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# Understanding Holistic Transformative Learning Based on Virtuous Values and Islamic Teachings

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## Abstract

*This article explores the concept of holistic, transformative learning, with an emphasis on virtuous values and Islamic teachings. In an era of rapid globalisation, education must evolve beyond mere academic performance to include character development, moral values, and social responsibility. By integrating the principles of virtue and Islamic ethics into education, a more comprehensive model of learning is proposed, one that balances intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual growth. This study aims todiscussesportance of holistic education in the Indonesian context, its global relevance, the opportunities and challenges it presents, and the necessary skills for becoming a responsible global citizen. The article also highlights how Islamic values contribute to shaping well-rounded individuals who are equipped to tackle modern societal issues while fostering global cooperation.*

***Keywords:*** *Holistic Education, Character Education, Global Citizenship, Indonesia, Islamic Values, Transformative Learning.*

## Introduction

Holistic transformative learning is an educational approach that seeks to develop the whole person—intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually—rather than focusing solely on academic achievement [1]. This model of learning is particularly relevant in contemporary education systems as they face the challenges of a rapidly changing global landscape [2]. As traditional education models primarily emphasise intellectual development, holistic education integrates the development of moral, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of students' lives [3]. One particular framework for holistic education that has gained prominence is the integration of virtuous values and Islamic teachings into educational curricula.

However, despite growing awareness, many educational institutions still adopt fragmented approaches that separate academic success from ethical and emotional growth. This has resulted in rising concerns such as increased student stress, academic dishonesty, and a lack of empathy among youth [4].

Islamic education, with its strong emphasis on moral integrity *(akhlaq),* justice *(adl),* compassion *(rahmah),* and responsibility *(amanah),* offers a unique perspective on education that aligns with the principles of holistic transformative learning [5]. The goal of such education is not merely

academic success but the creation of individuals who are ethical, empathetic, and responsible citizens. Nevertheless, while many studies have explored holistic and Islamic education separately, few have examined the synergy between these traditions in cultivating global citizenship. By including spiritual, moral, and socio-political aspects, holistic Islamic education greatly helps to promote world citizenship [6], [7]. It stresses the need of contextual and reflective learning, intercultural awareness, and all-encompassing educational practices. Islamic education can help to create responsible global citizens who are ready to interact with different points of view and strive for a fairer and more sustainable world by means of its emphasis on these areas [8], [9], [10].

This significant relevance due to the Indonesian context's majority Muslim population and its educational system's increasing efforts to integrate Islamic values [11]. Islamic values into the curriculum may involve teaching students about the importance of compassion, empathy, and social justice based on Islamic teachings [12], and then it can help students develop a strong moral compass and sense of social responsibility in their academic and personal lives [13].

Furthermore, integrating Islamic values into education can also help foster a sense of unity and community among students, as they learn to respect and care for one another based on shared beliefs and principles [14]. By incorporating these values into the curriculum, schools in Indonesia can not only provide students with a well-rounded education but also help them develop into responsible and compassionate members of society.

Additionally, teaching Islamic values can also promote a sense of cultural identity and pride among students, as they learn about the rich history and traditions of their faith. However, it is important to note that solely focusing on Islamic values in education may marginalise students from other religious backgrounds, hindering diversity and inclusivity within the school community. Additionally, there is a risk of promoting extremism or intolerance if these values are taught without emphasis on critical thinking and respect for differing beliefs.

In the global context, holistic education is seen as a crucial factor in preparing students for the challenges of a connected world [15]. In an era of globalisation, issues such as inequality, climate change, and human rights violations require cooperative solutions, education must focus on developing not only intellectual competencies but also social, emotional, and ethical skills [16]. In this light, integrating Islamic educational values into transformative learning may offer a culturally grounded yet globally relevant model for education reform in Muslim-majority nations like Indonesia.

Therefore, this article aims to explore how holistic transformative learning, rooted in Islamic educational values, can contribute to the development of global citizenship competencies. It further investigates the theoretical foundations, practical implications, and contextual challenges faced in integrating such approaches within national education systems, particularly in Indonesia. This paper examines the importance of holistic transformative learning, the opportunities it presents, the challenges it faces, and its relevance for cultivating global citizens in both national and international contexts.

