

Educational Values from Surah Al-Kahf (60-82): Implications for Islamic Boarding School Education

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Abstract

This qualitative library research analyzes the educational values embedded in Surah al-Kahfi verses 60-82 and their direct relevance to the educational process in Islamic boarding schools. Employing a descriptive-analytical approach to textual data from scholarly books and journals, this study identifies a comprehensive set of educational principles. The findings reveal that Surah al-Kahfi (60-82) articulates values pertaining to key educational elements, including objectives, learners, teachers, curriculum, methods, and tools. Furthermore, specific Islamic educational values such as a high work ethic, perseverance, patience, student-teacher ethics, critical thinking, and faith are prominently highlighted in the narrative of Prophets Musa and Khidir. The analysis demonstrates that these values are highly pertinent and widely applied within the pedagogical framework of Islamic boarding schools, fostering an educational environment aligned with the Quranic teachings. The study expects these findings to offer valuable insights for enhancing Islamic education practices.

Keywords: Educational Values, Surah al-Kahf verses 60-82, Education in Islamic Boarding School

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Introduction

Education is a deliberate and planned activity aimed at actualizing learners' potential across affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains (Alafnan, 2025). It represents a conscious effort to holistically develop individuals who embody noble norms and values. Within an Islamic framework, education profoundly values knowledge (reason) and action. Consequently, Islam consistently encourages its followers to utilize their intellects in seeking knowledge to distinguish between right and wrong (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2025). Islamic education, widely recognized, is fundamentally based on Islamic teachings, drawing from the Qur'an, Sunnah, scholarly opinions, and historical heritage (Abdalla, 2025). As an academic discipline, Islamic education encompasses various theories developed from hypotheses and insights derived from the holy book, the Qur'an, and the Hadith (Maulana, 2024). These theories pertain to its system, processes, anticipated outcomes, and its core responsibility of fostering the happiness and well-being of individuals. Rooted in Islamic values, Islamic education strives to instill a way of life guided by Islamic principles and promotes the development of knowledge in alignment with these values. Therefore, educational endeavors should be grounded in accountable educational theories, rather than mere trial and error or the subjective intentions of educators. In this



context, the teaching and learning process involves not only the transmission of knowledge, insights, experiences, and skills to learners but also the exploration, guidance, and nurturing of their full potential in accordance with planned objectives.

Currently, Islamic education confronts the inevitable challenges of modernization, alongside the ethical and moral imperatives of Islam itself (Amrullah & Zuhriyah, 2025). Throughout its development, Islamic education will continue to encounter various significant agendas and challenges. Amidst prevailing material-oriented lifestyles and the expansion of such worldviews, Islamic education's ability to provide vertical orientation and uphold ethical/prophetic values in human maturation will be consistently tested. A fundamental effort in this context is for Islamic education to internalize and manifest divine values within individual learners (Djuaini, 2025). Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have emerged as recognized Islamic educational institutions within the community (Suwendi et al., 2024). These institutions operate on a boarding system where students receive religious education through a teaching system or madrasah fully under the authority of one or several kyai (Islamic scholars) who possess distinctive characteristics, charisma, and independence in all aspects. Pesantren represent the Muslim community's strategy to enhance the quality of Islamic education and accommodate a significant number of children seeking in-depth Islamic education (Jamil et al., 2025), while also intensifying religious instruction for students.

However, contemporary reality reveals that many educators and educational institutions still struggle to enhance their quality and compete globally in the field of education. Furthermore, societal phenomena indicate a drift away from educational values, particularly within Islamic education. A contributing factor is the community's lack of understanding of the Qur'an, which further exacerbates moral decadence. It remains common to find Muslims who are unable to read the Qur'an. Therefore, efforts are being made to restore the relevance of Islamic teachings in society through a deeper understanding of the Qur'an. One effective approach to mitigate this educational deficiency is to study, research, and analyze educational and learning values. Deepening the understanding of education involves exploring various references and concepts proposed by education experts, including timeless references such as the Qur'an and the Hadith. Among these references, Surah Al-Kahf verses 60-82 hold a close connection to educational values.

The understanding of intellectual potential, as previously mentioned, is intimately linked to education. The educative values presented in Surah Al-Kahf and their relevance to the educational process in pesantren can serve as a metaphor. Education, as depicted in Surah Al-Kahf, revolves around the relationship between an educator (teacher) and a learner (santri). This Surah provides solutions closely associated with the teaching and learning process that ought to be implemented by those involved in education. The interaction between Prophet Musa and Prophet Khidr, portrayed in verses 60-82 of Surah Al-Kahf, functions as an educational interaction that should guide educators and students on how to engage in the educational and teaching process, resulting in an optimal learning experience. However, another concerning phenomenon in contemporary education involves students

going astray, disrespecting their teachers, and even resorting to physical altercations and mistreatment. More alarmingly, there are cases where parents, dissatisfied with their child being disciplined by a teacher, retaliate and punish the teacher themselves. Such incidents are prevalent within our educational system. Hence, there is a compelling need for research to find common ground among all involved parties to prevent such imbalances in our education system. While our education system strongly opposes criticism of teachers, students and parents, on the other hand, engage in disrespectful behavior and harm their teachers.

