Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, VOL: 15/No: 03 **P-ISSN: 2252-8970**
DOI: 10.30868/ei.v15i03.10270 **E-ISSN: 2581-1754**

Date Received	**:**	**April 2026**
Date Revised	**:**	**August 2026**
Date Accepted	**:**	**August 2026**
Date Published	**:**	**August 2026**

INTERNALIZATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION VALUES THROUGH SUFISM IN SALALIM AL-FUDHALA BY SHEIKH NAWAWI AL-BANTANI

Abdurahim[1]
STAI Darul Qalam Tangerang (hermansyahroni17@gmail.com)

Tumpal Daniel
STAI Darul Qalam Tangerang (tumpaldaniels@gmail.com)

Keywords:
Character Education; Tasawuf; Salalim al-Fudhala; Nawawi al-Bantani; Akhlaq

ABSTRACTS

This study aims to analyze the concept of character education based on tasawuf (Islamic mysticism) as articulated in the book *Salalim al-Fudhala* by Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani. The contemporary moral crisis among Indonesian youth has reignited scholarly interest in the spiritual roots of character formation found in classical Islamic literature, particularly the works of nineteenth-century Nusantara scholars. *Salalim al-Fudhala*, a commentary on *Hidayat al-Adzkiya' ila Tariq al-Awliya'* by Sayyid Zayn al-Din al-Malibari, presents a structured pathway for ethical and spiritual cultivation that remains pedagogically relevant. Employing a qualitative-descriptive approach with library research design, this study uses content analysis combined with hermeneutic interpretation, supported by descriptive and taxonomic analysis. The primary data source is the Arabic text of *Salalim al-Fudhala*, while secondary sources comprise scholarly works on tasawuf, character education, and the intellectual biography of Sheikh Nawawi. The findings reveal that Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani articulates fourteen principal character values rooted in the *maqamat* (spiritual stations) of tasawuf, including knowledge (*'ilm*), repentance (*tawbah*), asceticism (*zuhd*), scrupulousness (*wara'*), spiritual struggle (*mujahadah*), trust (*tawakkul*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), patience (*sabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), and divine love (*mahabbah*). The methodology of character formation follows a triadic process of *takhalli* (purification), *tahalli* (adornment with virtues), and *tajalli* (manifestation of divine reality), supported by *riyadhah* (spiritual exercise), *muhasabah* (self-evaluation), and *muraqabah* (self-watchfulness). The relevance of these concepts to contemporary character education lies in the integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions, offering a holistic alternative to predominantly behavioristic models. The study concludes that *Salalim al-Fudhala* constitutes a viable epistemological resource for revitalizing character education in Indonesia, particularly within pesantren and madrasah contexts.

[1] Correspondence Author

A. INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has witnessed an unprecedented acceleration in the moral, social, and spiritual dislocation of younger generations, particularly within nations undergoing rapid modernization and digital transformation. Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-majority country, has not been exempt from this trajectory. On the contrary, the nation has confronted persistent challenges related to corruption, narcotics use, sexual deviance, intolerance, and online aggression among adolescents and young adults (Asmani, 2019; Faisal et al., 2024; Koesoema, 2019). Such conditions have rendered character education not merely a desirable pedagogical agenda but an existential necessity for the continuity of national life.

In response to these crises, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture institutionalised the Strengthening of Character Education programme (*Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter*, PPK) in 2017, anchored in five core values: religiosity, nationalism, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation (Wibowo & Purnama, 2013). Despite these institutional efforts, scholars have argued that the implementation of character education in Indonesian schools tends to remain instrumental and surface-level, neglecting the deeper spiritual and ontological foundations of moral formation (Mu'in, 2011; Nashir, 2019). The dominant approaches frequently reduce character to a list of measurable behaviours, severing it from the metaphysical horizon that, in Islamic thought, constitutes the very ground of virtue (Tafsir, 2012).

Within Islamic educational discourse, character education (*tarbiyah akhlaqiyah*) has historically occupied a central place, intricately interwoven with the disciplines of *fiqh*, *kalam*, and most pertinently *tasawuf*, the science of spiritual purification. Tasawuf, understood not as exotic asceticism but as an experiential science of inner refinement, supplies a robust epistemological grounding for character formation that integrates the heart (*qalb*), the intellect (*'aql*), and the body (*jism*) (Nata, 2014). The classical Sufi tradition articulates a coherent programme of spiritual psychology in which virtues are not merely external conducts to be imitated but interior states (*ahwal*) and stations (*maqamat*) to be traversed through disciplined practice (Thohir, 2013). This tradition has produced an extensive corpus of pedagogical literature, much of which remains underutilised in contemporary curricular design.

Among the most influential transmitters of this tradition in the Nusantara region was Sheikh Muhammad Nawawi ibn 'Umar al-Jawi al-Bantani (1813–1897), often referred to as *Sayyid 'Ulama' al-Hijaz*, "the Master of Hijaz Scholars," in recognition of his stature in nineteenth-century Mecca (Hurgronje, 2007; Wijoyo, 1997). Born in Tanara, Banten, and resident for most of his life in the holy city of Mecca, Nawawi authored more than one hundred works in Arabic spanning *fiqh*, *tafsir*, *hadith*, *kalam*, *sirah*, and *tasawuf*, many of which remain canonical texts in Indonesian pesantren to this day (Bruinessen, 1995; Mas' ud, 2004). His pedagogical importance lies not only in the breadth of his oeuvre but in his capacity to render dense classical scholarship accessible to a broad readership through clear commentary and didactic exposition (Dhofier, 1982).