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## Methods

This study employs a qualitative literature review approach to analyse the academic discussions on holistic transformative learning, virtue-based education, and the role of Islamic values in educational systems. The review encompasses academic journals, books, and reputable online sources published since 2020 to capture the most recent developments in this field. The research identifies the core principles of holistic education, explores its benefits and challenges, and examines how Islamic values can contribute to the development of ethical and socially responsible global citizens. Key themes include the integration of virtue ethics, the role of educators, and the implications of Islamic moral principles in educational practice.

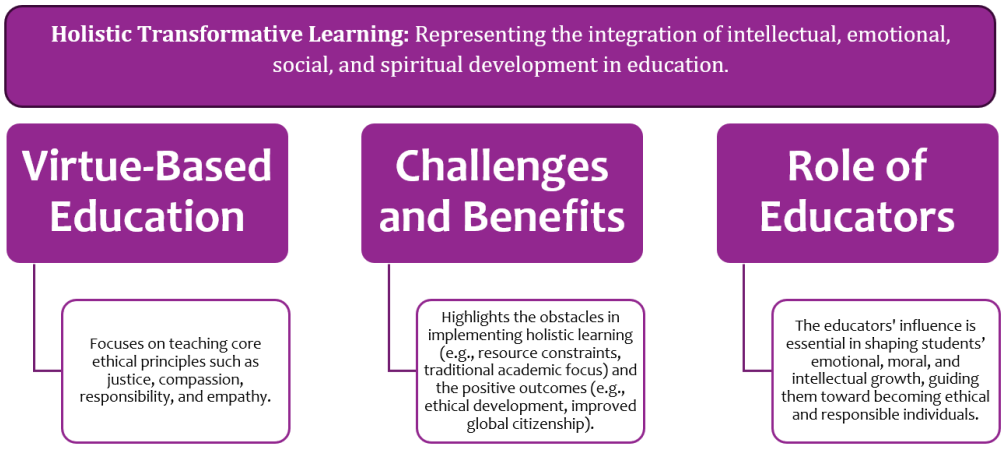



**Fig. 1.** Conceptual Framework of Holistic Transformative Learning

## Results and Discussion

### A. Holistic Transformative Learning: Theoretical Foundations and Applications

Holistic transformative learning is centered around the idea of developing the whole person: intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. This model contrasts with traditional education systems that focus primarily on academic knowledge and cognitive skills. Scholars like Mezirow [17] and Cranton [18] have argued that transformative learning encourages deep reflection, critical thinking, and personal development beyond the classroom. Transformative learning, particularly in the context of social transformation, is a process that encompasses emotional, cognitive, spiritual, physical, social, and environmental aspects, leading to a change in perspective and societal impact [19], [20], [21].

A holistic approach in Islamic education involves integrating religious values with general knowledge, eliminating the dichotomy between the two [22], [23], [24]. In the context of Islamic education, this approach emphasises intellectual development but also the cultivation of moral character, based on Islamic principles such as justice *(adl),* compassion *(rahmah),* and responsibility (*amanah).*

Islamic education, with its commitment to fostering *"insan kamil"* (the perfect human being), aligns well with the goals of holistic education. The focus is on preparing students who excel academically while also being equipped with strong ethical standards and a sense of social responsibility. In practical terms,

this approach is reflected in schools that integrate moral lessons into the curriculum, such as teaching values related to empathy, justice, and ethical decision-making.

This integration is evident in the curriculum reforms in Indonesia, where Islamic values are incorporated across all subjects to foster cognitive, character, and spiritual development. Table 1 compares three educational models based on their focus, key values, and intended outcomes. Traditional Education emphasizes academic achievement and knowledge, aiming for high academic scores. Holistic Transformative Education focuses on comprehensive development, promoting character, empathy, and social responsibility to produce well-rounded individuals. Islamic Education integrates moral and academic development, upholding values like justice, compassion, and responsibility to achieve both ethical and academic excellence.

**Table 1.** Comparison of Holistic Education Models

| Model | Focus | Key Values | Educational Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| Traditional Education | Academic Achievement | Knowledge | High academic scores |
| Holistic Transformative Education | Comprehensive Development | Character, empathy, social responsibility | Well-rounded individuals |
| Islamic Education | Moral and Academic Development | Justice, compassion, responsibility | Ethical and academic excellence |

Islamic schools in Indonesia, for example, integrate these values into their curriculum, not only through formal subjects but also through extracurricular activities such as community service, helping students develop both their academic knowledge and their moral character. For example, the Indonesian *fiqh* curriculum in higher education promotes moderate attitudes and inclusivity, aligning with transformative learning's emphasis on adaptability and respect for diverse perspectives. This curriculum encourages students to integrate religious, social, cultural, and state morals, fostering a balanced understanding of Islamic teachings. This comprehensive approach has shown positive outcomes in terms of student behaviour and social engagement.

