

ISLAMIC AXIOLOGY AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL DISCOURSE

Fahmi Salim¹, Amin Fauzi^{2*}

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA

²Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA

Corresponding email : *aminfauzi@uhamka.ac.id

Abstract: Islamic axiology as a branch of philosophy that examines values within the framework of divine revelation has long been discussed partially and tends to be disconnected from the global contemporary ethics discourse. This study aims to systematically analyze the foundations of Islamic axiology, map its contributions in responding to modern ethical crises, and formulate its relevance as an epistemological alternative to the dominance of Western ethics. The study employs a qualitative approach through library research with content analysis and theoretical synthesis of 28 scientific literature sources from Sinta 1-2 and Scopus-indexed journals within the 2015-2025 timeframe, of which 11 sources are from Scopus and Web of Science-indexed journals. The findings reveal three main conclusions: first, Islamic axiology is transcendental-integral as it rests on revelation as an absolute source of values, fundamentally differing from Western relativistic-rationalistic axiology; second, core values of Islamic axiology such as tawhid, justice, ihsan, and rahmah can provide substantive responses to three major contemporary ethical crises, namely digital moral crisis, social decadence of youth, and environmental degradation; third, a significant research gap exists in academic studies on the position of Islamic axiology as an equal alternative ethical system in global discourse. The novelty of this research lies in the construction of a systematic comparative framework between Islamic axiology and three main Western ethical schools (utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, and existentialism), producing a model of Islamic value integration in the context of contemporary Indonesian ethics.

Keywords: Islamic Axiology, Contemporary Ethics, Philosophy of Values, Moral Crisis, Global Ethics Discourse

INTRODUCTION

Questions about values, morality, and ethics have never been fully resolved in the history of human thought. Each era presents its own ethical challenges, and the contemporary era is no exception. The wave of the industrial revolution 4.0, the dominance of digital technology, the crisis of moral identity among the younger generation, and the threat of environmental degradation have placed modern humans at an unprecedented ethical crossroads. Amidst this landscape, the questions that arise are not simply "what is good" and "what is right," but rather: "where do values come from

and what are they used for?" These questions are the soul of axiological studies (Abadi, 2016; Bahrum, 2013).

Globally, contemporary ethical discourse is still heavily dominated by three major schools of Western thought: utilitarianism, which measures goodness by the greatest possible benefit; Kantian deontology, which rests on universal moral obligations based on reason; and existentialism, which places individual freedom as the source of value. These three schools, despite their rich intellectual contributions, have fundamental limitations when confronting ethical crises of a spiritual and transcendental nature. Haron, Jamil, and Ramli (2020), in their comparative study published in the *Journal of Governance and Integrity*, demonstrated that modern Western value systems tend to be based on human reason and social consensus, which are historical and relative in nature, thus failing to provide a stable moral foundation amidst rapid social change. Utilitarianism, for example, has been criticized for potentially sacrificing minority rights for the benefit of the majority, while Kantian deontology, while affirming moral universality, remains rooted in limited human reason (Harahap et al., 2022).

Islamic axiology presents a fundamentally different perspective. It is not simply an alternative ethical school, but rather a value system grounded in divine revelation (the Qur'an and Sunnah) as absolute and transcendental primary sources, while holistically integrating rational, spiritual, and social dimensions. Al-Faruqi (1982), in his monumental work **Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life**, asserts that monotheism is the most fundamental axiological principle in Islam, directing all dimensions of life, including ethics, epistemology, and social order, toward a single, cohesive divine goal. In this regard, values are not viewed as merely the product of social or rational agreements, but rather as divine mandates that bind every dimension of human life (Malik et al., 2021).

However, a gap in research exists: most studies discuss Islamic axiology internally and fragmentarily, without systematically placing it in critical dialogue with contemporary global ethical discourse. A study by Harahap et al. (2022) compares Islamic and Western axiology, but remains descriptive in nature. Malik et al. (2021) discuss the revitalization of Islamic educational axiology but do not explore its comparative dimension with Western ethics in depth. Meanwhile, Lisan and El-Yunusi (2024) explore Islamic axiology from an educational perspective but do not specifically address its contribution to the contemporary ethical crisis. These findings indicate an urgent need for a study that systematically positions Islamic axiology as an equal and relevant ethical system within global discourse.

