

Axiology of Education: Values, Ethics, and Goals of Education in Shaping National Character

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ABSTRACT

Abstract

This study aims to examine the axiological basis of education in shaping national character through an analysis of values, ethics, and educational objectives. The research method uses a qualitative approach with a literature study of various relevant academic sources. Data analysis is carried out using content analysis techniques with a hermeneutic approach to understand the deeper meaning of educational axiological concepts. The results show that educational axiology provides a fundamental philosophical foundation for the development of character education through the integration of Pancasila values, local wisdom, and universal values. The ethical and aesthetic dimensions in educational axiology must be developed holistically to shape whole human beings. Educational objectives that emphasize humanization and liberation provide a transformative orientation for character education. Implementing the integration of character values requires a systemic approach involving curriculum reform, teacher competency development, the creation of a conducive school culture, and the involvement of families and communities in an educational ecosystem that supports the formation of national character.

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A. Introduction

Education is a fundamental pillar in building a national civilization that focuses not only on the transfer of knowledge but also on the formation of character and moral values that form the foundation of social life. Axiology, a branch of philosophy that discusses values, ethics, and aesthetics, plays a central role in guiding education so that it does not lose its humanistic orientation amidst increasingly complex developments. Tilaar (2015) emphasized that Indonesian education must return to its philosophical essence to produce individuals with character, not simply intellectually intelligent individuals lacking moral values. In this context, educational axiology serves as a theoretical framework that examines how the values of goodness, truth, and beauty are instilled through the educational process to shape whole and dignified individuals.

The character crisis currently plaguing Indonesia's young generation is clear evidence that the national education system has not fully integrated the axiological dimension into learning practices. Lickona (2012) explained that effective character education requires a deep understanding of universal values, which must be instilled from an early age through modeling, habituation, and moral reflection.

Phenomena of moral degradation such as student brawls, drug abuse, corruption, and a weakening sense of nationalism demonstrate a gap between the ideal goals of education and the realities on the ground. Muslich (2011) revealed that education in Indonesia tends to prioritize cognitive aspects while neglecting the balanced development of affective and psychomotor skills, resulting in graduates who are intelligent but lack character. This situation calls for a reconstruction of the education system that places axiology as the primary foundation for formulating curricula, learning methods, and educational evaluation.

Globalization and advances in information technology have brought about a paradigm shift in education, demanding adaptation to new values without abandoning national identity. Zubaedi (2011) emphasized the importance of character education based on local wisdom as a filter in dealing with the strong currents of globalization that bring foreign values that do not always align with the Indonesian national character. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017) has launched Strengthening Character Education as a priority program that integrates five core values: religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation, and integrity into all aspects of education. However, the implementation of this program still faces various challenges, including teacher readiness, infrastructure support, and synergy between schools, families, and the community in creating an educational ecosystem conducive to character development.

Mulyasa's (2013) research on character education management shows that the success of character education depends heavily on the commitment of the principal, teacher competence, and a systematic and sustainable school culture. His research findings indicate that schools that successfully implement character education are those with a clear vision of the desired graduate profile, consistent habituation programs, and the involvement of the entire school community and parents in the character development process. Meanwhile, Wibowo (2012), in his study on the implementation of values- and ethics-based character education, found that student-centered learning methods with a contextual and reflective approach were more effective in instilling moral values than conventional, indoctrinating methods. This research also revealed that integrating character education into every subject yields more optimal results than classifying it as a separate subject.

A study by Sudrajat (2011) on building a school culture based on Pancasila values provides a perspective on the importance of reactualizing the nation's ideology within the national education system. His research shows that schools that integrate Pancasila values into all learning activities and school life are able to produce students with strong character, a high sense of national awareness, and a tolerant attitude toward diversity. These three studies consistently emphasize the importance of a holistic approach to character education that involves all educational components, but they are still limited to the context of practical implementation without deeply exploring the axiological foundations that serve as the philosophical basis for the values instilled.

