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# The Relevance of Ibn Sina's Philosophy of Education to the Development of MI Curriculum in the Merdeka Belajar Era

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the relevance of Ibn Sina's educational philosophy to the development of the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah curriculum in the Merdeka Belajar era. Using a qualitative approach with a literature review and field study design, data were collected through the analysis of Ibn Sina's works, Merdeka Curriculum policy documents, interviews with 20 madrasah practitioners, and focus group discussions. The results of the study indicate five main philosophical convergences: a student-centered learning paradigm, differentiated learning, a holistic approach, enjoyable learning, and character formation. Ibn Sina's philosophy provides an epistemological foundation for integrating Islamic values with modern pedagogy, a development-stage-based learning framework, and universal pedagogical principles. The integration model is formulated in five dimensions: vision-goal, curriculum design, learning strategies, holistic assessment, and educator development. Implementation challenges include educator competence, learning resources and mindset resistance. A comprehensive strategy is recommended to transform the MI curriculum to be responsive to the 21st century while being grounded in authentic Islamic values.

**Keywords:** The Educational Philosophy of Ibn Sina, Independent Learning Curriculum, Islamic Elementary School.

## I. Introduction

Education is a fundamental instrument for shaping the character and competence of the next generation. In the context of Islamic education, particularly in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), the challenge of integrating Islamic values with the demands of the times has become increasingly complex. (Rizky et al., 2023) The Merdeka Belajar era initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia demands a transformation of the educational paradigm from teacher-centered to student-centered, allowing for a broader space for the holistic development of students' potential. This policy presents both opportunities and challenges for Islamic educational institutions to formulate a curriculum that remains rooted in Islamic values while being responsive to contemporary dynamics. (Nuzuli, 2025).

Amid the tide of educational modernization, the thoughts of classical Islamic figures such as Ibn Sina (980-1037 AD) offer a rich and relevant philosophical perspective (Darmanto et al., 2023). Ibn Sina, known as



a polymath with monumental contributions in philosophy, medicine, and education, formulated a comprehensive and humanistic concept of education. His educational philosophy emphasizes the balanced development of the body, intellect, and spirit, a concept aligned with Indonesia's national education goals of creating well-rounded human beings. Ibn Sina viewed education not merely as the transfer of knowledge, but as a process of character formation (ta' dīb) and the development of human potential towards perfection (insān kāmil) (Tercan & Nurysheva, 2022).

Some of Ibn Sina's outstanding educational principles demonstrate the depth of his thinking regarding humanistic and comprehensive pedagogy. First, education must be tailored to the stages of child development, where Ibn Sina divides the phases of a child's growth into several periods with different physical, psychological, and intellectual characteristics ranging from infancy to adolescence. Each phase requires a specific pedagogical approach and learning materials that suit a child's cognitive capacity. Second, learning methods must be varied and enjoyable, as Ibn Sina believed that monotonous and forced learning would hinder the natural development of children and create boredom, which is counterproductive to the learning process. He recommended the use of educational games, stories, and activities that capture the child's interest as effective learning media. Third, the curriculum must integrate physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual education. Ibn Sina emphasized the importance of exercise and physical activity for bodily health, the study of science and philosophy for intellectual development, moral education for character building, and religious practice for the purification of the soul. Fourth, it is important to pay attention to the individual differences of learners, where Ibn Sina recognized that each child has different talents, interests, learning speeds, and tendencies; therefore, educators must be able to identify and accommodate the uniqueness of each individual. (Rasyid, 2019)

The philosophical principles of Ibn Sina demonstrate a fundamental alignment with the spirit of Merdeka Belajar, which was initiated by the Indonesian government (Rohmah 2013). The concept of differentiated learning in Merdeka Belajar, which requires teachers to adjust the learning process according to the needs, abilities, and learning styles of students, aligns with Ibn Sina's principle of paying attention to individual differences. Student-centered learning, which is the essence of Merdeka Belajar, resonates with Ibn Sina's view that children are active subjects in the educational process, not passive objects merely receiving a transfer of knowledge. (Muhamad et al., 2023) Likewise, the comprehensive competence development in the Merdeka Curriculum, covering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions, aligns with Ibn Sina's concept of holistic education, which integrates physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects. Even the emphasis of Merdeka Belajar on enjoyable, contextual, and meaningful learning can be traced its philosophical roots to Ibn Sina's ideas about the importance of varied and non-coercive learning methods. This paradigmatic alignment shows that classical Islamic educational philosophy, particularly Ibn Sina's thought, is not only relevant but can also serve as a solid epistemological foundation for the implementation of Merdeka Belajar in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, bridging the intellectual heritage of Islam with the demands of 21st-century education. (Zulika & Astuti, 2024)

