluating the programs as suggested by Was et al. (2006). The model advocates that character education should be an ongoing process that involves updating societal needs, curricula, teaching and learning approaches, and reviewing its relevance in the religious, cultural, and socio-economic environment of Bangladesh.

4.3.3 Religious Leaders

Religion, particularly Islam, plays an important role in Bangladesh; therefore, Islamic religious leaders have a unique opportunity to contribute to character education for Muslim students. Hence, Islamic religious leaders can establish partnerships with schools to collaboratively offer spiritual guidance in addition to promoting moral, ethical, and social values grounded in Islamic principles to reinforce values through character education aimed at character-building from an Islamic perspective (al-Ghazali, 1993a). Through the integration of Islamic principles into the character education curriculum, schools can highlight values such as justice, doing good, kindness, forgiveness, honesty, modesty, and accountability, which are crucial aspects of character education and holistic character development.

To promote character education, Islamic religious leaders can also be involved in community engagement; they can work alongside schools and communities to encourage students to actively participate in community services (al-Ghazali, 1993a; Lickona et al., 2002; Berkowitz & Bier, 2004, 2005; Berkowitz, 2011) and act following Islamic moral and social principles. Research has found that Islamic religious leaders have great contributions and roles in developing good character in society in various ways, such as exemplary and direct suggestions or lectures (Dollah & Ulfah, 2023). Accordingly, they can coordinate speeches, community events, talks, and seminars on character education and its importance in reinforcing spiritual,

ethical, moral, and social behaviour beyond the classroom. Additionally, they can inspire and encourage parents and the broader community to actively contribute to supporting character education and character-building of Muslim students (al-Ghazali 1993a) in Bangladesh. Islamic religious leaders can guide parents and families to nurture the good character of their children to reinforce character education at home, as al-Ghazali (1993a) emphasises parents' role in developing the good character of their children. Moreover, religious leaders can facilitate mediating conflicts concerning character education and character-building of Muslim students in schools or communities. In doing so, they must be wise, patient, and fair, through which they can set up positive examples for resolving disputes, which is a crucial component of character education. Finally, they must act as role models following the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his companions.

4.3.4 Policymakers

Policymakers play an important role in developing national guidelines and frameworks that support the holistic integration of character education across Bangladeshi education to implement the proposed character education model for Muslim students successfully. The first and foremost strategy is the development of a national educational policy for character education that sets clear philosophy, vision, mission, goals, objectives, standards, and strategies for its integration into the national education curriculum (al-Ghazali 1993a; Lickona 1991; Lickona et al., 2002) as well as its implementation in both Islamic-based and secular-based national schools in Bangladesh. Such strategies can ensure stability in character education practices and establish an integrated and holistic approach across different regions and education systems to promote students' moral, ethical, social, intellectual, and spiritual development systemically and simultaneously.

In addition to policy development, funding and resource allocation are critical to ensure that each institution has equal access to necessary educational materials and training to implement character education successfully. Thus, policymakers must ensure and allocate sufficient educational resources across the country's academic institutions to facilitate the effective implementation of the proposed character

education model for Muslim students in Bangladesh. This incorporates funding for developing character educational resources, teachers' training, and promoting co-curricular and extracurricular activities (Lickona et al., 2002) to align with character-building goals within the framework of the proposed model. Moreover, they can introduce policies that facilitate collaborative initiatives between religious institutions and organisations, community groups, and educational institutions to establish a holistic, unified and united platform to promote character education (al-Ghazali, 1993a; Lickona et al., 2002; Berkowitz & Bier, 2004, 2005; Berkowitz, 2011). Research has found that collaboration among stakeholders has a great influence on effectively implementing character education (Shruthi & Padmanabha, 2024). This includes policies to foster parental, family, and broader community involvement in character education and development programs (al-Ghazali 1993a; Lickona et al., 2002). They can incorporate parent-teacher meetings, discussions, community service programs, workshops, and training on ethical behaviour for parents, families, and stakeholders.

Furthermore, policymakers can introduce national public awareness campaigns to highlight the significance of character education for character-building in line with the proposed model. This can play an important role in raising public awareness involving media, public service announcements, and the community to encourage broader social and stakeholder engagement. Such initiatives can facilitate the spread of the message of ethical, moral, social, and spiritual growth, especially aimed at promoting character-building of Muslim students in Bangladesh.

A character-supportive environment is essential for the effective development of good character, as learned values and positive character traits must be practised in real-life interactions. Hence, the establishment of government residential or boarding schools can ensure a character-supportive educational environment that would help students develop and exhibit good character traits under the supervision of character education instructors. Above all, creating a collaborative framework where stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers, work together can be the most powerful strategy, as Berkowitz (2011) suggests that the most effective character education integrates a proactive, comprehensive, collaborative, and scientific approach to character development (p. 5). For example,

schools can develop partnerships with local mosques, religious institutions, organisations, and community organisations to share experiences, resources, and insights on character education and character-building. Hence, stakeholders must share the responsibility for the successful implementation of the proposed model of character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh. Hence, teachers must implement character education lessons, administrators should support the character education programs, religious leaders offer spiritual guidance, and policymakers provide the necessary legislative support and resources for character education. Ultimately, the model emphasises that stakeholders must act as role models for students, as Berkowitz and Bier (2004) also highlight the significance of adults being role models for effective character education. The analysis above demonstrates that the implementation of integrated character education in Bangladesh is dependent on the synergistic functioning of multiple stakeholders across interconnected ecological systems. Therefore, the model is organised as a hierarchical and interconnected framework in which the philosophical foundation guides curriculum and educational design. At the same time, implementation is facilitated through collaborative educational mechanisms and continuously refined through assessment and feedback.