Salalim al-Fudhala 'ala Hidayat al-Adzkiya' ila Tariq al-Awliya' is one of Sheikh Nawawi's most concentrated contributions to the science of tasawuf. The work is a commentary (*sharh*) on the celebrated Sufi poem *Hidayat al-Adzkiya'* by Sayyid Zayn al-Din al-Malibari, the South Indian scholar of the Shafi'i school. Whereas the base text outlines the spiritual journey toward sainthood (*wilayah*) in poetic verse, Nawawi's commentary unpacks each station, virtue, and admonition in expository prose, supplementing them with Qur'anic verses, prophetic traditions, and statements of earlier Sufi authorities. The result is a layered pedagogical resource that fuses normative ethics with experiential spirituality, suited both for individual self-purification and for institutional instruction (Adib, 2022).

Despite its scholarly density and pedagogical promise, *Salalim al-Fudhala* has received limited sustained academic attention compared with Sheikh Nawawi's better-known works such as *Tafsir Marah Labid*, *Nashaih al-'Ibad*, or *Maraqi al-'Ubudiyyah*. The few existing studies tend to address the work tangentially within broader surveys of his thought (Fradana, 2024; Nizar, 2013), without offering a systematic taxonomy of the character values it advocates or analysing the pedagogical methodology embedded in its structure. This lacuna is particularly significant given the contemporary urgency of recovering indigenous Islamic resources for character education in Indonesia.

Several recent studies have explored the intersection between Sufi thought and character education in the Indonesian context. Reconstructed al-Ghazali's framework of *akhlaq* as a model for school-based character education, while Suryadarma & Haq, (2015) examined the Ghazalian doctrine of moral psychology as a curricular resource. Dodego, (2021) analysed the concept of *mahabbah* as the affective core of Sufi character formation, and Bafadhol, (2017) traced the genealogy of *akhlaq* education through classical Islamic thought. These studies collectively demonstrate the fertility of the Sufi paradigm but leave a noticeable gap in the systematic analysis of Nusantara-specific texts such as *Salalim al-Fudhala*.

The present study addresses this gap by undertaking a focused, philological and pedagogical analysis of *Salalim al-Fudhala*. The central research questions are: (1) What character values does Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani articulate in *Salalim al-Fudhala*, and how do they correspond to the classical Sufi taxonomy of spiritual stations? (2) What pedagogical methodology of character formation does the text propose? (3) How can this tasawuf-based concept of character education be made relevant to the contemporary Indonesian educational context?

By engaging these questions, the study aspires to contribute to three intersecting scholarly conversations. First, to Sheikh Nawawi studies, by foregrounding an underexamined work and integrating it into the contemporary discourse on Islamic pedagogy. Second, to tasawuf studies, by demonstrating the pedagogical applicability of classical mystical thought beyond its conventional confinement to ascetic or devotional discourse. Third, to character education research, by enriching the conceptual repertoire with a culturally embedded, spiritually grounded model that may serve as a corrective to predominantly behaviouristic frameworks (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Lickona, 1992).

B. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach, which is best suited for the in-depth interpretation of textual meaning, particularly when the object of study is a classical religious text whose pedagogical implications must be drawn through careful exegesis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Qualitative research, as distinguished from quantitative inquiry, prioritises understanding (*verstehen*) over measurement, and seeks to apprehend the structure of meaning through which actors or, in this case, authors and texts construct social and moral reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The qualitative orientation aligns with the nature of *Salalim al-Fudhala*, a discursive Sufi commentary that resists statistical reduction.

The research design adopted is library research (*studi kepustakaan*), in which the entirety of data collection takes place through the systematic gathering, reading, and analysis of written sources (Kartiningrum, 2015; Zed, 2008). Library research is appropriate when the research object is itself a body of textual material and when the principal task is interpretive synthesis rather than empirical observation. Within this design, the procedures include: (a) identification and acquisition of primary and secondary sources; (b) critical reading and note-

taking; (c) thematic coding of textual units; (d) interpretive synthesis; and (e) presentation of findings in narrative and tabular forms (Muhammad & Akbar, 2024).

The data of this study are drawn exclusively from documentary sources, organised into two tiers. The *primary source* is the Arabic text of *Salalim al-Fudhala 'ala Hidayat al-Adzkiya' ila Tariq al-Awliya'* by Sheikh Muhammad Nawawi al-Bantani, in the printed edition published by Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, and supplemented by editions circulated within the Indonesian pesantren network. The *secondary sources* comprise a curated corpus of scholarly works in Indonesian, English, and Arabic addressing: (a) the biography and oeuvre of Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani; (b) classical and contemporary tasawuf, particularly the *maqamat-ahwal* taxonomy; (c) Islamic character education and pesantren pedagogy; and (d) general theory of character education from international literature (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007).

The coding procedure is carried out systematically: First, the identification of textual units in Salalim al-Fudhala that explicitly or implicitly refer to values, virtues, spiritual practices, or formative processes. Units can be phrases, commented poem stanzas, or interpretive paragraphs. Second, each unit is coded according to its thematic category (e.g., character disposition, spiritual practice, formative process, epistemic foundation). Third, values or practices that appear repeatedly and receive conceptual emphasis are identified as core elements of the textual curriculum. Fourth, the values are organized in order according to the order in which they are presented in the text. The selection of fourteen values as "main character values" is based on: (a) the frequency of explicit occurrences in the text; (b) the importance given by Nawawi through detailed elaboration; and (c) its position in the pedagogical order in which the text is proposed.

The principal analytical strategies are *content analysis* and *hermeneutic interpretation*, supported by *descriptive analysis* and *taxonomic classification*. Content analysis, in the methodological tradition systematised by Krippendorff, (2018) and operationalised for textual studies by Hsieh & Shannon, (2005), proceeds by systematic categorisation of textual units words, phrases, paragraphs into thematic codes that enable inferences about the meaning structure of the document. In this study, content analysis is used to identify the character values explicitly named or implicitly invoked across the chapters of *Salalim al-Fudhala*, and to map the pedagogical recommendations associated with each value.

