

**WESTERN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES IN THE PERSPEKTIF OF  
ISLAMIC EDUCATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL FILTERING FRAMEWORK  
BASED ON *TARBIYAH, TA'LIM, DAN TAZKIYAH***

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<p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>educational integration, philosophy of education, Islamic education</i></p>	<p><b>ABSTRACT</b> This article analyzes the major schools of educational philosophy idealism, realism, materialism, pragmatism, and existentialism within the framework of Islamic education and the contemporary Indonesian educational context. Using a qualitative library research method, this study examines classical and contemporary literature to explore the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of each philosophical school. The findings indicate that these schools emerged from specific historical and social contexts and offer distinct yet complementary perspectives on educational aims and practices. The study further reveals that the Islamic educational concepts of <i>tarbiyah</i>, <i>ta'lim</i>, and <i>tazkiyah</i> provide an integrative framework capable of synthesizing diverse philosophical traditions while maintaining the normative orientation of Islamic education. In the Indonesian context, particularly under the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, these philosophical schools remain relevant when applied flexibly and contextually to support character education, competency development, and learner autonomy. This study concludes that an integrative and complementary philosophical approach is essential for developing holistic and responsive educational practices in contemporary Islamic education</p>
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Philosophy of education serves as the conceptual foundation that shapes the direction, objectives, and practices of education (Basri, 2025). Every educational policy, instructional model, and curricular orientation is fundamentally grounded in particular philosophical assumptions concerning the nature of human beings, knowledge, and values (Anda Juanda, 2014). Therefore, an understanding of the major schools of educational philosophy is essential for educators and policymakers to ensure that educational practices are not conducted merely on pragmatic considerations without a clear theoretical foundation.

In the global context, the development of modern education has been marked by the emergence of various Western educational philosophies, including idealism, realism, materialism, pragmatism, and existentialism (Yusuf, 2023). Each of these philosophical schools emerged from distinct historical contexts and social challenges, offering different perspectives on the aims of education, the role of educators, and the position of learners. In practice, however, these philosophical traditions are often understood in isolation from one another and are sometimes presented as competing paradigms, giving rise to dichotomies between value-oriented education, cognitively oriented education, and education primarily focused on the pragmatic needs of society.

Although various Western educational philosophies have made significant contributions to the development of modern educational theory and practice, not all of their underlying philosophical assumptions can be fully embraced from the perspective of Islamic education. Islamic education is grounded in a tawhidic worldview, which recognizes the unity of the material and spiritual dimensions of existence, acknowledges revelation as a legitimate source of knowledge, and affirms the existence of metaphysical realities that transcend human empirical experience (Minarti, 2022). Consequently, certain philosophical schools particularly materialism, which regards reality solely as a material phenomenon and rejects metaphysical existence present a fundamental ontological tension with the core principles of Islamic education.

In this context, the engagement between Western educational philosophies and Islamic education is not intended to result in wholesale adoption; rather, it involves a process of selection, critical evaluation, and reinterpretation based on the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah* as the normative framework of Islamic education.

Within Islamic education, this issue becomes even more complex. Islamic education is not merely concerned with the transmission of knowledge; it also seeks to cultivate individuals who are faithful, morally upright, and socially responsible. The concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah* represent the holistic orientation of Islamic education, encompassing the development of intellectual, moral, and spiritual potentials (Yuwono et al., 2025). Nevertheless, scholarly discussions examining these concepts in relation to modern Western educational philosophies remain relatively limited. Existing studies often adopt a normative approach and have yet to formulate an operational conceptual framework capable of systematically evaluating and engaging with diverse philosophical traditions.

Indonesia, educational challenges have become increasingly evident with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes learning flexibility, differentiated instruction, and character development (Praekanata et al., 2024). This situation requires teachers to possess reflective and philosophical competencies in selecting and integrating appropriate instructional approaches. Without an adequate philosophical foundation, curricular flexibility may be misconstrued as unrestricted freedom lacking clear educational direction, thereby hindering the effective integration of national educational goals and Islamic values.

