

Reflecting Islamic Educational Philosophy on Junior High Students' Learning Motivation: A Humanistic Perspective

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Abstract: *This study explores the phenomenon of declining learning motivation among junior high school students by reflecting on Islamic educational philosophy and humanistic psychology. Rather than viewing motivation as a behavioral response to rewards or punishments, this research frames it as a personal, moral, and spiritual process. Using a qualitative philosophical approach and literature-based analysis, the study integrates classical Islamic concepts such as fitrah, mas'uliyah, and murabbi with humanistic principles like autonomy, empathy, and self-actualization. The result is a novel conceptual framework for spiritually-rooted and human-centered learning motivation. This integrative model offers a holistic perspective that repositions the role of the teacher, redefines classroom dynamics, and supports a more meaningful, value-oriented learning experience. The study contributes theoretically by bridging two major paradigms and practically by encouraging educational environments that nurture both the heart and the mind.*

Keywords: *Islamic education, humanistic psychology, motivation, student-centered pedagogy.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji fenomena menurunnya motivasi belajar pada siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP) melalui refleksi atas filsafat pendidikan Islam dan psikologi humanistik. Berbeda dari pendekatan konvensional yang memandang motivasi sebagai respons perilaku terhadap hadiah atau hukuman, studi ini memposisikannya sebagai proses yang bersifat personal, moral, dan spiritual. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif filosofis dan analisis kepustakaan, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan konsep klasik Islam seperti *fitrah*, *mas'uliyah*, dan peran guru sebagai *murabbi* dengan prinsip-prinsip humanistik seperti otonomi, empati, dan aktualisasi diri. Hasilnya adalah sebuah kerangka konseptual baru tentang motivasi belajar yang berakar pada spiritualitas dan berorientasi pada kemanusiaan. Model integratif ini menawarkan pandangan holistik yang memosisikan ulang peran guru, merekonstruksi dinamika kelas, dan mendukung pengalaman belajar yang lebih bermakna dan bernilai. Kontribusi penelitian ini bersifat teoretis – dengan menjembatani dua paradigma besar dan praktis dalam

mendesain lingkungan belajar yang menghidupkan hati dan pikiran.

Kata kunci: pendidikan Islam, psikologi humanistik, pedagogi berpusat pada siswa.

Introduction

The decline of learning motivation among junior high school students has become an increasingly urgent concern within Indonesia's current educational landscape. Many students exhibit low engagement, lack of enthusiasm for academic tasks, and a noticeable decline in their persistence to achieve meaningful goals. This issue is further exacerbated by the growing influence of digital culture, which shifts their focus from deep learning to momentary entertainment and social media consumption. A system that prioritizes cognitive achievement and test scores often strips learning of its intrinsic meaning. Motivation, in this context, becomes an obligation rather than a conscious, personal pursuit. This trend reflects not merely a psychological problem, but a deeper crisis in how education defines its purpose. Thus, a more reflective and philosophical approach is needed one that reconsiders learning as a pathway to personal growth. This article offers such a reflection by bringing together Islamic educational philosophy and the humanistic approach.¹

Several previous studies have examined the issue of student motivation, but most of them tend to focus on technical strategies or short term behavioral interventions. The reward-and-punishment methods only yield temporary improvements and fail to foster internal motivation.² Emphasized the role of teacher strategies, yet neglected the deeper values and existential dimensions behind students' learning.³ Meanwhile, discussed the role of spirituality in education, but did not explicitly connect it with the humanistic framework for adolescent learners.⁴ These studies, though insightful, stop short of offering a philosophical foundation for understanding

¹ Astuti, T., & Wahyuni, S. Pendidikan yang Membebaskan dalam Perspektif Humanistik dan Islam. *Jurnal Filsafat Pendidikan Islam*, 7(2), 2019. 123-134. <https://doi.org/10.18860/jfpi.v7i2.7342>

² Fauziah, R., & Ismail, H. (2021). Pendidikan Berbasis Spiritualitas: Upaya Penguatan Karakter Siswa. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 8(1), 45-59. <https://doi.org/10.24042/edukasi.v8i1.9910>

³ Fitriani, S., & Sudrajat, A. Strategi Guru dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Siswa. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Nusantara*, 6(2), 2021. 78-88. <https://doi.org/10.26737/jpdn.v6i2.1292>