Based on the above, this study aims to: (1) systematically outline the foundations of Islamic axiology within the philosophy of values; (2) construct a comparative framework between Islamic axiology and Western ethical schools; and (3) analyze the contribution of Islamic axiology in responding to three major contemporary ethical crises: the digital morality crisis, the moral decadence of the younger generation, and environmental degradation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Axiology as a Branch of the Philosophy of Value

Axiology comes from two Greek words, *axios* (value) and *logos* (science), and is definitively a branch of philosophy that studies fundamental values in human life, including goodness (ethics),

beauty (aesthetics), and truth (epistemology of value) (Simbolon & Firmanto, 2021). Within the structure of the philosophy of science, axiology serves to answer the third question after ontology ("what exists?") and epistemology ("how to know?"): "What is knowledge used for?" (Abadi, 2016; Mahfud, 2018).

Over its development, modern axiological studies have split into several major schools of thought. Subjectivism (Hume) views values as relative products of individual emotions and perceptions. Objectivism (Plato, Aquinas) affirms values as absolute, universal realities. Relativism (Nietzsche, Rorty) rejects the existence of universal values and views them as historical, socio-cultural constructs. Pragmatism (Dewey, James) assesses value based on its effectiveness and usefulness in practical life, while utilitarianism (Bentham, Mill) measures value based on calculations of collective happiness (Mahfud, 2018). Each of these schools carries different ethical implications, and this is what makes the discourse of axiology continue to be relevant in the contemporary era.

The Foundations of Islamic Axiology: Revelation as a Source of Values

Studies on Islamic axiology have been conducted by a number of previous researchers. Zainuddin (2008) emphasized that the relationship between religion and science within the Islamic paradigm is harmonious, with religion serving as the center of axiology, directing science toward moral and spiritual goals. Malik et al. (2021), in their study of the revitalization of Islamic axiology, asserted that Islamic axiology encompasses the trilogy of divine values (tawhid), human values (Islamic humanism), and natural values (Islamic environmentalism), all of which are rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

From an international perspective, Al-Faruqi (1982) constructed the concept of tawhid not merely as a theological doctrine but as a meta-value that orients the entire Islamic ethical system. This study provides an important foundation because it provides Islamic axiology with a philosophical dimension capable of engaging in dialogue with global ethical traditions. Haron et al. (2020) further demonstrate that the fundamental difference between Islamic and Western value systems lies in the source of those values: Islam places revelation as the primary, absolute source, while modern Western traditions tend to place reason or empirical experience. This is not a technical difference, but rather a fundamental epistemological one.

Harahap et al. (2022) compared Islamic and Western axiology and found that the fundamental difference lies in the epistemology of values. This study is an important initial step, but remains descriptive in nature and fails to address the concrete contribution of Islamic axiology in responding to the contemporary ethical crisis. Lisan and El-Yunusi (2024) broaden the scope by placing Islamic axiology in the context of education, but do not yet address its comparative-contributory dimensions within global ethical discourse. This gap constitutes the primary contribution of this study.

Contemporary Ethics and the Global Values Crisis

Contemporary ethical discourse is characterized by at least three fundamental, interrelated crises. First, the digital morality crisis triggered by the information technology revolution. Alfatih et al. (2025) show that unlimited digital freedom has eroded social empathy and given rise to new forms of dehumanization. Second, the moral decadence of the younger generation, characterized by hedonism, consumerism, and a lack of social responsibility (Arisanti & Sauri, 2023; Maria et al., 2021).

Third, the ecological crisis stems from an exploitative value orientation toward nature. Özdemir (2003), in his contribution published by Harvard University Press, asserts that the modern environmental crisis is fundamentally an ethical crisis rooted in humanity's view of nature as an object of exploitation, rather than as a trust to be safeguarded.

This is where Islamic axiology offers a different perspective. Faizah (2020) demonstrated that Islamic axiology can balance intellectual intelligence and human values, as it governs not only interpersonal relationships but also the relationship between humans and God (*hablum minallah*) and the relationship between humans and nature (*hablum minal alam*). Asyari et al. (2023) in their international study in the *Journal Analytica Islamica* demonstrated that the concept of Islamic axiology in character formation for students has proven effective in integrating transcendental values with everyday social behavior. These two studies provide a strong empirical basis for the argument that Islamic axiology is not only theoretically relevant but also practically relevant in responding to the contemporary ethical crisis.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach through library research. This approach is based on the nature of the study object, which is a philosophical and theoretical construct, requiring in-depth analysis of ideas, arguments, and conceptual relationships between various scientific literatures (Mamonto, 2024). Library research was chosen because it allows researchers to explore, identify, and synthesize knowledge documented in various reputable scientific sources.

