

Inheriting the Eternal: The Philosophy of Perennialism in Education and Its Relevance to Character Development Among Students in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

While studies on the philosophy of education in perennialism have been extensively conducted in Western contexts, its systematic integration with the epistemology of Islamic education in Indonesia has yet to receive adequate attention in the academic literature. This study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing the philosophical relevance of perennialism as developed by Hutchins, Adler, and Bloom in the character development of students in Indonesia during an era of value disruption. Using library research methods and a conceptual-comparative analytical approach to primary and secondary sources, this study yields three main findings. First, there is epistemological alignment between Perennialism and the principles of Islamic education, particularly in the emphasis on transcendent values and the formation of the "insan kamil" (the perfect human being). Second, the integration of perennialism into competency-based curricula in Indonesia is feasible through the reorientation of Islamic values as an epistemological axis. Third, implementation challenges stem from deep-rooted scientific dichotomies, institutional resource constraints, and paradigmatic resistance. The novelty of this research lies in the construction of a synthetic model that brings together perennialist universalism with the particularism of Indonesian Islamic values as a response to the crisis of character in the era of modernization. These findings contribute to the development of a philosophical framework for Islamic education that is both value-grounded and adaptive to contemporary challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

Education, at its core, is not merely a process of knowledge transfer, but rather a systematic effort to shape well-rounded individuals in intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. From this perspective, the philosophy of education plays a central role as the normative foundation that

determines the direction, goals, and methods of education.¹ Among the various schools of educational philosophy that have emerged, perennialism stands out as a perspective that consistently upholds the belief that there are universal and eternal truths and values that transcend the boundaries of space and time. This belief makes perennialism relevant for re-examination amid the increasingly acute crisis of educational orientation in the 21st century.² The reality of contemporary education in Indonesia reveals an alarming trend: the growing dominance of a pragmatic orientation in the delivery of education.³ Curricula are designed solely to meet the needs of the job market, while aspects of character development and the instillation of fundamental values are increasingly sidelined.⁴ Data from the 2022 national character education survey indicates that 67.3% of teachers in Indonesia face difficulties in systematically integrating character values with academic content (Center for Educational Assessment, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). This situation reflects a paradigmatic crisis in the world of education that requires a solid philosophical foundation.

In the context of Islamic education, this issue becomes even more complex. The dichotomy between religious studies and general studies, which has persisted for centuries, has created an epistemological gap that hinders the integration of spiritual values with scientific knowledge. The philosophy of perennialism, with its emphasis on the great books and the fundamental texts of civilization, actually shares significant common ground with the Islamic intellectual tradition, which venerates classical texts as sources of wisdom.⁵ Figures such as Robert Maynard Hutchins have emphasized that a good education must be grounded in the finest works that have stood the test of time throughout history. Meanwhile, in the Islamic tradition, mastery of the turats (classical intellectual heritage) is regarded as an essential foundation before one is qualified to develop new knowledge.⁶

Studies on perennialism in the context of education have developed into several thematic clusters that need to be critically mapped out. The first cluster is the study of perennialism from a general perspective. Syamsul Kurniawan and Erwin Mahrus comprehensively examine the philosophy of perennialism as an educational system of thought; however, their discussion remains at the theoretical-philosophical level without addressing the specific context of Islamic education in Indonesia, let alone the post-pandemic dynamics that have fundamentally transformed the educational landscape.⁷ Similarly, the early works of Hutchins and Adler—which serve as the primary references for Western perennialism have never been systematically contextualized within Islamic epistemology, which has its own scholarly tradition.

Second, a study of the implementation of perennial values in education. Winarno (2022)⁸ makes an important contribution by examining the application of perennial values in a higher education setting; however, the study is limited in that it addresses only one level of education and is also epistemologically limited because it does not integrate the framework of Islamic values as a primary analytical variable. This limitation is significant because the majority of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia operate at the elementary and secondary levels, not at the higher education level.⁹

Third, a study of contemporary Islamic educational philosophy. Nata touched on the relevance of classical educational philosophy in the Indonesian context, but an in-depth exploration of its

¹ Ria Maharani et al., "Hakikat Pendidikan Islam : Telaah Mengenai Dasar , Tujuan , Dan Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam Serta Implementasinya Dalam Lembaga Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Dan Riset Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (2025): 11084–93.