Based on the aforementioned background, the research problem formulated in this study aims to analyze the educational values in verses 60-82 of Surah Al-Kahf and their relevance to education in pesantren. The objective of this research is to concretely identify the educational values embodied in verses 60-82 of Surah Al-Kahf and their relevance to the educational process in pesantren, particularly in the case of Pondok Pesantren Raudhatul Ulum. By conducting this research, it is anticipated that Islamic educational institutions, especially Pondok Pesantren Raudhatul Ulum, will gain a clear understanding of how to implement the educational values presented in Surah Al-Kahf.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research design with a library-based approach (also known as literature review or textual analysis) to investigate the educational values in Surah Al-Kahf verses 60-82 and their relevance to education in Islamic boarding schools. This methodology emphasizes an in-depth understanding of textual meanings and interpretations, suitable for exploring phenomena within their natural context. Data Collection involved two primary types of sources: Primary Data, focused on the direct textual analysis of Surah Al-Kahf verses 60-82. Secondary Data, consisted of scholarly books and reputable academic journals related to Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), Islamic education, and pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). The data collection process systematically followed these stages: (1) Identifying relevant literature materials encompassing Qur'anic interpretations and educational studies; (2) Selecting data sources specifically addressing educational concepts within Surah Al-Kahf verses 60-82; (3) Prioritizing primary sources (Qur'anic verses) and supplementing them with secondary sources to provide contextual and theoretical depth; (4) Manually reviewing all selected literary materials; (5) Examining the substance of scholarly thoughts and writings; and (6) Cross-referencing findings with other authoritative sources to ensure comprehensive coverage and critical appraisal. Data analysis was performed using tahlili interpretation, a form of descriptive analysis. This method systematically explains the content of Qur'anic verses from various perspectives, considering the views, tendencies, and objectives of prominent interpreters. Following the sequential order of verses in the mushaf, tahlili interpretation typically covers: (1) General understanding of vocabulary; (2) Relevance and coherence between verses; (3) Occasions of revelation (asbab al-nuzul), if applicable; (4) Global meaning and thematic analysis of the verses; (5) Derived legal rulings or ethical principles; and (6) Presentation of diverse scholarly

opinions from different schools of thought (Shihab, 2013, p. 381). In this study, the tahlili approach was specifically applied to describe the educational content of Surah Al-Kahf verses 60-82, connecting each aspect to its implications for education within pesantren. The analysis aimed to identify explicit and implicit educational values, evaluate their significance, and explore their practical application and relevance in contemporary Islamic boarding school settings. To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings, this study adhered to principles of credibility (ensuring data accurately represents the intended educational values), transferability (providing rich descriptions to allow readers to assess applicability to other contexts), dependability (maintaining an audit trail of decisions and processes), and confirmability (reducing researcher bias through objective interpretation and cross-referencing with established scholarly works).

Result and Discussion

Educational Values in Surah Al-Kahf Verses 60-82 This section presents the educational values identified from an in-depth tahlili interpretation of Surah Al-Kahf verses 60-82, particularly within the narrative of Prophet Moses and Khidr. These values are categorized based on their relation to fundamental elements of the educational process: educational goals, learners, educators, teaching methods, educational content/materials, learning environment, and educational tools. From this analysis, three overarching educational goals are discernible: Cultivating Individuals Who Know Their God (Ma'rifatullah) The narrative illustrates that Prophet Moses, despite his prophethood, encountered events performed by Khidr under divine command that were beyond his immediate comprehension (e.g., damaging the boat, killing the boy, repairing the wall). These incidents were divine lessons, conveying to Prophet Moses and by extension, to humanity the profound limitation of human knowledge when compared to Allah's absolute knowledge. The events underscore those certain truths transcend sensory perception and can only be grasped through understanding Allah's intentions and purposes. Thus, to truly know Allah, individuals are called to contemplate the deeper meanings behind all phenomena, recognizing the divine will and wisdom in the universe. This forms a foundational educational goal is to foster a deep recognition and understanding of the Creator.