**B. Global Citizenship and the Need for Holistic Education**

Global citizenship is an educational approach that emphasises responsibility towards global issues such as inequality, climate change, and social justice. In other words, global citizenship is a concept that emphasises a broader community beyond national borders, fostering political, economic, social, and cultural interconnectedness [25], [26]. It aims to address global challenges such as intolerance, extremism, and environmental sustainability by promoting universal values like human rights, gender equality, and cultural diversity [10], [25].

Education systems must adapt to prepare students to confront these challenges. As noted by Banks [27], global citizenship education includes the development of cultural awareness, respect for diversity, and a commitment to ethical action on a global scale. Holistic transformative learning, with its emphasis on emotional intelligence, ethical reasoning, and empathy, plays a critical role in preparing individuals to become responsible global citizens.

A holistic transformative educational approach substantially enhances the cultivation of global citizenship by amalgamating diverse educational methodologies and frameworks that promote critical

awareness, empathy, and active engagement in global matters. This method is advantageous in multiple significant aspects:

1. Analytical Acumen and Compassion

Holistic transformative education prioritises the cultivation of critical thinking abilities, vital for comprehending and tackling global challenges. This methodology challenges students to critically evaluate socio-economic and political frameworks, cultivating a profound comprehension of global disparities and injustices [10], [28]. Furthermore, fostering empathy through holistic education enables students to value other perspectives and cultures, essential for global citizenship. This compassionate comprehension inspires individuals to undertake acts that advance social justice and sustainability [29].

2. Engaged and Collaborative Learning

Holistic education utilises interactive and participatory approaches, including experiential learning and collaborative projects, which effectively impart global citizenship. These strategies facilitate students' connection of local issues to global contexts, enhancing the relevance and impact of the learning experience. Initiatives such as internationalisation and mobility programs offer students practical experiences that deepen their comprehension of global interdependencies and their responsibilities as global citizens [10], [30].

3. Accountability and Initiative

Holistic education cultivates a sense of responsibility in pupils, motivating them to engage with global challenges. This is accomplished through curricula that incorporate global citizenship education (GCE) ideas, fostering a dedication to establishing a more just and equitable world. Students are urged to engage in civic activities, including volunteering and social media initiatives, which enable them to apply their knowledge to practical issues. This active engagement cultivates a sense of agency and optimism, both of which are crucial for instigating change.

4. Tackling Global and Local Challenges

Holistic education links local issues to global contexts, enabling students to comprehend the wider ramifications of their activities [31]. This method guarantees that students are cognisant of global issues and are prepared to tackle them through informed decision-making. Holistic education confronts the difficulties of diversity and social justice in a globalised world by incorporating multicultural and intercultural education frameworks [32], [33]. This method assists students in effectively navigating and positively contributing to increasingly varied cultures.

5. Surmounting Obstacles

Notwithstanding the advantages, problems persist in the implementation of holistic education for global citizenship, including opposition from educators and evolving educational objectives. The capacity of higher education institutions to cultivate global citizens through restructured curricula and inclusive pedagogical approaches is substantial [30].

So, a holistic educational approach is essential for cultivating global citizenship through the promotion of critical awareness, empathy, responsibility, and active engagement in global challenges.

This extensive educational model equips students to contribute to a more equitable and sustainable world, effectively addressing both local and global concerns.



In this context, Islamic values are closely aligned with the goals of global citizenship. Islam teaches the importance of caring for others, promoting justice, and working towards the common good—principles that are essential for fostering a more just and peaceful world. The Islamic framework of *rahmah* (compassion), *adl* (justice), and *amanah* (responsibility) directly supports the development of global citizens who are mindful of their role in addressing global issues.

Table 2 highlights key benefits of value-based education, detailing their descriptions, global impact, and examples. Ethical Awareness involves developing strong moral character, contributing to global peace and justice, as seen in Islamic principles like *adl* (justice) and *rahmah* (compassion). Cultural Sensitivity emphasizes respect for cultural diversity, promoting global harmony through understanding of diverse religious practices. Social Responsibility encourages active community engagement, helping to address global challenges such as poverty and climate change through volunteering and activism.