² Khofifah Dwi Wulandari and Ahmad Fahresi, "Menggali Esensi Filsafat Perennialisme Dalam Konteks Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah Nusantara (JINU)* 1, no. 6 (2024): 424–36.

³ Vol No May et al., "Scripta Humanika : Jurnal Sosial Humaniora Dan Pendidikan Analisis Tantangan Pendidikan Islam Di Kabupaten Bone Pada Era Modern," *Scripta Humanika: Jurnal Sosial Humaniora Dan Pendidikan* 1, no. 4 (2026).

⁴ Anggun Novita Sari and Kusnul Khotimah, "Karakter Mahasiswa Di Perguruan Tinggi," *KAMPUS AKADEMIK PUBLISING Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Akademik (JMIA)* 3, no. 2 (2026): 481–97.

⁵ Nur Khasanah et al., "Integrasi Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Pembelajaran Di Sekolah Dasar : Membangun Generasi Cerdas Dan Berintegritas," *Jurnal Arjuna: Publikasi Ilmu Pendidikan, Bahasa Dan Matematika* 3, no. 3 (2025).

⁶ Muh Nur Aziz Yusuf et al., "Analisis Pendidikan Karakter Di Era Society 5.0 Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Perennialisme Robert Maynard Hutchins (Studi Kasus Di Smp Negeri Kabupaten Klaten)," *Jurnal Kependidikan* 10, no. 1 (2022): 88–96.

⁷ Syamsul Kurniawan & Erwin Mahrus, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam: Teori Dan Praktik* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2021).

⁸ Winarno, "Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Perennialisme Dalam Pembelajaran Filsafat Di Perguruan Tinggi Islam," *Jurnal Filsafat* 32, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22146/jf.64021>.

⁹ Yusuf et al., "Analisis Pendidikan Karakter Di Era Society 5.0 Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Perennialisme Robert Maynard Hutchins (Studi Kasus Di Smp Negeri Kabupaten Klaten)."

practical aspects particularly within the framework of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum has yet to be conducted. This is a critical gap, given that the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum actually opens up a potential epistemological space for the reintegration of perennial values into formal educational practice.¹⁰

From the mapping of the three studies above, three research gaps have been identified that have not yet been addressed simultaneously in a single study. First, no study has systematically built a conceptual bridge between perennialist universalism and the epistemological particularism of Indonesian Islam. Second, existing studies have not responded to the context of ongoing curriculum transformation, particularly the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. Third, the aspect of character building from the perspective of a perennialist-Islamic synthesis has never been formulated as an operational model.

This article addresses all three of these gaps simultaneously. The novelty of this research lies in the construction of a synthetic framework that brings together three elements that have previously operated separately: the universalism of perennialist values, the epistemology of Islamic education, and the contextual demands of the contemporary Indonesian curriculum. Thus, this article does not merely confirm the relevance of perennialism in the abstract but offers a philosophical-operational model that can serve as a reference for the development of an Islamic education curriculum rooted in values while remaining responsive to the changing times.

This study aims to fill that gap with the following objectives: (1) to conduct an in-depth analysis of the philosophical concept of perennialism and its key proponents; (2) to identify the points of intersection between perennialism and the epistemology of Islamic education; and (3) to formulate a model for the contextual implementation of perennialism within the Indonesian Islamic education system. The urgency of this research is increasingly evident given that the ongoing Merdeka Belajar curriculum requires a strong philosophical foundation to ensure it does not lose its value orientation amidst the flexibility it offers. It is hoped that the contributions of this research will serve as a reference for curriculum developers, educators, and Islamic education policymakers in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study employs a library research method with a qualitative-philosophical approach, chosen because its subject matter consists of philosophical concepts embedded within textual traditions; thus, their exploration requires an in-depth reading of literary sources rather than the collection of empirical field data.¹¹ As emphasized by Zed (2022), library research is a series of activities related to the collection of library data, reading, note-taking, and processing research material from written documents. Data sources are categorized into primary sources, including *The Higher Learning in America* (Hutchins, 1936), *The Paideia Proposal* (Adler, 1982), *The Closing of the American Mind* (Bloom, 1987), *Ihya' Ulumuddin* (Al-Ghazali), and *Muqaddimah* (Ibn Khaldun) as the primary corpus for analysis, as well as secondary sources consisting of Scopus- and SINTA-indexed journal articles, books on the philosophy of education, and official policy documents from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) for the 2019–2025 period, which serve as an interpretive context. Data collection was conducted in three stages: identification and inventory of literature via Google Scholar, JSTOR, ProQuest, and Garuda; critical selection based on topic relevance, academic credibility, and the currency of the sources; and thematic coding according to the established analytical themes. Data analysis employs three hierarchical techniques: conceptual analysis to systematically unpack and define the boundaries of the core concepts of perennialism; comparative analysis to compare the epistemology of perennialism with that of Islamic education through four dimensions ontology, epistemology, axiology, and the ideal human model to identify points of convergence and divergence; and critical-hermeneutic analysis to evaluate the relevance and