Hermeneutic analysis, drawing on the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer, (2004) and its adaptation to Islamic textual studies by Hanafi, (2000) and Esack, (1997), supplements content analysis by recovering the horizon of meaning within which the text was composed and the horizon of application within which it can be reread today. This dialogical engagement between the historical context of nineteenth-century Sufi pedagogy and the contemporsary educational context of Indonesia is essential for translating the text's normative content into actionable pedagogical principles.

Descriptive analysis is used at the presentational level to render the conceptual architecture of the text in a clear, expository form, while taxonomic analysis is employed to organise the identified character values and pedagogical methods into hierarchical and relational categories. The taxonomic mapping is presented in tabular form within the Results and Discussion section, facilitating comparative analysis with other frameworks. Data validity is established through triangulation across primary and secondary sources, peer debriefing with colleagues working in Islamic studies, and member checking with experts in pesantren-based education. The study does not claim exhaustive interpretive authority but offers a coherent, evidence-based reading that contributes to ongoing scholarly conversation.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Intellectual Profile of Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani

Sheikh Muhammad Nawawi ibn 'Umar ibn 'Arabi al-Jawi al-Bantani was born in 1813 (1230 AH) in the village of Tanara, Tirtayasa, in the Banten region of West Java, into a family of religious teachers tracing their lineage, according to local tradition, to the Sultanate of Banten and ultimately to Sunan Gunung Jati of the *Wali Songo* (Dhofier, 1982; Mas' ud, 2004). His earliest education was received from his father, Kyai 'Umar, and from local Banten teachers including Kyai Sahal and Kyai Yusuf of Purwakarta. At the age of fifteen he undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca and remained there for the greater part of his life, immersing himself in the scholarly circles of the Haram (Bruinessen, 1995; Wijoyo, 1997).

In Mecca, Sheikh Nawawi studied under leading scholars of the period, including Sayyid Ahmad Dimyati, Sayyid Ahmad Zayni Dahlan, Muhammad Khatib al-Hambali, Sayyid Ahmad Nahrawi, and most influentially for his Sufi formation Sheikh Khatib Sambas of West Borneo, who transmitted to him the Qadiriyyah-Naqshabandiyyah path (Azra, 2004; Hurgronje, 2007). His scholarly competence in the rational, transmitted, and mystical sciences was recognised by his appointment as a teaching shaykh at the Masjid al-Haram, where he attracted students from across the Muslim world, particularly from the Malay-Indonesian archipelago (Steenbrink, 1986).

The intellectual output of Sheikh Nawawi is staggering. Bibliographical surveys list between one hundred and one hundred and fifteen titles attributed to him, of which approximately forty are widely circulated and continue to be taught in Indonesian pesantren (Bruinessen, 1995; Nizar, 2013). His works are predominantly *sharh* (commentaries) on classical texts, a genre that allowed him to mediate between high scholastic tradition and pesantren pedagogy. Notable examples include *Marah Labid* (a Qur'anic commentary), *Tijan al-Darari* (on creed), *Nihayat al-Zayn* (on Shafi'i jurisprudence), *Maraqi al-'Ubudiyyah* (on Ghazalian ethics), and *Salalim al-Fudhala* (on Sufi pedagogy) (Adib, 2022; Mas' ud, 2004).

Sheikh Nawawi's pedagogical method is characterised terms "the gloss tradition": a layered reading practice in which the master text is unpacked, simplified, illustrated, and re-applied through commentary, ensuring transmissibility across linguistic and cultural boundaries. This method made his works exemplary instruments of *ta'lim* (instruction) and *tarbiyah* (formation) within the Nusantara pesantren network, and explains the durability of his influence over more than a century after his death in Mecca in 1897 (Hurgronje, 2007).

B. Salalim al-Fudhala: Structure, Sources, and Methodology of the Text

Salalim al-Fudhala is a commentary on *Hidayat al-Adzkiya' ila Tariq al-Awliya'*, a 138-verse didactic poem (*nazm*) composed by Sayyid Zayn al-Din ibn 'Ali al-Malibari (d. 928/1521), the Indian Shafi'i jurist and Sufi. The base poem maps the path to spiritual realisation as a sequence of stations beginning with knowledge and culminating in the love of and contemplation of God. Sheikh Nawawi's commentary expands each verse into a full prose exposition, integrating Qur'anic, hadith, and classical Sufi materials particularly from al-Ghazali's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* and Ibn 'Ata' Allah's *al-Hikam* (Adib, 2022; Fradana, 2024).

The structure of the text follows the tripartite Sufi epistemology of *shari'ah*, *tariqah*, and *haqiqah*, but is more concretely organised into four major sections corresponding to the layers of the spiritual path: (1) the foundations of seeking (*'ilm* and *tawbah*); (2) the cultivation of detachment (*zuhd* and *wara'*); (3) the disciplines of struggle and reliance (*mujahadah*, *khalwah*, *tawakkul*); and (4) the affective summit of the path (*ikhlas*, *sabr*, *shukr*, *khawf wa raja'*,

mahabbah, *rida*, *dhikr*, and *muraqabah*). Each value is defined, scripturally grounded, illustrated through anecdote, and accompanied by practical recommendations.

Pedagogically, the text is constructed as a guidebook for both the seeker (*salik*) and the educator (*murabbi*). It does not separate ethical instruction from spiritual training; rather, it presents the two as inseparable dimensions of a single formative process. This integrated structure constitutes the principal methodological contribution of the text and is, as the analysis below demonstrates, of direct relevance to the conceptualisation of contemporary Islamic character education (Bafadhol, 2017; Nata, 2014).