⁴ Herlina, E., & Mahfud, C. Pengaruh Spiritualitas dalam Pembelajaran terhadap Motivasi Belajar Peserta Didik. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10(1), 2022. 57-71. <https://doi.org/10.21093/jpi.v10i1.3941>

motivation as a holistic human experience. This indicates a conceptual gap that must be bridged through integrative and reflective inquiry. Addressing this gap is critical for reshaping how we approach educational practice in meaningful ways. This article, therefore, aims to respond to that gap with a theoretical and reflective contribution.⁵

In Islamic educational philosophy, human beings are viewed as creations endowed with intellect and spirit, guided by their innate disposition (*fitrah*) toward growth and transcendence. Learning, from this perspective, is not merely a cognitive endeavor but a form of worship and a path to personal refinement. On the other hand, the humanistic approach sees learners as free, autonomous individuals with the inner drive to grow and reach self-actualization. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Carl Rogers' emphasis on empathy and learner autonomy reflect this framework. Interestingly, these principles align closely with Islamic values such as *ikhtiyar* (free will), *tarbiyah* (holistic education), and *mas'uliyah* (moral responsibility). Integrating both approaches allows us to reimagine education as a space where students learn not out of compulsion, but through self-awareness and meaning-making. Herlina and Mahfud (2022) confirmed that spiritual-humanistic education significantly improves students' intrinsic motivation. Together, these traditions offer a powerful response to the contemporary educational crisis.

The issue of declining motivation cannot be separated from how the national education system emphasizes performance outcomes above personal development. Curricula are often rigid, with little room for self-expression, self-reflection, or exploration of personal identity. This is particularly problematic for junior high students, who are in a critical phase of psychosocial and moral development. Within Islamic educational philosophy, education is understood as *tazkiyah* (purification of the soul) and *takmil* (self-completion), guiding students toward divine consciousness and moral virtue. Similarly, the humanistic perspective views learning as a journey of awakening, toward a fuller sense of self and meaning. When combined, these two approaches help establish learning environments that nourish both the cognitive and spiritual dimensions of student growth. Argue that spiritual-based learning strategies can alleviate emotional exhaustion in

⁵ Kurniawati, D. Urgensi Filsafat Pendidikan Islam dalam Menjawab Tantangan Era Digital. *Jurnal Tarbiyatuna*, 15(1), 2023. 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.18326/tarbiyatuna.v15i1.1-13>

students. This further underscores the need for educational models that engage the whole person mind, heart, and soul.⁶

Despite growing interest in student motivation, much of the existing literature remains rooted in behavioral and cognitive paradigms that tend to prioritize outcomes over internal meaning. Scholars have developed models emphasizing goal-setting, feedback, and reinforcement, which, while valuable, often marginalize the emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning.⁷ Very few studies have ventured into the realm of integrating religious philosophical frameworks particularly Islamic thought with contemporary humanistic theories to examine student motivation at the junior high level. This omission is especially evident in Indonesian contexts, where education is deeply intertwined with religious values but seldom analyzed through a unified pedagogical-philosophical lens.⁸ Furthermore, adolescence as a developmental stage is frequently discussed in psychological terms, but rarely explored as a spiritually formative phase in education literature.⁹ Such a gap undermines the potential of holistic interventions that speak to both the cognitive and moral agency of the learner. There is an urgent need for research that situates motivation within a broader existential and ethical frame, particularly one grounded in Islamic pedagogical principles. This article addresses this lacuna by offering a conceptual integration of Islamic educational philosophy and humanistic psychology. In doing so, it aims to redefine motivation as not only a psychological construct but also a spiritual and moral imperative.

The core problem, therefore, lies not only in the decline of motivation itself, but in the limited conceptual frameworks used to understand it.¹⁰ Existing interventions tend to focus on surface-level behaviors rather than addressing the ontological needs of students as moral and spiritual beings. This article proposes a theoretical contribution by synthesizing the humanistic

⁶ Lestari, M., & Syarifuddin, A. Peran Guru dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Siswa. *Jurnal Kependidikan Islam*, 5(1), 2022. 99–112. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jki.v5i1.11834>

⁷ Deci, Edward L., and Richard M. Ryan. *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. New York: Springer, 2017.

⁸ Eccles, Jacquelynne S., and Robert W. Roeser. "Schools as Developmental Contexts During Adolescence." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 21, no. 1 (2011): 225–241.