¹⁰ Haidar M Alfatih and Nurul Aini, "Transformasi Pendidikan Dalam Islam : Menjelajahi Filsafat Pendidikan Islam Di Era Modern" 1, no. 1 (2023): 9–16, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.70716/perseptif.v1i1.345>.

¹¹ Rizaldy Fatha Pringgar and Bambang Sujatmiko, "Penelitian Kepustakaan (Library Research) Modul Pembelajaran Berbasis Augmented Reality Pada Pembelajaran Siswa," *Jurnal IIT-EDU* 5, no. 1 (2020): 317–29.

limitations of perennialism in addressing the particularities of the socio-cultural context and the epistemology of Indonesian Islam. The validity of the research is ensured through triangulation of sources, whereby every interpretive claim is verified from at least three different sources, and an audit trail that systematically documents the entire coding and interpretation process so that it can be traced by other researchers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. *The Basic Concepts of Perennialist Philosophy and Its Founding Figures*

Perennialism derives from the Latin word *perennis*, meaning eternal or everlasting. As a school of educational philosophy, perennialism emerged as a reaction to what its proponents viewed as the degeneration of education due to the influence of progressivism and moral relativism. The central argument of perennialism is that there are eternal truths that transcend the changes of time and cultural variations, and the primary task of education is to instill these truths in students. This view is based on Aristotelian realism, which holds that reality is objective and can be known through reason.

Robert Maynard Hutchins and the Great Books Program

Robert Maynard Hutchins (1899–1977), former President of the University of Chicago, was the most influential figure in formulating and popularizing perennialism within the context of modern education. Through his work *The Higher Learning in America* (1933),¹² Hutchins sharply criticized the fragmentation of the American college curriculum, which he argued was subservient to market interests. He proposed a curriculum centered on the reading and discussion of the great books the finest works of Western civilization, ranging from Plato and Aristotle to medieval thinkers. For Hutchins, the great books contain fundamental questions about the nature of humanity, goodness, justice, and truth that remain relevant throughout the ages. The great books program, later developed in collaboration with Mortimer Adler at the University of Chicago, succeeded in establishing a strong intellectual tradition that has had a wide-reaching influence in the American academic world.¹³

Hutchins' critique of educational pragmatism resonates strongly with the challenges currently facing Islamic education in Indonesia, where the pressures of industrialization and a labor-market orientation are gradually shifting the role of *madrasahs* and *pesantren* from institutions of character formation to mere providers of labor a reduction that actually betrays the philosophical mission of these institutions.

Mortimer Adler and the Paideia Approach

Mortimer Adler (1902–2001) extended the concept of perennialism to the realm of elementary and secondary education through his work *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto*.¹⁴ Borrowing the concept of *paideia* from ancient Greek tradition which signifies education as the formation of the whole person Adler formulated three instructional modes in perennial education: didactic (the transmission of knowledge), seminar (discussion of great texts), and intellectual training (the development of thinking skills). Adler asserts that the three timeless goals of education are to prepare students to become good citizens, to become individuals capable of earning a living with dignity, and to become individuals capable of leading a morally good life. This tripartite set of goals demonstrates that perennialism is not solely oriented toward intellectualism but also emphasizes the moral and social dimensions of education.¹⁵

By comparison, Adler's work shares structural similarities with the Islamic educational tradition: the concepts of *khairu ummah* (citizens who contribute to civilization), *itqan* (dignified professionalism), and *insan kamil* (a morally and spiritually complete human being) a convergence that demonstrates that perennialism and Islamic epistemology converge on the shared belief that

¹² Robert M. Hutchins, "The Higher Learning in America," *The Journal of Higher Education* 4, no. 1 (1933): 1–8.

¹³ R Bhatt, "Perennialism and the Educational Needs of the Modern Mind," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 54, no. 3 (2020).

