Fikrah: Jurnal Ilmu Aqidah dan Studi Keagamaan
issn 2354-6174 eissn 2476-9649
Tersedia online di: journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/fikrah
Volume 14 Nomor 1 2026, (141-162)
DOI: 10.21043/fikrah.v14i1.36559

The Manifestation of Akhlaq al-Karimahin Muslim Teacher Educators: A Philosophical Inquiry

Nuskhan Abid
Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
nuskhan@students.unnes.ac.id

Rudi Hartono
Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
rudi.hartono@mail.unnes.ac.id

Rahayu Puji Haryanti
Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
rahayu_ph@mail.unnes.ac.id

Hendi Pratama
Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
hendipratama@mail.unnes.ac.id

Abstract

Amid the ontological challenges of modern higher education, which tends to separate general knowledge from spiritual values, there is an urgent need to understand how moral and religious integrity are integrated into educators' professional identity. The integration of academic professionalism and Islamic ethical values is crucial to addressing the dichotomy of knowledge that often arises in current higher education practices. This study aims to conduct a philosophical inquiry into the embodiment of ethicalvalues in the professional praxis of educators at an Islamic University. Furthermore, this study aims to uncover the meaning of the manifestation of Akhlaq al-Karimahof Muslim teacher educators through philosophical inquiry. This study uses a narrative inquiry design

to explore the lived experiences of Muslim educators. Data analysis uses Foucault's technologies of the self. The results show that educators engage in internalizing Divine Trust and Intentionality. Another finding is that Akhlaq al-Karimah manifests as Inner Asceticism and social and pedagogical interactions. Theoretically, this study contributes to the integration of knowledge, with no dichotomy between general knowledge and religion. In practice, the findings can serve as policy recommendations for developing the identity of teacher educators at Islamic universities and integrating Islamic values into professional practice.

Keywords: Islamic ethics, Muslim educators, narrative inquiry, teacher identity

Abstrak

Di tengah tantangan ontologis pendidikan tinggi modern yang cenderung memisahkan pengetahuan umum dan nilai-nilai spiritual, terdapat kebutuhan mendesak untuk memahami bagaimana integritas moral dan religius diintegrasikan ke dalam identitas profesional pendidik. Integrasi antara profesionalisme akademik dan nilai-nilai etika Islam menjadi isu krusial dalam mengatasi dikotomi pengetahuan yang sering terjadi dalam praktik pendidikan tinggi saat ini. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk melakukan penyelidikan filosofis tentang perwujudan nilai-nilai etika dalam praktik profesional pendidik di sebuah universitas Islam. Lebih jauh lagi, studi ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap makna manifestasi Akhlaq al-Karimah dari pendidik guru Muslim melalui penyelidikan filosofis. Studi ini menggunakan desain penyelidikan naratif untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman hidup pendidik Muslim. Analisis data menggunakan teknologi diri menurut Foucault. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa pendidik terlibat dalam proses internalisasi kepercayaan ilahi dan intensionalitas. Temuan lain adalah bahwa Akhlaq al-Karimah bermanifestasi sebagai asketis batin serta dalam interaksi sosial dan pedagogis. Secara teoritis, studi ini berkontribusi pada integrasi pengetahuan, tanpa dikotomi antara pengetahuan umum dan agama. Dalam praktiknya, temuan ini dapat berfungsi sebagai rekomendasi kebijakan untuk pengembangan identitas pendidik guru di universitas Islam dalam mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam praktik profesional.

Katakunci: Etika Islam, pendidik Muslim, narrative inquiry, identitas pendidik

Introduction

Modern education currently faces profound ontological challenges due to the dominance of the objective knowledge paradigm, where modern natural science categorically separates statements of fact from religious beliefs, moral codes, and political order (Van den Daele, 2017). In fact, the integration of religion,

philosophy, and general knowledge has the potential to enrich and advance social life (Walid et al., 2025). This phenomenon is evident in the teaching of non-religious subjects in higher education. One example is English language learning for non-native speakers or English as a Foreign Language (EFL). EFL has long been considered a representation of both the West and the secular. English, as a global language, has been criticized by Muslim scholars for embodying Western values and ideologies such as materialism, utilitarianism, and secular logic (Han, 2018). Language and religion continue to interact in various contexts and ways, giving rise to diverse socioeconomic, political, linguistic, and religious consequences (Han, 2018).

This separation between religion and language reinforces the notion that EFL is another manifestation of Western and secular values. This secularization is particularly evident in subjects like foreign language learning, which is often constrained by secular pragmatism, in which language is viewed solely as a functional, technical tool for communication. Educators' efforts to integrate personal integrity frequently encounter bureaucratic barriers, professional standards, and research systems that serve as barriers to integrity by shaping individual actions in undesirable ways (Kerr, 2019). In the Islamic world, this scientific dichotomy is further exacerbated by internal and external factors that sharply separate religious and non-religious knowledge (Desfita et al., 2024). To address this crisis, a paradigm of scientific integration is needed that transcends narrow monodisciplinary scientific linearity toward interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches (M. A. Abdullah, 2015).

Currently, there is an interesting discussion about how lecturers incorporate religious values, such as Akhlaq Karimah, into general subjects such as English. Today, teaching English is no longer merely about transferring linguistic knowledge but rather a blend of faith, identity, and pedagogical approaches and expertise (Wong & Mahboob, 2018). However, integrating religious values into secular subjects such as English is not straightforward. Lecturers often experience tension in balancing the demands of a Western curriculum with the religious values they uphold (Sidqurrahman, 2024). Philosophically, the manifestation of Akhlaq al-Karimah in English teaching is not merely a classroom strategy but a profound inquiry into how a Muslim educator bridges the dichotomy between the secular and the sacred, thereby restoring education's true purpose as the process of shaping the whole person. To conduct an in-depth analysis of the manifestation of *Akhlaq al-Karimah* in professional practice, this study employs Michel Foucault's theoretical

framework of Technologies of the Self. This concept refers to practices that enable individuals to act upon their bodies, souls, and ways of thinking to achieve self-transformation toward a particular state of happiness or purity (Foucault, 1988). Although rooted in the Western intellectual tradition, this framework holds significant philosophical relevance when brought into dialogue with Islamic concepts and traditions. Both converge on a common focal point: the awareness that ethical identity is not static but the result of conscious effort and self-discipline to cultivate noble character. The integration of these two perspectives allows for a philosophical inquiry into how EFL lecturers in Islamic higher education settings navigate their identities.