Figure 4.11 demonstrates that this model is guided by Al-Ghazali's (1993a) and Lickona's (1991) character education and character-building concepts, which align with the religious, cultural, and social context of Bangladesh and its educational needs. This figure illustrates the alignment between the conceptual framework and the overall integrated character education model developed in this study. It establishes how the philosophical foundations, theoretical constructs, curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular-related components are systematically connected to the structure of the model. The figure serves to clarify the conceptual coherence between the guiding framework and the model design, ensuring consistency between theoretical foundations and model components.

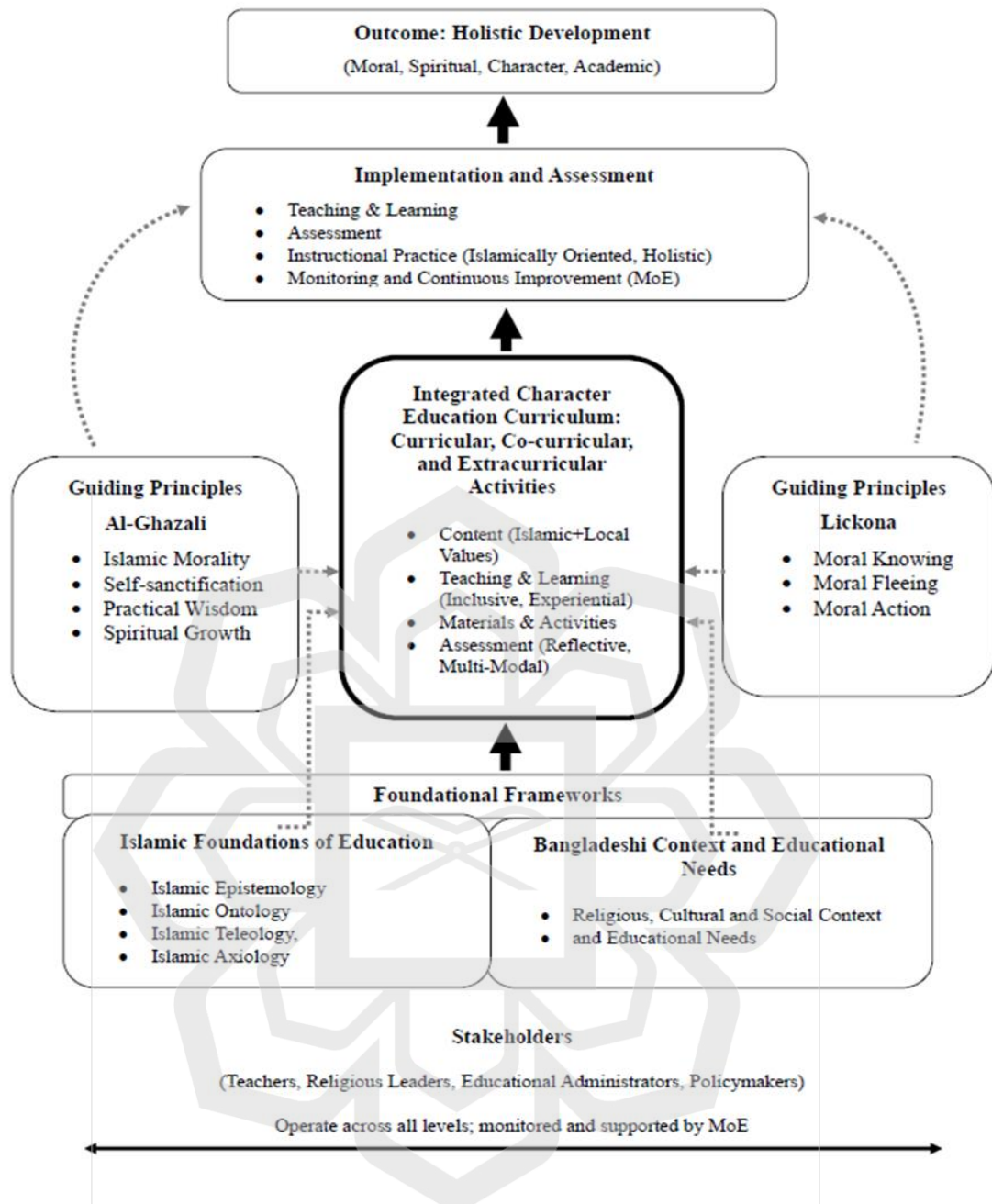


Figure 4.11 Alignment of the Conceptual Framework with the Integrated Character Education Model for Muslim Students in Bangladesh (developed by the researcher)

Accordingly, the philosophy, vision, mission, goals, and objectives of this model are grounded in Islamic philosophical foundations of education, although it incorporates the religious, cultural, and social context of Bangladesh and its contemporary educational needs. Figure 4.12 presents the developed Conceptual Model of Integrated Character Education for Muslim Students in Bangladesh in

response to the research gaps identified in the study, where each component reflects a direct attempt to address specific deficiencies in existing character education practices in Bangladesh.