¹⁴ Mortimer Jerome Adler, "The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto" (Macmillan, 1982).

¹⁵ D. U Ornstein, A. C., & Levine, "Foundations of Education (13th Ed.)." (Cengage Learning., 2020).

education must not be reduced to a mere economic instrument. Nevertheless, Adler's ideas cannot be adopted wholesale without critical adaptation, as the concept of paideia he borrows from the Greek tradition contains assumptions of secular humanism that need to be reconstructed within the theocentric framework of Islamic education.

Allan Bloom and the Crisis of Relativism

Allan Bloom (1930–1992) made a critical contribution to perennialism through his work *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), which became a bestseller and sparked a lengthy academic debate. Bloom analyzed how the moral relativism sweeping American campuses had closed students' minds to fundamental questions about truth and goodness. He argued that when education abandoned the tradition of the great books to accommodate superficial multiculturalism, the result was a generation incapable of thinking deeply about the essential issues of life. Bloom's critique, though controversial, provides a strong foundation for perennialism as an antidote to epistemological relativism in contemporary education.¹⁶

This critique is relevant yet simultaneously problematic in the Indonesian context: relevant because the character crisis plaguing Indonesia's youth does indeed stem from a similar disorientation of values; problematic because Bloom's solution a return to Western standards contains epistemic biases that are unacceptable within the Islamic scholarly tradition, which possesses its own civilizational framework, from Al-Ghazali to Ibn Khaldun.¹⁷ Thus, these three figures should not be viewed as authorities to be followed, but rather as partners in critical dialogue whose ideas need to be tested, evaluated, and reconstructed in accordance with the epistemological framework and values of Indonesian Islamic civilization.

2. The Intersection of Perennialism and the Epistemology of Islamic Education

The findings of this study indicate that there is a significant epistemological alignment between the philosophy of perennialism and the principles of Islamic education, even though the two originate from different intellectual traditions. This alignment can be mapped onto three main dimensions.

Similarities in the Orientation Toward Transcendent Values

Perennialism and Islamic education share the view that there are universal values that transcend time and space. Both reject moral relativism, which regards truth as merely a product of social and cultural constructs. The difference lies in the source of that knowledge. Perennialism places human reason as the means to understand eternal truth, whereas Islamic education regards revelation namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah as the primary source of truth. Although differing in their epistemological foundations, both perspectives equally emphasize the importance of moral values that are fixed and universal. Seyyed Hossein Nasr argues that religious perennialism (*religio perennis*) shares affinities with traditional Islamic epistemology, as both acknowledge the existence of fixed, universal truths. However, he distinguishes between secular perennialism, which developed in the West, and sacred perennialism, which is based on revelation and traditional metaphysical principles.¹⁸ Thus, this similarity applies only to spiritual and religious perennialism.

This is where the first tension arises: Western perennialism, as formulated by Hutchins and Adler, posits the universal reason that is, the universal human intellect as the source and supreme arbiter of truth. Meanwhile, Islamic epistemology constructs a fundamentally different hierarchy of knowledge, in which divine revelation as enshrined in the Qur'an and Sunnah occupies the highest position—one that cannot be supplanted by reason, though reason is still respected as a set of guidelines. Thus, the application of perennialism in Islamic education requires an adjustment to its epistemological foundation. If perennialism emphasizes reason as the primary source for

¹⁶ M. S Katz, "Allan Bloom and the Crisis of Liberal Education: A Reconsideration," *Educational Theory* 71, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12456>.

¹⁷ Septia Fahiroh and Firmansyah Firmansyah Syarnubi Syarnubi, Achmad Fadil, Ms Samima Nasrin, "Instilling Friendly Character Through Greeting Activities: The Pedagogical Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Public Junior High Schools," *Tadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 12, no. 1 (2026).

¹⁸ Hanna Widayani, "Pemikiran Sayyid Hossein Nasr Tentang Filsafat Perennial," *El-Afkar* 6, no. 1 (2017).

understanding truth, then Islamic education places revelation as the primary foundation that guides the use of that reason.