Research on Islamic educational philosophy and curriculum has been extensive, but studies that specifically explore the relevance of Ibn Sina's thought to the development of MI curricula in the context of Merdeka Belajar are still limited. Previous studies have focused more on the historical and philosophical aspects of Ibn Sina's thought without contextualizing it with contemporary educational policies in Indonesia. Some research indicates that integrating classical Islamic philosophical values can enrich modern curriculum design and provide a solid epistemological foundation for Islamic education in Indonesia. Research (Hidayatulloh, 2024) explains that Ibn Sina's concept of education regarding the balance of developing the body, intellect, and morals is relevant to the goals of holistic education in Indonesia. Meanwhile, a study (Muslimin, 2023) reveals that implementing the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in madrasahs requires a strong philosophical foundation to ensure that Islamic values are not uprooted amid the currents of modernization. On the other hand, international research by Günther (2020) emphasizes that Ibn Sina's thoughts on

pedagogy and child developmental psychology have made significant contributions to Islamic civilization and remain relevant for study in the context of contemporary education.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, as an Islamic elementary education institution, holds a strategic position in shaping the foundation of faith, knowledge, and character of the Muslim generation. In the Merdeka Belajar era, MI is required to develop a curriculum that not only meets national competency standards but also accommodates the needs for the development of Islamic spirituality and morality of students. This requires a philosophical framework that can bridge the gap between classical Islamic scholarly traditions and the demands of 21st-century education. Initial data from this study show that out of 50 madrasahs surveyed in Central Java and East Java, 78% reported experiencing difficulties integrating classical Islamic values with the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. Only 32% explicitly referred to the thoughts of classical Islamic education figures, such as Ibn Sina, in developing their curriculum. In addition, preliminary interviews with 20 teachers and school principals indicated a gap between the theoretical understanding of Islamic educational philosophy and its practical implementation in curriculum design. Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to explore the relevance of Ibn Sina's educational philosophy to the development of the MI curriculum in the Merdeka Belajar era. This research is expected to provide a theoretical contribution in the form of a conceptual framework for MI curriculum development grounded in classical Islamic educational philosophy, while being responsive to contemporary educational policies. Practically, this study is expected to serve as a reference for policymakers and education practitioners in MI in designing a curriculum that is integrative, holistic, and based on authentic Islamic values.

## II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1. Ibn Sina's Philosophy of Education

Ibn Sina, known in the West as Avicenna, was one of the greatest polymaths in Islamic civilization who lived during the Golden Age (980-1037 AD). His contributions across various fields of knowledge, ranging from philosophy, medicine, astronomy, and education, have had a significant impact not only on the Islamic world but also on Western civilization during the Middle Ages. In the field of education, Ibn Sina formulated comprehensive and systematic pedagogical concepts, as reflected in his various works such as *Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb*, *Al-Siyasah*, and treatises specifically on child education. His educational thought was based on a harmonious synthesis of Islamic teachings, Aristotelian philosophy, and empirical experience as an educator and observer of human development. (Günther, 2020) emphasized that Ibn Sina did not merely continue the Greek tradition of educational thought but developed a new approach that integrated the Islamic spiritual dimension with a systematic pedagogical methodology based on a deep understanding of child developmental psychology.

The philosophical foundation of Ibn Sina's education is based on his philosophical anthropology concept of humans as beings possessing both material (body) and immaterial (soul) dimensions of existence. Ibn Sina viewed that the ultimate goal of education is to guide humans toward perfection (*al-kamal*) through the development of all their innate potentials, including physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. This concept aligns with the Islamic view of humans as caliphs on Earth, responsible for optimally actualizing their human potential. Nejad and Borhani (2013) explain that Ibn Sina's contribution to the development of the Islamic education curriculum lies in his ability to formulate pedagogical principles that are universal while remaining rooted in Islamic values. From an epistemological perspective, knowledge is acquired through two main avenues: first, through sensory experience and rational processes (*al-'aql al-'amali*), and second, through spiritual illumination or intuition (*al-hads*). Both avenues must be developed in balance in the educational process to produce humans who are perfect, both intellectually and spiritually (Inati, 2013).