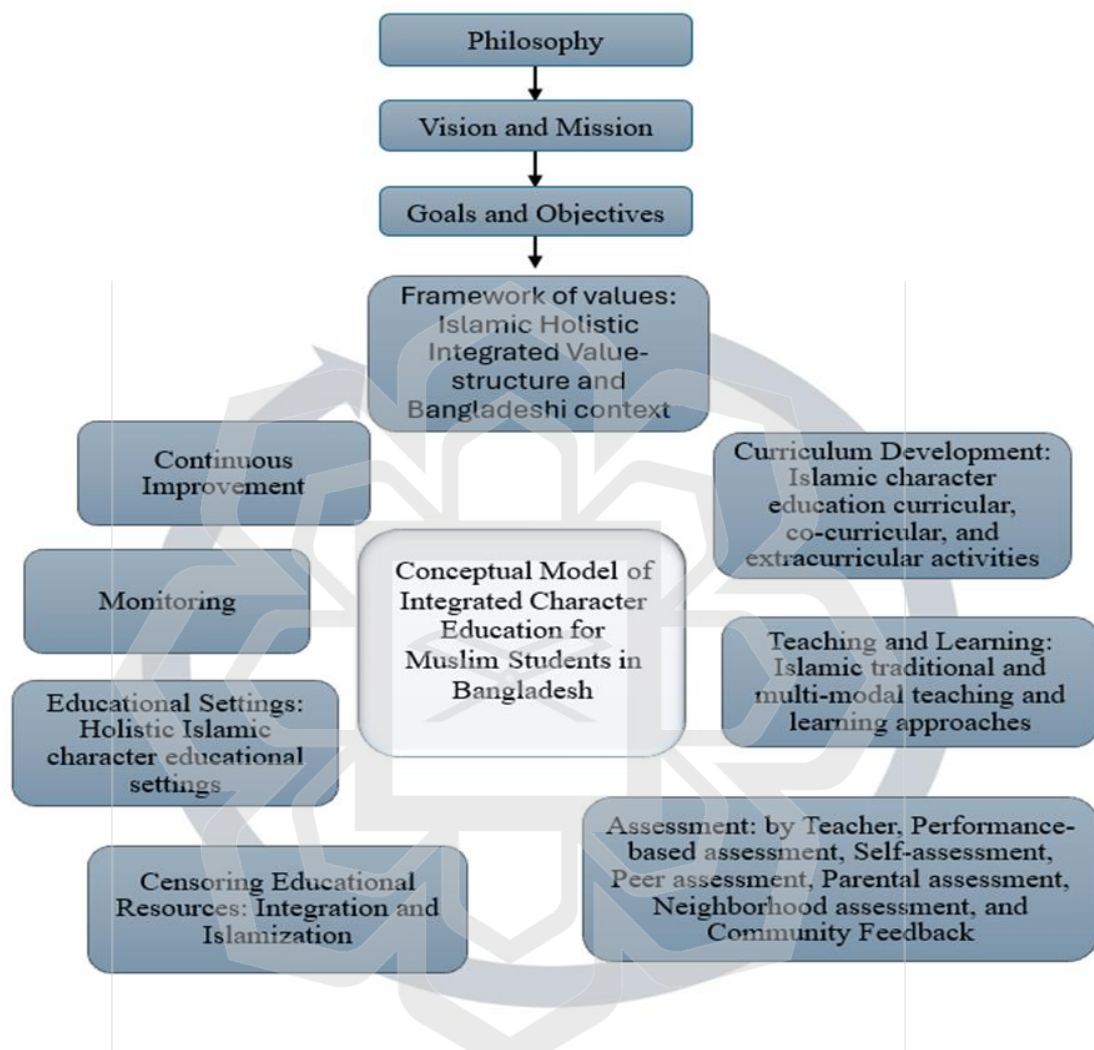


Figure 4.12 Conceptual Model of Integrated Character Education for Muslim Students in Bangladesh (developed by the researcher)

Figure 4.12 presents the final conceptual model developed in this study for integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh. It synthesises the philosophical foundations, curriculum framework, educational approaches, value system, and implementation mechanisms into a unified structure. The model provides a holistic representation of how character education can be systematically integrated

within the educational context of Bangladesh, grounded in Islamic philosophical principles and aligned with contemporary educational needs.

Hence, curriculum development is a significant component of the model that emphasises developing an Islamic character education curriculum, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities that align with its directions. The model advocates the integrated and standalone character education subject for Muslim students enrolled in both secular-based and Islamic-based national education in Bangladesh. However, the model ultimately promotes the holistic approach to character education so that it reflects in all other subjects and is the main focus of educational activities to inculcate values in every aspect of learning experiences. Nevertheless, the model fosters Islamic principles in educational activities both inside and beyond the classroom; the educational resources, lesson plans, curriculum contents, media and technologies, and teacher training all must be aligned with the model's directions and rooted in Islam.

Accordingly, since Muslim students' character education and character-building are concerned, as the teaching and learning strategies the model advocates integrating Islamic traditional and multi-modal teaching and learning approaches to character education to ensure a holistic approach to character education in Bangladesh. The model promotes stakeholders, particularly teachers, as role models in character education, in addition to facilitators and instructors to guide students' activities and rituals related to character development and spiritual growth. Assessment of character development is crucial to evaluate the development of character traits in students based on the imparted knowledge and training of moral principles and values. Thus, the model emphasises assessments by the teacher, performance-based assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, parental assessment (assessment of parents), neighbourhood assessment, and community feedback as part of developing holistic assessment mechanisms in Bangladesh concerning character education and character-building of Muslim students. The model also advocates censoring educational resources as one of its significant components to facilitate the Integration and Islamisation of educational materials to ensure that the appropriate values and virtues inconsistent with Islamic principles within the Bangladeshi context and educational needs are imparted to students.