Developing Righteous Individuals (Taqwa) Righteousness, or taqwa, is depicted as a complete commitment to obeying Allah's commands and abstaining from His prohibitions. Prophet Moses exemplifies this through his unwavering acceptance of the daunting task to seek Khidr, despite lacking specific details beyond a meeting point known only to Allah (Quran, Al-Kahf, 18:60). His journey, undertaken solely based on divine instruction, reflects profound taqwa. Similarly, Khidr demonstrates taqwa by executing three actions under Allah's explicit command, even knowing they would provoke disagreement from Prophet Moses (Quran, Al-Kahf, 18:67). Khidr's actions, performed not for human praise but purely for divine obedience, highlight complete surrender to Allah's will. Both figures embody the essence of taqwa, fulfilling divine commands and avoiding prohibitions, even when

personal sacrifice is required. Fostering Morally Noble Human Beings (Akhlaq Karimah) The story also underscores the importance of noble character. As narrated in Imam Bukhari's hadith, Prophet Moses was divinely admonished for presuming himself the most knowledgeable on Earth, leading to Allah's command for him to seek Khidr, a man endowed with greater divine knowledge. This journey was intended to instill humility in Prophet Moses. His humble approach upon meeting Khidr, as well as Khidr's own humility in acknowledging Allah's distinct knowledge bestowed upon Moses, exemplify the virtue of akhlaq karimah. This interaction during their learning process demonstrates that true knowledge acquisition must be preceded by sincerity and the eradication of arrogance. Arrogance, depicted as "Allah's clothing," is detrimental to learning and character development. Consequently, this goal emphasizes the cultivation of humility, respect, and noble conduct in both educators and learners.

Relevance to Education in Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren)

The educational values identified from Surah Al-Kahf verses 60-82 specifically cultivating individuals who know their God (Ma'rifatullah), developing righteous individuals (taqwa), and fostering morally noble human beings (akhlaq karimah)—hold profound and enduring relevance for the pedagogical practices within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). These institutions, deeply rooted in Indonesian society, are inherently designed for the holistic development of students, meticulously integrating spiritual, intellectual, and moral dimensions into their core curriculum and daily life. The narrative of Prophet Musa and Khidr thus serves not merely as a historical account but as a foundational blueprint for cultivating the ideal Muslim character within the pesantren ecosystem.

The first educational goal, knowing their Lord (Ma'rifatullah), is a non-negotiable cornerstone of pesantren education. Unlike secular educational systems that might prioritize purely empirical knowledge, pesantren actively guide santri (students) to perceive and understand divine wisdom through every facet of existence. The systematic study of the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical Islamic texts (such as works of tafsir and aqidah) is meticulously designed to foster a contemplative mindset. The events in Surah Al-Kahf, particularly Khidr's actions executed under divine command, are frequently utilized as a powerful pedagogical tool in pesantren. These stories serve as metaphors, urging santri to recognize the limits of human perception and the absolute necessity of submitting to divine decrees. This perspective encourages santri to pursue knowledge not solely for vocational or worldly success, but primarily as a profound path to deeper understanding and connection with Allah, fostering a worldview where every natural and social phenomenon reflects an intricate divine design and purpose.

Such an approach aims to instill spiritual depth that transcends rote memorization, moving towards genuine intellectual and spiritual enlightenment. Furthermore, the emphasis on righteousness (taqwa) permeates every aspect of pesantren life, transforming it into a living laboratory for character building. The communal living arrangements, often strict discipline, and daily routines meticulously structured around collective prayers, Qur'an recitation, and adherence to Islamic jurisprudence, are all meticulously designed to cultivate a strong sense of taqwa.

The unwavering commitment of Prophet Moses to embark on a challenging journey based solely on divine instruction, and Khidr's unquestioning obedience to Allah's commands despite their perplexing nature, are continuously invoked by kyai (Islamic scholars/teachers) as exemplary models. These narratives instill in santri a deep sense of obedience to religious precepts, fostering resilience and patience in the face of hardship, and nurturing an intrinsic dedication to their studies as acts of worship. This continuous reinforcement of taqwa translates into practical behaviors, shaping the santri's commitment to daily obligations, ethical conduct, and self-discipline, thereby reflecting a deep submission to divine will. Finally, the cultivation of morally noble human beings (akhlaq karimah) is arguably the most tangible and profoundly emphasized aspect of pesantren education.

The compelling story of Prophet Musa and Khidr directly informs the pesantren's foundational approach to humility, respect, and the profound etiquette of seeking knowledge. The divine admonition of Prophet Moses for his initial intellectual pride serves as a potent and enduring lesson for santri, powerfully illustrating the dangers of arrogance in the pursuit of knowledge. In pesantren, the sanctity of the student-teacher relationship is paramount, closely mirroring the dynamic observed between Moses and Khidr. Santri are rigorously taught to embody humility and profound respect for their kyai, recognizing the kyai's vast wisdom, spiritual insight, and extensive experience. This reverence is maintained even when grappling with teachings that may initially appear challenging or counterintuitive. The absence of social stratification among santri where all individuals are treated equally irrespective of their socioeconomic background or parental status powerfully reinforces the rejection of arrogance and actively promotes a meritocratic pursuit of knowledge driven by sincere intention and diligent effort. This unique communal and moral environment fosters a holistic intellectual and spiritual growth, where knowledge is esteemed not for personal aggrandizement but for the selfless service of Allah and the greater good of humanity.