Ibn Sina's pedagogical principles encompass several fundamental aspects that are still relevant today. First, the principle of gradual development (*tadarruj*), in which Ibn Sina divides the stages of child development into several phases with different characteristics, ranging from infancy (0-2 years), early childhood (2-7 years), late childhood (7-14 years), and adolescence (14-21 years). Each phase requires learning materials, methods, and approaches that align with a child's cognitive capacity and psychological development. Second, the principle of balance and moderation (*tawazun wa i'tidal*), which emphasizes the importance of developing all aspects of a child's personality proportionally without emphasizing one aspect while neglecting others. Third, the principle of individualized learning, where Ibn Sina acknowledges that every child has different temperaments (*mizaj*), talents (*isti'dad*), and tendencies, so the educational approach must be tailored to the individual characteristics. Fourth, the principle of active and enjoyable learning rejects coercive methods and excessive corporal punishment, as they can harm a child's psyche and hinder their natural development (Inati, 2013). (Hidayatulloh 2024) emphasizes that Ibn Sina's educational philosophy regarding child-centered learning and respecting the individuality of learners has significant implications for contemporary education, particularly in the context of pedagogical reforms that emphasize student-centered learning.

According to Ibn Sina, the educational curriculum must encompass four main, interconnected, and integrated dimensions. The first dimension is physical education (*tarbiyah jismiyyah*), which includes maintaining health, good nutrition, regular exercise, and developing motor skills. Ibn Sina, with his background as a prominent physician, emphasized the importance of physical health as the foundation for the development of intellectual and spiritual capacities. The second dimension is intellectual education (*tarbiyah 'aqliyyah*), which involves learning languages, mathematics, natural sciences, logic, philosophy, and various other branches of knowledge. The process of intellectual development should be carried out progressively, starting from the concrete to the abstract and from the simple to the complex. The third dimension is moral education (*tarbiyah khuluqiyyah*), which aims to shape noble character (*akhlak mahmudah*) and eliminate reprehensible traits (*akhlak madzmumah*) through habituation, role modeling, and the internalization of virtuous values. The fourth dimension is spiritual education (*tarbiyah ruhiyyah*), which includes religious education, worship practices, and the development of spiritual awareness that brings one closer to God. (J. Mark Halstead, 2007) explains that the integration of Islamic values into the educational curriculum should not be superficial or merely an addition of religious subjects, but should rather be the soul that enlivens the entire educational process and shapes the students' worldview.

The learning methods recommended by Ibn Sina varied and were adapted to the learning material and the characteristics of the students. He advocated the use of discussion and dialogue methods (*munazarah*) to develop critical and argumentative thinking skills, demonstration and hands-on practice methods for skill learning, storytelling methods (*qisas*) for instilling moral values, and memorization and repetition methods (*tahfiz wa tiktirar*) for materials that require memorization. Nevertheless, Ibn Sina emphasized that learning should take place in an enjoyable and non-coercive atmosphere because forced learning results in superficial knowledge that does not last. He also recommends the use of educational games as a learning medium, especially for young children, because play is a natural way for children to learn and explore their environments. (Fathurohim, 2023) in his analysis of the philosophical perspective of Islamic education, concludes that the pedagogical approach developed by figures such as Ibn Sina has relevance to the principles of constructivism in contemporary learning theory, where learners are seen as active subjects who construct their own knowledge through interaction with the environment and guidance from educators.

The role of educators in Ibn Sina's conception is central and noble. Educators function not only as knowledge transmitters (*ta'lim*) but also as character builders (*ta'dib*) and spiritual guides (*tarbiyah*). An educator must have deep academic competence in their field, pedagogical competence in delivering material, personal competence that reflects noble character, and social competence in interacting with students. Ibn Sina emphasizes the importance of educators' exemplary conduct in shaping students' character, because

children learn mostly through observing and imitating the behavior of adults around them. Educators must also have the sensitivity to understand the individual characteristics of each student and the ability to adapt teaching methods according to their needs. (Günther, 2020) emphasizes that the classical Islamic education model developed by scholars such as Ibn Sina places the teacher-student relationship within a sacred and transformative framework, where the teacher not only imparts knowledge but also transmits life values and guides the student on a spiritual journey toward intellectual and moral maturity.

## 2.2. The Concept and Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in Islamic Elementary Schools

The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is a transformative policy launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia in response to various national education challenges and the demands of 21st-century learning. This policy was officially implemented gradually in 2022 after trial processes in several pioneering schools. The basic philosophy of Merdeka Belajar is to provide freedom and autonomy to educational units, educators, and students to develop their potential optimally without being burdened by rigid and uniform regulations that limit creativity. In this context, the concept of "merdeka" (freedom) refers to freedom of thought, freedom to innovate in learning, and freedom to develop competencies according to individual interests and talents. Rahmawati et al. (2021) explained that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in madrasahs presents a great opportunity to integrate Islamic values with innovative learning that is responsive to students' needs, but it also poses specific challenges related to the readiness of human resources and supporting infrastructure.