For educational settings, the model advocates holistic Islamic educational settings to ensure that character education is not limited to classrooms, but rather it reinforces beyond, particularly at home and in the community, through the active engagement of stakeholders. The model also includes monitoring and continuous improvement to ensure that character education is not a one-time attempt but a continuous focus and main agenda of educational activities. It includes regular monitoring, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, identification of potential challenges, finding solutions, research, and adaptation, implementing the results to resolve challenges, and employing innovative actions and plans. Accordingly, this process must go on a continuous cycle regularly. Thus, the proposed model integrates moral, spiritual, behavioural, curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular dimensions into a unified framework.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Integrated character education is crucial for developing holistic individuals who not only possess knowledge of the world but are also aware of both worldly matters and the hereafter. Bangladesh needs character education that is both integrated and capable of producing personalities with these qualities. Additionally, the educational settings and opportunities must support and foster students' holistic development. This chapter presents a conceptual model of integrated character education purposely intended for Muslim students in Bangladesh, addressing the country's current needs. It is guided by character education and character-building concepts of both al-Ghazali (1993a) and Lickona (1991) and is rooted in an Islamic philosophical foundation. Moreover, the chapter explores several approaches and techniques for character education, including teaching, training, mentoring, lecturing, memorisation and manifestation, storytelling, audio-visual display, and modelling. It outlines and organises the core components that make up the conceptual model. The model highlights the significance of a character-supportive and character-centric integrated curriculum with a focus on holistic student growth.

Furthermore, the model advocates for a holistic assessment mechanism that frequently assesses students' performance by integrating and Islamising current approaches and strategies; this chapter goes into detail about them. Hence, with an emphasis on the diverse approaches for fostering good character development, the model offers a holistic framework for integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh. It seeks to empower students to embody Islamic values, morals, and traditions through personal, social, professional, and cultural contexts. Eventually, the model claims that this framework will equip them to serve as true vicegerents (*khalifa*) of Allah and contribute positively to society.

Furthermore, the model promotes the active involvement of stakeholders in character education. Accordingly, this chapter explores and delineates the roles and strategies of teachers, school administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers in implementing the model within both Bangladeshi Islamic-based and secular-based national schools. The specific responsibilities of the stakeholders include classroom-based character integration, school leadership and policy development, community and religious engagement, and national-level educational planning. These collaborative roles ensure the practical implementation and sustainability of integrated character education across both secular and Islamic education systems in Bangladesh. Accordingly, the implementation strategies ensure that the model is based on research and consistent with religious and cultural values, which significantly raises the potential for success of the model in Bangladeshi educational settings. The chapter concluded that if this model is effectively implemented, educational institutions can have a significant impact on shaping the moral and ethical frameworks for future generations of Bangladesh, particularly in terms of character education and the holistic development of Muslim students. Moreover, the model's universality and versatility make it applicable in a variety of educational settings.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The study develops a conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh within its sociocultural and religious context. This chapter presents a concise synthesis of the entire study, highlighting the key findings, theoretical and practical implications, major contributions, and recommendations for future research and implementation.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The major challenge facing Bangladesh is the lack of effective character education and increasing moral deterioration. Chapter One provided an overview of the study, identifying the need for an integrated character education model for Muslim students in Bangladesh grounded in an Islamic philosophical foundation. The study argued that character education and character-building can serve as an effective response to moral decline when aligned with Islamic principles. It was further guided by the assumption that character formation is most effectively developed through an integrated educational approach combining moral values, structured learning experiences, and practical application within educational settings. The study adopted philosophical, historical, and library-based research methods. It addressed the research problem, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, researcher's positionality, and the overall organisation of the thesis.

To address the first research question, Chapter Two explored the philosophical foundations of character education with particular emphasis on Islamic philosophy. It discussed key philosophical dimensions and concepts underpinning Islamic character education and character-building, including the Islamic worldview, knowledge (*'ilm*), education (*tarbiyah-ta'lim-ta'dib*), *khalifah*, *amanah*, and the concept of good

character within the educational context of Bangladesh. Contemporary educational perspectives were incorporated selectively to provide conceptual context and clarification where relevant. The chapter concluded that the Islamic philosophical foundation provides the most appropriate basis for developing the proposed model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh. Subsequently, Chapter Three explored the historical development of education in Bangladesh in relation to character education and moral formation among Muslim students. It traced the evolution of educational reforms from independence to the present, examining both secular-based and Islamic-based national educational streams, including the Qawmi madrasah system. The chapter further discussed contemporary educational reforms and the challenges of integrating Islamic character education within the existing educational framework of Bangladesh.

Chapter Four addressed the second and third research questions of the study by presenting the proposed conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh, grounded in the philosophical foundations of Islamic education. The chapter outlined the philosophy, vision, mission, goals, objectives, and major components of the model, including a character-centric curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, holistic educational settings, integrated teaching and learning approaches, and continuous assessment of students' character development. The model emphasises the cultivation of holistic individuals possessing academic competence alongside moral, ethical, social, cultural, and spiritual values aligned with Islamic principles. The chapter further highlighted the collaborative roles of teachers, educational administrators, religious leaders, policymakers, families, and communities in supporting the effective implementation of the model. Finally, it concluded that the successful implementation of the proposed model may contribute significantly to shaping the moral, ethical, and spiritual development of future generations in Bangladesh.