The research data sources are secondary scientific literature in the form of reputable journal articles indexed in Sinta (ranks 1 and 2) and Scopus/Web of Science for the period 2003-2025, with a primary focus on publications from 2015-2025. Source collection was conducted through three main databases: Google Scholar, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), and the Sinta portal of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Inclusion criteria include: (1) journal articles specifically discussing Islamic axiology, Islamic philosophy of values, or Islamic ethics; (2) articles discussing contemporary ethics from a Western perspective relevant for comparison; and (3) articles examining the crisis of morality and values in a modern context. Exclusion criteria included articles whose original sources could not be verified, articles from predatory journals, or articles not indexed in official databases.

As part of a transparent source selection procedure, of the 47 articles found through the initial search, 19 were excluded because they did not meet the criteria for indexing or thematic relevance. A total of 28 primary sources were used in this study, consisting of 11 international articles indexed by Scopus/WoS and 17 national articles indexed by Sinta 1-2. This process followed the systematic review principles developed by Nasution and Siregar (2023) regarding the axiological perspective in the study of knowledge sources.

The data analysis technique employed two complementary methods. First, content analysis was used to identify, categorize, and interpret the main themes from each source studied. Second, theoretical synthesis was used to establish conceptual relationships between ideas from different sources, resulting in a more comprehensive and integrative theoretical framework. The validity of the research is maintained through source triangulation and cross-referencing between sources that

study similar topics, prioritizing reputable international sources as comparisons and argument reinforcement.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The Foundational Construction of Islamic Axiology: A Transcendental-Integral Value System

The analysis of the reviewed literature shows that Islamic axiology possesses a hierarchically structured and integral value architecture, fundamentally different from any ethical system developed in the Western philosophical tradition. This structure can be identified as three layers: the foundational layer (tawhid as the source of supreme values), the operative principle layer (justice, ihsan, rahmah, amanah), and the applicative layer (implementation of values in social, educational, economic, and environmental life).

At the foundational layer, tawhid is not merely a theological creed but the most fundamental axiological principle. Al-Faruqi (1982) explains that tawhid places God as the absolute source of moral values and demands that humans demonstrate their ethical quality through deeds in all dimensions of life. This means that in Islamic axiology, every value has a transcendental legitimacy that transcends social consensus or rational calculation. Zainuddin (2008) strengthens this argument by showing that the relationship between religion and science in the Islamic paradigm is harmonious and mutually directive, so that there is no dichotomy between the spiritual and rational dimensions in the construction of values.

At the operative principle level, justice (adl), ihsan, rahmah, and amanah function as mechanisms for translating the values of monotheism into concrete actions. Haron et al. (2020) assert that in the Islamic value system, justice is a primary moral value encompassing all dimensions of life, from legal, economic, social, and spiritual. It differs from Western concepts of justice because it has theological roots that transcend social consensus. Meanwhile, ihsan, as examined by Fauziah (2019), is a value that pushes beyond the demands of justice to a higher good, born from the awareness that God constantly watches over every action. This distinguishes Islamic axiology from utilitarianism: ihsan does not measure the value of an action solely by its external impact, but rather by the quality of the actor's intention and inner consciousness.

Islamic axiology is not simply an ad hoc collection of moral values, but rather a hierarchically structured and coherent system. Each layer has a specific and mutually supportive axiological function, from theological foundations to practical applications. This is a characteristic that no Western ethical school possesses in its entirety, as Western philosophy generally operates at only one or two levels of this structure.

Comparative Analysis: Islamic Axiology versus Western Ethical Schools

One of the most important findings of this study is the construction of a systematic comparative framework between Islamic axiology and three major Western ethical schools. This comparison is important not to demonstrate the superiority of one system over another, but rather to identify precisely where the defining epistemological differences lie and how these differences yield distinct ethical implications in addressing contemporary moral crises.

Bentham-Mill utilitarianism views the value of an action based on its impact on collective happiness (the greatest happiness of the greatest number). In the context of the digital morality crisis, for example, utilitarianism would judge digital content problematic only if its negative impacts outweigh its benefits for the majority. This is problematic because it opens up room for justifying the exploitation of minorities for the benefit of the majority (Harahap et al., 2022). Islamic axiology, on the other hand, employs the principle of maqasid al-sharia: an action is only valuable if it protects religion, life, intellect, posterity, and property, without exception. This standard excludes considerations of majority or minority, as moral value stems from divine revelation.