**Table 2.** Benefits of Holistic Education for Global Citizenship

| Benefit | Description | Global Impact | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ethical Awareness | Development of strong moral character | Fosters global peace and justice | Islamic principles of adl and rahmah |
| Cultural Sensitivity | Respect for cultural diversity | Promotes global harmony | Understanding diverse religious practices |
| Social Responsibility | Engagement in community service | Addresses global issues like poverty and climate change | Volunteering, activism |

In Indonesia, where a significant portion of the population is Muslim, the integration of Islamic values into education supports the broader objectives of global citizenship. Islamic teachings on global justice and social welfare, such as promoting fair trade and alleviating poverty, contribute to nurturing global citizens who not only understand global issues but are also committed to making a difference in the world.

### C. Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Holistic Transformative Learning

While the benefits of holistic transformative learning are clear, several challenges must be addressed in its widespread implementation. A significant barrier is the lack of sufficient resources and teacher training. In many developing countries, including Indonesia, educational systems face constraints such as inadequate funding, limited access to professional development programs, and outdated teaching methods. This limits the ability to implement holistic education models effectively. Teachers need specialised training to integrate both academic knowledge and moral development into their teaching practices, a challenge that is particularly pronounced in resource-poor contexts.

In recent efforts to implement holistic transformative learning, one prominent challenge is the issue of cognicentrism. Many modern educational initiatives primarily focus on cognitive processes, often neglecting the emotional and spiritual dimensions that are equally crucial to the transformation of learners [34]. This narrow emphasis on cognition can hinder the development of a well-rounded, holistic learning experience, leaving students with an incomplete framework for growth.

Another significant obstacle is the integration of digital technologies into higher education. Educational institutions are increasingly confronted with the challenge of adapting to rapid technological advancements [35]. While digital tools have the potential to enhance student engagement and foster critical thinking, institutions often struggle to incorporate these technologies effectively into the learning process. This lack of integration can prevent students from fully benefiting from the transformative learning experiences that digital technologies can offer.

Another challenge is the entrenched focus on academic performance in traditional education systems. Standardised testing, which often prioritises cognitive skills over emotional or moral development, remains a significant feature of educational systems worldwide. However, this focus presents an opportunity for reform. Integrating character development and values-based education into national curricula can create a more balanced system that fosters the development of ethical and socially responsible individuals.

Despite these challenges, there are several opportunities for the implementation of holistic education. The increasing recognition of global citizenship education provides a strong foundation for reform. Table 3 outlines key challenges in implementing value-based education, along with associated opportunities and proposed solutions. The *Lack of Resources*, such as limited funding and training, presents an opportunity for collaborative efforts and external support, which can be addressed through international partnerships and enhanced teacher training. The *Focus on Academic Performance* often overshadows values education, offering a chance for curriculum reform aimed at holistic learning by integrating values into core subjects. *Teacher Readiness* remains a challenge due to inadequate training, but can be improved through professional development and specialized courses on holistic teaching practices.

**Table 3.** Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Holistic Education

| Challenge | Description | Opportunity | Proposed Solution |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of Resources | Inadequate funding and training | Collaborative initiatives, external support | International partnerships, teacher training |
| Focus on Academic Performance | Prioritization of exams over values | Curriculum reform for holistic learning | Integrating values-based education into core subjects |
| Teacher Readiness | Insufficient training for educators | Professional development programs | Specialized courses on holistic teaching practices |
| Challenge | Description | Opportunity | Proposed Solution |

International collaborations, as well as the growing availability of online educational resources, can play a significant role in supporting the development of holistic learning environments. Additionally, integrating Islamic values into global educational frameworks allows for cross-cultural dialogue, enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation among nations.

## Conclusion

Holistic transformative learning, when guided by virtuous values and Islamic teachings, offers a comprehensive educational model that goes beyond academic performance to nurture the development of well-rounded individuals. By integrating moral, emotional, and spiritual growth into the curriculum, educational systems can prepare students to face the challenges of the modern world. In

both national and global contexts, the adoption of this approach is crucial for cultivating responsible global citizens who can address pressing global issues with empathy, justice, and a sense of shared responsibility. While challenges in implementation remain, such as resource limitations and the focus on standardised, the opportunities for reform are substantial. Education systems worldwide must embrace holistic learning to equip future generations for the complexities of a rapidly evolving world.

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