⁹ Haidar, Abdul Karim. *Pendidikan Islam: Transformasi ke Arah Pembaharuan*. Jakarta: Pustaka Alvabet, 2018.

¹⁰ Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*. New York: Guilford Press, 2020.

emphasis on self actualization with the Islamic notion of *fitrah* the innate human inclination toward growth, goodness, and divine awareness. Through this synthesis, a more nuanced and context sensitive model of learning motivation can be articulated one that accommodates the intellectual, emotional, and ethical complexity of adolescent learners. The significance of this contribution extends beyond theory; it opens up practical pathways for creating classroom environments that are more attuned to students' inner lives. In culturally Islamic societies such as Indonesia, where religious identity plays a foundational role in moral reasoning, the fusion of Islamic and humanistic perspectives is not only logical but necessary.¹¹ Such integration allows educators to foster a learning culture that is both reflective and transformative. Ultimately, the article advances a framework that is intellectually rigorous and spiritually responsive, addressing the crisis of meaning that underlies motivation loss in youth.¹² It thereby offers a timely response to the demands of a rapidly evolving educational ecosystem.

Moreover, learning at the junior high level takes place during a formative stage in students' identity construction. It is a transitional period where learners begin to search for their voice, values, and sense of purpose. What they need is not only instructional support, but also emotional validation and philosophical orientation. Islamic educational values offer a spiritual foundation for such growth, while humanistic principles provide the flexibility and empathy necessary for personal exploration.¹³ The synergy between these two paradigms does not merely result in effective learning; it empowers students to connect their academic pursuits with a deeper sense of who they are. Emphasize the importance of addressing the learner's existential needs to create transformative educational experiences. Now more than ever, educational institutions must become more responsive to these psychological and spiritual dynamics. Integrating Islamic and humanistic values is not an option it is an imperative.

¹¹ Schunk, Dale H., and Maria DiBenedetto. "Motivation and Social-Emotional Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice." In *Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning*, edited by Joseph A. Durlak et al., 34–48. New York: Guilford Press, 2020.

¹² Sutrisno, Mudji. "Religious Education and Character Formation in Indonesian Islamic Schools." *Journal of Moral Education* 50, no. 4 (2021): 427–440.

¹³ Suroso P. R., Ani Aryati, Titin Yenni, Septiana Putri, Eka Yanuarti, and Ahmal. "Implementation of Humanistic Learning Theory in Islamic Religious Education Learning." *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan* 15, no. 2 (2023): 1850–58.

Reflecting on the motivation crisis through the lens of Islamic educational philosophy and humanism encourages a reevaluation of education's core assumptions. Learning should no longer be reduced to the delivery of content or the pursuit of grades, but recognized as a process of humanizing and spiritual awakening. Students must not only be intellectually competent, but also emotionally mature and spiritually aware.¹⁴ This calls for a shift in pedagogy from instruction-centered to meaning-centered, from passive absorption to active reflection. Teachers must be repositioned as mentors and guides who awaken learners' inner potentials, rather than merely delivering information.¹⁵ This perspective resonates with the demands of 21st-century education, which calls for balance between academic excellence and human integrity. Argue, a spiritual-humanistic education opens up space for both personal and collective transformation. Education, in this sense, becomes a sacred journey toward wholeness.

This article aims to critically examine the phenomenon of declining learning motivation among junior high students through an integrated lens of Islamic educational philosophy and humanistic theory. It seeks to construct a conceptual framework that redefines motivation as a multidimensional process involving spiritual, psychological, and pedagogical factors. Beyond theoretical inquiry, this paper also aspires to offer reflective insight for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in building a more meaningful educational system. Its practical contribution lies in encouraging the design of pedagogies that do not merely train the intellect, but also cultivate the heart and soul. Theoretically, it broadens the discourse on how Islamic and humanistic values can be harmonized in modern educational thought. As such, this study may serve as a conceptual reference for future research and educational innovation. Most importantly, it calls for a restoration of education's spiritual foundation as a guiding compass. remind us, without a philosophical compass, education risks losing its sense of direction.

Method

This study employed a qualitative-reflective approach, rooted in philosophical inquiry, to explore how Islamic educational philosophy can be

¹⁴ Aep Saepudin. "Holistic Islamic Education: Assessing the Impact of Integrative Curricula on Moral and Spiritual Development in Secondary Schools." *International Journal of Social Sciences and Contemporary Issues* 6, no. 1 (2024).