Although academic interest in integrating Islamic values into education is increasing, the existing literature on Muslim educators in non-religious subjects, particularly English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, is still largely dominated by perspectives on functional pedagogical strategies (Gai, 2025; Nguyen et al., 2023; Tseng & Lin, 2024) or sociological challenges in the classroom (Jamshed et al., 2024; Okyar, 2023; Song et al., 2024). Previous research tends to highlight what teachers do and how they do it, but often neglects the ontological dimension regarding who they are in relation to their theological commitments. There is a significant gap in the literature specifically exploring the inner lives of educators as a philosophical inquiry. Few studies have examined how theological values, such as Akhlaq al-Karimah, are negotiated with modern professional identities through reflective narratives of lived experience.

This study seeks to fill that gap by offering a new perspective that brings together the tradition of classical Islamic ethics with contemporary frameworks of thought. The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to move beyond technical analysis of teaching toward an understanding of morality as a conscious process of self-formation. By integrating the educational philosophy of KH Hasyim Asy'ari (1415) and Foucault's (1988) theory of technologies of the self, this study not only depicts teaching practices but also uncovers how a Muslim educator interprets their profession as a space for spiritual actualization. Through this narrative inquiry, the study is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of contemporary Islamic educational philosophy and to offer a model of knowledge integration oriented toward cultivating noble character. Theoretically, the results of this study will show that the professional identity of teacher educators is shaped by the construction of Akhlaq Karimah values , which are integrated into teaching and socio-cultural

practices. Given the ongoing tension between modern secular professionalism and Islamic theological commitment, this study poses the main research question: How do Muslim English teacher educators at Islamic Religious Colleges manifest Akhlaq al-Karima has a form of technology of the self to navigate their professional identities and pedagogical practices? In response to this question, the study aims to conduct a philosophical inquiry into how these ethical values are embodied in educators' professional praxis. By bridging the classical Adab tradition with Foucauldian perspectives, this research seeks to reveal the ontological and theological dimensions of teaching 'secular' subjects as both a form of spiritual actualization and a critical response to the modern dichotomy of knowledge.

This study uses a narrative inquiry design to explore the lived experiences of Muslim teacher educators. Narrative inquiry aligns with the philosophical premise that humans understand their ethical existence through stories (Chung & Clandinin, 2023; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Huber, 2010). This qualitative approach aims to explore how individuals derive meaning in their lives through the crafting of stories and narratives. Researchers gather and examine these personal narratives to infer insights about life experiences. This methodology explores participants' internal technologies of the self and interprets their pedagogical stories through the lens of Akhlaq al-Karimah, as formulated by Al-Ghazali and KH Hasyim Asy'ari.

To ensure validity and cross-check the interview data, this study applied theoretical triangulation. Theoretical triangulation uses more than one theoretical perspective or discipline to interpret findings and facilitate theory building or theory expansion (Farquhar et al., 2020). Theoretical triangulation is an approach to data from various theories and perspectives to improve the quality of research and provide recommendations for researchers to incorporate as a validation technique (Stamenkov, 2023). Data validity is strengthened by considering how these values manifest in classroom pedagogical interactions. This study engaged teacher educators who instruct in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at a state Islamic university in Indonesia. English language teaching today is no longer simply a transfer of linguistic knowledge but rather a fusion of faith, identity, and pedagogical expertise. Therefore, EFL teacher educators are relevant subjects to examine the integration between the external dimension of knowledge and the internal dimension of faith. A purposive sampling method was employed to select participants, ensuring that those chosen could elucidate relevant themes, concepts, and phenomena (Palinkas et

al., 2015; Robinson, 2014). Teacher educators were invited to participate via WhatsApp. These participants signed a consent form attached to the invitation message. Given the philosophical and narrative nature of this inquiry, a purposive sampling of two key participants was deemed sufficient. Flyvbjerg (2006) explains that just one or a few cases can provide much deeper theoretical insights than hundreds of random samples. In accordance with ethical guidelines, as suggested by Widodo (2014), pseudonyms were used, and the university's name was not disclosed in detail to maintain confidentiality.

Internalizing Divine Trust and Intentionality

The initial manifestation of Akhlaq al-Karimah in Muslim educators is evident in the transformation of their awareness regarding the essence of the teaching profession. According to the research findings, participants view their roles not just as professional activities but as an ontological foundation rooted in responsibility to God. This aligns with the concept of the Mode of Subjection in Foucault's theory (Lawlor & Nale, 2014), which lecturers willingly submit to moral authority on the belief that education is a Divine mandate. From this perspective, intention, or niyyah, becomes the primary internal technology guiding every pedagogical action they take. As reflected in the participants' statements, the process of internalizing this Divine trust transforms the teaching of English, which is often regarded as a secular endeavor, into a sacred form of worship. This alignment of intention is not only a personal motivation but also a conscious effort to ensure that all professional activities are always oriented towards attaining the pleasure of Allah SWT and long-term goals in the hereafter.

In the teaching process, educators realize that their role goes beyond merely fulfilling professional duties; it is also a spiritual practice. This awareness encourages participants to purify their intentions before beginning their classroom teaching practice. Maheswari shared her experience refining her intentions before teaching.