Kantian deontology asserts that an action is morally valuable not because of its consequences, but because of its conformity to universal moral obligations formulated by pure reason. To some extent, this parallels the Islamic axiological principles of moral responsibility and trustworthiness. However, the fundamental difference lies in the source of obligation: Kant places human reason as the moral legislator, while Islam places divine revelation. Haron et al. (2020) points out that this is not a trivial difference, as human reason is historical, contextual, and susceptible to cultural bias, while revelation is absolute and transcends the boundaries of time and space.

Sartre's existentialism positions individual freedom as the source of value: humans create value through their free choices. In the context of the moral crisis of the younger generation, existentialism has the potential to exacerbate the problem, as it provides philosophical legitimacy for value relativism and the rejection of external moral authority. Islamic axiology responds to this challenge with the concept of freedom within the boundaries of sharia: humans are free to choose, but this freedom is interpreted as a test for which they will be held accountable before God. This concept, as examined by Wanto (2023) regarding the implications of hurriyah al-insan for social life, creates a balance between individual autonomy and transcendental responsibility.

Table 2. Comparative Matrix of Islamic Axiology and Western Ethical Schools

Dimensi	Aksiologi Islam	Utilitarianisme	Deontologi Kantian	Eksistensialisme
Source of Values	Revelation (Al-Qur'an & Sunnah)	Experience & Calculation of Benefits	Pure reason of (reason)	Individual Freedom
Nature of Values	Transcendental absolute	Relatively Consequential	Universal rationality	Existential Subjectivity
Moral Standards	Maqasid al-Shariah	Greatest Happiness	Categorical imperative	Free & Authentic Choice
Purpose of Ethics	Please Allah & benefit the people	Collective Happiness	Compliance with obligations	Free Self-Actualization
Spiritual Dimension	Integral and fundamental	Irrelevant	Irrelevance	Rejected/Transcended
Response to the Ecological Crisis	Caliph; natural trust	Cost-benefit analysis	Obligation to protect nature	Individual Choice

Source: Adapted from Haron et al. (2020), Harahap et al. (2022), Al-Faruqi (1982), Zainuddin (2008)

Table 2 above clearly demonstrates that the differences between Islamic axiology and Western ethical schools are not merely technical or methodological, but rather at the most fundamental epistemological level: the source of values themselves. An ethical system derived from revelation will be more stable and consistent in the face of social and technological change, because it does not rely on limited reason. This is a strong academic argument for why Islamic axiology deserves an equal place in global ethical discourse.

The Contribution of Islamic Axiology in Responding to Three Contemporary Ethical Crises

The Digital Morality Crisis and the Islamic Axiological Response

The digital era has given rise to previously unimaginable forms of ethical crisis. Alfathir et al. (2025) show that unlimited digital freedom has systematically eroded social empathy, giving rise to the phenomena of cyberbullying, mass disinformation, and dehumanization in virtual interactions. Saavedra et al. (2023) in their international study in the *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* showed that an axiological approach to education has been proven to produce more sustainable behavioral changes than a purely regulatory approach, because it works from within the individual through the internalization of values.

Islamic axiology responds to this crisis through three interrelated principles. First, the principle of digital trust: every use of technology is a trust that will be accounted for, not simply a right to be freely used. Huda and Bustam (2023) in their study of the axiological values of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) explain that trust in Islam is not only a personal responsibility, but also a social one, encompassing the role of humans as caliphs who manage all of God's creation, including technology. Second, the principle of tabayyun (clarification): The Qur'an explicitly commands the clarification of information before it is disseminated (QS. Al-Hujurat: 6), which is directly relevant to the problem of digital disinformation. Third, the principle of digital ihsan: Asyari et al. (2023) shows that the value of ihsan encourages individuals to not only avoid bad actions in the digital world, but to actively contribute to goodness because of the awareness that Allah is always watching.

Moral Decadence of the Younger Generation

The phenomenon of moral decadence among Indonesia's youth has reached alarming levels. Maria et al. (2021) identified hedonism and consumerism as structural root causes, not simply individual behavior. Alfathir et al. (2025) further linked this crisis to the lack of a strong foundation of values in the educational curriculum, particularly Islamic Religious Education, which remains cognitive in nature and has not addressed the affective-axiological dimension.