Furthermore, educational realities indicate that educators operate under multidimensional pressures, ranging from bureaucratic demands and collegial expectations to the diverse characteristics of learners. This situation underscores the importance of a philosophical approach that is neither rigid nor dogmatic, but rather contextual and adaptive. In this context, various schools of educational philosophy need to be critically examined in order to identify ideas that are relevant to the development of contemporary education without disregarding the normative foundations of Islamic education. Such an

approach enables a process of selection, reinterpretation, and conceptual synthesis through which elements that align with the principles of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah* may be adopted and further developed, while elements that contradict the paradigm of Islamic education may be critically evaluated or rejected.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this article aims to analyze Western educational philosophies within their historical and philosophical contexts, examine their compatibility with the principles of Islamic education through the framework of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah*, and explore their relevance to the development of contemporary Indonesian education. Accordingly, this study does not seek to normatively integrate all philosophical schools; rather, it undertakes a process of philosophical evaluation and filtering to identify elements that may be contextualized within Islamic education.

Although studies on educational philosophy have been widely conducted, most of the existing literature continues to focus on describing philosophical schools separately or positioning them within a dichotomous framework. On the other hand, studies in Islamic education tend to emphasize normative-theological aspects without undertaking a systematic philosophical evaluation of the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions underlying Western educational philosophies. Furthermore, research linking such a filtering process to the practical needs of Indonesian education, particularly in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, remains relatively limited. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by offering a critical philosophical analysis that positions the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah* as an evaluative framework for selecting, reinterpreting, and selectively synthesizing the contributions of various educational philosophies in accordance with the normative objectives of Islamic education and the contemporary needs of Indonesian education.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a library research method with a qualitative-philosophical approach. This method was selected because the object of inquiry consists of ideas, concepts, and theoretical constructs found within various Western educational philosophies and Islamic educational thought.

Primary sources include works representing the major traditions of idealism, realism, materialism, pragmatism, and existentialism, as well as Islamic educational literature discussing the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah*. Secondary data were obtained from scholarly journal articles, academic books, and relevant research publications that support the analysis.

The study adopts a philosophical hermeneutic approach, which seeks to understand philosophical ideas in light of their historical contexts and the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions underlying them. Through this approach, each educational philosophy is not examined merely at the textual level but is interpreted within the context of its emergence and intellectual development, allowing its conceptual meaning to be understood more comprehensively.

Data were analyzed using critical content analysis and conceptual comparative study. Critical content analysis was employed to identify the philosophical assumptions underlying each educational philosophy, particularly those related to conceptions of human nature, sources of knowledge, educational aims, and the values promoted by each tradition. Subsequently, conceptual comparative study was used to compare these assumptions with the principles of Islamic education grounded in the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah*.

The analytical process was conducted in four stages. First, the identification and categorization of the principal concepts within each educational philosophy. Second, a philosophical interpretation of the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of each philosophical tradition. Third, a critical evaluation of their compatibility and points of divergence with the paradigm of Islamic education. Fourth, a conceptual synthesis aimed at formulating a selective, critical, and contextual model of engagement between Western educational philosophies and Islamic educational concepts within the context of contemporary Indonesian education.

Through this procedure, the study does not merely describe various educational philosophies; rather, it undertakes a process of philosophical

filtering to determine which elements of thought may be accepted, modified, or rejected based on the normative framework of Islamic education.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Historical and Situational Context of the Emergence of Western Educational Philosophies**

The emergence of educational philosophies cannot be separated from the historical and situational contexts that shaped the development of human thought in particular periods. Each philosophical school arose as an intellectual response to the social, cultural, political, and epistemological conditions of its time. Consequently, the differences in their philosophical orientations reflect the diverse educational needs and challenges faced by societies in different historical contexts (Kneller, 1971).

Idealism traces its roots to the tradition of classical Greek philosophy, particularly the thought of Plato, which developed within a broader quest for universal truth and enduring normative values (Ramin, 2017). In a societal context characterized by the search for moral order and ideal justice, idealism regards education as a means of guiding individuals toward intellectual and moral perfection through the cultivation of reason and character formation (Ramin, 2017). This orientation positions education as a normative process aimed at shaping civilized and ethical human beings rather than merely producing technical agents within a social structure.