> *"In carrying out my profession as an educator, I intend it sincerely and intend it as a form of worship; it will bring blessings to the teacher educator and the students." (Interview with Maheswari)*

Maheswari's assertion highlights that the role of teacher educators transcends the mere transmission of knowledge; it is perceived to garner blessings. The recognition that teaching serves as a conduit for blessings must originate from genuine intentions. Teaching is both a mandate and an opportunity bestowed by God. According to Maheswari, her initial perception of

the teaching profession was confined to the dissemination of knowledge from educators to students. Over time, she developed an awareness and began to realign her intentions. The collaboration and interaction with lecturers, staff, and students within the Islamic educational context led her to realize that teaching is not solely a secular profession but an integral part of worship. Consequently, teaching must be conducted with sincerity, purity of heart, and patience. The motivation to engage in professional activities as a form of worship emerges from a shift in intention, transforming the execution of routine tasks into an act of worship.

In accordance with this perspective, Betari posits that the recognition of divine responsibility stems from the understanding that education is a direct endowment from God. Consequently, she perceives herself as not yet having attained the status of an exemplary educator. Numerous deficiencies require attention, and various aspects that necessitate enhancement. The impetus for continuous self-improvement arises from an intrinsic awareness. This awareness ultimately inspires her to align her intentions and to make her faith in God a foundational principle in the execution of her activities.

> *"I was reminded that education is both a gift and a responsibility entrusted by Allah, for which one must be accountable. I have come to realize that, thus far, I have not fulfilled my role as a good educator. Consequently, I have resolved to set my intentions, enhance my demeanor, and seek assistance from Allah, praying for His guidance and facilitation in my efforts to instruct students." (Interview with Betari)*

In her statement, Betari articulates the realization that teaching transcends a mere professional endeavor and embodies a form of worship. Her recognition of her own limitations as an ideal educator prompted a shift in her intentions. Additionally, her understanding of education as a dual responsibility further influenced this change. Betari acknowledges the necessity of fulfilling the educator's role with utmost diligence. Consequently, she feels compelled to maintain her conduct, cognizant that her actions will be held accountable in the afterlife. This awareness has instilled in Betari a heightened sense of responsibility towards her profession. Her aspiration for self-improvement underscores the notion that teaching extends beyond mere knowledge transmission, serving as a means of personal betterment. In her professional practice, Betari remains aware of her human limitations. Thus, as an expression of her awareness and responsibility as an educator, she consistently seeks divine assistance and guidance in her teaching endeavors.

Stigall (2022) argues that God's trust in humans is a form of therapeutic trust, intentionally given to inspire human trustworthiness. In the context of Muslim teacher educators, internalizing this mandate is not simply accepting a

task but rather a response to God's trust, which encourages them to continually improve themselves. As seen in Betari's narrative, the awareness that education is a gift and responsibility entrusted by God triggers an internal drive to become more trustworthy in carrying out this role. Thus, the emerging *Akhlaq al-Karimah* is a manifestation of educators' efforts to respond to God's therapeutic trust through purifying intentions and improving pedagogical quality.

To validate participants' narratives and explain how these ethical subjectivities directly shape practical actions in the real world, on-site field verification was conducted. Observational data from the fieldwork are presented below:

> *"Before starting lectures, teacher educators perform ablution first to maintain purity. Teachers and educators ensure that their clothes are appropriate, clean, neat, and fragrant. Teacher educators also pray before and after finishing teaching and intend to teach for the sake of Allah." (Classroom observation)*

Observational data confirm that the internalization of divine belief is systematically reflected in disciplined physical and ritual preparation before entering English classes. Observations indicate that these teacher educators consistently perform ablution (wudu) before beginning their classes. In Islam, maintaining bodily and spiritual purity through ablution is a deliberate practice to prepare oneself for worship. Within Foucault's framework of technologies of the self, this physical ritual functions as an askesis, embodied in conscious operations performed on the body to prepare the mind and body for worship. Furthermore, this spiritual readiness is manifested professionally by ensuring that the teacher educators' clothing is appropriate, clean, neat, and fragrant. The teacher educators recite prayers both before and after their teaching sessions, reinforcing their intention to teach solely for the sake of Allah. Ultimately, the activities undertaken by teacher educators are based on a sincere intention to engage in professional practice.

The participants' statements underscore the significance of intention within Islamic tradition. Intention is highly esteemed in Islam as it embodies piety. Typically, intention emerges from the awareness of a profound human desire to attain God's favor and avoid His displeasure (Mohammad & Quoquab, 2016). Consequently, the research findings indicate that each participant reoriented their intentions from initially pursuing worldly objectives to prioritizing worship. The role of an educator transcends a mere profession or ordinary occupation; it is a mission to secure divine blessing. In Islam, work can be regarded as an act of worship if performed with sincere intention *(niyyah)* and

in the pursuit of Allah's pleasure (Al-Hayali, 2024). This intentional shifting is a conscious act, as niyyah represents an internal disposition and realization that serves as the origin of actions, rather than mere verbal declarations or mental concepts (Raja, 2016). Any endeavor initiated with a virtuous intention will ultimately yield a positive outcome.

This goodness is not solely from a human perspective but is transcendental in nature. In essence, the goodness sought by Betari and Maheswari is that which Allah sanctions. Ultimately, intention transforms an individual's actions from a sole focus on this world to an orientation toward the hereafter. In Foucault's perspective, this represents a tangible form of intentional self-transformation. With good intentions, educators at Islamic higher education institutions become more sincere in carrying out their duties. In Islam, sincerity is the highest manifestation of monotheism, where a person is motivated solely by the purpose of serving Allah. Sincerity is often achieved through actions performed for Allah (Raja, 2016).

