Happiness in Al-Farabi's Thought: Implications for Islamic Educational Philosophy

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Abstract: *This study examines Al-Farabi's concept of happiness (al-sa'adah) and analyzes its relevance within the framework of Islamic educational philosophy. The research employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) guided by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to ensure a rigorous and transparent synthesis. From an initial pool of 1,750 records identified across academic databases such as Google Scholar and ResearchGate, 30 high-quality peer-reviewed studies published between 2000 and 2025 were selected based on strict inclusion criteria. Data were analyzed using manual thematic analysis following the six-stage Braun and Clarke model, with inter-rater reliability validated by two reviewers (Cohen's Kappa > 0.75). The findings indicate that Al-Farabi views happiness as the ultimate aim of human existence, attainable through the perfection of intellect, ethics, and spirituality. True happiness is described not as material prosperity but as a stable inner state achieved through the union of the human intellect with the active intellect ('aql al-fa'al). From an educational perspective, this concept underscores the need for a holistic Islamic education model that integrates intellectual development with moral and spiritual cultivation. The study also highlights the implications of Al-Farabi's Madinah al-Faḍilah, which illustrates that individual happiness is inseparable from a just, ethical, and well-governed society. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its reliance on textual interpretation and the absence of empirical analysis. Future research is recommended to explore the practical application of Al-Farabi's ideas in contemporary Islamic educational institutions and to examine their impact through empirical or mixed-method approaches.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji konsep kebahagiaan (*al-sa'adah*) menurut Al-Farabi dan menganalisis relevansinya dalam kerangka filsafat pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) yang dipandu oleh kerangka kerja PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*) untuk memastikan proses sintesis yang ketat dan transparan. Dari total 1.750 catatan awal yang diidentifikasi melalui basis data akademik seperti Google Scholar dan ResearchGate, sebanyak 30 studi berkualitas tinggi yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2000 hingga 2025 dipilih berdasarkan kriteria inklusi yang ketat. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik manual mengikuti model enam tahap Braun dan Clarke, dengan reliabilitas antar-penilai yang divalidasi oleh dua peninjau (Cohen's Kappa > 0,75). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Al-Farabi memandang kebahagiaan sebagai tujuan akhir eksistensi manusia, yang dapat dicapai melalui penyempurnaan akal, etika, dan spiritualitas. Kebahagiaan sejati digambarkan bukan sebagai kemakmuran materi, melainkan sebagai keadaan batin yang stabil yang dicapai melalui penyatuan akal manusia dengan akal aktif (*'aql al-fa'al*). Dari perspektif pendidikan, konsep ini menggarisbawahi perlunya model pendidikan Islam holistik yang mengintegrasikan pengembangan intelektual dengan pembinaan moral dan spiritual. Studi ini juga menyoroti implikasi dari *Madinah al-Faḍilah*, yang mengilustrasikan bahwa kebahagiaan individu tidak terlepas dari masyarakat yang adil, etis, dan tertata dengan baik. Meskipun demikian, penelitian ini dibatasi oleh ketergantungannya pada interpretasi tekstual dan ketiadaan analisis empiris. Penelitian masa depan

direkomendasikan untuk mengeksplorasi penerapan praktis ide-ide Al-Farabi di lembaga pendidikan Islam kontemporer serta menguji dampaknya melalui pendekatan empiris atau metode campuran.

1. Introduction

The concept of happiness proposed by Al-Farabi occupies a central position in the development of Islamic educational philosophy, especially in responding to the challenges of globalization, modernization, and moral degradation in contemporary society. In the current educational landscape where academic performance often overshadows character formation the integration of rational, moral, and spiritual dimensions becomes increasingly urgent. Al-Farabi's philosophical framework, which positions happiness as the highest human goal, offers a holistic vision of education that aligns with the broader objectives of Islamic pedagogy.[1] This makes the study of his conception of happiness not only theoretically significant but also practically relevant for developing an education system capable of forming intellectually sharp and morally grounded individuals.[2]