While previous studies have made significant contributions to understanding the practice of character education, there remains a research gap that needs to be bridged, particularly regarding with a comprehensive axiological analysis of how values, ethics, and educational goals interact to shape national character. Previous studies tended to focus on the implementation and management of character education without critically analyzing the philosophical underpinnings behind the selection of specific values and how these values translate into operational educational practices. Furthermore, the discourse on how educational axiology can address contemporary challenges such as technological disruption, value pluralism, and the shift in educational paradigms toward 21st-century learning remains largely unexplored theoretically and empirically.

Another identified gap is the limited number of studies integrating Western axiological perspectives with local Nusantara wisdom in formulating a contextual character education framework for Indonesia. Most previous research adopts Western character education theories without adapting them to take into account the socio-cultural uniqueness of Indonesia's diverse society. Yet, the values embodied in the Pancasila philosophy, the local wisdom of various ethnic groups, and strong religious traditions hold great potential as authentic and relevant axiological sources for character formation in Indonesia's young generation. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed on how educational axiology can be reconstructed by synergizing universal values with local wisdom to produce a character education model that is not only theoretical but also applicable and transformative.

The novelty of this research lies in the effort to construct a theoretical framework for educational axiology that integrates classical and contemporary philosophical perspectives with Indonesian local wisdom values as a foundation for formulating a holistic and contextual concept of character education. Unlike previous research, which tends to be partial in analyzing values or ethics separately, this study presents a comprehensive analysis of the interrelationships between values, ethics, and educational goals within a coherent axiological system. This approach goes beyond the conceptual level but also explores the practical implications of this axiological framework in curriculum design, learning strategies, and educational evaluation oriented toward the formation of a strong and integrated national character.

Furthermore, this research offers a critical perspective on the dichotomy between competency-based education, which emphasizes 21st-century skills, and character education, which emphasizes moral and spiritual development. Through the lens of educational axiology, this research seeks to demonstrate that these two aspects are not in conflict but rather complementary and must be synergistically integrated to produce graduates who are not only technically competent but also possess moral integrity and a commitment to human values. Thus, this research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a more meaningful and relevant national education system in response to the challenges of the times and the needs of character development in Indonesia.

The current reality of Indonesian education demonstrates a concerning paradox: on the one hand, there has been an increase in access and educational attainment quantitatively, while on the other hand, there has been a decline in the moral quality and character of the younger generation. Various cases of moral degradation, such as rampant bullying in schools, academic plagiarism, dishonesty in exams, and student involvement in criminal acts, demonstrate that the education system has not been able to optimally fulfill its function as a medium for value transformation and character formation. This phenomenon is exacerbated by an educational orientation that focuses too much on achieving test scores and graduation without considering the process of developing a holistic personality, resulting in a generation that is intellectually intelligent but morally fragile.

This situation demands a fundamental reorientation of the national education system that places axiology as the primary foundation in all aspects of education delivery. The challenges faced are not only related to curriculum changes or the addition of character education subjects, but also a more fundamental paradigm shift in how education is understood and implemented by all stakeholders. Strong synergy is needed between the government, schools, families, and communities to create an educational ecosystem that supports character formation through role models, habituation, and the reinforcement of the nation's noble values. Only with a comprehensive and sustainable approach can the ideal of education as a vehicle for the formation of a complete Indonesian human being with character, civilized, and competitiveness can be realized for the progress and glory of the nation in the future.

B. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method to examine in depth the axiology of education in shaping national character. Creswell (2014) explains that a qualitative approach allows researchers to explore phenomena holistically and in depth through analysis of various descriptive and interpretive data sources. The literature study method was chosen because it allows researchers to analyze, synthesize, and integrate various concepts, theories, and previous research findings that are relevant to the topic of educational axiology, values, ethics, and character formation. Zed (2014) emphasizes that literature study is not merely an activity of reading and recording library sources, but rather a series of activities related to library data collection methods, reading and recording, and managing research materials systematically to produce a comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied. Data sources in this study were obtained from various primary and secondary literature including educational philosophy books, national and international scientific journals, research articles, educational policy documents, and other academic publications related to educational axiology and character education. The data collection process was conducted through literature searches in various academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and accredited national journal portals using relevant keywords such as educational axiology, character

education, educational values and ethics, and national character building. Sugiyono (2017) stated that in qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument that carries out data collection, analysis, and interpretation based on a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Literature selection is carried out by considering the criteria of relevance, source credibility, publication actuality, and theoretical and empirical contributions to the research topic. Data analysis was carried out through content analysis techniques with a hermeneutic approach to understand the deep meaning of various concepts and theories contained in the literature being studied. Miles and Huberman (2014) explained that qualitative data analysis involves three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions that are carried out repeatedly and interactively until data saturation is achieved. In the context of this research, data reduction is carried out by identifying and categorizing key concepts about educational axiology, values, ethics, and educational objectives from various literature sources. Data presentation is carried out by compiling a conceptual matrix and theoretical framework that integrates various perspectives on the axiology of education in shaping national character. Conclusions are drawn through synthesis and interpretation of findings from the literature to construct a comprehensive understanding of how educational axiology plays a role in shaping national character and to formulate theoretical and practical implications for the development of the national education system.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Result

a. Axiological Foundations in Character Education

Axiology, as a branch of philosophy that studies values, plays a fundamental role in providing a philosophical foundation for character education in Indonesia. The literature review indicates that educational axiology encompasses two main dimensions: ethics, which relates to moral values, and aesthetics, which relates to the values of beauty in the educational process. Bertens (2013) explains that ethics in education is not only concerned with teaching what is right and wrong, but also with developing moral awareness and the ability for ethical reflection that enables individuals to make responsible decisions in various life situations. This axiological dimension is crucial because education cannot be separated from the values that serve as the orientation and ultimate goal of the educational process itself, namely, developing individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess moral integrity and aesthetic sensitivity. In the context of Indonesian education, the most fundamental axiological foundation is the values of Pancasila as the ideology and philosophy of the nation that reflects the personality and identity of the Indonesian nation. Kaelan (2010) emphasized that Pancasila as a philosophical system contains basic values that are universal yet uniquely Indonesian, which include the values of divinity, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice that must be the spirit in all aspects of national education. These Pancasila values do not stand alone but are integrated with the diverse values of local wisdom from various ethnicities and cultures of the archipelago as well as the religious values believed in by Indonesian society. Tilaar (2012) stated that local values-based education makes a significant contribution to shaping a strong cultural identity and national consciousness, while also acting as a filter against global values that are inconsistent with the nation's character.

Implementing an axiological foundation in character education requires a comprehensive understanding of the hierarchy of values and how these values are transformed into concrete attitudes and behaviors in everyday life. Lickona (2013) developed a concept of character education that encompasses three components: moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions, which must be developed in an integrated and continuous manner. Moral knowledge encompasses moral awareness, knowledge of moral values, the ability to take others' perspectives, moral reasoning, decision-making, and self-knowledge. Moral feelings encompass conscience, self-esteem, empathy, love of kindness, self-control, and humility. Meanwhile, moral actions encompass competence, desire, and habits to do good. These three components must be developed holistically so that character education is not merely cognitive or indoctrinating, but rather forms a complete person with awareness, feelings, and actions aligned with the moral values believed in.

b. Ethics and Educational Goals from an Axiological Perspective

Educational ethics is a practical manifestation of axiology, providing direction on how the educational process should be carried out to achieve the desired goal of character development. Dewey (2008), in his theory of progressive education, emphasized that the goal of education is not merely the transfer of knowledge or preparation for future life, but rather education itself is a life in which moral values are developed through direct experience and critical reflection on those experiences. This perspective shifts the educational paradigm from an instructive and teacher-centered approach to a more humanistic and learner-centered approach, where students become active participants in the learning process and character development. In this context, educational ethics relates not only to the material taught but also to teaching methods, teacher-student relationships, the learning environment, and the entire educational ecosystem, which must reflect the moral values intended to be instilled.