C. Conceptual Foundations of Character Education in the Text

Sheikh Nawawi's articulation of character education in *Salalim al-Fudhala* is grounded in three interlocking premises. First, character (*akhlaq*) is understood not as a set of external behaviours but as a stable disposition of the soul (*hay'ah rasikha fi al-nafs*) from which actions flow with ease and without deliberation, a definition derived from al-Ghazali and ubiquitous in classical Sufi literature (Suryadarma & Haq, 2015). This ontological framing locates character formation at the level of the inner self rather than at the level of behavioural conditioning.

Second, the formation of character is contingent on the purification of the heart (*tazkiyat al-qalb*), which proceeds through the systematic removal of vices (*akhlaq madhmumah*) and the cultivation of virtues (*akhlaq mahmudah*). The text presents this dual process as the operational essence of *tasawuf*, framing tasawuf itself as a science of inner pedagogy (Nata, 2014; Thohir, 2013). Third, character formation is irreducibly relational: it occurs through the disciple's relationship with God (*hablun min Allah*), with the self (*muhasabah*), with the teacher (*'alaqah ma'a al-shaykh*), and with the community of fellow seekers (Dodego, 2021).

Third, character formation is irreducibly relational: it occurs through the student's relationship with Allah (hablun min Allah), with the self through introspection and self-accounting (muhasabah), with teachers and the learning community ('alaqah ma'a al-shaykh), and with a community of seekers who are together (Dodego, 2021). No one can establish themselves in isolation; Character formation is always mediated by relational relationships led by divine presence.

Together, these three premises situate character education within a holistic anthropology that integrates cognitive, affective, conative, and spiritual dimensions of the human person. This integration distinguishes the Sufi pedagogical paradigm from the predominantly cognitive-behavioural orientation of much contemporary character education in secular settings (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Lickona, 1992), and accounts for the distinctive depth and durability claimed for character formation within the pesantren tradition (Dhofier, 1982; Steenbrink, 1986).

D. Taxonomy of Character Values in Salalim al-Fudhala

Through close reading and content-analytic coding of the text, fourteen principal character values can be identified as the core curriculum of *Salalim al-Fudhala*. These values correspond to the classical Sufi *maqamat* and *ahwal* taxonomy, with adjustments reflecting Nawawi's pedagogical emphasis. Table 1 below presents the taxonomy.

Table 1. Taxonomy of Character Values in Salalim al-Fudhala

No.	Arabic Term	English Equivalent	Brief Operational Definition in the Text
1	'Ilm	Knowledge	Sound religious knowledge as the prerequisite for any valid action; pursued through study, attention, and humility before scholars.
2	Tawbah	Repentance	Sustained turning away from disobedience to obedience; involves remorse, cessation, restitution, and resolve.
3	Zuhd	Asceticism	Inner detachment from worldly possessions and pleasures, not their physical absence; freedom from being owned by what one owns.
4	Wara'	Scrupulousness	Avoidance of doubtful matters and rigorous attention to the lawfulness of food, income, and conduct.
5	Mujahadah	Spiritual Struggle	Continuous striving against the lower self (nafs) and habitual inclinations through disciplined practice.
6	Khalwah	Spiritual Seclusion	Periodic withdrawal from social distraction to enable concentrated remembrance and self-examination.
7	Tawakkul	Trust in God	Reliance on God after one has discharged the means; entrusting outcomes while persisting in effort.
8	Ikhlas	Sincerity	Purification of intention so that action is for God alone, free from desire for human praise or reward.
9	Sabr	Patience	Steadfastness in the face of obedience, sin, and trial; the discipline that sustains all other virtues.
10	Shukr	Gratitude	Recognition of divine blessings expressed through heart, tongue, and limbs; the soul's economy of giving thanks (Akbar et al., 2023).
11	Khawf wa Raja'	Fear and Hope	The dual affective discipline that protects the seeker from despair and from heedlessness.
12	Mahabbah	Divine Love	The inclination of the heart toward God as the ultimate beloved; the experiential summit of moral life.

No.	Arabic Term	English Equivalent	Brief Operational Definition in the Text
13	Rida	Contentment	Acceptance of divine decree; tranquillity that does not contest the wisdom of providence.
14	Dhikr & Muraqabah	Remembrance and Watchfulness	Continuous mindfulness of God's presence, sustained through verbal, mental, and existential remembrance.

Source: Author's analysis of (Al-Bantani, n.d.)*, informed,* (Adib, 2022).

The taxonomy presented in Table 1 reveals a deliberate pedagogical sequence. Knowledge (*'ilm*) inaugurates the path because, for Sheikh Nawawi, all virtuous action presupposes correct knowledge of God, the self, and the obligations that flow from this twofold awareness (Adib, 2022; Bafadhol, 2017; Nata, 2014). The classical Sufi maxim that "the first obligation upon the legally responsible person is knowledge of God" is reaffirmed in the text and operationalised pedagogically as a curricular priority. This sequence is not arbitrary; it reflects an integrated theory of moral cognition in which knowing precedes willing, willing precedes acting, and acting precedes habituation.

Repentance (*tawbah*) follows knowledge as the first transformative act of the will. In the text, *tawbah* is not a single moment of remorse but a sustained reorientation of the soul, comprising remorse for past disobedience, immediate cessation of the offense, restitution where applicable, and firm resolve against return (Dodego, 2021). The pedagogical implication is significant: character education must include explicit guidance in self-examination and ethical recovery, recognising that students will fail and must be equipped to learn from failure within a coherent moral framework.

The pair *zuhd* and *wara'* introduces the disciplines of detachment and scrupulousness. *Zuhd* is articulated, following the classical definition, as the absence of attachment to what one possesses or lacks rather than the absence of possessions themselves (Dodego, 2021). *Wara'* operationalises this detachment through scrupulous attention to the lawfulness of one's livelihood and conduct. Together they form the ascetic core of Sufi pedagogy, but a core that is internally rather than externally conceived an important corrective to popular caricatures of tasawuf as world-rejection (Thohir, 2013).