In conclusion, the educational values explicitly derived from Surah Al-Kahf verses 60-82 namely, knowing Allah, taqwa, and akhlaq karimah are far from being mere theoretical constructs. They are actively and deeply integrated into the overarching philosophy, meticulously crafted curriculum, and the fabric of daily life within pesantren. These revered institutions serve as living embodiments of these profound values, diligently striving to produce individuals who are not only profoundly knowledgeable but also deeply pious, genuinely humble, and impeccably morally upright. The consistent and pervasive application of these values aims to enhance the holistic quality of individuals in terms of both intellect and morality, thereby meticulously aligning pesantren education with the profound and timeless wisdom embedded within the majestic Qur'anic narrative. This congruence ensures that pesantren continue to play a vital role in shaping future generations capable of navigating modern complexities while upholding immutable Islamic principles.

Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive tahlili analysis of Surah Al-Kahf verses 60-82, particularly the profound narrative of Prophet Musa and Khidr, this study concludes that the fundamental purpose of education, as articulated within these verses, is the holistic development of individuals grounded in three core principles: knowing their Lord (Ma'rifatullah), being righteous (taqwa), and possessing noble character (akhlaq karimah). These findings directly align with the overarching objective of this research to identify and analyze the educational values embedded in the aforementioned Qur'anic verses and their relevance to the educational process in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren).

The analysis reveals that the narrative offers rich insights applicable to all facets of the educational ecosystem. For learners (santri), the story underscores the paramount importance of patience, humility, and unwavering respect towards their educators. Intellectual prowess, a fervent thirst for knowledge, meticulous preparation, and even prolonged dedication to study are rendered insufficient if santri lack the patience and reverence for their teachers, as exemplified by Prophet Musa's journey with Khidr. This highlights a critical value for students: cultivating an inner disposition that prioritizes adab (etiquette) and perseverance above immediate comprehension, leading to genuine spiritual and intellectual growth. The educational values for students thus encompass a high spirit, diligent work ethic, relentless curiosity, polite behavior, and an openness to learn from anyone, irrespective of their perceived rank or status.

For educators (kyai or teachers), the narrative emphasizes the necessity of profound empathy and individualized attention towards each student. Teachers must possess the wisdom to recognize and understand the unique characteristics and learning styles of every santri. Beyond academic mastery, effective educators are characterized by compassion, gentleness, immense patience, and a capacity for forgiveness, all while maintaining firmness in upholding discipline. The pedagogical approach suggested is one that adapts teaching methods to the content, ensuring effective knowledge transfer. Crucially, the most impactful method of education is through personal example and role modeling, where educators embody the values they seek to instill. The educational content itself, whether implicit or explicit, invariably coexists in the transformative process of knowledge acquisition, mirroring Khidr's actions which were implicitly understood by divine command. Furthermore, a conducive educational environment, as reflected in the story, thrives on meaningful interaction between educators and students, complemented by a comfortable and stimulating surrounding. The role of educational tools, both material and non-material, is also vital in achieving learning objectives. These comprehensive elements goals, learners, educators, methods, content, environment, and tools are demonstrably present and deeply integrated into the educational paradigm of Islamic boarding schools.

This research further identifies specific Islamic educational values that warrant continuous cultivation: the lifelong pursuit of knowledge, fostering intellectual humility to prevent arrogance and self-satisfaction with current understanding; the need for educators to balance patience with firmness

in addressing student discipline and learning challenges. The practical manifestation of these values within pesantren highlights their inherent capacity to nurture character, critical thinking, and spiritual maturity.

In essence, this study provides a robust overview of how the educational and teaching process within an institution, particularly pesantren, ought to be guided by the timeless principles enshrined in the Qur'an. Specifically, by drawing upon the rich educational wisdom encapsulated in Surah Al-Kahf verses 60-82, pesantren can continue to refine their pedagogical approaches to produce individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also deeply rooted in faith, highly righteous, and exemplary in character.

While this study offers significant insights, it is based on a textual analysis of specific Qur'anic verses and their theoretical relevance. Future research could explore the empirical application and effectiveness of these values in diverse pesantren settings, perhaps through qualitative case studies or mixed-methods approaches. Investigating how these Qur'anic values manifest in student outcomes, educator training programs, and curriculum development within various Islamic educational institutions would further enrich the understanding of their practical impact and adaptability in contemporary contexts.

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