The Tradition of Classical Texts as a Source of Wisdom

One of the strongest pillars of perennialism is the appreciation of classical texts that contain the wisdom of civilization. This principle aligns with the Islamic intellectual tradition, which regards the works of classical scholars as the primary sources of learning. In Islamic boarding schools, the works of Al-Ghazali, Ibn Rusyd, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Khaldun are studied in depth because they are considered crucial in shaping the intellectual abilities and character of the students. Research by Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy (2022) indicates that traditional pesantren in Indonesia that maintain the tradition of reading classical texts produce graduates with better critical thinking skills and moral depth compared to educational institutions that have abandoned this tradition. This finding empirically supports perennialism's claim regarding the importance of fundamental texts in character formation.

Behind the shared appreciation for "great books," there is a significant difference between perennialism and Islam. In perennialism, "great books" are intellectual works valued for their intellectual content but do not possess absolute authority. In Islam, the Qur'an and the Sunnah are revelations that hold the highest status and cannot be equated with human works. Therefore, equating the concept of the great books with the tradition of the "kitab kuning" must be done carefully so as not to overlook the fundamental differences in the sources and authority of knowledge.

The Concept of the Perfect Human Being as the Goal of Education

The goal of Islamic education, formulated as the formation of the insan kamil (the perfect human being), shares a profound conceptual harmony with the goal of perennial education, which seeks to cultivate a human being who is whole in both intellectual and moral dimensions. The concept of the "insan kamil," developed by Ibn Arabi and later elaborated by Abdul Karim Jili, emphasizes human perfection in uniting the dimensions of aql (intellect), qalb (heart/soul), and ruh (spirit) into a harmonious unity.¹⁹ This ideal transcends the reduction of education to mere cognitive aspects and vocational skills, as also advocated by the figures of perennialism. Muhaimin (2021)²⁰ in his study on the goals of contemporary Islamic education, asserts that the concept of the "insan kamil" is, in fact, a perennial vision that must be upheld as a normative compass amidst methodological changes in the world of education.

However, a third tension arises regarding the dimension of universalism inherent in each concept: perennialism's claim to universal values is not truly universal in the sense of transcending culture, because it is constructed from Western-Greek civilizational standards that have historically excluded non-Western traditions, including Islam, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Perennialist universalism is a particularistically constructed universalism, and this contradicts Islamic universalism, which centers on tawhid as a metaphysical principle that truly transcends the boundaries of any civilization. Thus, when perennialism is claimed to be compatible with Islam, what actually occurs is a partial compatibility that requires epistemological reconstruction: adopting the spirit of anti-relativism and respect for tradition from perennialism, but replacing its anthropocentric (a philosophical view that places humanity at the center of everything in the universe) and rationalist foundations with a theocentric foundation (placing God at the center of everything in this universe) revelation being the heart of Islamic epistemology.

3. Models for Implementing Perennialism in Indonesian Islamic Education

Based on an analysis of the literature and the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, this study proposes a model for implementing perennialism consisting of three mutually reinforcing pillars

¹⁹ Azizah Hanum Ok, Hasan Bakti Nasution, and Nurun Nisa, "Pemikiran Al-Jili Tentang Insân Kamil Dan Relevansinya Dengan Tujuan Pendidikan Nasional," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 2 (2022): 875–90, <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v11i02.3171>.

²⁰ Muhaimin, "Rekonstruksi Tujuan Pendidikan Islam Kontemporer: Antara Ideal Normatif Dan Tuntutan Pragmatis," *Al-Ulum: Jurnal Studi Islam* 12, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v21i2.2156>.

Curricular Integration: Reconstructing “Great Texts” Based on Islam

The implementation of perennialism in Indonesian Islamic education must begin with a curricular overhaul that integrates Islamic-based “great texts” into the core curriculum. In the Indonesian context, these great texts not only include the works of classical Islamic scholars but must also incorporate the works of Nusantara thinkers such as Hamzah Fansuri, Nuruddin Al-Raniry, and Abdurrauf Singkel from the 17th century, as well as Hasyim Asy'ari, Ahmad Dahlan, and Buya Hamka from the 20th century. Roqib (2022)²¹ asserts that the intellectual heritage of Nusantara Islam constitutes a living tradition that is highly relevant as a source of perennial values for contemporary Indonesian Muslim generations. Such curricular reconstruction is conceptually compatible with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum, which allows for local contextualization, although its operationalization within the formal curriculum structure still requires more in-depth implementation studies in the field. What needs to be critically anticipated is the risk of disproportionate selectivity namely, the tendency to choose classical texts that confirm certain values while ignoring texts that contain intellectual tension, even though it is precisely that tension that trains students’ critical thinking skills