Islamic axiology offers a comprehensive response through the concept of character education based on divine values. Asyari et al. (2023) in their research demonstrated that the implementation of Islamic axiological concepts in education significantly contributes to the formation of student character, encompassing aspects of piety, honesty, discipline, and responsibility. Interestingly, the Islamic axiological approach yields more holistic character change than conventional character education approaches, as it integrates transcendental motivation (deeds for the sake of Allah) with social motivation (benefiting others). Malik et al. (2021) call this the "revitalization of the axiology of Islamic education," which positions divine, human, and natural values as an inseparable whole.

The practical implications in the Indonesian context are very concrete. Huda and Bustam (2023) show that Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) that have historically implemented an Islamic axiological approach have been proven to produce graduates with higher levels of moral integrity, because the process of internalizing values in Islamic boarding schools is not only cognitive but encompasses all dimensions of students' life experiences. This demonstrates that Islamic axiology is not only theoretically relevant but also has a practical track record that can be further elaborated in national education policy.

The Ecological Crisis and Islamic Environmental Ethics

The environmental crisis is one of the most pressing ethical challenges of the contemporary era. Munir (2023) asserts that Islamic axiology plays a strategic role in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because the Qur'anic values of justice, compassion, and rahmatan lil-alamin (mercy for all creation) directly support the principles of sustainable development. Özdemir (2003), in his contribution to the volume *Islam and Ecology* published by Harvard University Press, asserts that the concept of the caliph in Islam places ecological responsibility as a moral obligation directly stemming from the theological belief in God as the absolute owner of the universe.

Risyda, Azzahra, and Syahinda (2025) demonstrate that in Islamic economics, the values of distributive justice and the prohibition of exploitation are not merely legal principles but an axiological manifestation of monotheism, stating that if God is the absolute owner of all nature, then destroying it violates the divine mandate. This contribution goes beyond what utilitarianism can offer, as it instills ecological responsibility as a moral obligation rooted in the deepest theological convictions. This makes Islamic axiology relevant not only in the personal or educational sphere, but also in the realm of industry and economic policy.

Table 3. Contribution of Islamic Axiology in Responding to Three Contemporary Ethical Crises

Ethical Crisis	Root of the Problem (Axiological Analysis)	Islamic Axiological Response
Digital Morality	Nihilism of values in virtual space; freedom without transcendental responsibility	The principles of digital trust, tabayyun, and ihsan in the use of technology
Moral Decadence of the Younger Generation	Hedonism; the absence of transcendental motivation in character education	Character education based on divine values; integration of transcendental and social motivation
Environmental Degradation	Anthropocentric-exploitative values; the absence of theological responsibility towards nature	Caliph concept; ecological trust; the prohibition of israf and facade as a divine obligation

Source: Compiled from various sources, 2025

The above findings indicate that Islamic axiology is not only an internally relevant value system but also has the potential to make a substantive contribution to contemporary global ethical discourse as an independent and equal value system. This relevance is not because Islamic axiology conforms to Western standards, but rather because it offers a distinct and complementary perspective, particularly in dimensions inherently absent from the modern Western ethical tradition: the transcendental, spiritual, and eschatological dimensions.

The first implication is for educational policy in Indonesia. Huda and Bustam (2023) and Asyari et al. (2023) consistently demonstrate that an Islamic axiological approach to education results in more holistic character formation. This provides a strong academic argument for encouraging reform of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum from a cognitive and rote orientation to an axiological and transformative orientation. The second implication is for economic and environmental policy. Islamic axiological values such as distributive justice, the prohibition of exploitation, and the ecological mandate offer a stronger ethical foundation for a sustainable economy than mere carbon regulation or market mechanisms.

The third implication concerns the construction of an Islamic axiological model within global ethical discourse. This model asserts that Islamic axiology need not position itself as a critique of Western ethics, but rather as an equal dialogue partner. Ternate (2024) demonstrates that Quranic values of justice and well-being align with principles of global social justice, demonstrating that Islamic axiology can contribute to productive intertraditional dialogue.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research successfully concludes that Islamic axiology possesses a transcendental-integral value architecture based on monotheism, which is epistemologically fundamentally different from Western ethical schools (utilitarianism, deontology, existentialism). While the West relies on reason, calculation, or individual freedom, Islamic axiology is based absolutely on revelation, thus capable of providing substantive and holistic solutions to the digital morality crisis, moral decadence, and ecological crisis through the principles of amanah, ihsan, and khalifah.

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