The goals of education from an axiological perspective are inseparable from the concept of the ideal human being to be formed through the educational process. Driyarkara (2006), in his educational philosophy, proposed the concepts of hominization and humanization as two processes that must go hand in hand in education. Hominization is the process of making humans human biologically and psychologically, while humanization is the process of humanizing humans, meaning forming individuals who are cultured, moral, and possess full human dignity. The goal of education, according to this perspective, is to shape whole people who balance intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and social dimensions. Freire (2007) added a critical and transformative dimension to the goals of education, stating that education must free people from various forms of oppression and injustice and empower them to become agents of constructive social change.

In the context of Indonesian education, the goals of national education, as stated in Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, emphasize that education aims to develop the potential of students to become individuals who believe in and fear God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. Mulyasa (2014) analyzed that the national education goals reflect a synthesis of religious, moral, intellectual, and social values that must be developed in a balanced and integrated manner. However, the reality on the ground shows that the implementation of these educational goals still faces various obstacles, such as an educational orientation that is too focused on cognitive aspects, an evaluation system that only measures academic achievement, and a lack of role models and the instillation of character values in school life. Therefore, a reformulation of educational strategies is needed that places ethics and axiological objectives as the primary orientation in all aspects of education delivery.

c. Integration of Character Values in the National Education System

The integration of character values in the national education system is a systematic and planned effort to instill moral values in all aspects of education, from the curriculum, learning process, school culture, to the evaluation system. The Ministry of Education and Culture (2017) through its Education Strengthening Policy The character education program has formulated five core values as priorities for character development: religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation, and integrity. These values are implemented through three approaches: classroom-based, school culture-based, and community-based. The classroom-based approach integrates character values into each subject through the selection of value-rich learning materials, the use of learning methods that encourage internalization of values, and an evaluation process that measures not only cognitive aspects but also student attitudes and behaviors. Wibowo (2013) explains that integrating character values into learning can be achieved through various strategies such as contextual learning, cooperative learning, project-based learning, and problem-based learning, which provide opportunities for students to experience and reflect on character values in real-life situations.

School culture plays a crucial role in shaping students' character because it provides direct experience of how moral values are practiced in everyday life within the school environment.

Zamroni (2016) suggests that a school culture conducive to character building is one that emphasizes discipline, honesty, responsibility, mutual respect, cooperation, and concern for others, developed through habituation, exemplary behavior by the principal and teachers, and consistent and fair enforcement of rules. Creating a positive school culture requires a strong commitment from the entire school community and adequate infrastructure support, such as clear rules, an educational reward and punishment system, and various habituation programs such as flag ceremonies, religious activities, mutual cooperation, and extracurricular activities that develop character. Lickona and Davidson (2005) emphasize the importance of schools developing both performance character and moral character simultaneously. Performance character relates to the development of values such as perseverance, work ethic, and commitment to excellence, while moral character relates to values such as honesty, empathy, and fairness.

Family and community involvement is a determining factor in the success of character education because character formation cannot be left entirely to the school but requires synergy and consistency of values between the school, family, and community. Megawangi (2016) stated that the family is the first and foremost school for the formation of a child's character, where basic values such as compassion, honesty, responsibility, and discipline are first learned through interaction and parental example. Therefore, schools need to develop partnership programs with parents, such as parent-school programs, intensive communication about children's character development, and parental involvement in various school activities. Meanwhile, society as a broader social context also plays an important role in providing support and supervision of the character development of the younger generation. Suparno (2015) emphasized that character education will be effective if there is consistency of values between what is taught in school and what is practiced in the family and community, so that children do not experience disorientation and can develop a strong and consistent moral identity in various life contexts.