In response to the speculative tendencies of idealism, realism emerged by emphasizing the importance of objective reality and empirical knowledge. This philosophical tradition gained prominence alongside the growth of scientific inquiry and modern rationality, particularly during the rise of the natural sciences (Rismanto & Sos, 2024). Within this framework, education is understood as a systematic effort to transmit factual knowledge and develop logical thinking skills, enabling individuals to understand and manage the real world rationally. Realism therefore marked a significant shift from metaphysical orientations toward scientific approaches in education.

Materialism emerged within a context of profound social and economic transformation, particularly during the Industrial Revolution and the

development of critiques of social inequality. Rooted in the thought of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, materialism views human consciousness as a product of material conditions and the relations of production that shape social life (Marx, K., & Engels, 1970). From this perspective, education cannot be separated from socio-economic structures and power relations; rather, it is understood as an instrument that may either reproduce or transform existing social structures. This school introduced a critical perspective into educational studies by highlighting the ideological and social dimensions of educational practice.

With the expansion of democratic societies and the increasing complexity of modern life, pragmatism emerged as a response to philosophical perspectives considered absolute and ahistorical. Developing strongly in the United States during the late 19 and early 20 centuries, pragmatism particularly through the work of John Dewey emphasized experience, problem-solving, and the practical usefulness of knowledge (Dewey, 1938). In the context of rapid social change, pragmatism views education as a dynamic process that must adapt to learners' needs and real-life challenges. Consequently, curricula and instructional methods should not be static but rather contextual and flexible.

Existentialism, meanwhile, developed amid profound humanitarian crises, particularly in the aftermath of World War II, as a response to dehumanization, alienation, and the subordination of individuals within oppressive social systems. Existentialist thinkers such as Jean-Paul Sartre emphasized freedom, choice, and personal responsibility as the essence of human existence (Sartre, 2007). In educational contexts, existentialism critiques mechanistic and standardized educational practices while emphasizing the importance of respecting learners' subjectivity, self-awareness, and search for meaning in life.

The historical and situational analysis presented above demonstrates that educational philosophies emerged as responses to the specific challenges and needs of their respective eras. Understanding these historical backgrounds provides an essential foundation for examining the characteristics, contributions, and limitations of each philosophical tradition

in a balanced manner, while also creating space for processes of philosophical evaluation, selection, and reinterpretation in addressing the complexities of contemporary education.

The emergence of these diverse philosophical traditions further indicates that educational philosophy does not develop in an intellectual vacuum. Rather, it constitutes a response to crises of knowledge, social transformation, and evolving human needs. Therefore, the validity and relevance of any educational philosophy cannot be detached from the historical circumstances that gave rise to it. This finding also underscores that the application of any philosophical tradition within Islamic education requires a critical evaluation of its underlying assumptions rather than a direct and uncritical adoption of its conceptual framework.

### **Philosophical Analysis of Western Educational Philosophies: Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Perspectives**

Western educational philosophies are founded upon distinct ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions, which fundamentally shape their conceptions of human nature, educational aims, and pedagogical strategies (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017, Kneller, 1971). These philosophical differences should not be regarded merely as theoretical variations; rather, they represent conceptual frameworks that systematically influence the direction, value orientations, and educational practices developed across diverse social and historical contexts.

Idealism situates reality within the realm of ideas, values, and normative principles, based on the assumption that human beings are inherently rational and moral creatures. This perspective can be traced to the thought of Plato, who viewed education as a process of guiding the soul toward knowledge of universal truth and goodness Pitriyana et al., (2024) From an idealist perspective, education is directed toward the cultivation of intellectual development, character formation, and the internalization of transcendent values. Consequently, the role of the educator extends beyond the transmission of knowledge to that of a moral exemplar who guides learners toward the attainment of personal and moral excellence (Kneller, 1971).