The emergence of sincerity makes educators feel unburdened as they carry out their professional responsibilities. In the context of this study, the compliance demonstrated by participants, which initially stemmed from university regulations and societal ethics, eventually transforms into obedience to God. Changing one's intention becomes a way for educators to achieve blessings in teaching. The sincerity displayed by the participants serves as evidence of a process of self-awareness that begins with the determination of intention. Educators have the power to change their identities. In Foucault's concept of technologies of the self, this is called subjectivation. This concept refutes the idea that individuals can use power over themselves to instill self-identity (Villadsen, 2024). Foucault's concept of subjugation is closely related to the mechanisms and techniques by which subjects shape themselves as moral agents, directly addressing the influence on behavior (le Blanc, 2016).

The value of educators' pedagogical actions does not end with students' academic achievement but extends to life after death. This inner manifestation then becomes a stable moral guide. These educators demonstrate that their technology of the self works by transforming work into devotion to God. This proves that *Akhlaq al-Karimah* originates from an inner transformation of identity that recognizes God's authority over human standards of professionalism. This action begins with the educators' intention. Intention becomes reinforcement and control before educators begin their professional practice. Intention plays an important role in shaping the foundations of ethics

and morality in education, emphasizing sincere intention as the basis for all educational actions (Mohd Zuki et al., 2024). In Foucault's view of the technologies of the self, intention is a tool used by educators to achieve the main goal of becoming educators who possess *akhlaq al-karimah*. Ultimately, every activity begun with the intention of worship will result in good actions. The result is educators' *akhlaq al-karimah* aligned with Islamic ethics

Akhlaq al-Karima has the Result of Inner Asceticism

In this philosophical inquiry, the virtue of morality is not automatically possessed by Muslim educators; rather, it is an achievement born of an intense inner discipline. In Foucauldian terminology, this process of discipline is referred to as askesis. Simply put, askesis is defined as self-training. This training differs from school education, which focuses on memorization and academic knowledge. Askesis focuses more on concrete actions, such as practicing our daily attitudes, behaviors, and ethics to become better individuals (Alves & Martins, 2023). Findings indicate that English language teacher educators in Islamic institutions actively engage in ethical self-work to achieve desired moral standards. This practice involves training them to comply with institutional or religious rules. This training process is carried out through inner effort to align their behavior with Islamic values. This is echoed by participants who encounter numerous obstacles during the learning process. This inner training to cultivate goodness makes them more patient, honest, and sincere in their teaching.

> *"When dealing with students who do not pay attention during class, behave rudely, and cheat on exams, I realize that as a teacher, I need to be more patient and reflect on my teaching experiences." (Interview with Betari)*

Betari's story reveals that she faces both internal and external obstacles in her teaching. The obstacles she encounters, such as students being disrespectful or cheating, force her to become more patient. Becoming more patient does not happen overnight. Betari explained that her teaching experiences have made her more patient when facing obstacles. Meanwhile, Maheswari emphasized self-control, as evidenced by her verbal control and dedication to her duties. Awareness of being a role model for students as a teacher educator has led Maheswari to train herself to be more patient and to eliminate negative impulses.

> *"Because I am aware that my role as an educator will undoubtedly be that of a role model for students, I always try to behave and speak as well as*

possible. I also have been given a mandate and am responsible for carrying out my duties as a teacher, so I commit to seriously carrying it out." (Interview with Maheswari)

Based on the findings, it can be inferred that teacher educators train themselves to be more patient when encountering problems in their teaching. *Akhlaq al-Karimah* is manifested as patience and self-control. Patience contributes to increased self-regulation, impulse control, and self-compassion, which are integral parts of the personal development process (Worthen, 2018). The development of good character *(akhlaq)* in Islam involves managing one's emotions. Whereas character formation in Islam relies heavily on patience and perseverance in controlling negative emotions and strengthening positive ones, this aligns with the concept of asceticism (F. Abdullah, 2012). Meanwhile, based on Ghazali's concept of *tazkiyat al-Nafs* through the stages of *muhasabah* (self-introspection), *mujahadah* (struggling against the low self), and *riyadah* (spiritual training), is the right way to improve *akhlaq* from reprehensible to good behavior (Anwar et al., 2025).

Research findings indicate that participants managed their emotions and patience when encountering obstacles in their teaching practice. Their self-practice demonstrated their awareness that, as teacher educators, they must conduct themselves well. Furthermore, their awareness of being good role models for their students also enabled them to develop patience. The patience demonstrated by teacher educators is a manifestation of *Akhlaq al-Karimah* in their teaching practice. Participants realized that only with patience could they successfully overcome the problems that arise during teaching. There is a positive, high, and significant relationship between teachers' patience levels and their professional resilience, indicating that increased patience can enhance professional resilience (Tekin & Çayak, 2024). More than five years of teaching experience allowed participants to practice their emotional control and patience.

The opportunity to face obstacles was not seen as a burden but as a chance to train themselves to become more resilient, patient, and emotionally well-managed teacher educators. This is what makes teacher educators mindful that their profession requires attention to attitudes, emotions, and patience. The implementation of emotion management training, which includes mindfulness exercises, helps teachers become more focused and patient in teaching (Khoiroh et al., 2025). In addition to full awareness and self-practice, the embodiment of *Akhlaq al-Karimah* by teacher educators is a construction grounded in local wisdom. Participants live in *madrasah* and *pesantren* environments. This means

they receive exemplary behavior from *the ulama, Kiai, and scholars who serve as role models in madrasah and pesantren* environments. The patience and exemplary wisdom of Islamic scholars and kiai serve as models for teachers, encouraging the cultivation of patience and sincerity (Khoiroh et al., 2025). The charisma of *Kiai*, such as sincerity, religious obedience, and wisdom, makes them respected and trusted role models not only within the Islamic boarding school but also in the surrounding community (Ahmad et al., 2025). The exemplary behavior of the ulama and figures positions teacher educators as patient, sincere, and devout in worship, and as role models for students. This is a manifestation of *Akhlaq al-Karimah* in the professional practice of teacher educators at Islamic universities.