The main principles of the Merdeka Curriculum encompass several fundamental aspects that distinguish it from previous curricula. First, competency-based learning emphasizes achieving measurable and meaningful learning outcomes rather than merely mastering content knowledge. Second, flexibility in the curriculum structure allows educational units to allocate learning time according to the characteristics and needs of students in their environment. Third, differentiated learning requires educators to tailor the learning process to students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Fourth, project-based learning through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project, which integrates various subjects to solve contextual problems. Fifth, formative assessment focuses on monitoring students' development and providing constructive feedback to improve learning. Sixth, character development through the internalization of the Pancasila Student Profile, which includes dimensions of being faithful and devoted to God Almighty, having global diversity, working together, being independent, thinking critically, and being creative. (Nuzuli, 2025) emphasizes that the development of the Islamic basic education curriculum must be able to integrate classical philosophical values with modern pedagogical principles to produce a curriculum design that is epistemologically solid and practical in its implementation.

The Independent Curriculum structure at the elementary madrasah level consists of several main interrelated components. The first component is intrathe curricular learning, which includes compulsory and elective subjects with flexible time allocations. In the context of madrasahs, these subjects include Islamic Religious Education and Character Education (integrated with Akidah Akhlak, Fiqh, Qur'an and Hadith, and Islamic Cultural History), Pancasila Education, Indonesian Language, Mathematics, Natural and Social Sciences (IPAS), Physical Education, Sports, and Health, as well as arts and crafts subjects. The second component is the Project for Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students and the Profile of Rahmatan lil Alamin Students (specifically for madrasahs), which is allocated approximately 20-30% of the total learning time. This project was designed to develop cross-disciplinary competencies through problem-based learning in real-life contexts. The third component is co-curricular learning, which is a learning activity carried out to strengthen or sharpen the competencies learned in intramural learning. Fahmi and Susanto (2021) explain that the

integration of Islamic values in the Independent Curriculum should not be seen as a separate entity, but rather as a perspective that colors the entire learning process and the character development of students.

Learning outcomes in the Merdeka Curriculum are formulated based on the developmental phases of students, rather than by grade as in the previous curriculum. For MI levels, learning outcomes are divided into three phases: Phase A (generally for grades I and II), Phase B (generally for grades III and IV), and Phase C (generally for grades V and VI). This phase-based approach provides space for students to learn according to their developmental stage and gives educators the flexibility to adjust learning to the students' pace. Each subject has comprehensive learning outcomes covering the dimensions of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Specifically, for Islamic religious education in madrasahs, learning outcomes not only emphasize the cognitive aspect in the form of mastery of Islamic concepts, but also the affective aspect in the form of internalization of values and the development of noble character, as well as the psychomotor aspect in the form of worship practices and the application of Islamic teachings in daily life. Gea et al. (2023) emphasize that the implementation of Islamic educational philosophy in the madrasah curriculum requires the formulation of learning outcomes that are holistic and balanced between the development of students' spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions.

Learning differentiation is a key characteristic of the Merdeka Curriculum, which requires a shift in the pedagogical paradigm from uniform learning to learning that is responsive to student diversity. Differentiation can be carried out through three main avenues: content differentiation (what is learned), process differentiation (how it is learned), and product differentiation (how students demonstrate their understanding of the material). In the context of MI, learning differentiation must consider various factors such as students' learning readiness levels, diverse learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic), different interests and talents, and heterogeneous socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Educators must be competent in conducting diagnostic assessments to identify students' learning needs, design varied learning experiences, and provide support according to individual needs. (Hidayatulloh, 2024), in his study on the relevance of classical Islamic educational thinkers' ideas to the Merdeka Curriculum, concludes that the principle of differentiated learning has long been known in the Islamic educational tradition, as seen in the educational practices of figures such as Ibn Sina, who paid great attention to the individual characteristics of students in designing the learning process.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasahs faces various challenges that need to be anticipated and overcome. The first challenge is the readiness of educators, which not only includes a conceptual understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum but also practical competence in applying differentiated learning, designing authentic assessments, and integrating Islamic values into the learning process. The second challenge is the availability of learning resources that support the implementation of the new curriculum, including textbooks, learning media, and educational technology. The third challenge is the educational mindset or paradigm, which still tends to be conservative and resistant to change among educators, madrasah principals, and parents. The fourth challenge is the madrasah management system, which needs to be transformed to support flexibility and autonomy in pedagogical decision making. The fifth challenge is integrating authentic Islamic values without adopting a rigid or indoctrinative approach. (Fathurohim, 2023) explains that Islamic education reform in Indonesia, including the implementation of the new curriculum in madrasahs, requires a comprehensive and contextual approach that considers the social, cultural, and political complexities surrounding Islamic educational institutions.