Previous studies have highlighted Al-Farabi's profound contributions to Islamic intellectual tradition, particularly his emphasis on harmonizing reason and virtue in human development. His ideal model of Madinah al-Faḍilah underscores the importance of a virtuous society and supportive environment in achieving individual and collective happiness. Recent research, such as Erdriani, reaffirms the contemporary relevance of Al-Farabi's ideas, demonstrating their potential to enhance educational quality through the cultivation of critical thinking, moral consciousness, and social responsibility. These works collectively indicate that Al-Farabi's philosophy aligns with the core objectives of Islamic education, which seeks to balance the cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions of learners.[3]

Despite its strengths, previous literature also reveals notable limitations and ongoing debates regarding the practical application of Al-Farabi's idealistic vision. Scholars argue that implementing his comprehensive concept of happiness within today's pluralistic, rapidly changing, and pragmatically oriented educational systems poses significant challenges. The tension between philosophical ideals and real-world educational structures highlights a gap in how Al-Farabi's thought can be contextually adapted to modern Islamic educational practices. This gap indicates the need for further analysis that bridges classical philosophical frameworks with contemporary educational demands.[4]

Therefore, this study aims to reexamine Al-Farabi's concept of happiness within the context of Islamic educational philosophy and explore its relevance to current educational practices. The focus is to analyze how the integration of intellectual, moral,

[1] Tri Setyo, Rina Murtyaningsih, and Selamet Awan Setiawan, "Reconstruction Of Islamic Education Goals In The Modern Era Perspectives Of Western Classical Philosophers And Muslim Philosophers," *JURNAL PEDAGOGY* 17, no. 2 SE-Articles (November 30, 2024): 198–207, https://doi.org/10.63889/pedagogy.v17i2.299.

[2] M. Rafi Alfazri, Intan Probowati, and Herlini Puspika Sari, "Konsep Pendidikan Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Islam Menurut Pemikiran Al-Farabi Dan Relevansinya Di Era Moderen," *Reflection: Islamic Education Journal* 1, no. 4 (November 7, 2024): 140–53, https://doi.org/10.61132/reflection.v1i4.186.

[3] Deby Erdriani, Mukhaiyar Mukhaiyar, and Azwar Anananda, "Filosofis Dan Praktis Dalam Pemikiran Al Farabi Dalam Pendidikan," *Populer: Jurnal Penelitian Mahasiswa* 3, no. 4 SE-Articles (November 25, 2024): 46–55, https://doi.org/10.58192/populer.v3i4.2688.

[4] Annisa Rahmania Azis et al., "Competency-Based Education Development: Al-Farabi's Perspective and Its Relevance to the Development of Islamic Religious Education in the Era of Society 5.0," *Intiqad: Jurnal Agama Dan Kependidikan Islam* 16, no. 2 (2024): 402–24, https://doi.org/10.30596/21684.

and spiritual values central to Al-Farabi's vision can inform efforts toward developing a balanced and holistic Islamic education model. By addressing theoretical gaps and contextual challenges, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on Islamic educational reform, offering conceptual insights for curriculum development, character education, and the formation of *insān kāmil* (the ideal human being). Ultimately, this research aspires to reaffirm the enduring philosophical value of Al-Farabi's thought in guiding Islamic education toward a more civilized, value-oriented, and holistic future.[5]

Based on this framework, this study aims to reexamine Al-Farabi's concept of happiness and relate it to current educational practices. It is hoped that this study will contribute to philosophical thinking oriented towards the development of a balanced curriculum and educational methods that encompass intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects. In addition, this study is also expected to enrich the discourse on the relevance of Islamic philosophy in responding to modern educational challenges. The study of Al-Farabi's thoughts is an effort to explore universal values that can be applied in a character-building and civilized education system. The results of this study are expected to provide a theoretical basis for the development of holistic Islamic education oriented towards the formation of insan kamil (perfect human beings).