Chapter Five presented a synthesis of the study and reiterated that the proposed conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students fosters the development of good character through the integrated processes of character education and character-building. The chapter further discussed the theoretical and practical implications, major contributions, and recommendations of the study. It concluded

that a holistic approach involving policy development, stakeholder engagement, continuous research, curriculum alignment, and effective implementation strategies is essential for integrating the proposed model into the existing educational framework of Bangladesh.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY: THEORY AND PRACTICE

The development of a conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh has a wide range of noteworthy theoretical implications, particularly in the areas of Islamic character education, Islamic value-based education, and Islamisation of Knowledge. The study significantly contributes to the advancement of Islamic character education theory as it proposes a comprehensive model that integrates Islamic principles with contemporary pedagogical approaches to character education and character-building. The model advocates that character development in Muslim students must be based on an Islamic philosophical foundation and global educational practices that challenge traditional character education and character-building concepts. It highlights the notion that character education is not just about teaching values and virtues, but about cultivating a holistic ethical, moral, social, cultural, and spiritual identity grounded in Islamic principles and worldview. Additionally, this study proposes critically evaluating and aligning existing educational values, character traits, materials, and teaching approaches with the Islamic worldview to ensure that students obtain a holistic character education. Thus, the study advances the installation and integration of the Islamic worldview, particularly in the field of character education, to create a strong Islamic foundation for character education and the development of good character traits.

Moreover, the study contributes to the ongoing theoretical discussion on the integration of academic and moral education. The study challenges the existing traditional models that prioritise academic achievements over moral, ethical, social, cultural, and spiritual development by advocating for the inclusion of character education as a significant part of the curriculum and education system. This theoretical swing pushes scholars to rethink how character education can be efficiently woven into academic teaching and learning, ensuring a more balanced and holistic

educational experience for learners. Furthermore, since the model integrates Islamic values, principles, and good character traits within the framework of integrated character education, it expands the scope of Islamic education, particularly Islamic moral education concerning the development of good character.

Since the study underscores the significance of integrating revealed and acquired knowledge, particularly in integrated character education for good character development based on Islamic directions, it advances the theory of Islamisation of Knowledge. Thus, it highlights the need for character education to be rooted in Islamic philosophy and cultural norms. Islamisation of Knowledge is employed as a guiding interpretive and integrative process that ensures alignment of educational theories, content, and practices with Islamic epistemological and axiological principles within the framework of the study. It implies that Islamic values and philosophy not only inform the content of the curriculum but also the underlying structure and teaching and learning approaches. This shift offers a new perspective on how Islamic educational philosophy can be applied in contemporary educational settings, particularly in the realm of character education. Nevertheless, the practical implementation of the proposed model may encounter several contextual and institutional challenges, including differences in educational settings, variations in stakeholder readiness, limitations in teacher preparation, and possible resistance to curriculum reform within existing educational structures. Since the study is conceptual and non-empirical in nature, the effectiveness of the model in practice requires further empirical validation and contextual adaptation.

When it comes to the implementation of Islamic character education and character-building approach through the integrated curriculum in Bangladesh and other Muslim countries, the study has significant practical implications. Accordingly, one of the key implications is that educationalists, teachers, and policymakers need to prioritise character education and character-building in the curriculum to address moral degradation and challenges. The introduction of character education as a core subject will have a direct effect on the personal growth and academic achievements of students. It will facilitate the cultivation of a morally upright, ethically sound, socially bonded, spiritually strong, and intellectually capable generation. However, integrating character education as a core educational component may require substantial policy

support, curriculum restructuring, teacher training, and institutional commitment. The diversity of educational systems in Bangladesh may also influence the extent and consistency of implementation across different institutions.

Additionally, the study has noteworthy implications for curriculum design and implementation since the proposed model in the study calls for a revised curriculum that integrates character education within academic subjects to promote it as an essential component of education and the school experience. Hence, it requires educationalists, curriculum developers, and policymakers to design curriculum resources, including textbooks, lesson plans, and teaching materials that reflect both academic knowledge and the development of values, including moral, ethical, social, cultural, and spiritual, rooted in Islam. The model advocates practical steps for incorporating the teaching of values in every discipline to foster character development alongside academic content, which are in line with its vision, mission, goal, objective, educational approaches, and assessment mechanism.

The study highlights the need for comprehensive teacher training and professional development programs to provide teachers with the autonomy, inventiveness, and proficiency to select and employ educational materials and approaches for teaching, learning, and cultivating students' moral character through integrated curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, along with assessing their character development and academic performance. In addition to encouraging and enabling them to choose suitable educational materials and approaches to foster good character development, it will also help them understand the significance of effective character education in moulding and instilling values and positive character traits in students. Moreover, it will allow them to use their creativity in combination with educational materials to make the lessons interactive and engaging. Along with encouraging teachers to serve as role models both inside and outside of the classroom, the model also calls for providing them with all the necessary resources and support they need. Above all, it benefits teachers to understand how crucial it is to behave as role models for students, helping them to develop moral principles and positive character traits.

In practice, the effective integration of character education also depends on establishing a character-supportive school environment and culture. Hence, the study gives particular attention to the educational setting to ensure a holistic, character-supportive educational scenery that facilitates teaching and learning holistic character education. Encouraging character development under a character-supportive school environment that is cooperative, respectful, and empathetic can boost student engagement and motivation, which will improve academic and character development performance. Therefore, this study has a major implication for educational administrators as it recognises the role they can play in implementing character education. Accordingly, they will realise their responsibilities and play an active role in ensuring a character-supportive environment to inculcate values and good character traits among students through an integrated character education curriculum, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

Furthermore, the study emphasises the need for collaboration between stakeholders—including schools, teachers, parents, and the community—in promoting a holistic approach to the student character development process. The model advocates that character education must not be isolated and confined within the classroom but should be expanded into everyday life and supported by the family and community setting. Hence, educational institutions are encouraged to create partnerships with stakeholders to facilitate both academic and personal development at school and to ensure that values learned in school are reinforced at home and in the community. This collaboration involves offering stakeholders training sessions, seminars, and workshops to acquire the knowledge and skills required to assist children in developing positive character traits and their reinforcement. Thus, their ability and understanding of their significant roles and responsibilities in character education will be enhanced.