### 2.3. The Relevance and Integration of Classical Islamic Educational Philosophy in the Contemporary Curriculum

The discourse on the relevance of classical Islamic educational thought in the context of contemporary education has become a study that attracted the attention of many researchers at the national

and international levels. The ideas of figures such as Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, and others offer a rich philosophical framework on the nature of humans, the purpose of education, learning methods, and comprehensive curricula. In the modern era, characterized by rapid change, globalization, and technological advancement, the question of how far these classical thoughts remain relevant and how to integrate them with the demands of 21st-century education becomes important. (Günther, 2020) In his comprehensive study of Ibn Sina's pedagogical thought, he concluded that Ibn Sina's contribution is not only historical but also offers universal principles about learning and child development that remain valid to this day. The universality of these principles lies in their strong foundation in the empirical observation of child developmental psychology and a deep understanding of the dimensions of human personality.

The intersection between Ibn Sina's philosophy of education and the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum can be found in several fundamental aspects. First, both emphasize the importance of a student-centered approach, recognizing that each child has unique potential, characteristics, and needs that must be addressed. Ibn Sina's concept of individualized learning aligns with the principle of differentiation in the Merdeka Curriculum, which requires tailoring learning to the student's learning profile. Second, both advocate holistic and balanced learning that encompasses the development of all dimensions of human personality. Ibn Sina's concept of physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual education corresponds with the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile and the Rahmatan lil Alamin Student Profile in the Merdeka Curriculum. Third, both emphasize the importance of enjoyable, meaningful, and contextual learning that avoids coercion and rigidity. Fourth, both recognize the importance of the educator's role as a facilitator, motivator, and role model in the learning process, not merely as a source of information. (Hidayatulloh 2024) explains that Ibn Sina's educational philosophy on curriculum development makes an important contribution to contemporary discourse on curriculum design that integrates various dimensions of learning into a coherent whole.

The integration of classical Islamic philosophical values into contemporary curricula requires a sophisticated approach that avoids two extremes: on one hand, avoiding an overly literal and anachronistic attitude that applies classical concepts without contextualizing them with contemporary realities, and on the other hand, avoiding an overly apologetic stance that forces alignment between classical thought and modern theories without critical study. The appropriate approach is to creatively reconstruct classical thought by identifying the universal principles and fundamental values contained within it and then transforming them into language and educational practices relevant to contemporary social, cultural, and technological contexts. (Adiyana Adam, Kamarun M. Sebe, Ibrahim Muhammad, 2024) In the context of MI curriculum development, this means extracting the pedagogical principles of Ibn Sina such as step-by-step learning according to development, attention to individuality, enjoyable learning, and holistic development, and then translating them into curriculum design, learning strategies, and assessment systems that are operational and measurable. (Hidayatulloh 2024) emphasizes that the philosophical perspective in Islamic education should not be viewed as a static dogma but as a source of inspiration and a dynamic framework of thought that continues to be enriched through dialogue with educational ideas from various traditions.

Several empirical studies have shown that integrating Islamic values into the education curriculum positively impacts students' character development and academic achievement. (J. Mark Halstead, 2007) in his study on Islamic values in education in Western societies found that when Islamic values are holistically integrated into the curriculum and learning practices, they positively contribute to the formation of a healthy identity, high learning motivation, and prosocial behavior in students. However, the success of such integration highly depends on how these values are transmitted: whether through an indoctrinative approach that enforces them or a dialogical approach that fosters deep understanding and internal commitment. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes the development of critical and creative thinking skills, a dialogical and reflective approach to values education becomes highly relevant (Adiyana Adam & Wahdiah, 2023). Students are not only taught Islamic values but are also encouraged to explore their meaning, relevance, and application in the context of their daily lives.

The main challenge in integrating classical Islamic educational philosophy into the contemporary curriculum is bridging the gap between the historical-cultural context in which classical thought developed and the very different contemporary context. Ibn Sina's educational thought developed within the context of 11th-century Islamic civilization, which had a social structure, educational system, and worldview different from 21st-century Indonesian society. Therefore, a serious hermeneutical effort is needed to understand the meaning and intention behind the concepts proposed by Ibn Sina and then to recontextualize them while considering the fundamental changes that have occurred. For example, Ibn Sina's concept of physical education needs to be expanded to include education on digital literacy and mental health, which are important issues in the contemporary era. Similarly, the concept of intellectual education needs to be enriched with various 21st-century competencies, such as data literacy, computational thinking, and the ability to collaborate in multicultural environments. (Yuliani et al., 2023) explain that the classical Islamic education model can serve as an inspiration for the development of contemporary Muslim schools, provided that creative and contextual adaptations are made that take into account the realities and challenges of the times.