2. Discussion

a. Axiological Foundation in Character Education

Research findings indicate that axiology, as the philosophical foundation of character education, plays a strategic role in providing direction and value orientation for the entire educational process. This aligns with Kneller's (2014) view, which asserts that educational axiology serves as a moral compass that directs education toward meaningful and humanistic goals, not merely the achievement of technical competencies detached from the context of values. From this perspective, education is understood as a process of developing the whole person, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions integrated with moral and spiritual values. Ornstein and Hunkins (2013) explain that an axiologically based curriculum places values at the core of all educational activities, where every subject, learning method, and evaluation system is designed not only to develop knowledge and skills but also to instill the values of goodness, truth, beauty, and justice that serve as the foundation of social and national life.

The integration of Pancasila values as the axiological foundation of Indonesian education demonstrates the importance of contextualizing universal values with local wisdom and the nation's cultural identity. Notonagoro (2015), in his theory of Pancasila as a philosophical system, explains that the five principles of Pancasila contain hierarchical and organic values, with Belief in the One and Only God as the spiritual foundation underlying the values of humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice. This hierarchical structure has important implications for the design of character education, which must begin with the development of spiritual and moral awareness as the foundation for developing social and civic character. Sastrapradeda (2013) adds that Pancasila-based education should not be understood as ideological indoctrination, but rather as a dialogical and reflective process that helps students understand the deeper meaning of Pancasila values and their relevance to concrete life in a pluralistic and democratic society.

The often-overlooked aesthetic dimension of educational axiology actually plays a significant role in shaping a holistic and balanced character. Eisner (2012) emphasizes that aesthetic education is not solely concerned with teaching art, but also with developing sensitivity to beauty, harmony,

and the quality of experiences that enrich students' spiritual and emotional lives. Education that integrates the aesthetic dimension will produce individuals who not only have the ability to think rationally and have good moral attitudes, but also have an appreciation for beauty, creativity, and the ability to create a meaningful and quality life. Greene (2015) explains that aesthetic education opens up space for moral imagination that allows students to imagine new possibilities, develop empathy by feeling the experiences of others, and have the courage to transform reality towards better and more just conditions, so that this aesthetic dimension becomes an important complement to the ethical dimension in holistic character education.

b. Ethics and Educational Goals from an Axiological Perspective

The discussion of ethics and educational goals from an axiological perspective reveals the complexities and dynamics that arise in formulating and implementing meaningful educational goals amidst changing times. Noddings (2012), through his theory of the ethics of care, offers an alternative perspective that emphasizes the importance of caring relationships between educators and students as the foundation for effective moral education. Unlike prescriptive approaches to character education that emphasize the instillation of specific virtues, the ethics of care approach emphasizes the importance of caring, responsiveness to students' needs, and the development of the ability to foster healthy and productive relationships with others. Gilligan (2016) explains that this ethics of care complements the ethics of justice, which emphasizes universal principles and individual rights, by paying attention to the relational context, the particularities of situations, and the responsibility to respond to the concrete needs of others in relationships.

Educational goals that prioritize humanization and liberation provide a critical and transformative dimension to character education. Giroux (2011) developed the concept of critical pedagogy, emphasizing that education should not be neutral but rather should develop students' critical awareness of various forms of injustice, domination, and oppression within social structures, and empower them to become agents of transformative social change. From this perspective, character education is not simply about instilling individual virtues such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility; it must also foster social awareness, a concern for justice, and a commitment to fighting for a more democratic and just life together. Apple (2014) adds that the curriculum, as an arena for value contestation, must be designed deliberatively, involving various stakeholders to ensure that the values instilled through education do not reproduce the domination of certain groups but instead develop students' critical awareness and democratic capacity.