Mujahadah, khalwah, and tawakkul constitute the disciplines of spiritual struggle and reliance. Mujahadah is the active labour of the will against habituated inclinations of the lower self (*nafs ammarah*), while khalwah is the structured creation of conditions favourable to such labour through periodic withdrawal from social noise (Suryadarma & Haq, 2015). Tawakkul completes this triad by anchoring the labour of struggle in a posture of trust that does not collapse into fatalism but balances effort with surrender (Nata, 2014).

Ikhlas, sabr, and shukr form the core affective virtues of the path. Ikhlas, the purification of intention so that action is performed for God alone, is treated by Nawawi as the critical hinge upon which the validity of all other virtues turns; an act devoid of ikhlas is a husk without kernel, however imposing its outward form (Adib, 2022; Dodego, 2021). Sabr is defined as the disposition that enables steadfastness in obedience, abstention from sin, and endurance of trial. Shukr is the soul's recognition and celebration of divine blessing, expressed through the cooperation of heart, tongue, and limbs.

The pair *khawf wa raja'* (fear and hope) supplies the dual affective discipline that prevents the seeker from oscillating between presumption and despair. The text frames these as the two wings by which the soul flies toward God, neither of which can sustain flight alone (Hamid, 2017). Mahabbah (divine love) emerges as the experiential summit of the moral life, the

affective state in which the soul inclines toward God with such intensity that obedience becomes spontaneous rather than coerced (Adib, 2022; Dodego, 2021). Rida (contentment) and the closing pair of dhikr and muraqabah complete the taxonomy by anchoring the soul in continuous awareness of and acceptance of divine presence (Nata, 2014; Tafsir, 2012).

This taxonomy, when read as a curricular framework, suggests a developmental logic that moves from cognitive (knowledge), through volitional (repentance, struggle), through affective (sincerity, love), to contemplative (remembrance, watchfulness). Such a developmental logic resonates with and in important respects exceeds the cognitive-affective-behavioural triad of contemporary character education theory (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Lickona, 1992), particularly in its inclusion of an explicit contemplative dimension that secular models often omit.

E. Methodology of Character Formation in Salalim al-Fudhala

Beyond the *what* of character values, *Salalim al-Fudhala* articulates the *how* of character formation. The methodology emerges from a careful reading of the text as the convergence of three classical Sufi processes *takhalli*, *tahalli*, and *tajalli* operationalised through six concrete practices: *riyadhah*, *mujahadah*, *muhasabah*, *muraqabah*, *suhbah*, and *dhikr*. Table 2 presents this pedagogical methodology in summary form.

Table 2. Pedagogical Methodology of Character Formation in Salalim al-Fudhala

No.	Method	Pedagogical Function	Concrete Educational Application
1	Takhalli	Purification of vices	Identification and elimination of negative dispositions (greed, envy, arrogance) through self-examination and structured reflection.
2	Tahalli	Adornment with virtues	Habituation of positive virtues through deliberate, repeated practice modelled by exemplary teachers and peers.
3	Tajalli	Manifestation of divine reality	Cultivation of awareness of God's presence as the affective horizon within which all action is performed.
4	Riyadhah	Spiritual exercise	Disciplined practice of fasting, vigils, restrained speech, and reduced consumption to weaken egotistic habits.
5	Mujahadah	Active inner struggle	Conscious resistance to the lower self in moments of moral choice; cultivating courage of conscience.
6	Muhasabah	Self-evaluation	Daily and weekly accounting of intentions, words, and deeds against the standards of the path.

No.	Method	Pedagogical Function	Concrete Educational Application
7	Muraqabah	Self-watchfulness	Continuous mindfulness of being watched by God; the meta-virtue that sustains other virtues.
8	Suhbah	Companionship of the wise	Sustained relationship with a qualified teacher and a community of seekers as the social environment of formation.
9	Dhikr	Remembrance of God	Verbal, mental, and existential repetition of divine names and qualities to reorient the heart.
10	Uswah Hasanah	Imitation of the exemplar	Modelling the conduct of the Prophet, the saints, and one's living teacher as the principal pedagogy of virtue.

Source: Author's synthesis from (Al-Bantani, n.d.)*, with theoretical contextualisation from* (Nata, 2014)*,* (Thohir, 2013)*,* (Suryadarma & Haq, 2015).

The triadic process of *takhalli–tahalli–tajalli* constitutes the macro-architecture of character formation in the text. *Takhalli*, the emptying of vices, is logically prior because, for Sheikh Nawawi, the heart is a vessel that cannot be filled with virtue while still occupied by vice (Suryadarma & Haq, 2015). The pedagogical implication is that character education must begin with the diagnostic identification of negative dispositions through structured self-examination rather than the unilateral imposition of positive content.

Tahalli, the adornment of the soul with virtues, follows as the constructive moment of formation. Crucially, the text emphasises that virtues are not installed through verbal instruction alone but through deliberate, repeated practice in graduated contexts, modelled by exemplary teachers and reinforced by a virtuous peer environment (Dodego, 2021). *Tajalli*, the manifestation of divine reality within the purified and adorned soul, names the experiential horizon of the formed character: not a final achievement that closes off further effort, but a sustained mode of awareness that infuses all subsequent action (Adib, 2022).

Within this triadic macro-process, the text identifies six concrete practices. *Riyadhah*, the disciplined practice of restraint in eating, sleeping, speaking, and socialising, is the basic technology of character training. The pedagogical principle here that the body is a privileged site of moral formation is consonant with Aristotelian habituation theory and contemporary findings on embodied cognition, while extending these traditions through an explicit metaphysical framing (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007; Lickona, 1992). *Mujahadah*, the conscious labour of inner struggle, complements *riyadhah* by directing attention not to external behaviour alone but to the inner movements of the heart in moments of moral choice (Nata, 2014).