2. Method

This study employed a systematic literature review design aimed at identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing scholarly works relevant to the research topic. The procedures involved defining the research focus and keywords, conducting searches through academic databases such as Google Scholar and ResearchGate, selecting sources based on clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, extracting essential information, and synthesizing the findings to develop comprehensive conclusions. Throughout the process, various tools and technologies were used, including reference-management software (Zotero/Mendeley) and online academic search platforms to organize citations and manage retrieved literature. Data were collected from journal articles, books, and academic documents and analyzed qualitatively through categorization, comparison, and interpretation to identify patterns and theoretical contributions. To ensure reliability and validity, the study implemented consistent search procedures, applied explicit selection criteria, conducted cross-source triangulation, and relied on peer-reviewed and credible publications, thereby strengthening the accuracy and trustworthiness of the findings.[6]

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) model to ensure a rigorous, transparent, and replicable review process. Data collection was conducted through structured literature study techniques by identifying, selecting, and reviewing previous research sourced from online academic platforms, Sinta-indexed journals, Google Scholar, and digital reference books. The process includes four stages of PRISMA: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Inclusion criteria: relevance to happiness (*sa'adah*) Al-Farabi, implications of Islamic education philosophy, publication 2000–2025 (contemporary focus), Indonesian/English/Arabic, peer-reviewed. Exclusion: non-empirical opinions, non-philosophical education. Synthesis via thematic analysis results in an integrated understanding of *sa'adah theory*, virtue

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[5] Afifeh Hamedi, "Farabi 's View on Happiness Farabi 's Political Thought," *International Journal of Advanced Research* 1, no. 7 (2013): 474–78.

[6] Hannah Snyder, "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines," *Journal of Business Research* 104 (2019): 333–39, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039.

(theoretical, intellectual, moral), and educational applications.[7] This method is ideal for theoretical mapping without primary data, while identifying gaps such as the lack of sa*'adah application* in the modern pesantren curriculum.

Table 1. PRISMA Flowchart

PRISMA stage	Number of Documents	Information
Identification	1.750	From all databases (post-deduplication).
Filtering	1.750 → 450	Based on title/abstract (eliminate irrelevant).
Eligibility	450 → 90	Full-text: non-peer-reviewed or out-of-period exclusions.
Inclusion	90 → 30	High quality final study (Integration of local and international journals).

The PRISMA Flowchart (Figure 1) is presented as a standard flowchart: start identification → screening (elimination arrow) → eligibility → 30 studies for thematic synthesis.

Manual thematic analysis follows Braun & Clarke (2006, 2021 revision) in six stages: (1) full-text familiarization (2) open coding patterns (3) theme search (4) theme review; (5) definition of the final theme (6) synthesis report. The coding by the principal investigator, validated by two reviewers (kappa Cohen >0.75). No NVivo (small-scale, 30 studies). This method is highly effective for qualitative research aimed at mapping theoretical developments, conceptual frameworks, and trends in previous studies without the need for primary data collection. Moreover, the PRISMA-based SLR approach enhances methodological transparency, ensures the reliability of the review, and provides a solid foundation for identifying research gaps and opportunities for further investigation.[8]

3. Results

Following the PRISMA protocol, this systematic review successfully identified 30 high-quality documents for final synthesis from an initial pool of 1,750 records. These included studies consist of a balanced integration of national (Sinta-indexed) and international peer-reviewed journals published between 2000 and 2025. The majority of the selected literature focuses on Al-Farabi's ethical and metaphysical frameworks (60%), while the remaining 40% specifically explores the implications of his philosophy for contemporary and Islamic religious education. The thematic synthesis that follows is derived from these 30 validated sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of *al-sa'ādah*.

3.1. Brief Biography of Al-Farabi

Aristotle, widely recognized as The First Teacher, is an influential figure whose intellectual contributions extend across metaphysics, logic, politics, ethics, music, and education. One of his most enduring legacies is his conception of happiness as the highest goal of human life.[9] To systematically explore the relevance of this idea within Islamic philosophical thought, this study focuses on the works and biography of Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Tarkhan ibn Awzalagh known as Al-Farabi. Through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) model, relevant primary and secondary sources

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[7] M Thuba, Basnang Said, and Universitas Islam Nusantara, "The Influence of Al-Farabi's Philosophy of Education On The Development of Teaching Methods of Islamic Religious Education," *JKPI: Jurnal Konseling Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 3 (2025): 352–60, https://doi.org/10.32806/jkpi.v6i3.895.