Meanwhile, when viewed through a Foucauldian framework, a pattern emerges among participants. Teacher educators practice self-evaluation by questioning their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. This mode of questioning why teachers should foster certain attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors serves to shape the teacher educators' identities (Carswell & Conway, 2025). Teacher educators shape their emotional behavior using Foucault's ethical framework and empowering, positive, and professional self-development techniques. Self-formation practices, which involve managing emotions to maintain a positive attitude, include smiling and showing students that you are happy and caring (Karnovsky et al., 2022). The results of the study indicate that teacher educators exhibit patience and sincerity. This attitude is a form of self-training and an awareness that emotional management and patience are crucial in teaching practice. The professional identity of teachers, manifested in *Akhlaq al-Karimah*, is constructed through inner asceticism. The formation of the ethical identity of teacher educators in Islamic institutions results from inner asceticism, or askesis, namely, the intense and conscious practice of self-discipline aimed at achieving *Akhlaq al-Karimah*.

Important findings indicate that this noble character is not automatically acquired but developed through inner struggle *(mujahadah)*, introspection *(muhasabah)*, and spiritual training *(riyadah)*, thereby aligning one's behavior with Islamic values. Patience and self-control emerge as key manifestations of *Akhlaq al-Karimah*, in which educators actively manage negative emotions and impulses when facing practical challenges, such as student disrespect or exam cheating. Awareness of their role as role models and the strong influence of local wisdom, exemplified by *Ulama* and *Kiai* in the *pesantren* environment, are key driving factors in the formation of this identity. Furthermore, there is a

significant positive relationship between patience and professional resilience, with teaching experience and mindfulness practice helping educators become more focused and resilient in carrying out their professional duties.

Akhlaq al-Karimah manifested in social and pedagogical interactions

Teacher educators who hold professional roles and roles as members of society possess an integrated identity. The manifestations of professional and social identity are reflected in the students. Teacher educators become ethical subjects who influence students through ethos, or the way of life that appears tangible. Therefore, teacher educators feel that they serve as role models for students in applying kindness and empathy. This statement is observable from the following interview results with the participants:

> *"I can be a role model for students by applying kindness and empathy." (Interview with Betari)*

The kindness and empathy demonstrated by Betari are manifestations of *Akhlaq al-Karimah* in both social and professional settings. These attitudes arise from the full awareness that a teacher educator serves as a moral mirror for students. The kindness of teacher educators is evident in empathy. In the context of EFL teaching, this is realized through a friendly disposition when students struggle to articulate vocabulary correctly, when students are confused in speaking practice, or when they do not laugh at students' deficiencies in their language abilities. Kindness and empathy during teaching practice foster positive relationships between teacher educators and students, and among students. The adoption of the pedagogy of kindness is expressed by nurturing connection, fostering independence, and encouraging compassion among learners. Empathy in social interactions helps peers feel cared for and heard by everyone (Gilmour, 2021). Kindness and empathy among teacher educators are crucial to the construction of their professional identity. Prosocial behavior of teachers, closely related to kindness and empathy, within the context of their professional roles, is a key component of the pedagogical environment (Floman, 2018).

Efforts by teacher educators to serve as moral role models help foster students' self-awareness of the importance of *Akhlaq al-Karimah*. When awareness of embodying kindness and empathy emerges, it affects the quality of life for students and their surrounding environment. Cultivating self-awareness in children and awareness of others in social-affective and social-cognitive contexts tends to promote compassion and affective empathy, thereby

contributing to the well-being of individuals and the collective (Kappelmayer et al., 2023). This endeavor does not stop at the teacher educator level alone. There is also a role for the institution to consciously condition the entire academic community to adopt kindness and empathy. This will foster efforts among teacher educators, students, and faculty. Moral education is practiced daily, emphasizing the cultivation of autonomy, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, compassion, and respect for others, all of which are important for social interaction and ethical behavior (Anam et al., 2019). Intervention programs designed through activities such as mindfulness, affective and cognitive empathy training, and tasks related to kindness and helping others will develop affective abilities, compassion, and altruism (Kappelmayer et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, in addition to being moral role models for students, teacher educators demonstrate *Akhlaq al-Karimah* by administering fair assessments and respecting diversity. Assessment is a crucial matter for teacher educators. At this stage, teacher educators hold full authority to conduct evaluations; therefore, fair assessment for all students is required.

> *"Providing fair assessments, teaching moral and ethical values to students, and providing good examples for students. Respect each other regardless of age, title, or position, both with colleagues and students, and respect diversity from various backgrounds." (Interview with Maheswari)*

Maheswari's narrative shows that, as teacher educators, they have an obligation to be good role models for students. In addition, Maheswari treats everyone with respect regardless of cultural background, social status, or academic ability. Maheswari's attitude embodies virtue and kindness. The virtues of benevolence and its relation to justice and equality are highly important characteristics in interpersonal relationships within educational environments (Pantić & Carr, 2017). When teacher educators demonstrate friendly, fair, and respectful attitudes toward diversity, this serves as a direct example for students. Moreover, such practices of kindness constitute direct learning experiences for students. Principles of Islam, such as justice, empathy, and benevolence, are taught to students to guide them in interacting with others in healthy, constructive ways (Khasanah, 2023).