In contrast, realism is grounded in the view that reality exists objectively and independently of human consciousness. The roots of this perspective can be clearly traced to the philosophy of Aristotle, who emphasized the importance of sensory experience and rational reasoning as the foundations of knowledge in Dwi Septiwiharti, S.S (2024) Within the realist framework, education serves to equip learners with factual understanding, logical reasoning skills, and mastery of academic disciplines. The principal contribution of realism lies in its emphasis on scientific inquiry, the objectivity of knowledge, and the development of systematic curricular structures.

Materialism situates education within the framework of material determination and socio-economic structures. In the intellectual tradition of Karl Marx, human consciousness is understood as a product of material conditions and the relations of production that shape social life (Marx, K., & Engels, 1970). Consequently, education is viewed as a social institution closely connected to economic needs, the distribution of knowledge, and relations of power. Although materialism has often been criticized for its tendency to reduce spiritual and ethical dimensions to material factors, it offers a critical perspective for examining educational inequality, social reproduction, and the relationship between education and class structures within society.

Pragmatism rejects the notion of truth as absolute and final. In John Dewey's philosophy, truth is understood as provisional and contextual, its validity determined by its practical usefulness in addressing real-life human problems (Dewey, 1938). From a pragmatic perspective, education emphasizes experiential learning, critical reflection, and learners' adaptive capacities. The learning process is viewed as a dynamic and evolving activity that develops alongside social change. Consequently, curricula and instructional methods are expected to be flexible, contextual, and oriented toward problem-solving rather than fixed and prescriptive.

Existentialism places freedom, choice, and individual responsibility at the center of the educational experience. Jean-Paul Sartre argued that human beings are autonomous subjects who consciously create meaning in their lives

through existential choices and decisions (Sartre, 2007). From this perspective, education is not intended to standardize learners or merely transmit knowledge; rather, it seeks to facilitate the development of self-identity, self-awareness, and moral responsibility. Consequently, a dialogical relationship between educators and learners becomes a central element of the existentialist educational process (Kneller, 1971).

Philosophical analysis of Western educational philosophies demonstrates that each tradition is founded upon distinct ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions (Stables, 2017). Consequently, the contributions of these philosophical traditions to educational development cannot be evaluated uniformly but must be understood in light of their respective philosophical foundations. These differences not only generate variations in educational aims and pedagogical strategies but also shape conceptions of human nature, sources of knowledge, and the values that guide educational practice.

From the perspective of Islamic education, these philosophical traditions cannot be accepted in their entirety without undergoing a process of critical evaluation. Idealism contributes significantly to character formation, morality, and value orientation, which are consistent with the objectives of Islamic education in cultivating individuals of noble character (*akhlak*) (Murtiningsih, 2024). Realism strengthens the scientific tradition, the objectivity of knowledge, and the development of rational thinking skills that are essential to the process of *ta'lim* (Nawangsari et al., 2025). Pragmatism offers contextual, reflective, and problem-oriented approaches to learning, making it particularly relevant to the demands of contemporary education. Existentialism highlights self-awareness, individual responsibility, and the search for meaning in life, thereby enriching the personal development dimension of education and contributing to the holistic formation of learners (Minarti, 2022).

Unlike the other philosophical traditions, materialism presents a more fundamental challenge because it is grounded in an ontological assumption that views reality solely as a material phenomenon and rejects the existence of metaphysical dimensions (Solihutaufa, 2025). This assumption is

incompatible with the *tawhidic* paradigm that serves as the foundation of Islamic education. Nevertheless, materialism's critique of social inequality, power relations, and the reproduction of social structures within education retains analytical value and may be utilized in a limited capacity to examine educational realities from a critical perspective.

These findings indicate that the relationship between Western educational philosophies and Islamic education is best understood through a process of philosophical filtering rather than unrestricted integration. The analysis demonstrates that the compatibility of each philosophical tradition with Islamic education varies according to its ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations. Idealism shows substantial compatibility in the domains of values and moral formation, realism and pragmatism contribute important methodological insights for knowledge development and learning processes, whereas materialism presents a fundamental ontological incompatibility because of its rejection of metaphysical reality.