¹⁵ Maulida, N. Internalisasi Nilai Spiritual dalam Pembelajaran: Sebuah Telaah Konseptual. *Al-Fikrah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 21(1), 2023. 33–46. <https://doi.org/10.14421/al-fikrah.v21i1.4075>

integrated with humanistic thought in understanding students' learning motivation. Rather than relying on numerical measurements, this approach centers on interpreting learning as a meaningful, personal, and spiritual experience. It aligns with the interpretive paradigm, where meaning is constructed through reflection on human experiences.¹⁶ Data were gathered through literature review and document analysis, focusing on scholarly works published in the last seven years, including Islamic philosophical texts and educational psychology literature. The sources were selected purposively based on thematic relevance and conceptual depth. Classical Islamic scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh were studied alongside modern theorists like Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. This dialogical method enriched the study with both theological and psychological perspectives. It also allowed a deeper reading of motivation beyond surface-level behavior, into its existential roots.¹⁷

The collected data were analyzed through content analysis and philosophical synthesis to generate interpretive themes. These included key ideas such as intrinsic motivation in Islam, the role of empathy and freedom in learning, and the intersection of self-actualization and worship. Thematic coding was guided by a hermeneutic strategy that moves between parts and wholes, allowing concepts from different traditions to illuminate one another.¹⁸ The philosophical synthesis aimed not just to compare ideas but to integrate them constructively, offering a fresh conceptual framework for motivation that is spiritually grounded and human-centered. This type of analysis also helped uncover the normative assumptions within both traditions and their implications for educational practice. By combining Islamic ethics and humanistic psychology, the study contributes to a more holistic understanding of motivation that is relevant to the adolescent educational context. It also serves as a foundation for rethinking pedagogical approaches that can address the current crisis of meaning and engagement in schooling.

Result and Discussion

Philosophical and Humanistic Foundations of Learning Motivation

Understanding learning motivation through the lens of Islamic educational philosophy requires us to revisit the very foundations of how

¹⁶ Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications. 2018.

¹⁷ Neuman, W. L. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (8th ed.). Pearson Education. 2021.

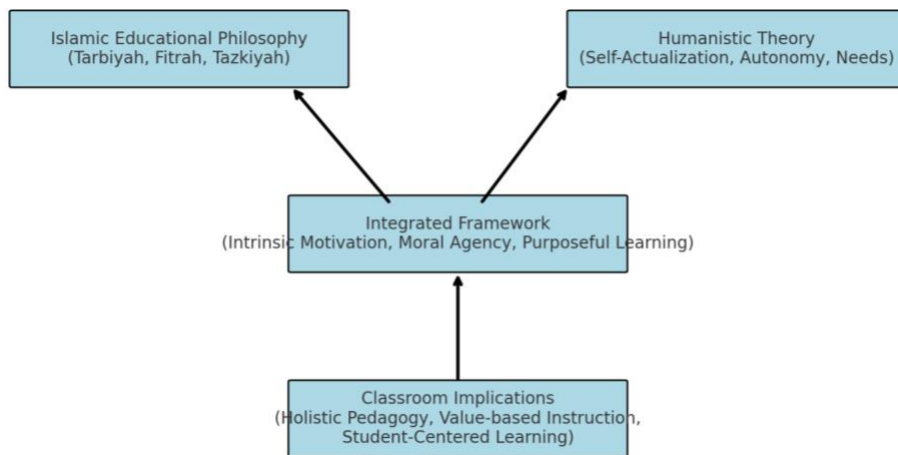
¹⁸ Saldaña, J. *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications. 2021.

education is defined and practiced. In classical Islamic thought, education (*tarbiyah*) is not only about knowledge transmission but also about the formation of the soul, character, and purpose.¹⁹ Learning is viewed as an act of worship, a process of drawing nearer to the Divine through the refinement of intellect and morals. This view contrasts with conventional models that treat motivation as a response to external stimuli grades, rewards, or punishment. The Islamic framework, instead, positions motivation as an intrinsic drive rooted in the human *fitrah* (innate nature) that seeks meaning and truth. This aligns with the Qur'anic depiction of human beings as noble creations endowed with both rationality and spiritual responsibility. From this theoretical perspective, motivation becomes inseparable from one's spiritual orientation and life purpose. As such, any educational system that ignores this foundational vision risks producing disengaged learners with no inner compass.