Meanwhile, in the context of Maheswari's fair assessment, this stems from the awareness that becoming a teacher educator is a trust *(Amanah)* from God. Therefore, to manifest blessing *(barakah)*, a fair assessment for students is required. Islamic values reflected in the university's vision, mission, and

objectives also serve as external factors that hold teacher educators responsible for conducting fair evaluations. The integration of Islamic values into the curriculum and daily activities, such as assessment and mutual respect, in an Islamic Institute contributes to the development of positive behaviors and harmonious social interactions (Khasanah, 2023). A fair assessment will foster a harmonious atmosphere and mutual respect. Fair assessment, as a social process and qualitative assessment that involves all stakeholders and covers all phases of assessment, highlights the social dimension. Classroom assessment is influenced by individual and social concerns, teacher-student interactions, and social impact, linking fair assessment with pedagogical and social dynamics (Baniasadi et al., 2022). Fair assessment is seen as being equitable and involving multiple learning opportunities, transparency, fostering trust, promoting critical reflection, and avoiding equal evaluation for all students, illustrating pedagogical practice (Murillo & Hidalgo, 2020).

Research findings indicate that teacher educators strive to conduct fair and inclusive assessments. In the context of Islamic education, this is part of the effort to create a sense of justice for everyone. However, in practice, efforts to conduct assessments that align with Islamic values often encounter obstacles in assessing respect for Islamic ethical principles, such as honesty, integrity, and spiritual growth, while ensuring empirical validity and standardization (Rahman, 2025). Participants have conducted fair assessments as a form of manifestation of good morals. Islamic principles such as *ʿadl* (justice), *amanah* (trust), *muhasabah* (accountability), and *ihsan* (excellence) can be used to improve ethical and moral aspects in assessment (Haqdad & Chuadhry, 2025). Fairness, as a fundamental ethical principle in evaluation, ensures that every student is treated equally and free from bias through the use of clear, impartial assessment tools. The concepts of fairness and honesty are essential in Islamic education and should be reflected in academic evaluations, which should be grounded in the values and teachings of the Qur'an (Sidik et al., 2025).

Teacher educators also demonstrate *Akhlaq al-Karimah* by serving as moral role models in the classroom. Classroom observations indicate that:

> *"Teacher educators often apologize for mistakes during teaching. They realize that humans are not free from mistakes. Teacher educators also integrated discussions on effort, patience, and ethical learning into my lessons, aligning my approach with pedagogical principles and Islamic values of honesty and perseverance" (Classroom observation)*

Observations show that internal ethical subjectivity translates into concrete, practical actions in classroom teaching. From Foucault's perspective on technologies of the self, the act of apologizing for mistakes represents a significant deconstruction of institutional power. Teacher educators no longer position themselves as sources of absolute, unwavering authority; they consciously demonstrate their human limitations. This practice demonstrates a deliberate way of behaving in which the subject continually evaluates and improves their relationships with themselves and others. In Islam, this practical action is a direct manifestation of *tawāḍuʿ* (humility) and *shiddiq* (truthfulness), recognizing that ultimate perfection belongs only to God.

The manifestation of *Akhlaq al-Karimah* in social and pedagogical interactions constitutes a tangible realization of the educator's inner transformation, evident in daily behaviors within the academic environment. These behaviors include serving as a moral exemplar, conducting fair assessments, respecting everyone, and valuing differences. This aligns with the view on the importance of a teacher's moral profile and the unique relationship between teachers and students in shaping students' inner ethical compass (Kralik & Mahrik, 2019). In the context of Islamic universities, this exemplar often adopts the adab education pattern found in *pesantren*, which encompasses moral values, etiquette, and character quality, and how these values are developed into habits through daily activities and principles consonant with a character-based school (Anam et al., 2019). In addition, based on the teachings of Hasyim Asy'ari, who always calls for loving the Prophet, doing good to everyone even though they have different religions, making unity, brotherhood, and tolerance the foundation of moderation between religious communities in Indonesia (Farida, 2020). However, the internalization of these values cannot stand alone without the support of an appropriate ecosystem, because moral actions and the embodiment of noble character require a conducive social environment and the provision of social space for students to translate knowledge and appreciation into actions inside and outside the school (Sukardi, 2016). The integration of the exemplar role of teacher educators with the creation of positive social spaces in which English language teaching is no longer merely the transmission of linguistic skills but also a means of cultivating noble, applicable character serves as a bridge for students to integrate Islamic ethical values into their social practices authentically.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the manifestation of *Akhlaq al-Karimah* in the professional practice of English language (EFL) lecturers at Islamic universities is not simply the application of technical pedagogical strategies, but rather a profound ontological transformation. Through the integration of theological commitments and modern professionalism, English language teaching, often considered secular, is successfully transformed into a space for spiritual actualization and worship. This study makes a significant contribution by using narrative inquiry to explore the religious experiences and pedagogy of teacher educators. The study's primary theoretical contribution lies in the interdisciplinary dialogue between Michel Foucault's Technologies of the Self framework and the concepts of *Akhlaq al-Karimah* from Al-Ghazali and KH Hasyim Asy'ari.

This study proves that the ethical identity of educators is dynamic and the result of conscious effort and self-discipline. Professional integrity is no longer viewed as passive adherence to external ethical codes, but rather as the quality of the subject's relationship with oneself in the face of transcendental values. The concept of intention functions as a key internal technology that transforms routine tasks into divinity-oriented moral actions. This research makes an important contribution to the development of the field of educational philosophy, particularly by offering an integrative paradigm that bridges the secular (EFL) and the sacred (religious values). Furthermore, this study shows that the teacher's identity has shifted from merely an instructor of linguistic knowledge to one who guides students through living moral examples.

This study confirms that in Islamic educational philosophy, *Akhlaq al-Karimah* and Adab are not merely additional components of the curriculum but rather the essence of an educator's existence. The manifestation of these values is a form of resistance to the spiritual emptiness of the modern education system, which pursues only intellectual brilliance.

References

Abdullah, F. (2012). Teaching Islamic Ethics and Ethical Training: Benefiting From Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Scienc*, *2*(3).