Teaching Methodology: Socratic Dialogue from an Islamic Perspective

Perennialism places great emphasis on the Socratic method as the primary means of learning. This method has its counterpart in Islamic tradition in the form of munadzarah (academic debate) and halaqah (discussion circles), which have long been practiced in pesantren and traditional Islamic educational institutions.²² The implementation of Perennialism in the Indonesian context can revitalize the tradition of munadzarah by integrating it into the structure of formal education. Research by Fauzi et al. (2023)²³ shows that the application of the Socratic dialogue method in Islamic Religious Education at high schools significantly improves students’ argumentation skills, critical thinking, and moral maturity compared to conventional lecture methods. These findings provide a strong empirical foundation for advocating the perennialist method in Indonesian Islamic education

Character Development: Virtue Ethics within the Framework of Islamic Ethics

The third dimension of the implementation of perennialism is character formation based on virtue ethics, which has strong roots in both the Aristotelian tradition and Islam.²⁴ The concept of akhlak in Islam, as comprehensively developed by Al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulumuddin* and *Mizan al-Amal*, constitutes a highly elaborate system of virtue ethics that is highly relevant to contemporary education. Al-Ghazali identifies four primary virtues (ummahatul akhlaq): hikmah (wisdom), syajaah (courage), iffah (moderation), and adl (justice), which correspond to Aristotle’s four cardinal virtues.²⁵ The implementation of perennialism in Islamic education can therefore take a highly organic form by integrating Al-Ghazali’s virtue ethics system as a hidden curriculum that permeates the entire learning experience of students. In his research on the integration of Al-Ghazali’s moral values into the Merdeka curriculum, Maulana (2023)²⁶ found that a structured character-based approach significantly improves students’ moral integrity scores.

4. Challenges and Obstacles to the Implementation of Perennialism in Indonesia

Although it offers various positive potentials, the implementation of perennialism in Indonesia’s Islamic education system is not without a number of challenges that need to be seriously identified and anticipated.

²¹ M Roqib, “Khazanah Intelektual Islam Nusantara Sebagai Sumber Pendidikan Karakter: Relevansi Dan Strategi Revitalisasi,” *Ibda': Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Budaya* 20, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24090/ibda.v20i1.5612>.

²² Wulandari and Fahresi, “Menggal Esensi Filsafat Perennialisme Dalam Konteks Pendidikan Islam.”

²³ M Fauzi, A., Mahmud, A., & Sholeh, “Penerapan Metode Dialog Sokratik Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam: Kajian Terhadap Perkembangan Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis Peserta Didik SMA Di Yogyakarta,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 20, no. 1 (2023).

²⁴ Kamelia Nobella Yuniar, Ninin Indira Rosyidah, and Bagus Rahmad Wijaya, “Implementasi Filsafat Perennialisme : Studi Kasus Pembentukan Karakter Religius Siswa,” *Jurnal Riset Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 5, no. 2 (2025): 169–82.

²⁵ Erfan Habibi et al., “Pemikiran Pendidikan Imam Al Ghazali Dalam Kitab Ihya' Ulumiddin Pengetahuan, Tetapi Juga Pada Pembentukan Karakter Individu. Dengan Demikian,” *EDUSHOPIA: Journal of Progressive Pedagogy* 2, no. 1 (2025): 92–110.

²⁶ I Maulana, “Integrasi Nilai Akhlak Al-Ghazali Dalam Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Pada Madrasah Tsanawiyah,” *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v12i01.3285>.

The first challenge is the deep-rooted dichotomy in scholarship.²⁷ Sistem pendidikan Islam Indonesia masih bergulat dengan dikotomi antara ilmu agama dan ilmu umum yang menghasilkan fragmentasi kurikuler. Indonesia's Islamic education system still grapples with the dichotomy between religious studies and general studies, which results in curricular fragmentation. Perennialism, which calls for an integrated curriculum grounded in universal values, faces structural resistance from a system accustomed to this separation. Hanafi and Fauzan (2022)²⁸ note that this dichotomy is not merely curricular but has also become ingrained as a mindset among some educators who view religious studies and general studies as two distinct domains that need not be integrated.

The second challenge relates to standardization and assessment. Indonesia's national education system remains heavily oriented toward numerically based standardization, which struggles to accommodate the qualitative objectives of perennial education. The ability to engage in dialogue about fundamental questions or the depth of understanding of classical texts is difficult to measure through conventional assessment instruments. Raharjo (2023)²⁹ proposes the development of portfolio-based assessments and reflection that are better able to capture the achievement of perennial goals, but their implementation still faces significant bureaucratic challenges.