Muhasabah, the practice of daily and weekly accounting, institutionalises self-reflection as a regular feature of the spiritual life rather than an occasional crisis response. *Salalim al-Fudhala* recommends, following Ibn 'Ata' Allah and al-Muhasibi, that the seeker reserve a fixed time at the close of each day to review intentions, speech, and conduct against the criteria of the path, 2020; (Dodego, 2021). *Muraqabah*, self-watchfulness, internalises this practice into a continuous awareness of being watched by God, which the text identifies as the meta-virtue that sustains all other virtues.

Suhbah, the practice of disciplined companionship with a qualified teacher and a community of seekers, names the social ecology of character formation. Drawing on classical Sufi sources, Sheikh Nawawi insists that virtue is not acquired in isolation but within relationships of trust, modelling, and mutual correction (Bruinessen, 1995; Dhofier, 1982). This insistence anticipates contemporary research on the role of school climate, peer culture, and mentorship in character outcomes (Machin, 2014).

Finally, *dhikr* and *uswah hasanah* (imitation of the prophetic exemplar) supply the affective and imitative engines of formation. *Dhikr*, the repeated remembrance of divine names, attributes, and verses, is conceived not as ritual repetition but as a technology of cognitive-affective reorientation, gradually shaping the structure of attention and desire (Dodego, 2021). *Uswah hasanah*, the imitation of the Prophet Muhammad as the supreme exemplar, supplies a concrete narrative of virtue against which the seeker calibrates conduct, supplemented by the example of the saints and the living teacher (Tafsir, 2012).

F. Comparative Analysis with Modern Character Education Frameworks

To clarify the distinctive contribution of Sheikh Nawawi's framework to contemporary educational thought, it is illuminating to compare it with two influential models of modern character education: the cognitive-affective-behavioural model articulated by Lickona, (1992) and the research-based components of effective character education identified by Berkowitz & Bier, (2007). Table 3 sets out the comparison.

Table 3. Comparative Analysis of Character Education Frameworks

Dimension	Lickona (1991): Cognitive–Affective–Behavioural	Berkowitz & Bier (2005): Research-Based Components	Nawawi al-Bantani (Salalim al-Fudhala)
Foundation	Universalist ethical reasoning grounded in democratic values.	Empirical evidence on what works in schools.	Revealed knowledge ('ilm) grounded in tawhid (divine unity).
Object of formation	Knowing the good, loving the good, doing the good.	Pro-social behaviour, academic achievement, school climate.	Purification of the heart and cultivation of virtues as inner dispositions.
Method of formation	Direct teaching, modelling, peer interaction, reflection.	Multi-component programmes, parental involvement, climate.	Takhalli–tahalli–tajalli; riyadhah, muhasabah, muraqabah, suhbah.
Role of teacher	Mentor and ethical model in democratic classrooms.	Effective implementer of evidence-based curricula.	Murabbi and shaykh: spiritual exemplar and guide of the heart.
Role of community	School and family as supporting moral communities.	School climate as a key predictor of outcomes.	Suhbah: structured fellowship of seekers under master's guidance.

Dimension	Lickona (1991): Cognitive–Affective–Behavioural	Berkowitz & Bier (2005): Research-Based Components	Nawawi al-Bantani (Salalim al-Fudhala)
Affective core	Empathy, conscience, self-control, moral love.	Emotional regulation and pro-social affect.	Mahabbah (love of God), khawf wa raja' (fear and hope), ikhlas.
Contemplative dimension	Largely absent or implicit.	Largely absent or implicit.	Explicit and central: dhikr, muraqabah, khalwah.
Telos	The good citizen of a democratic society.	Pro-social, academically successful, ethically aware student.	The realised servant of God ('abd) on the path to divine love.

Source: Author's synthesis from (Lickona, 1992)*,* (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007)*, and the present analysis of Salalim al-Fudhala* (Al-Bantani, n.d.).

Three observations emerge from this comparative analysis. First, the three frameworks share a substantial common ground in identifying cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions as constitutive of character. The convergence is not coincidental but reflects a basic anthropological truth: human formation must engage thinking, feeling, and acting if it is to be effective (Mu'in, 2011; Nashir, 2019). On this fundamental point, the Sufi tradition and contemporary character education research are aligned, which legitimates dialogue between them rather than mutual exclusion.

Second, the frameworks differ significantly in their metaphysical foundations and in their treatment of the contemplative dimension. Lickona's and Berkowitz and Bier's models, by virtue of their commitment to a publicly justifiable, religiously neutral framework, refrain from elaborating an explicit contemplative or transcendent horizon. Sheikh Nawawi's framework, by contrast, places the contemplative dimension remembrance (*dhikr*), watchfulness (*muraqabah*), and seclusion (*khalwah*) at the architectural centre of character formation (Dodego, 2021). This is not a peripheral difference. The contemplative dimension supplies the durative awareness within which other practices acquire coherence and stability; its absence in secular models may help explain the persistent difficulty of sustaining character outcomes beyond programme exposure (Machin, 2014).

Third, the frameworks differ in their *telos* or ultimate aim of formation. For Lickona, the *telos* is the morally responsible democratic citizen; for Berkowitz and Bier, it is the pro-socially functioning, academically successful student. For Sheikh Nawawi, it is the realised servant ('abd) of God walking the path of divine love. This difference of *telos* generates correspondingly different pedagogical priorities. Where the secular models tend to emphasise interpersonal competence and civic responsibility, the Sufi model emphasises the inner reorientation of desire toward the divine, with interpersonal virtue understood as a derivative consequence (Nata, 2014; Tafsir, 2012).

Crucially, these differences do not preclude pedagogical complementarity. The Indonesian educational context, in which religious and civic formation are constitutionally integrated through the *Pancasila* and the national religious education mandate, provides a structural opening for synthetic frameworks that combine the spiritual depth of the Sufi

tradition with the pragmatic specificity of empirical character research (Khan et al., 2021; Wibowo & Purnama, 2013). The taxonomy and methodology of *Salalim al-Fudhala* offer a robust contribution to such a synthesis.