Abdullah, M. A. (2015). Religion, science, and culture: An integrated, interconnected paradigm of science. *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, *52*(1), 175–203. https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2014.521.175-203

Ahmad, Ngarawula, B., & Roseli, M. (2025). The Role of Leadership of Kyai as the Caretaker of Islamic Boarding Schools in Building Social Piety : Study at Miftahul

Ulum Bettet Islamic Boarding School, Pamekasan, Madura. *International Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*, *6*(11), 11–41. https://doi.org/10.47505/ijrss.2025.11.2

Al-Hayali, O. S. A. (2024). (The Importance of Knowledge and Work in Islamic Thought) A Study of the Stages of Spiritual Purification According to Imam Al-Ghazali. *International Journal of Religion*, *5*(7), 1032–1043. https://doi.org/10.61707/jzwhmz79

Alves, F. S., & Martins, C. J. (2023). Reflections about academic formation in physical education on the light of technologies of self in Foucault. *Movimento*, *29*, e29043. https://doi.org/10.22456/1982-8918.122484

Anam, S., Degeng, I. N. S., Murtadho, N., & Kuswandi, D. (2019). The Moral Education and Internalization of Humanitarian Values in Pesantren: A Case Study from Indonesia. *Journal for the Education of Gifted Young Scientists*, *7*(4), 815–834. https://doi.org/10.17478/jegys.629726

Anwar, S., Fikri, A. D., Izza, Y. P., & Izza, S. A. A. D. F. Y. P. (2025). Implementation of The Concept of Tazkiyat Al-Nafs Imam Al-Ghazali in The Cultivation Of Student Moral Education at The Al-Aly Bojonegoro Modern Islamic Boarding School. *Al Ulya: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, *10*(1), 176–186. https://doi.org/10.32665/alulya.v10i1.4210

Asy'ari, H. (1415). *Adab al-Alim wal Muta'allim fi Ma Yajibu ilaihi al-Muta'allim fi Ahwali Ta'limihi wa Ma Yatawaqafu alaihi al-Mu'allim fi Maqamati Ta'limihi*. Maktabah At-Turats Al-Islamy.

Baniasadi, A., Salehi, K., Khodaie, E., Bagheri Noaparast, K., & Izanloo, B. (2022). Fairness in Classroom Assessment: A Systematic Review. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher 2021 32:1*, *32*(1), 91–109. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-021-00636-z

Carswell, D., & Conway, P. F. (2025). Understanding teacher ethico-political identity formation from a Foucauldian perspective. *British Educational Research Journal*, *51*(1), 321–343. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.4079

Chung, S., & Clandinin, D. J. (2023). Narrative inquiry. In R. J. Tierney, F. Rizvi, & K. Ercikan (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education (Fourth Edition)* (pp. 123–130). Elsevier. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128186305110140

Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry: A methodology for studying lived experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, *27*(1), 44–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X060270010301

Clandinin, D. J., & Huber, J. (2010). Narrative Inquiry. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGaw (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education* (3rd ed., pp. 436–441). Elsevier.

Desfita, V., Salminawati, S., & Usiono, U. (2024). Integration of Science in the Perspective of Islamic Educational Philosophy and Its Implications in Realizing Holistic Education. *Jurnal As-Salam*, *8*(2), 114–134. https://doi.org/10.37249/assalam.v8i2.714

Farida, U. (2020). Kontribusi dan Peran KH. Hasyim Asy'ari dalam Membingkai Moderasi Beragama Berlandaskan al Quran dan Hadis di Indonesia. *FIKRAH*, *8*(2), 311–328. https://doi.org/10.21043/FIKRAH.V8I2.7928

Farquhar, J., Michels, N., & Robson, J. (2020). Triangulation in industrial qualitative case study research: Widening the scope. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *87*, 160–170. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.02.001

Floman, J. L. (2018). *The effects of mindfulness and kindness meditation on teacher emotional abilities, compassion, and prosocial behavior* [University of British Colombia]. https://doi.org/10.14288/1.0363153

Foucault, M. (1988). *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. University of Massachusetts Press.

Gai, C. Y. M. (2025). Reflective Practice in Language Teaching and Learning: A Literature Review. *Journal of English Teaching and Learning Issues*, *8*(2), 111–128. https://doi.org/10.21043/JETLI.V8I2.25463

Gilmour, A. (2021). Adopting a pedagogy of kindness. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*, (22). https://doi.org/10.47408/jldhe.vi22.798

Han, H. (2018). Studying Religion and Language Teaching and Learning: Building a Subfield. *Modern Language Journal*, *102*(2), 432–445. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6497939&info=resumen&idioma=ENG

Haqdad, A., & Chuadhry, M. A. (2025). Reimagining Assessment Systems in Universities: An Islamic Framework for Quality and Accountability. *NIBRAS (نبراس)*, *4*(02), 12–25. https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/nibras/article/view/4254

Jamshed, M., Alam, I., Sultan, S. Al, & Banu, S. (2024). Using artificial intelligence for English language learning: Saudi EFL learners' opinions, attitudes and challenges. *Journal of Education and E-Learning Research*, *11*(1), 135–141. https://doi.org/10.20448/jeelr.v11i1.5397

Kappelmayer, M., Czar, A., Tresca, M., D'Adamo, P., & Lozada, M. (2023). A school intervention promotes compassion, empathy and social relationships in children. *School Psychology International*, *44*(5), 515–532. https://doi.org/10.1177/01430343221145668

Karnovsky, S., Gobby, B., & O'Brien, P. (2022). A Foucauldian ethics of positivity in initial teacher education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *54*(14), 2504–2519. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2021.2016390

Kerr, D. H. (2019). *Barriers to Integrity*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429042140

Khasanah, U. (2023). Islamic Education as a Foundation of Character: a Case Study of the Formation of Noble Morals in Students. *Journal of Islamic Education*, *8*(2), 294–309. https://doi.org/10.52615/jie.v8i2.541

Khoiroh, U., Baharun, H., Agus, A. H., & Mundiri, A. (2025). Emotional Management in Local Wisdom: Strategies for Enhancing Teachers' Work Resilience in

Pesantren-Based Madrasah. *Journal of Educational Management Research* , *4*(5), 2296–2309. https://doi.org/10.61987/JEMR.V4I5.1331

Kralik, R., & Mahrik, T. (2019). Interpersonal relationships as the basis of student moral formation. *ICERI 2019 Proceedings*, *1*, 8896–8900. https://doi.org/10.21125/iceri.2019.2129

Lawlor, L., & Nale, J. (2014). Subjectification. In *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon* (pp. 496–502). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139022309.087

le Blanc, G. (2016). Becoming a Subject in Relation to Norms. In L. Cremonesi, O. Irrera, D. Lorenzini, & M. Tazzioli (Eds.), *Foucault and the Making of Subjects* (8). Bloomsbury Publishing.