The study further concludes that the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah* provide a comprehensive philosophical filtering framework through which educational ideas can be categorized as acceptable, modifiable, or rejectable according to the principles of Islamic education. Through this framework, Islamic education is able to engage critically and constructively with modern educational thought, adopting beneficial elements while maintaining its *tawhidic* worldview, moral orientation, and spiritual objectives.

### **Tarbiyah, Ta'lim, and Tazkiyah as a Framework for Philosophical Filtering**

Islamic education is founded upon a paradigm that differs fundamentally from Western educational philosophies, as it is grounded in a *tawhidic worldview* that recognizes Allah as the ultimate source of truth, human beings as possessing both physical and spiritual dimensions, and education as a means of attaining well-being in both this world and the hereafter (Junaedi, 2017). Within this framework, education is understood not merely as a process of knowledge transmission or skill development, but also as a process of character formation and the holistic development of the

human person (Hasanah et al., 2023). This paradigm is reflected in the three central concepts of Islamic education *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah* which are interrelated and constitute an integrated educational framework. These concepts function not only as educational objectives but also as conceptual tools for evaluating educational ideas and philosophies that emerge outside the Islamic intellectual tradition.

*Tarbiyah* refers to the gradual, purposeful, and continuous development of all human potentials toward the fulfillment of their *fitrah* as servants and vicegerents of Allah on earth (Dana, 2020). This concept emphasizes the balanced cultivation of intellectual, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual dimensions, enabling learners to develop as complete and integrated individuals. From the perspective of Islamic education, *tarbiyah* is not limited to the achievement of academic competencies; it also encompasses the formation of social responsibility, ethical awareness, and personal maturity (Adha, 2025). Consequently, *tarbiyah* serves as an important evaluative framework for assessing the extent to which a particular educational philosophy contributes to the holistic development of the human person.

*Ta'lim* focuses on the transmission, development, and internalization of knowledge (Zahra et al., 2024). This concept regards knowledge as a means of understanding reality while simultaneously recognizing the signs of Allah's greatness in human life and the universe. *Ta'lim* extends beyond the acquisition of information and encompasses the cultivation of critical, rational, systematic, and responsible thinking (Makmun et al., 2026). Within the Islamic educational tradition, knowledge possesses ethical and spiritual dimensions; therefore, its application must be directed toward the welfare and benefit of humanity. Consequently, *ta'lim* serves as an important framework for evaluating educational approaches related to the acquisition, development, and application of knowledge.

*Tazkiyah*, meanwhile, refers to the process of spiritual purification aimed at cultivating noble character, self-discipline, and closeness to Allah (Zakia et al., 2024). This concept places moral and spiritual development at the center of education, as educational success is measured not only by intellectual achievement but also by the quality of learners' character.

Through *tazkiyah*, education seeks to produce individuals who possess moral integrity, ethical awareness, and the ability to apply knowledge responsibly. Accordingly, *tazkiyah* functions as a criterion for assessing the extent to which an educational philosophy contributes to character formation and the development of the spiritual dimension of human beings.

Based on these three concepts, this study positions *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah* as a framework for the philosophical filtering of Western educational philosophies. This framework is employed to identify elements of thought that are compatible with the objectives of Islamic education, elements that require reinterpretation and modification, and elements that cannot be accepted because they conflict with the fundamental principles of Islam. Through this approach, Islamic education is not viewed as a closed system resistant to modern intellectual developments; rather, it is understood as an intellectual tradition capable of engaging in critical dialogue, conceptual selection, and creative synthesis without losing its normative identity. Therefore, the relationship between Islamic education and Western educational philosophies is more appropriately understood as a process of philosophical filtering rather than unrestricted integration.

Islamic education is founded upon a *tawhidic paradigm* that views human beings as possessing physical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions (Duryat, 2021). Consequently, the educational process is directed not only toward the acquisition of knowledge and skills but also toward the cultivation of moral character, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility. This paradigm is reflected in the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah*, which collectively constitute the foundation of Islamic education. In this context, these concepts function not only as educational goals but also as evaluative frameworks for assessing educational ideas that originate outside the Islamic tradition.