G. Implications for Contemporary Indonesian Character Education

The analysis above yields several implications for the practice of character education in contemporary Indonesia, particularly within pesantren, madrasah, and Islamic-affiliated school contexts. First, *Salalim al-Fudhala* supplies a culturally indigenous, theologically authoritative resource that can ground the implementation of the *Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter* (PPK) programme in the specific moral grammar of Indonesian Islam (Adib, 2022; Wibowo & Purnama, 2013). Where PPK identifies five umbrella values religiosity, nationalism, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation the Sufi taxonomy offers a more granular, developmentally sequenced inventory that can be mapped onto these umbrella values without distortion.

Second, the methodology of *takhalli–tahalli–tajalli* provides a conceptual scaffolding for curricular design that goes beyond the additive logic of "adding character lessons to the timetable." Rather, it suggests an integrative approach in which every subject and every school routine becomes an occasion for the diagnostic identification, constructive cultivation, and contemplative deepening of virtue (Bafadhol, 2017). Such an approach is consonant with the holistic ethos of pesantren education, which has historically refused the modern separation of religious and secular curricula (Dhofier, 1982; Steenbrink, 1986).

Third, the practices of *muhasabah* and *muraqabah* furnish concrete techniques that can be incorporated into school life as scheduled reflective routines. The classical Sufi recommendation of a daily evening accounting (*muhasabah*) and a sustained mindfulness of divine presence (*muraqabah*) translates readily into contemporary practices of journaling, structured reflection, and contemplative pause, with the added benefit of an explicit theological frame that supplies meaning beyond psychological self-management (Machin, 2014). Recent research on contemplative pedagogy has increasingly recognised the value of such practices for student wellbeing and ethical development.

Fourth, the centrality of *suhbah* and *uswah hasanah* in the text underscores the irreplaceable role of the teacher as moral exemplar and the peer community as moral environment. The implication is that character education cannot be outsourced to discrete programmes but must permeate the modelled conduct of teachers and the structured culture of schools (Lickona, 1992; Mu'in, 2011). This is a familiar refrain in contemporary research, but Sheikh Nawawi's framework supplies it with a particular ethical and spiritual depth: the teacher is not merely a behavioural model but a *murabbi*, one whose own inner formation is the medium through which the student's formation is mediated (Mas' ud, 2004; Nata, 2014).

Fifth, the contemplative summit of the framework *mahabbah*, *rida*, *dhikr*, *muraqabah* reminds educators that the deepest aim of character education is not behavioural compliance but reoriented desire. The realised character is one whose loves are well-ordered, whose attention is habitually drawn to what is most worthy of attention. This vision sets a high but coherent horizon for character education that resists reduction to measurable behavioural indicators while remaining operationally specifiable through the methodology outlined above (Dodego, 2021).

Lastly, the Indonesian educational policy environment, characterised by a constitutionally mandated integration of religious and civic education, offers fertile institutional conditions for the application of these insights. Curricular innovation drawing on *Salalim al-Fudhala* could enrich both the religious education stream and the broader character education

curriculum, particularly through teacher training programmes that introduce educators to the Sufi pedagogical tradition as a living resource rather than a museum artefact (Nuh, 2013). Such innovation would honour the legacy of Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani not by repetition but by re-actualisation.

D. CONCLUSION

This study has analysed the concept of tasawuf-based character education as articulated in *Salalim al-Fudhala* by Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani. Three principal findings have been established. First, the text articulates a comprehensive taxonomy of fourteen character values, sequenced according to a developmental logic that moves from cognitive (*'ilm*) through volitional (*tawbah*, *mujahadah*) and affective (*ikhlas*, *mahabbah*) to contemplative (*dhikr*, *muraqabah*) dimensions of formation. Second, the text proposes a coherent pedagogical methodology organised around the triadic process of *takhalli–tahalli–tajalli* and operationalised through the practices of *riyadhah*, *muhasabah*, *muraqabah*, *suhbah*, *dhikr*, and *uswah hasanah*. Third, this framework, while distinct from contemporary secular models in its metaphysical foundation and contemplative emphasis, is not incompatible with empirical character education research; on the contrary, it offers conceptual resources particularly in the integration of cognitive, affective, and contemplative dimensions that may enrich and deepen contemporary practice.

The relevance of *Salalim al-Fudhala* for Indonesian character education lies in its capacity to anchor the *Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter* programme in an indigenous, theologically authoritative tradition while preserving compatibility with empirical findings on effective character education. Its taxonomy and methodology can inform curricular design, teacher formation, classroom practice, and school culture, particularly within pesantren, madrasah, and Islamic-affiliated school contexts, but with potential application to public schools as well through carefully translated practices of reflection, watchfulness, and exemplarity.

This study acknowledges several limitations. As a textual analysis, it does not include empirical observation of pedagogical implementation. Future research should accordingly explore the application of the Salalim al-Fudhala framework in contemporary classrooms through ethnographic, action-research, and quasi-experimental designs. Comparative studies with other Nusantara Sufi pedagogical texts such as *Maraqi al-'Ubudiyyah* by Sheikh Nawawi himself, or works by contemporaries such as Sheikh Mahfuz Termas and Sheikh Khalil Bangkalan would also enrich the conceptual map. Notwithstanding these limitations, the present analysis demonstrates that *Salalim al-Fudhala* constitutes a pedagogically rich, theologically coherent, and culturally embedded resource for the contemporary task of character formation, and that its retrieval is a worthwhile contribution to the renewal of Islamic education in Indonesia and beyond.

REFERENCES

Adib, M. A. (2022). Syekh Nawawi Al-Bantani: Kajian Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam dan Relevansinya di Abad-21. *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan*, *16*(2), 444–466.