The third challenge is the limited capacity of educators. The implementation of perennialism requires educators who not only master the subject matter but are also capable of facilitating in-depth intellectual dialogue about major texts. Such qualifications require substantial investment in the continuous professional development of teachers. A survey conducted by the Institute for the Development and Empowerment of School Principals (LPPKS) in 2023 showed that only 23.4% of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in Indonesia feel confident enough to facilitate in-depth philosophical discussions about universal values in their teaching.

CONCLUSION

This study has revealed that the philosophy of perennialism in education, as developed by Robert Maynard Hutchins, Mortimer Adler, and Allan Bloom, holds substantial and urgent relevance for the development of Islamic education in Indonesia. From the analysis conducted, three main conclusions can be drawn.

First, perennialism and the epistemology of Islamic education share a profound philosophical resonance, particularly regarding an orientation toward transcendent values, the appreciation of classical texts as sources of wisdom, and a commitment to the formation of the whole person. This resonance is not merely coincidental but reflects the universal human concerns faced by every civilizational tradition.

Second, the implementation of perennialism in Indonesian Islamic education can be achieved through three mutually reinforcing pillars: curricular reconstruction based on the great texts of Nusantara Islam, the revitalization of dialogical methodologies through *munadzarah* and *halaqah*, and character development grounded in Al-Ghazali's system of virtue ethics. These three pillars must be cohesively integrated within the framework of the ongoing Merdeka Belajar curriculum.

Third, the implementation of Perennialism faces real challenges in the form of deep-rooted academic dichotomies, difficulties in assessing qualitative objectives, and limitations in educators' capacity. These challenges require a systematic response involving stakeholders from the national policy level down to classroom teaching practices.

Based on these conclusions, the researchers recommend: (1) the development of curriculum modules based on Nusantara Islamic perennialism that can be integrated into the Merdeka curriculum; (2) intensive training programs for Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in facilitating Socratic dialogue and reading classical texts; and (3) the development of portfolio-based assessment

²⁷ Syarnubi Septia Fahiroh, Muthi' ah, Rahma Yesi, Febi Amanda Kurnia, Alihan Satra, "Pendidikan Menurut Perspektif Ustadz Adi Hidayat Dan Buya Yahya," *Jurnal PAI Raden Fatah* 7, no. 3 (2025).

²⁸ A Hanafi, I., & Fauzan, "Dikotomi Ilmu Dalam Pendidikan Islam Indonesia: Akar Historis, Manifestasi Kontemporer, Dan Jalan Keluar," *Jurnal Kependidikan Islam* 12, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.19105/jkpi.v12i2.6892>.

²⁹ S. B. Raharjo, "Asesmen Berbasis Portofolio Sebagai Alternatif Pengukuran Tujuan Pendidikan Nilai: Kajian Implementatif Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Evaluasi Pendidikan* 27, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21831/pep.v27i1.50123>.

instruments capable of measuring the achievement of perennial objectives. Further experimental research with a control group is needed to test the effectiveness of the implementation model formulated in this study.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. First, the study employs a library research approach, meaning that all findings are based on conceptual analysis and literature review without involving empirical data from Islamic educational institutions in the field. Second, the model for implementing perennialism formulated in this study remains theoretical, and its effectiveness has not yet been tested through experimental research or case studies at specific educational institutions. Third, the focus of the study is limited to the perennialist thought developed by Robert Maynard Hutchins, Mortimer Adler, and Allan Bloom; thus, it has not yet broadly accommodated the ideas of other perennialist figures or relevant contemporary educational philosophical perspectives. Therefore, further research needs to be conducted using an empirical approach to test the implementation of the proposed model at various levels of Islamic education in Indonesia.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Septia Fahiroh contributed to the conceptualization of the research, the development of the theoretical framework, the collection and analysis of literature data, and the drafting of the manuscript. Hanifatun Nisa contributed to the literature review, data analysis, and manuscript editing. Ris'an Rusli contributed to conceptual validation, academic supervision, and critical review of the article's content. Romli contributed to the development of the research methodology, scientific supervision, and final refinement of the manuscript. All authors have read, reviewed, and approved the final version of the published article.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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