Mohammad, J., & Quoquab, F. (2016). Furthering the thought on Islamic work ethic: how does it differ? Journal of Islamic Marketing, 7(3), 355–375. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-07-2014-0047

Mohd Zuki, N. S., Hoque, M., & Mohamed, Y. (2024). The role of Intention (Niyyah) in education: Based on al-Quran and Sunnah. *Al-Azkiyaa - International Journal of Language and Education*, *3*(2), 207–219. https://doi.org/10.33102/alazkiyaa95

Murillo, F. J., & Hidalgo, N. (2020). Fair student assessment: A phenomenographic study on teachers' conceptions. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, *65*, 100860. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2020.100860

Nguyen, T. A., Le, T. T., Vang, M. D., Phuong, Y. H., Huynh, T. T. A., Nguyen, T. H., & Pham, T. T. (2023). Vietnamese EFL high school teachers' perceptions of difficulties when implementing competency-based English teaching curriculum and their proposed solutions. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, *5*(2), 1863. https://doi.org/10.59400/FLS.V5I2.1863

Okyar, H. (2023). University-level EFL students' views on learning English online: a qualitative study. *Education and Information Technologies*, *28*(1), 81–107. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11155-9

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, *42*(5), 533–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Pantić, N., & Carr, D. (2017). Educating Teachers as Agents of Social Justice: A Virtue Ethical Perspective. In *Teacher Education for the Changing Demographics of Schooling* (pp. 55–65). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54389-5_5

Rahman, N. A. (2025). Competency-Based and Ethical Assessment Models in Contemporary Islamic Pedagogy. *Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies*, *3*(1), 57–69. https://doi.org/10.61194/ijis.v3i1.710

Raja, T. (2016). The core of action: sincerity of intention. *Message of Thaqalayn*, *17*(1).

Robinson, R. S. (2014). Purposive Sampling. In *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research* (pp. 5243–5245). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_2337

Sidik, A. R., Hermina, D., Huda, N., Dalam, E., Dan, E., Pendidikan, A., Prinsip-Prinsip, (, Keadilan, P., Privasi, D., & Rahman Sidik, A. (2025). Ethics in Educational Evaluation and Assessment (Ethical Principles in Educational Evaluation and Assessment from the Perspective of Fairness, Objectivity, and Privacy). *Al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies*, *8*(2), 1569–1580. https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v8i2.2075

Sidqurrahman, Z. (2024). The integration of Islamic perspectives in teaching English as a foreign language: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Social and Economics Research*, *6*(2), 223–245. https://doi.org/10.54783/JSER.V6I2.660

Song, X., Razali, A. B., Sulaiman, T., & Jeyaraj, J. J. (2024). Impact of Project-Based Learning on Critical Thinking Skills and Language Skills in EFL Context : A Review of Literature. *World Journal of English Language*, *14*(5), 402. https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n5p402

Stamenkov, G. (2023). Recommendations for improving research quality: relationships among constructs, verbs in hypotheses, theoretical perspectives, and triangulation. *Quality & Quantity*, *57*(3), 2923–2946. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-022-01461-2

Stigall, J. (2022). Conceptualizing divine trust. *Religious Studies*, *58*(4), 857–877. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412522000427

Sukardi, I. (2016). Character Education Based on Religious Values: an Islamic Perspective. *Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, *21*(1), 41–58. https://doi.org/10.19109/td.v21i1.744

Tekin, Ö. E., & Çayak, S. (2024). Examining the Relationship Between Teachers' Patience Levels and Professional Resilience. *International Journal of Academic Studies in Technology and Education*, *2*(1), 22–39. https://doi.org/10.55549/ijaste.25

Tseng, Y. C., & Lin, Y. H. (2024). Enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners' Writing with ChatGPT: A University-Level Course Design. *Electronic Journal of E-Learning*, *22*(2), 78–97. https://doi.org/10.34190/EJEL.21.5.3329

Van den Daele, W. (2017). Traditional knowledge in modern society. *The Governance of Knowledge*, 29–42. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315132297-3/TRADITIONAL-KNOWLEDGE-MODERN-SOCIETY-WOLFGANG-VAN-DEN-DAELE

Villadsen, K. (2024). "The Subject and Power" – Four Decades Later: Tracing Foucault's Evolving Concept of Subjectivation. *Foucault Studies*, *36*(1), 293–321. https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/56/article/940823

Walid, K. Al, Miri, M., & Norman, N. A. (2025). Philosophy and Religion in Abdurrahman Wahid's Post-Secularism Thought. *FIKRAH*, *13*(1), 65–80. https://doi.org/10.21043/FIKRAH.V13I1.28842

Widodo, H. P. (2014). Methodological consideration in interview data transcription. *International Journal of Innovation in English Language Teaching and Research*, *3*(1).

Wong, M. S., & Mahboob, A. (Eds.). (2018). *Spirituality and English Language Teaching*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/WONG1534

Worthen, V. E. (2018). Patience as a development virtue and common therapeutic factor. In *Issues in Religion and Psychotherapy* (Vol. 39, Number 1). https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/irp/vol39/iss1/9