The study advocates the establishment of an assessment mechanism that evaluates both academic performance and character growth to ensure that the development of students is being cultivated in all aspects, including moral, ethical, social, cultural, spiritual, and intellectual. Thus, the study highlights the significance of continuous evaluation and feedback mechanisms to gauge the effectiveness and sustainability of the character education model. This will require academic institutions

to implement both qualitative and quantitative approaches to track the progress of students to make necessary adjustments to the teaching and learning approach. These implications advocate a paradigm shift in how the educational system addresses moral degradation and challenges in developing holistic individuals, especially in Bangladesh. At the same time, the study recognises that long-term sustainability of the proposed model depends on continuous evaluation, stakeholder cooperation, educational policy alignment, and adaptability to changing social and educational realities.

5.4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study makes several significant contributions to both the academic field of character education and the practical education system, particularly within the context of Muslim students in Bangladesh. The study contributes in the following ways.

5.4.1 A Novel Conceptual Model for Integrated Islamic Character Education

One of the primary contributions of this study is the formation of a conceptual model of integrated character education that is particularly designed for Muslim students in Bangladesh. In its approach, the model is novel and integrates Islamic values with contemporary educational practices. The model highlights the Islamisation of education and integrates Islamic values and principles of ethics and morality into the curriculum as the foundational basis for character formation and development. In this study, Islamic values function as guiding ethical and spiritual principles, while Islamic character refers to the embodiment of those values through students' attitudes, behaviour, and moral conduct. Thus, this makes the model distinct from traditional approaches that are often secular or Western in origin. It provides a culturally relevant framework for character education and character-building that is rooted in both Islamic philosophy and Bangladeshi social, religious, and cultural contexts.

5.4.2 Advancement of the Field of Character Education

This study adds to the corpus of knowledge that was previously accessible about character education in Bangladesh and, more significantly, in other locations by proposing an integrated approach where academic performance and character development are equally prioritised. It challenges the existing frameworks that advocate separating character development from academic learning. The study fosters a unified character-centric curriculum and holistic approach to character education to promote moral, ethical, social, cultural, spiritual, and academic achievement simultaneously. This contribution shifts the focus from merely achieving academic achievement to fostering holistic individuals who are equipped with both knowledge and good character.

5.4.3 Boarding the Scope of Islamisation of Knowledge

The study also contributes to expanding the body of knowledge on the Islamisation of education. It challenges the secularised education system since it advocates that education for Muslims must be rooted in Islamic philosophy and Islamic values and principles should be integrated into the curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, particularly in the Muslim-majority context. Thus, the study highlights that Islamisation of Knowledge is not only about academic content but also about the integration of Islamic values and principles in the educational process. Accordingly, it contributes to the ongoing discourse on how to modernise the Muslim educational system. In particular, the study advances the Islamisation of knowledge and education in the field of character education, promoting that the Islamisation of Knowledge is capable of offering and establishing a dynamic and sustainable educational system that meets the spiritual and intellectual needs of humanity.

5.4.4 Practical Guidelines for Stakeholders and Implementation

Underlining the significance of aligning educational resources and teaching approaches with values informed by Islam, the study outlines practical strategies for policymakers, educationists, and curriculum developers. It also advocates curriculum reforms and outlines research-based roles and strategies for stakeholders, including teachers, educational administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers, to implement Islamic character education in the curriculum of Bangladesh to address moral degradation better. Thus, it makes the study especially valuable for those involved in curriculum design and educational reforms in countries such as Bangladesh.

5.4.5 Integration of Character Education and Academic Knowledge

Moreover, emphasis on students' holistic development is another significant contribution of the study. It underlined the value of cultivating Islamic character traits such as faith in Allah, god-consciousness, forgiveness, and justice, combined with academic knowledge. The study contributes to the ongoing debate in educational theory concerning the need for an education system that nurtures the whole child, addressing the cognitive, emotional, ethical, moral, social, and spiritual development.

5.4.6 A Global Solution to the Moral Crisis

While the model is designed for Bangladesh, the model's universality and versatility give it global implications because moral crisis and a lack of effective character education are problems that the entire world is facing. The proposed model promotes the development of a holistic generation in Bangladesh capable of overcoming the challenges of contemporary society and acting as sincere vicegerents of Allah. Such people are also needed in the world as role models, as they are knowledgeable, have positive character traits, and can integrate Islamic ethics, beliefs, and customs into their daily lives while navigating the difficulties of contemporary society. In nations such as Bangladesh, where a moral crisis is occurring and there is a dearth of effective character education, and where they aspire to raise a better next generation, the

proposed model would be a remedy. Proper implementation of the model in any educational setting would facilitate the development of holistic personalities who are decent persons, good students, moral citizens, and true vicegerents of Allah.

5.4.7 Empowerment of Stakeholders in the Education System

Additionally, the study promotes stakeholder engagement for effective character education and character-building of students. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of how these stakeholders can work together to establish an integrated, collaborative, and character-supportive environment at school and beyond for students by outlining and emphasising their significant collaborative effort and role in supporting the moral and academic development of students.