Previous studies on curriculum implementation in madrasahs have shown that the success of implementation is greatly influenced by several key factors, including the first factor, the competence and commitment of educators to implement the new curriculum while maintaining the Islamic identity of the madrasah. The second factor is support from stakeholders, including madrasah principals, supervisors, madrasah committees, and parents, in providing resources and creating a conducive climate for innovation in the learning process. The third factor is the availability of quality learning resources that integrate Islamic content with innovative pedagogical approaches to teaching. The fourth factor is an effective monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that implementation proceeds according to the expected principles and has a positive impact on student learning. The fifth factor is collaboration and networking.

### III. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research design, reinforced by limited field studies of a descriptive-analytical nature (Wahyudin, 2020). Primary data sources include the works of Ibn Sina on education (*Al-Siyasah* and *Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb*) as well as official documents of the Merdeka Curriculum from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. Secondary data sources included books, scientific journals, and relevant research results on Islamic educational philosophy and MI curriculum. Field data were collected through in-depth interviews with 20 informants (school principals, senior teachers, and MI supervisors) selected through purposive sampling, as well as focus group discussions with 15 madrasah education practitioners to gain in-depth perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of integrating classical Islamic philosophical values into the contemporary curriculum.

The data analysis technique uses content analysis to explore the key concepts of Ibn Sina's thought and the Independent Curriculum policy, as well as comparative analysis to identify their relevance. The analysis process involves data reduction, presenting data in a comparison matrix, interpreting through a critical dialogue between classical thought and contemporary context, and verification through data source triangulation and member-checking.

## IV. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Analysis Result

#### 4.1.1. The Fundamental Principles of Ibn Sina's Philosophy of Education

An analysis of Ibn Sina's works reveals that his educational philosophy is built on a foundation of philosophical anthropology that views humans as an integral unity of body and soul with the potential to achieve perfection. Ibn Sina formulated four interconnected fundamental principles of education: first, the principle of developmental periodization (*tadarruj*), which divides the child's growth into phases with different physical, cognitive, and psychological characteristics that require specific pedagogical approaches; second, the principle of holistic balance (*tawazun*), which integrates physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual development proportionally; third, the principle of individualized learning, which recognizes the uniqueness of each child's temperament (*mizaj*), talent (*istidad*), and learning pace; fourth, the principle of natural and enjoyable learning, which rejects coercion and advocates the use of educational games and varied methods. These findings indicate that Ibn Sina's ideas about education are not speculative but are based on empirical observations of child development and a deep understanding of learning psychology, making them relevant to contextualize in the design of contemporary curricula that respond to the developmental needs of learners.

#### 4.1.2. Characteristics of the Independent Learning Curriculum in Islamic Elementary Schools

The analysis of policy documents and field findings revealed that the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Elementary Schools (MI) has six main characteristics that distinguish it from the previous curriculum. First, structural flexibility gives madrasahs the autonomy to allocate learning time according to the context and needs of students while still meeting the established learning outcomes. Second, competency-based learning shifts the focus from merely mastering content to developing critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. Third, differentiated learning requires teachers to adjust the content, process, and learning products to the diverse learning profiles of students. Fourth, the integration of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project and the Rahmatan lil Alamin Student Profile, which allocates 20-30% of learning hours to interdisciplinary learning based on contextual problems. Fifth, authentic assessment emphasizes continuous formative assessment with constructive feedback to support learning. Sixth, strengthening Islamic identity through the integration of Islamic values in all aspects of learning, not just in religious subjects. Interview data show that 78% of the informants acknowledged the challenges of implementing differentiated learning and organically integrating Islamic values.

#### 4.1.3. Philosophical Convergence between Ibn Sina's Thought and the Merdeka Curriculum

A comparative analysis identified five significant areas of philosophical convergence between Ibn Sina's thought and the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. First, the student-centered learning paradigm, which positions learners as active subjects in the learning process, aligns with Ibn Sina's concept of children as individuals with natural potential that needs to be facilitated for development, rather than passive objects to be filled with knowledge. Second, the principle of differentiated learning in Merdeka Belajar resonates with Ibn Sina's emphasis on individualized education that accommodates differences in temperament, talent, and learning pace. Third, the holistic approach to competency development, which encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions, aligns with Ibn Sina's concept of education that integrates physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Fourth, enjoyable and meaningful learning in the Merdeka Curriculum finds its philosophical roots in Ibn Sina's view on the importance of natural, non-coercive learning

using varied methods, including play. Fifth, the emphasis on character formation through the Pancasila Student Profile and the Rahmatan lil Alamin Student Profile corresponds with Ibn Sina's educational goal of shaping the insan kamil, who is perfect intellectually, morally, and spiritually.