*Tarbiyah* represents the gradual and balanced development of all human potentials, *ta'lim* emphasizes the transmission and advancement of knowledge, while *tazkiyah* focuses on spiritual purification and moral formation (Rajiannor & Barni, 2026). Together, these concepts serve as philosophical instruments through which Islamic education can evaluate and

filter various educational philosophies. Accordingly, the relationship between Islamic education and Western educational philosophies is understood neither as total acceptance nor absolute rejection, but rather as a process of critical selection based on their ontological, epistemological, and axiological compatibility with Islamic values.

From this perspective, idealism demonstrates a relatively high degree of compatibility with Islamic education, particularly at the axiological level. Its emphasis on values, morality, character formation, and the pursuit of universal goodness aligns closely with the orientation of *tazkiyah*, which places moral cultivation at the center of education. Islamic education accepts the idealist emphasis on character formation and the internalization of noble values (Haris, 2024). However, it modifies the source of those values. Whereas classical idealism grounds values in reason or universal philosophical ideas, Islamic education regards divine revelation as the ultimate source of truth and value (Suryadi, 2024). Thus, the moral and character-building dimensions of idealism can be accepted, while its metaphysical foundations require reorientation within a *tawhidic* framework.

Realism also offers significant contributions to Islamic education, particularly in relation to *ta'lim*. Its emphasis on observation, rationality, objectivity, and the mastery of empirical knowledge strengthens the Islamic tradition of scholarship and scientific inquiry (Ashari et al., 2025). Islamic education accepts scientific methods and empirical approaches as legitimate means of understanding the natural world. Nevertheless, realism requires modification because Islamic education does not restrict reality solely to that which can be perceived through the senses or verified empirically (Nawang Sari et al., 2025). Beyond physical reality, Islam acknowledges the existence of metaphysical realities such as revelation, angels, the afterlife, and the spiritual dimension of human beings. Therefore, empirical approaches are accepted as valid methods of acquiring knowledge, but they are not regarded as the sole source of truth.

Pragmatism offers valuable contributions to the development of contextual, adaptive, and problem-oriented learning. Its emphasis on learning experiences, reflection, and the practical usefulness of knowledge is

compatible with the Islamic principle that encourages the application of knowledge for the benefit of humanity (Fauzi et al., 2025). Within the framework of *ta'lim*, Islamic education accepts active and contextual learning approaches promoted by pragmatism. However, the pragmatic conception of truth, which is measured solely by its practical utility, requires modification. In Islamic education, utility must remain within the boundaries of Sharia values and morally grounded human purposes. Thus, usefulness is not regarded as the sole criterion of truth; rather, it must operate in harmony with truth derived from divine revelation.

Existentialism also contributes important insights to Islamic education, particularly through its appreciation of individual uniqueness, freedom of choice, self-awareness, and personal responsibility (Nisa & Rengganis, 2024). These elements are relevant to the concept of *tarbiyah*, which views human beings as active subjects of education who are accountable for their actions. Islamic education accepts the importance of fostering self-awareness and moral responsibility among learners. Nevertheless, the existentialist concept of freedom requires reconstruction. Whereas existentialism regards individuals as autonomous creators of life's meaning, Islamic education understands human freedom within the framework of servitude to Allah and moral accountability before Him. Therefore, freedom is accepted as an essential human capacity, but it is not understood as absolute freedom detached from moral and spiritual values.

Unlike the other philosophical traditions, materialism presents a more fundamental challenge at the ontological level. Materialism views reality exclusively as a material phenomenon and rejects the existence of metaphysical dimensions that cannot be empirically observed (Syafei, 2025). This assumption stands in direct opposition to the Islamic worldview, which affirms the existence of Allah, revelation, the soul, and unseen realities as integral dimensions of human existence. Consequently, Islamic education cannot accept the ontological foundations of materialism as a basis for educational thought. Nevertheless, Islamic education may still benefit from certain analytical tools developed within the materialist tradition, particularly in examining the influence of social, economic, and power structures on

educational access and quality (Tantowi, 2022). In other words, what may be accepted is not its materialist ontology but rather its critical function as an instrument of social analysis.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the process of philosophical filtering demonstrates that Islamic education neither wholly accepts nor completely rejects Western educational philosophies. Idealism, realism, pragmatism, and existentialism contain elements that can be accepted and adapted in accordance with the *tawhidic* paradigm, whereas materialism can only be utilized in a limited manner as a tool of social analysis without accepting its ontological assumptions. Accordingly, the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah* function as an evaluative framework that enables Islamic education to undertake the processes of selection, reinterpretation, and critical synthesis of modern educational thought without compromising its normative identity and educational objectives.