5.4.8 Empowerment of Teachers

The study stresses the need for specialised teacher training and professional development programs to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, educational resources, technological tools, skills, and strategies for teaching character education. It firmly advocates providing teachers freedom to select resources or activities based on their creativity, and competence to instil character traits in line with the proposed model. Additionally, it motivates teachers to serve as active agents and positive role models both within and outside of the classroom. This contribution is especially noteworthy as it concentrates on practical skills and proficiencies that teachers need to be effective in integrating values and ethics into their classroom practices, which directly enhance teaching outcomes concerning character-building.

5.4.9 Groundwork for Integrated Islamic Character Education

This study provides valuable insights for researchers at various levels, particularly those interested in education, character education, the Islamisation of education, Islamic-based character education, the integration of Islamic worldview and local cultural values into education, moral degradation, good character formation, values education, civic education, moral education, and approaches to promoting moral values and good character. Researchers focusing on integrated character education—especially in the context of Bangladesh—will find this study thought-provoking. It offers an opportunity to examine, validate, and evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed model, as well as to enhance its efficacy and further promote integrated character education for students in Bangladesh. Ultimately, it lays the groundwork for future research.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the findings and contributions of the study, the recommendations are prioritised into immediate policy-level actions and longer-term implementation and research directions to ensure practical applicability within the context of Bangladesh and other Muslim-majority countries.

5.5.1 Recommendations for Policymakers

Priority 1: Core Policy and Curriculum Reforms

- **Integrate Character Education into the National Curriculum:** policymakers—particularly those responsible for educational planning and curriculum development—should take proactive steps to integrate and introduce character education as an essential subject within the existing curriculum of Bangladesh. Additionally, policies should be formulated to integrate character education into other subjects to ensure that values are intertwined and reinforced throughout the educational experience of

students. Thus, students' holistic development will be prioritised, where character growth and academic achievement are equally highlighted.

- **Redefine educational philosophy:** Curriculum development and implementation of the suggestions for character education as a distinct subject would not be viable without a connection between educational philosophy and character education, and the development of good character in students. Since there is not much room for character education in Bangladesh, it is recommended that the educational philosophy, including foundational principles, vision, mission, goals, and objectives, be redefined to provide adequate room for it as a distinct subject in line with the proposed model.
- **Assessing Existing National Curriculum to Align with the Proposed Principles:** Policies must be formulated to examine the existing curriculum to ensure that it aligns with the proposed model's principles. Hence, policymakers can conduct a comprehensive examination and analysis of the existing national curriculum in collaboration with educational authorities to revise the curriculum and incorporate the model's principles. Thus, developing a comprehensive curriculum integrating Islamic character education across all subjects, aligning with religion, national standards, and local cultural contexts, and implementing it throughout educational systems and institutions can be facilitated. It will not only strengthen the character growth of students but also offer a more relevant character education within the social, cultural, and religious context of Bangladesh.

Priority 2: Implementation Support Mechanisms

- **Character Educational Material Development and Distribution:** It is critical to develop resources for character education, including educational materials, textbooks, lesson plans, activities, assessment tools, and resources, incorporating local examples and narratives within the religious and national curriculum in Bangladesh, tailored to the integrated character education model. Audio-visual resources such as movies, plays, videos,

and interviews that expressly address and promote character education and good character development in students must be encouraged. Hence, in collaboration with curriculum developers, theologians, educators, and educational authorities, distribute, implement, and promote curriculum materials focusing on character education goals and good character development aligned with the model should be developed, distributed, implemented, and promoted throughout the institutions across the country. Accordingly, this will support the implementation of curriculum-level reforms by ensuring appropriate learning resources.

- **Training and Professional Development:** Teachers should be well-informed in character education concepts and approaches to facilitate the effective character education and character-building of students. Since they serve as instructors, facilitators, and role models in addition to being directly involved in teaching and learning character, they must be well-trained, too. Hence, policymakers must revise and ensure teacher training and education programs to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively integrate proposed character education goals into their lesson plans and in their classrooms in light of the model. This is essential for the effective implementation of the proposed curriculum reforms.
- **Engagement of Stakeholders for Collaborative Network:** Policymakers should promote active stakeholder engagement to create a collaborative network for sharing resources, experiences, and best practices among stakeholders, especially educational institutions, families, businesses, religious organisations, and government agencies. Collaborative roles and strategies of stakeholders are necessary for effective character education and character-building initiatives. Hence, it is strongly recommended to increase stakeholder involvement, particularly family involvement in character education, by offering workshops, seminars, and outreach initiatives. These activities will help reinforce the principles learned in school and at home, encouraging families to support and reinforce the

values they learn. Accordingly, this functions as a supportive mechanism for sustaining character education beyond classroom settings.

- **Integrating Character Scores into Final Grades:** Similar to other subjects, character education, and good character development assessment scores should be graded and taken into account when determining a student's final grade. Additionally, to motivate students to prioritise character development above other subjects and prepare students for future situations, such as obtaining a respectable job and getting promoted, as well as other aspects of life, character development assessment scores should be highly valued. Hence, policymakers should find ways to incorporate character education assessment grades into the final grade of students.

5.5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings and contributions of the study in addressing the prevailing moral crisis and the dearth of effective character education in Bangladesh, the following recommendations are presented for policymakers and future researchers. In line with the nature of the study, the recommendations are organised to prioritise immediate policy-level actions followed by implementation support mechanisms and longer-term research directions to ensure practical applicability within Bangladesh and other Muslim-majority contexts.

Priority 1: Model Validation and Contextual Studies

- **Empirical Validation of the Proposed Model:** Further research is required to validate the proposed model in real-world settings through empirical investigation to assess its effectiveness and generalisability, particularly within the context of Bangladesh.
- **Qualitative Exploration of Character Development Processes:** An in-depth understanding of the issues under study related to the development of good character employing an integrated character education curriculum

can be obtained through qualitative phenomenological and ethnographic research.