Contextualizing educational goals with the challenges of the 21st century demands a reformulation of character education that focuses not only on traditional values but also integrates the competencies and character traits needed to face the complexities of contemporary life. Trilling and Fadel (2009) argue that 21st-century education must develop skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, digital literacy, and the ability to adapt to rapid change. However, Wagner (2018) cautions that the development of these skills must not be separated from character development, which includes values such as integrity, empathy, global responsibility, and a commitment to sustainability. The synthesis of 21st-century competencies with character values produces the concept of an educated person who is not only technically competent but also possesses wisdom, compassion, and a sense of purpose that provide meaning and direction for the use of these competencies for the well-being of oneself, society, and the wider community.

c. Integration of Character Values in the National Education System

The implementation of the integration of character values in the national education system faces various structural, cultural, and technical challenges that require a comprehensive and systemic approach. Fullan (2016), in his theory of educational change, explains that sustainable educational change requires three key elements: a clear moral purpose, systematic capacity building, and a collaborative culture that supports continuous learning and innovation. In the context of character education, moral purpose relates to the shared commitment of all educational stakeholders to the importance of character formation as the primary goal of education. Capacity building relates to developing the competencies of teachers, principals, and other education personnel in designing and

implementing effective character education. Collaborative culture relates to developing a school culture that supports the learning of values through habituation, role modeling, and collective reflection.

The role of teachers as moral educators is crucial to the success of character education because they function not only as instructors but also as moral models and facilitators in the process of character formation in students. Hansen (2011) developed the concept of the teacher as a moral agent, emphasizing that every action, word, and attitude a teacher has toward students has a moral dimension that can influence the formation of their character, both consciously and unconsciously. Therefore, teacher professional development is not limited to pedagogical aspects and mastery of material; it must also encompass the development of the teacher's own character and moral integrity. Sockett (2012) explains that effective teachers as character educators are those who possess moral exemplarity, personal qualities that reflect the virtues they wish to instill in students, such as honesty, fairness, caring, patience, and a commitment to excellence. They also possess the ability to create moral conversations with students that encourage ethical reflection and the development of moral reasoning.

Character education evaluation requires a different approach than conventional academic evaluation because character is multidimensional and develops over the long term through a complex process. Berkowitz and Bier (2014) emphasize that character education evaluation must utilize multiple methods and multiple sources to obtain a comprehensive picture of student character development. This includes behavioral observation, self-reporting, peer assessment, teacher assessment, and analysis of artifacts produced by students during the learning process. Lovat (2017) added that character education evaluation should not be judgmental or punitive but rather should be developmental and formative, aiming to help students understand their strengths and areas that need to be developed in their character-building journey. Furthermore, character education evaluation should also include an evaluation of the program, policies, and overall school culture to ensure that the educational environment is truly conducive to the desired character formation, not just rhetoric that does not translate into real practice.

D. Conclusion

Educational axiology provides a solid philosophical foundation for the development of holistic, contextual, and transformative character education in shaping the character of the Indonesian nation. The integration of the universal values embodied in Pancasila with local wisdom and religious values creates an axiological framework that is unique and relevant to Indonesia's diverse socio-cultural context. The ethical and aesthetic dimensions of educational axiology must be developed in a balanced manner to produce individuals who possess not only moral knowledge and ethical reasoning skills, but also sensitivity to beauty, empathy, and the ability to create meaningful lives. The goal of education, which prioritizes humanization, liberation, and the development of the whole person, provides a clear direction for transforming the national education system from an instructive and cognitive-centric approach to a more humanistic and character-centric approach.

Implementing the integration of character values into the national education system requires a systemic approach involving curriculum reform, developing teacher competencies as moral educators, creating a conducive school culture, involving families and communities, and developing a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate evaluation system. The success of character education cannot be achieved through partial approaches or short-term programs. Instead, it requires a long-term commitment, consistency of values between schools, families, and communities, and the political will of the government to make character education a national priority. The challenge ahead is how to develop a character education model that can integrate traditional values with the demands of 21st-century competencies, and develop the capacity of educational institutions to become moral communities truly capable of shaping a young generation with strong character, high competitiveness, and a commitment to national progress and universal humanity.

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