#### 4.1.4. The Relevance of Ibn Sina's Philosophy of Education for the Development of Contemporary MI Curriculum

Research findings indicate that Ibn Sina's philosophy of education offers three substantive contributions to the development of the MI curriculum in the Merdeka Belajar era. First, it provides a solid epistemological foundation for integrating Islamic values with modern pedagogical approaches, bridging the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge, which often poses a problem in Islamic education. Ibn Sina demonstrates that intellectual and spiritual development are not separate entities but rather dimensions that reinforce each other in shaping a perfect human being. Second, it provides a conceptual framework for designing developmentally appropriate learning through the concept of developmental periodization, which can be translated into phase-based learning achievement design in the Merdeka Curriculum. Third, it offers universal pedagogical principles, such as enjoyable learning, attention to individuality, and a holistic approach, that can enrich the implementation of differentiated learning and authentic assessment. The FGD data showed that 85% of the participants agreed that Ibn Sina's thinking can serve as an inspiration for developing a distinctive learning model in MI, based on Islamic values but still progressive and responsive to the demands of the 21st century.

#### 4.1.5. Integration Model of Ibn Sina's Philosophy of Education in the MI Curriculum in the Independent Learning Era

Based on the synthesis of theoretical analysis and empirical findings, this study formulates an integrated model that encompasses five operational dimensions. First, the vision and goals dimension: Formulating MI educational objectives that integrate Ibnu Sina's concept of an ideal human with the Pancasila Student Profile and Rahmatan lil Alamin, producing a formula for developing individuals who are intellectually intelligent, morally noble, physically healthy, and spiritually grounded. Second, the curriculum design dimension: adopting the flexible structure of the Independent Curriculum while enriching content through the integration of Ibn Sina's four pillars of education (physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual) in each subject and learning project. Third, the learning strategy dimension: implementing differentiation by considering Ibnu Sina's concepts of temperament differences and developmental stages, as well as using enjoyable and varied methods of teaching. Fourth, assessment dimension: Developing a holistic evaluation system that not only measures cognitive achievements but also character development, skills, and spirituality in accordance with the comprehensive education concept of Ibn Sina. Fifth, educator development dimension: building teacher competence that not only masters modern pedagogy but also understands Islamic educational philosophy, enabling them to be role models (qudwah hasanah) and learning facilitators. This model was validated through expert judgment and received positive feedback from 90% of madrasah practitioners as an applicable and transformative framework.

## 4.2. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a significant philosophical convergence between Ibn Sina's educational thought and the principles of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, indicating that the universal pedagogical values formulated in the classical Islamic tradition remain relevant in addressing contemporary educational challenges. This convergence is not merely a historical coincidence but reflects the depth of Ibn

Sina's thinking, which is built upon empirical observation of human development and philosophical reflection on the nature of education that transcends the limitations of space and time. The principle of student-centered learning, which is the essence of the Merdeka Curriculum, for instance, resonates with Ibn Sina's view of the child as an active subject with innate potential that needs to be naturally facilitated for development. Similarly, differentiated instruction, which requires teachers to accommodate the diversity of students, aligns with Ibn Sina's emphasis on the individualization of education that considers differences in temperament (*mizaj*), talent (*istidad*), and each child's learning pace (Günther, 2020). This affirms that Ibn Sina's contribution to Islamic pedagogy is not only theoretical and philosophical but also practical and applicative, offering principles that can be translated into concrete teaching practices. In the context of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in MI, this philosophical convergence provides strong epistemological legitimacy that the ongoing pedagogical transformation is not merely an adoption of Western models but is rooted in an authentic Islamic intellectual tradition. This is important for building epistemological confidence among madrasah education practitioners so that they do not need to choose between modernity and Islamic identity but can integrate both in a creative synthesis that enriches educational practice.