From a conceptual standpoint, the integration of Islamic educational values with humanistic theory offers a powerful synthesis for addressing the motivational crisis in schools. Humanistic psychology, particularly the works of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, emphasizes self-actualization, autonomy, and the fulfillment of psychological needs. These needs such as belonging, competence, and purpose mirror the Islamic emphasis on dignity (*karamah*), responsibility (*amanah*), and moral agency (*taklif*).²⁰ When combined, both traditions call for a learning environment that nurtures not just academic achievement but also self-discovery and moral growth. Motivation, then, is not a tool to control students but a reflection of their inner alignment with values they perceive as meaningful. This conceptual model redefines students not as passive recipients of instruction, but as active agents in the learning process. Such an understanding reshapes our pedagogical assumptions and invites a more holistic, student-centered approach to education. Theories alone, however, gain value when translated into the realities of the classroom.

¹⁹ Al-Attas, S. M. N. *The concept of education in Islam: A framework for an Islamic philosophy of education*. International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC). 1991.

²⁰ Al-Ghazali. *The education of children: Al-Ghazali's abridged version of Ayyuha al-Walad*. Islamic Texts Society. 2021.



Picture 1. Integrating Islamic Educational Philosophy and Humanistic Theory

Applied to the context of junior high school students, this integrated framework offers practical insights into how motivation can be cultivated meaningfully. Adolescence is a critical stage where students begin questioning their identity, purpose, and direction in life.²¹ In many cases, the loss of motivation stems not from laziness, but from a lack of personal relevance and emotional connection to what they are learning. By incorporating spiritual narratives, ethical discussions, and reflective dialogue into the curriculum, educators can help students relate content to their lived experiences. For example, teaching science through the lens of stewardship (*khilafah*) or discussing literature through themes of justice and compassion can make learning resonate more deeply.²² Likewise, creating emotionally safe spaces where students feel heard and respected supports their psychological needs for autonomy and belonging. When both the heart and mind are engaged, motivation arises not from pressure, but from purpose. This is the kind of educational experience that both Islamic and humanistic traditions aspire to nurture.

Integrative Insights from Literature on Motivation in Islamic and Humanistic Education

²¹ Sulaiman, T. (2020). Exploring Islamic spiritual education to foster holistic motivation in students. *Journal of Islamic Educational Studies*, 8(1), 23–36. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jies.2020.8.1.5623>

²² Zuhdi, M. (2015). Islamic education in the era of globalization: Challenges and responses of Islamic education in Indonesia. *Tafhim: Journal of Islamic Education*, 8(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.20414/jie.v8i1.1220>

As I explored the literature, one recurring theme kept surfacing Islamic educational philosophy views learning as something far more than academic achievement. In the works of scholars like Al-Ghazali, learning is seen as an act of spiritual refinement, a way to become closer to God by nurturing the intellect and the heart. Motivation, in this sense, isn't triggered by rewards or punishment, but by an inner sense of purpose something embedded deeply in the soul.²³ It reminds us that young learners aren't just vessels to be filled with knowledge, but souls on a journey. This concept offers a powerful contrast to modern systems that often emphasize grades above meaning, and output above values. What's striking is how Islam situates motivation within the realm of personal responsibility and spiritual accountability. It's not about pushing students to work harder it's about guiding them to care deeply about why they learn in the first place. That shift in perspective changes everything.

At the same time, humanistic psychology adds another rich layer to this conversation. Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, for example, describe learners as individuals who thrive when their basic emotional and psychological needs are met. They emphasize that when students feel safe, valued, and free to express themselves, their motivation emerges naturally. There's a beautiful harmony here with Islamic principles that emphasize *karamah* (dignity), *amanah* (trust), and *ikhtiyar* (freedom of choice). Both traditions, though different in language, recognize that the learner must be honored as a full human being. It's not enough to just give instructions we must also make space for students to explore meaning, agency, and connection. When motivation is rooted in that kind of environment, it becomes sustainable. It's no longer about chasing performance, but about nurturing a deeper engagement with learning itself.