### **Relevance of Philosophical Filtering for Contemporary Indonesian Education**

Contemporary Indonesian education faces increasingly complex challenges, including the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, character development, technological advancement, and the growing demand for adaptive and learner-centered educational approaches (Nursalim et al., 2024). In this context, the results of the philosophical filtering of Western educational philosophies provide a more selective and contextual conceptual framework than the uncritical adoption of any single philosophical tradition. Such an approach enables Indonesian education to benefit from modern educational thought while remaining aligned with the foundational values of national and Islamic education.

The relevance of Western educational philosophies to contemporary Indonesian education lies not in their wholesale application but in the selective utilization of elements that have undergone philosophical filtering through the framework of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah*. Indonesia's educational system is currently undergoing a transitional phase characterized by efforts to improve human resource quality, strengthen character

education, and respond to global change and technological development (Wijaya et al., 2016). Within this context, Western educational philosophies offer conceptual resources that may be employed selectively and contextually to address contemporary educational challenges.

The filtered elements of idealism remain highly relevant to character education and the strengthening of the *Pancasila Student Profile*. Idealism's emphasis on moral values, ethics, and character formation supports Indonesia's educational vision of developing learners who are not only academically competent but also faithful, morally upright, and socially responsible citizens (Amsad et al., 2025). These values correspond closely to the dimension of being faithful to God, possessing noble character, and demonstrating ethical conduct within the *Pancasila Student Profile*. They are also consistent with the orientation of *tazkiyah* in Islamic education, which regards moral cultivation as a central educational objective.

Realism contributes significantly to competency-based curriculum development and the enhancement of scientific and numerical literacy. Its emphasis on empirical knowledge, objectivity, and scientific rationality aligns with efforts to improve educational quality through evidence-based and inquiry-oriented learning approaches (Syafei, 2025). Within the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, realism supports the development of scientific literacy, critical thinking skills, and mastery of fundamental concepts required to engage with contemporary scientific and professional challenges. However, Islamic education maintains that the pursuit of knowledge should not be limited to understanding empirical reality but should also foster awareness of Allah as the Creator of the universe.

Pragmatism demonstrates significant relevance to experience-based learning, differentiated instruction, and the development of twenty-first-century competencies (Puspitasari, n.d.). Its emphasis on experiential learning, problem-solving, and the practical application of knowledge is consistent with the principles of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, which promotes flexibility and learner-centered educational practices (Puspitasari, n.d.). In the context of Indonesia's geographical, cultural, and social diversity, pragmatic educational approaches facilitate the design of contextualized and adaptive

learning experiences that address local needs while accommodating the diverse backgrounds and learning characteristics of students..

The principles of experiential learning, critical reflection, and problem-solving advocated by pragmatism are highly relevant to the implementation of differentiated instruction within the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Nevertheless, the pragmatic emphasis on utility and practical effectiveness must be guided by an ethical and moral framework. In this way, education can cultivate learners who are not only knowledgeable and competent but also possess integrity, character, and a strong sense of social responsibility.

Materialism, although it must be approached critically, offers valuable insights for understanding the realities of educational inequality in Indonesia. The materialist perspective helps illuminate the influence of socio-economic factors, resource accessibility, and power structures on educational quality (Mardizal & Ramatni, 2024). In this context, materialism may be employed as a critical analytical framework for examining regional disparities in education, inequalities in educational facilities, and challenges related to educational equity, without necessitating the acceptance of its underlying ideological and ontological assumptions.