Priority 2: Implementation and Effectiveness Studies

- **Teacher Effectiveness and Training Impact:** Teachers are the most significant stakeholders in integrated character education since their efforts mostly contribute to students' performances and achievements. Therefore, the effectiveness of training programs and the ability of teachers to use the acquired knowledge and skills in the classroom can be investigated through a quantitative analysis or feedback.
- **Development of Assessment Mechanisms:** Future studies should be conducted to create standardised tools and mechanisms to assess the holistic development of students. Hence, both qualitative and quantitative studies are recommended.
- **Use of Digital Technologies and Online Platforms in Character Education:** Further research should explore how advanced technologies, tools, and online platforms can be utilised to promote character education in schools, specifically in the context of Muslim-majority nations.

Priority 3: Expansion and Comparative Research

- **Comparative Studies Across Contexts:** Comparative studies could explore the applicability of the proposed model in other countries' educational and cultural settings, particularly Muslim-majority nations, aiming to refine the approach and assess its potential for global implementation. Such research can contribute to the development of a global model of integrated Islamic character education.
- **Role of Parents and Community:** Future research should explore the role of parents and community members in character education, focusing on how their involvement influences students' character outside of the school. It will facilitate finding the best practice for engaging families in integrated Islamic character education.

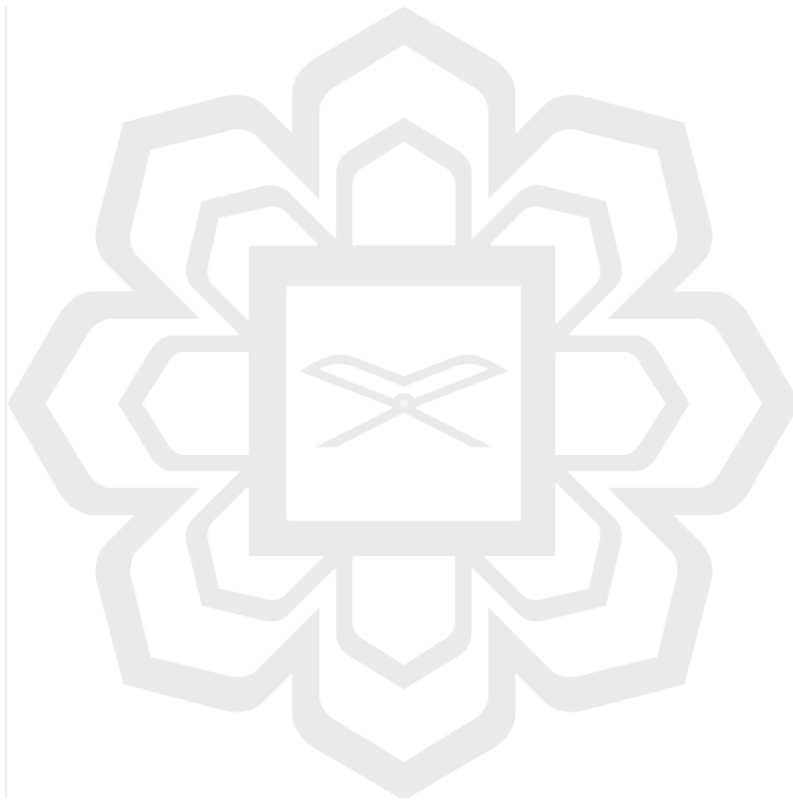
5.6 CONCLUSION

The primary focus of the study was to develop a conceptual model of integrated character education for Muslim students in Bangladesh by aligning with its unique socio-cultural and religious context. The philosophical foundation of Islamic education underlines the concurrent development of both physical and spiritual aspects of individuals, which is crucial for the holistic development of Muslim students in Bangladesh. The study found that this foundation serves as the appropriate basis for the proposed model. Additionally, Islamic education underscores that the ultimate purpose of human life is to fulfil the divinely assigned duties, especially the role of serving as a *khalifah* of Allah. Accordingly, the proposed integrated Islamic character education model was developed for Muslim students in Bangladesh.

The study highlights that the successful implementation of the proposed model requires collaborative engagement among key stakeholders, including teachers, educational administrators, religious leaders, and policymakers. Through such collaborative engagement, Bangladesh can ensure a comprehensive educational framework that fosters the development of individuals who are morally upright, ethically sound, academically capable, and spiritually rooted in Islam. Although instilling values and good character through the curriculum is a challenging endeavour, character education initiatives often face various forms of resistance. Nonetheless, the study has significant theoretical and practical implications for ongoing discussion and theory in character education, especially within the context of Islamic character education and character-building. The study also highlights the global relevance of the proposed model. Further research is recommended to strengthen, validate, and expand the proposed model.

In its last thoughts, the study notes that the Muslim Ummah was once at the forefront of knowledge but has gradually declined in this position due to various educational and moral challenges, particularly the limited emphasis on character development in education systems. Hence, the Muslim Ummah needs a thorough reformation using a holistic approach to education, particularly to character education for good character development of students rooted in Islam. In addition to improving academic performance, this model pushes students to prepare for ethical issues, as

Bangladesh has the potential to develop a society that is more religious and locally value-driven and ethical. Consequently, the study aspires to contribute to the development of morally upright, ethically sound, and spiritually grounded students within an Islamic educational framework to serve as a sincere vicegerent of Allah. The study is convinced that such a generation would contribute to the revival of the Islamic intellectual and educational legacy. Allah knows best (الله أعلم).



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