As I delved deeper, one connection became increasingly clear: both Islamic and humanistic traditions value the student's autonomy, but not as a rebellion rather, as a sacred trust. Islam calls learners to think, reflect, and choose with intention, not blindly follow. The Qur'an is filled with invitations to contemplate. Meanwhile, Rogers insists that deep learning only happens when students feel a sense of ownership. When these ideas meet, they produce a compelling argument: students are not passive actors they are moral agents with voices that matter. And when we trust them, when we give

²³ Bronk, Kendall-C., editor. "Youth Purpose in Life Development." In *MPOWER: The Impact of a Purpose Program on Adolescents*, 21–37. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2021.

them room to make mistakes and grow, they don't just participate they flourish. That kind of motivation doesn't depend on grades; it's sustained by a sense of self. In the practical sense, this integration opens many doors. Studies show that when teachers connect lessons to students' real lives through values, stories, or spiritual metaphors students are far more engaged. Imagine teaching environmental science while framing it through the Islamic principle of stewardship (*khilafah*), or guiding a literature class through themes like mercy and justice. It's not about religious preaching, but about helping students see learning as personally meaningful. When they can relate what they learn to who they are, motivation becomes authentic. Humanistic learning spaces echo this idea, encouraging empathy, dialogue, and emotional safety. When both the heart and mind are activated, learning becomes alive.

Another insight that stood out is the role of the teacher not as a controller of knowledge, but as a mentor, a moral companion. In both Islam and humanistic psychology, the teacher is not simply a transmitter of content. They are someone who listens, understands, and walks alongside the learner. Research confirms that students are more motivated when they feel genuinely cared for by their teachers not just evaluated, but valued. In today's classrooms, this is more important than ever. Students don't just need structure they need connection. A sincere teacher who models character and compassion can do more for motivation than any test or textbook. Lastly, the literature points to a structural issue. Our schooling systems are still built around performance metrics exams, ranks, and scores. But motivation thrives in spaces that allow for reflection, creativity, and meaning making. Both Islamic education and humanistic thought push us to rethink how we structure our learning environments. We need spaces where students can question, create, and reflect where they're invited not only to *know*, but to *become*. This doesn't require a total revolution just a willingness to make education more human. And in that shift, we just might rediscover why we started teaching in the first place

Table 1. Literature-Based Findings and Theoretical Analysis

No	Literature-Based Finding	Analysis / Interpretation	Supporting Theory
1	Learning in Islam is a sacred journey rooted in <i>fitrah</i> (innate nature) and spiritual purpose (Al-Ghazali, 2001; Al-Attas, 1991)	Motivation arises from within as a response to the divine call of knowledge. Learning is both a personal and	Islamic Educational Philosophy: Knowledge is a path to God; learning is a

		spiritual responsibility.	moral-spiritual duty.
2	Humanistic psychology emphasizes that motivation grows when emotional and psychological needs are met (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1969)	Students need autonomy, belonging, and purpose to sustain intrinsic motivation. The classroom must be emotionally safe and student-centered.	Humanistic Psychology: Maslow's hierarchy of needs; Rogers' self-directed learning.
3	Both Islamic and humanistic traditions value autonomy and personal responsibility (Halstead, 2004; Sulaiman, 2020)	Motivation deepens when learners are treated as moral agents with the ability to choose, reflect, and grow. Educators should facilitate not dominate.	Islamic: Concept of <i>mas'uliyah</i> and <i>ikhtiyar</i> . Humanistic: Learner agency and self-regulation.
4	Contextualized learning through spiritual or ethical themes enhances engagement (Zuhdi, 2015; Sulaiman, 2020)	Linking lessons to moral, real-life narratives makes learning relevant and motivational. Integration of <i>khilafah</i> , justice, and compassion themes increases emotional connection.	Constructivist + Islamic values: Meaningful learning comes through relevance and moral framing.
5	Teacher as <i>murabbi</i> and facilitator plays a central role in fostering motivation (Herlina & Mahfud, 2022)	Motivation increases when students feel genuinely cared for. Emotional warmth, moral guidance, and spiritual presence of teachers act as internal motivators.	Humanistic: Empathetic teaching. Islamic: Teacher as role model and spiritual nurturer (<i>murabbi</i>).
6	Structural rigidity of schools undermines motivation (Creswell	Current exam-focused systems suppress autonomy and reflection. Motivation	Humanistic: Learning through freedom and experience.