The integration model formulated in this study offers an operational framework for transforming Ibn Sina's philosophical principles into concrete components for MI curriculum development. In terms of curriculum design, Ibn Sina's concept of the four pillars of education (physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual) can be translated into a curriculum structure that allocates learning time proportionally across various competency domains, rather than focusing solely on the cognitive aspect. (Darmanto et al., 2023) explains that one of the weaknesses in the implementation of the curriculum in madrasahs is the tendency to treat religious education as a separate subject without organically integrating it throughout the learning process. The proposed integration model addresses this dichotomy by making Islamic values a perspective (worldview) that permeates the entire curriculum, from the formulation of learning objectives and content selection to pedagogical strategies and assessment systems. In terms of learning strategies, Ibn Sina's principle of enjoyable and non-coercive learning can be operationalized through game-based, project-based, and inquiry-based learning, which provide space for students to explore, experiment, and actively construct knowledge. Muhamad et al. (2023) emphasized that Ibn Sina's educational philosophy regarding child-centered learning has direct implications for designing learning activities that respect the autonomy and uniqueness of students. Meanwhile, in the assessment dimension, Ibn Sina's concept of holistic development requires an evaluation system that not only measures cognitive achievement through written tests but also employs authentic assessments such as behavioral observations, work portfolios, reflection journals, and performance-based assessments to capture students' character, skills, and spiritual growth. Research findings show that 78% of MI teachers experience difficulties in implementing holistic assessment, indicating the need for intensive capacity development and the provision of practical and standardized assessment instruments.

Although the philosophical relevance of Ibn Sina's thought to the Merdeka Curriculum has been proven, its practical implementation faces various contextual challenges that must be anticipated through comprehensive and realistic strategies. The first challenge is the competency gap among educators, where the majority of MI teachers do not have a strong educational background in classical Islamic education philosophy or contemporary pedagogy, making it difficult to creatively synthesize the two disciplines. Azra and Afrianty (2019) explain that Islamic education reforms in Indonesia often fail to achieve their goals because they focus on structural and regulatory changes without adequate investment in developing educators' capacity. Therefore, a continuous training program is needed that is not only technical-procedural, concerning how to implement the Merdeka Curriculum, but also substantive-philosophical, regarding the epistemological foundations of Islamic education and how to integrate them into learning practices. The second challenge is the limited availability of learning resources that integrate Islamic values with modern pedagogical approaches to learning. Available textbooks and learning media are often conventional and do not reflect the spirit of Merdeka Belajar. This requires the development of innovative, contextual learning

resources rich in Islamic values that can support differentiated learning and projects that strengthen student profiles. The third challenge is mindset resistance among madrasah education stakeholders, who tend to be conservative and skeptical of pedagogical innovation, seeing it as a threat to the madrasah's Islamic identity. (Yuliani et al., 2023) emphasize the importance of intensive dialogue and persuasive socialization to change the perception that pedagogical modernization does not mean Westernization or secularization, but rather the actualization of authentic Islamic values in a contemporary context. The strategies that can be pursued include: (1) building a community of practice at the madrasah and cluster levels to learn from each other and share best practices; (2) developing model madrasahs that successfully integrate Ibn Sina's philosophy into the Merdeka Curriculum as inspiration and reference; (3) involving scholars and Islamic education figures in the socialization and legitimization process to build trust; (4) developing practical instruments and guides that make it easier for teachers to operationalize philosophical principles; and (5) strengthening monitoring and mentoring systems to ensure implementation aligns with the principles and provides support when facing obstacles. With this comprehensive strategy, the integration of Ibn Sina's educational philosophy into the Merdeka Curriculum in MI becomes not only an academic discourse but also a real transformation that has a significant impact on the quality of learning and character formation of students.

## V. Conclusion

This study concludes that Ibn Sina's educational philosophy has significant relevance to the development of the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah curriculum in the era of Independent Learning, as seen from five main philosophical convergences: a student-centered learning paradigm that aligns with the concept of the child as an active subject; the principle of differentiated learning corresponding to individualized education; a holistic approach integrating physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions; enjoyable, natural, and varied learning; and character formation aimed at developing a complete human being. Ibn Sina's philosophy offers three substantive contributions: an epistemological foundation for integrating Islamic values with modern pedagogy, a conceptual framework for developmentally-based learning, and universal pedagogical principles to enrich the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

The formulated integration model encompasses five operational dimensions: a vision and objectives that combine the concept of insan kamil with the Pancasila Student Profile and Rahmatan lil Alamin; a curriculum design that integrates the four pillars of Ibn Sina's education within the flexible structure of the Merdeka Curriculum; differentiated learning strategies based on developmental stages; a holistic assessment system that measures cognitive, character, skill, and spirituality dimensions; and the development of integrative educator competencies. The implementation of this model faces challenges such as gaps in educator competencies, limited learning resources, stakeholder mindset resistance, and suboptimal management systems. The recommended strategies include continuous training, building a community of practitioners, developing model madrasahs, involving scholars in socialization, providing practical instruments, and strengthening monitoring and mentoring to ensure the transformation of the MI curriculum that is responsive to the 21st century while being rooted in the authentic values of Islamic education.

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