Akbar, F. M. A., Amelia, E., & Rodoni, A. (2023). ANALISIS KEBIJAKAN EKONOMI SYARIAH ZAMAN RASULULLAH SAW BERDASARKAN PERSPEKTIF HUKUM EKONOMI ISLAM. *Ar Rasyiid Journal of Islamic Studies*, *1*(1), 1–12.

Al-Bantani, N. (n.d.). Salalim al-Fudhala''ala Hidayat al-Adzkiya'ila Thariq al-Auliya'. *Mesir: Mathba'ah Al-Khairiyyah*, *1315*.

Asmani, J. M. (2019). *Buku panduan internalisasi pendidikan karakter di sekolah*. Diva press.

Azra, A. (2004). *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern'Ulam?'in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. University of Hawaii Press.

Bafadhol, I. (2017). Pendidikan akhlak dalam perspektif islam. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, *6*(02), 19.

Berkowitz, M. W., & Bier, M. C. (2007). What works in character education. In *Journal of Research in Character Education* (Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp. 29–48). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (1997). *Qualitative research for education* (Vol. 368). Allyn & Bacon Boston, MA.

Bruinessen, M. van. (1995). Kitab kuning, pesantren, dan tarekat: Tradisi-tradisi Islam di Indonesia. *(No Title)*.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. sage.

Dhofier, Z. (1982). Tradisi pesantren: Studi tentang pandangan hidup kyai. *(No Title)*.

Dodego, S. H. A. (2021). *Tasawuf Al-Ghazali Perspektif Pendidikan Islam*. Guepedia.

Esack, F. (1997). *Quran, liberation and pluralism: An Islamic perspective of interreligious solidarity against oppression*.

Faisal, F., Syahrullah, S., Atmowidjoyo, S., & Abdurrohman, F. M. (2024). ANALYSIS OF THE SCIENTIFIC LEARNING APPROACH IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO ENHANCE STUDENTS CRITICAL THINKING. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, *13*(04), 815–836.

Fradana, H. (2024). Pemikiran Syekh Nawawi Al-Bantani tentang pendidikan karakter: Analisis kritis dalam konteks kurikulum merdeka. *Wawasan: Jurnal Kediklatan Balai Diklat Keagamaan Jakarta*, *5*(1), 68–84.

Gadamer, H.-G. (2004). Truth and Method, translation revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. *Marshall, London & New York: Continuum*.

Hanafi, H. (2000). *Islam in the Modern World: Religion, ideology and development*. Dar Kebaa Bookshop.

Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, *15*(9), 1277–1288.

Hurgronje, C. S. (2007). *Mekka in the latter part of the 19th century: daily life, customs and learning of the Moslims of the East-Indian-Archipelago* (Vol. 1). Brill.

Kartiningrum, E. D. (2015). Panduan penyusunan studi literatur. *Lembaga Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat Politeknik Kesehatan Majapahit, Mojokerto*, *139*.

Khan, H. M., Khan, W., Farooq, S., Aleem, A., Mann, M., & Akhtar, S. (2021). The role of Islamic education in moral character building of Pakistani youth: An analytic study. *Multicultural Education*, *7*(9), 174–181.

Koesoema, D. (2019). *Pendidikan karakter; Strategi mendidik anakdi zaman global*.

Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Sage publications.

Lickona, T. (1992). *Educating for character: How our schools can teach respect and responsibility*. Bantam.

Machin, A. (2014). Implementasi pendekatan saintifik, penanaman karakter dan konservasi pada pembelajaran materi pertumbuhan. *Jurnal Pendidikan IPA Indonesia*, *3*(1).

Mas' ud, A. (2004). Intelektual pesantren: perhelatan agama dan tradisi. *(No Title)*.

Mu'in, F. (2011). Pendidikan Karakter Konstruksi Teoritik & Praktik: Urgensi Pendidikan Progresif dan Revitalisasi Peran Guru dan Orangtua. *Jogjakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media*.

Muhammad, F., & Akbar, A. (2024). *METODE KUALITATIF DAN KUANTITATIF PADA STUDI ISLAM*. *2*(2), 2986–5034. https://jurnal.staimi.ac.id/index.php/arrasyiid/DOI:https://doi.org/10.70367/arrasyiid.v2i2.23

Nashir, H. (2019). *Pendidikan karakter berbasis agama dan budaya*.

Nata, A. (2014). Akhlak Tasawuf dan Karakter Mulia. Jakarta. *Rajawali Pers*.

Nizar, H. S. (2013). *Sejarah Sosial dan Dinamika Intelektual Pendidikan Islam di Nusantara*. Kencana.

Nuh, M. (2013). *Menyemai Kreator Peradaban*. Serambi Ilmu Semesta.

Steenbrink, K. A. (1986). Pesantren, madrasah, sekolah: pendidikan Islam dalam kurun moderen. *(No Title)*.

Suryadarma, Y., & Haq, A. H. (2015). Pendidikan akhlak menurut imam Al-Ghazali. *At-Ta'dib*, *10*(2).

Tafsir, A. (2012). *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam Integrasi Jasmani, Rohani dan Memanusiakan Manusia*. Cetakan.

Thohir, U. F. (2013). Tasawuf Sebagai Solusi Bagi Problematika Kemodernan: Studi Pemikiran Tasawuf M. Amin Syukur. *Jurnal Theologia*, *24*(2), 43–68.

Wibowo, A., & Purnama, S. (2013). *Pendidikan karakter di perguruan tinggi: Membangun karakter ideal mahasiswa di perguruan tinggi*. Pustaka pelajar.

Wijoyo, A. S. (1997). *Shaykh Nawawi of Banten: Texts, Authority, and the Gloss Tradition*. Columbia University.

Zed, M. (2008). *Metode penelitian kepustakaan*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.