	& Poth, 2018; Sulaiman, 2020)	needs environments that allow flexibility, inquiry, and moral- spiritual exploration.	Islamic: Holistic development of body, mind, soul.
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The synthesis of Islamic educational philosophy and humanistic psychology, as shown in the table, reveals a compelling alignment between spiritual moral values and psychological theories of motivation. Both traditions emphasize that students are not merely recipients of knowledge, but conscious beings with agency, responsibility, and purpose. While Islamic thought grounds motivation in the soul’s pursuit of divine truth through *fitrah* and reflection, humanistic theory focuses on the learner’s psychological needs such as belonging, autonomy, and self worth. The integration of these views suggests that motivation is most effectively nurtured in environments that honor both the sacredness of learning and the emotional well-being of the learner. It becomes clear that motivation cannot be reduced to mechanical reinforcement or academic pressure alone. Instead, it emerges when students are guided to connect their learning with values, identity, and meaning. The convergence of Rogers’ emphasis on self-directed growth and Islam’s focus on ethical accountability enriches our understanding of what it means to motivate students holistically.

Furthermore, the findings underline the importance of pedagogical and structural transformation in education. Learning must move beyond content delivery and become a space where ethical narratives, personal relevance, and inner reflection are actively cultivated. When science is taught through environmental stewardship or character education is framed within prophetic virtues, students are more likely to see learning as an extension of their lived experience. Moreover, the role of teachers as *murabbi* and empathetic guides is crucial they are not just content experts, but character models and moral companions. Equally important is the call to redesign schooling systems that currently prioritize exams and conformity over curiosity and character. Islamic and humanistic perspectives both argue for educational environments that are flexible, reflective, and value-driven. Thus, the analysis supports a shift from outcome-based education toward one that is meaning-centered, morally conscious, and deeply human.

Constructing a Holistic Framework of Motivation through Islamic and Humanistic Synthesis

One of the fundamental issues uncovered in this study is that many conventional approaches to student motivation are overly mechanistic, relying heavily on extrinsic rewards, competition, or fear of failure. These

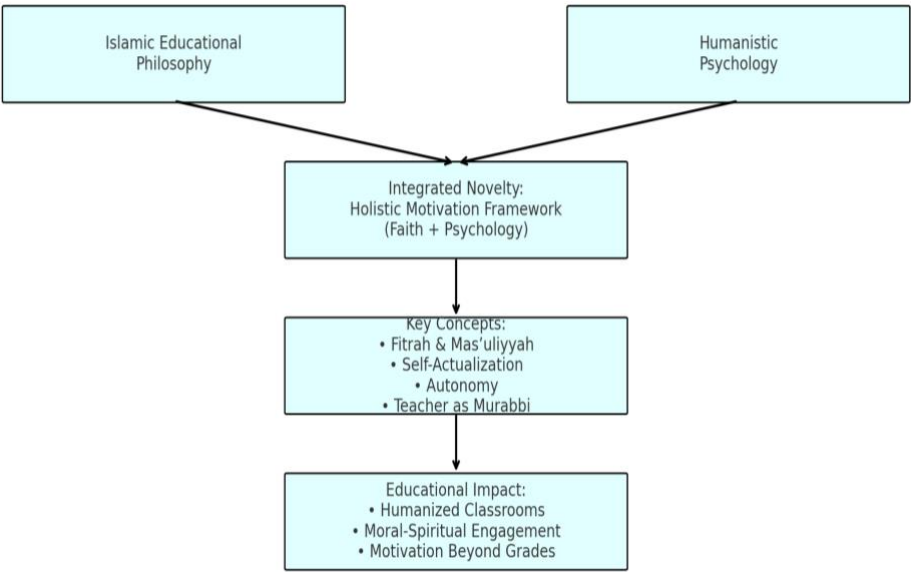
approaches, while functional in some contexts, fail to address the deeper psychological and spiritual needs of learners especially those in early adolescence. At this stage of development, students begin forming their identities and questioning the meaning behind their actions, including their engagement with school.²⁴ Yet, educational systems often sideline this process by focusing solely on performance metrics. This study challenges such narrow understandings of motivation by proposing a more integrated and reflective model. Through the lens of Islamic philosophy and humanistic psychology, it becomes evident that motivation should be understood not only as a behavioral output but also as a moral, emotional, and existential process. This deeper framing allows educators to see students as whole beings minds to be cultivated and souls to be guided.