Although the ontological foundations of materialism are incompatible with the principles of Islamic education, its critical perspective remains useful for examining educational inequalities in Indonesia. Analyses of disparities in educational access, unequal distribution of resources, and variations in educational quality across regions can provide valuable insights for the development of more equitable and inclusive educational policies. In this sense, materialism is utilized not as a philosophical worldview but as a critical analytical tool for understanding structural challenges within contemporary educational systems.

Existentialism is particularly relevant in addressing the growing need for educational approaches that respect individual uniqueness, learning autonomy, and the development of personal identity among learners (Siswadi, 2024). Its emphasis on choice, responsibility, and self-awareness is consistent with student-centered learning approaches that position learners as active agents in constructing knowledge and shaping their educational experiences

(Panggalo et al., 2025). Within the context of Indonesian education, existentialism provides a philosophical foundation for strengthening learner autonomy, self-reflection, and the development of individual potential, particularly in response to the pressures of standardization and uniformity within educational systems.

Respect for learning autonomy, individual uniqueness, and the development of personal potential is consistent with the spirit of the *Merdeka Belajar* initiative. However, such freedom must be guided by moral responsibility and religious values to prevent it from evolving into excessive individualism. In this regard, educational freedom should not be understood as unrestricted autonomy but as the capacity to make responsible choices within an ethical and spiritual framework.

Therefore, the relevance of Western educational philosophies in the contemporary Indonesian context does not lie in the dominant application of any single philosophical tradition. Rather, it lies in the ability to selectively adopt, critically evaluate, and reinterpret those elements that are compatible with the objectives of national education and the paradigm of Islamic education. The results of the philosophical filtering process through the framework of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah* enable Indonesian education to develop educational practices that are character-oriented, scientifically grounded, adaptive, and humanistic while remaining firmly rooted in transcendent values. Such an approach allows Indonesian education to engage constructively with modern educational thought without losing its normative foundations, cultural identity, and spiritual orientation.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that the Western educational philosophies of idealism, realism, materialism, pragmatism, and existentialism are founded upon distinct ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions, resulting in diverse educational orientations. These differences should not be understood merely as variations in pedagogical approaches but rather as reflections of broader philosophical worldviews that shape conceptions of human nature, knowledge, values, and the purposes of education. Consequently, the relevance of these philosophical traditions to Islamic

education cannot be determined solely by their pedagogical contributions but must also be evaluated in light of their underlying philosophical assumptions.

The findings indicate that the concepts of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah* can function as a philosophical filtering framework for evaluating Western educational philosophies from the perspective of Islamic education. Through this framework, educational ideas may be classified into three categories: those that can be accepted, those that require modification and reinterpretation, and those that must be rejected because they contradict the fundamental principles of Islamic education. Idealism is generally accepted in its emphasis on moral values and character formation, although its source of values is reoriented toward divine revelation. Realism and pragmatism contribute significantly to the development of scientific inquiry, critical thinking, and contextual learning, but their assumptions regarding reality and truth require adjustment within a *tawhidic* framework. Existentialism offers valuable insights into learner autonomy, self-awareness, and personal responsibility, although its concept of freedom must be understood within the context of accountability before Allah. In contrast, the ontological foundations of materialism are incompatible with Islamic education because they reject metaphysical reality; nevertheless, its critical analysis of social and educational inequalities remains useful as an analytical tool.

The study further reveals that the relevance of Western educational philosophies to contemporary Indonesian education lies not in the wholesale adoption of any single philosophical tradition but in the selective appropriation of ideas that support the objectives of national education and Islamic education. Through the framework of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah*, educational thought can be critically evaluated and contextualized to support the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, differentiated instruction, character education, and the strengthening of the *Pancasila Student Profile* while maintaining a firm commitment to transcendent values and moral responsibility.

Based on these findings, future studies are encouraged to explore the practical implications of this philosophical filtering framework in specific educational settings, including curriculum development, instructional design,

teacher education, and character formation programs. Empirical research is also needed to examine how the principles of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *tazkiyah* can be operationalized in contemporary educational practices to address the challenges of globalization, technological transformation, and the evolving needs of Indonesian society.

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