Through systematic engagement with both classical Islamic thought and contemporary psychological theories, this study identifies several points of convergence that are rarely examined in tandem. Islamic education, with its emphasis on *fitrah* (natural disposition), moral development, and divine purpose, resonates strongly with humanistic principles such as autonomy, empathy, and self-actualization. While these two traditions are often studied separately, their integration reveals a powerful conceptual synergy. The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to bridge these paradigms, not as oppositional, but as mutually reinforcing. In particular, the study brings fresh insight into how learning motivation can be reframed as an ethical-spiritual journey rather than a transactional behavior. By aligning moral agency (*mas'uliyah*), reflective learning (*tafakkur*), and self-directed growth, this study constructs a comprehensive framework that speaks to both cognitive and affective domains of student development.

The core contribution of this study lies in its conceptual synthesis and practical implications. It offers educators a new lens for designing learning environments that are not only intellectually stimulating but also emotionally and spiritually nourishing. The proposed model encourages learning spaces where students feel safe, respected, and morally engaged. Rather than merely transmitting information, teachers are repositioned as facilitators of inner growth, or *murabbi*, who guide students through dialogue, reflection, and value-oriented inquiry. This shift holds particular relevance for junior high education, where motivation often declines due to rigid curricula and disconnected pedagogy. The study's findings encourage schools to revisit

²⁴ Good, Marie, and Teena Willoughby. "Adolescence as a Sensitive Period for Spiritual Development." *Child Development Perspectives* 2, no. 1 (2008): 32–37. doi:10.1111/j.1750-8606.2008.00038.x.

their structures, redefine their learning goals, and cultivate an ethos of compassion, freedom, and moral intentionality in the classroom. It also emphasizes the need for teacher training programs to incorporate both spiritual awareness and emotional intelligence into professional development frameworks.



Picture 2. Spiritually-Rooted and Human-Centered Student Motivation

In terms of academic contribution, this article seeks to bridge the often overlooked intersection between Islamic educational philosophy and humanistic psychology two traditions with deep internal coherence yet rarely engaged in empirical or conceptual dialogue. By offering a structured framework that is both theologically grounded and psychologically informed, this study contributes to the broader discourse on holistic and value based education. It challenges the conventional dichotomy between faith-based and secular pedagogies by presenting an integrative model that affirms both spiritual depth and human agency. However, this contribution remains primarily conceptual, and its practical effectiveness has not yet been tested through empirical research. The lack of field based validation presents a key limitation, particularly in terms of generalizability and classroom application across diverse educational contexts. Moreover, while this paper draws primarily from secondary literature, future studies are needed to operationalize its framework and assess its impact through qualitative or mixed method classroom based inquiry. Comparative studies across different cultural or religious settings may also enrich the theoretical model by

exploring its adaptability. In doing so, scholars can refine how educational motivation is conceptualized not merely as performance driven but as rooted in existential, spiritual, and ethical development. This article, therefore, offers a foundational step an invitation to reimagine education as an inherently human and transcendent pursuit that warrants further empirical elaboration.

Conclusion

This study critically reflects on the declining learning motivation among junior high students by offering a conceptual synthesis rooted in Islamic educational philosophy and humanistic psychology. It argues that motivation is not merely a response to external stimuli or academic pressure, but a deeply human process involving the soul, intellect, and ethical purpose. The Islamic view positions learning as an act of worship and personal responsibility (*mas'uliyah*), while the humanistic tradition emphasizes autonomy, self-worth, and emotional safety. Together, these paradigms illuminate the inner dynamics of student motivation, framing it as a moral and spiritual journey rather than a mechanical output. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative framework that unifies faith-based values with psychological insights to create a spiritually-rooted, human-centered model of motivation. This model challenges the secular-religious dichotomy often found in education by emphasizing that meaningful motivation arises from environments that honor identity, agency, and ethical engagement. The teacher is no longer just a content deliverer but a *murabbi* a facilitator of inner growth and reflection. Through this lens, motivation is cultivated through relevance, relationship, and reflection, rather than grades or compliance.

The scientific contribution of this study extends to practical implications for classroom design, curriculum planning, and teacher development. It calls for a shift from rigid, exam-oriented schooling toward value-rich, flexible learning spaces that nurture both the heart and the mind. Educators are urged to implement pedagogies that engage students' spiritual potential and emotional realities. Ultimately, this study repositions education as a transformative process where learning is not only about mastering content, but also about becoming more human, more ethical, and more deeply connected to the meaning of one's existence.

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