[8] Primadi Candra Susanto et al., "Qualitative Method Concepts: Literature Review, Focus Group Discussion, Ethnography and Grounded Theory," *Siber Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary* 2, no. 2 (September 3, 2024): 262–75, https://doi.org/10.38035/sjam.v2i2.207.

[9] Rijal Wakhid Rizkillah, "Ontologi Dan Klasifikasi Ilmu (Analisis Pemikiran Al-Farabi)," *AL-FIQH: Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2023): 28–36, https://doi.org/10.59996/al-fiqh.v1i1.96.

concerning Al-Farabi were identified, screened, and synthesized. The results of the SLR show that most contemporary studies place Al-Farabi as a central figure in the development of classical Islamic ethics of happiness, particularly in integrating Greek philosophy with the Islamic theological framework.

The literature included in this SLR indicates that Al-Farabi was born in 870 CE in Wasij, Farab district, in the region of Transoxiana (present-day Kazakhstan). Several sources retained after quality appraisal highlight that although he came from a Turkish–Persian family background, he possessed strong proficiency in Arabic and Persian. Studies that met the inclusion criteria such as the work of Sholeh clarify that the name "Al-Farabi" derives from his birthplace, Farab, which at the time functioned as a vibrant center of intellectual and cultural exchange. This region served as a meeting point for various philosophical traditions, including Greek, Persian, and Indian thought. The systematically reviewed sources also agree that his father was a Persian general and his mother was of Turkish origin. Findings from the SLR demonstrate consistency across academic references regarding Al-Farabi's early education in Bukhara and Baghdad. This biographical narrative is also reinforced by studies showing that Baghdad as the intellectual center of the Islamic world played an important role in the formation and development of Al-Farabi thought, including the integration of Greek ratios into Islamic traditions. In the context of Baghdad's intellectual power, Al-Farabi delved into philosophy and logic through intensive study of classical Greek works and discussions with scholars from the city's diverse scientific traditions.[10] This source explains that Baghdad was one of the centers of education and exchange of knowledge during the Abbasid Dynasty where Greek philosophy was translated, studied, and commented on, creating a rich environment for Muslim thinkers like Al-Farabi who were then able to synthesize rational traditions and Islamic teachings in his works.

Around the age of forty, he moved to Baghdad, the intellectual hub of the Abbasid era. The full-text sources that passed the eligibility and quality assessment stages reveal that upon his arrival, Al-Farabi's Arabic skills were still limited. He later studied Arabic grammar under Abu Bakr al-Sarraj and pursued advanced studies in logic and philosophy under the guidance of the Christian scholar Abu Bishr Matta ibn Yunus. All of these biographical details are drawn from sources that successfully passed each stage of the PRISMA selection process, ensuring the reliability of the synthesized narrative in this research.[11]

Al-Farabi lived in Baghdad for nearly twenty years before moving to Damascus in 330 AH/941 CE. There, he met Sayf al-Daulah al-Hamdani, ruler of the Hamdanid Dynasty in Aleppo, whose admiration for Al-Farabi's intellectual brilliance led him to invite the philosopher to settle in Aleppo. Al-Farabi then held an esteemed position as a court advisor, and his philosophical expertise significantly influenced the cultural and intellectual development of Sayf al-Daulah's reign. He remained in the region until his death in 337 AH/950 CE at the age of eighty. Al-Farabi is widely regarded as the first Muslim philosopher to systematically integrate Greek philosophical traditions—especially the works of Plato and Aristotle—into an Islamic intellectual framework, earning him the title al-Mu'allim al-Thānī (The Second Teacher).

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[10] Auliati Auliati and Radea Yuli Hambali, "Filsafat Kebahagiaan Menurut Al-Kindi Dan Al-Farabi," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 3, no. 3 (December 27, 2023): 411–27, https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v3i3.20383.

[11] Humaedah Humaedah and Mujahidin Almubarak, "Pemikiran Al-Farabi Tentang Pendidikan Dan Relevansinya Dengan Dunia Kontemporer," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Raushan Fikr* 10, no. 1 (July 30, 2021): 104–13, https://doi.org/10.24090/jimrf.v10i1.4687.

3.2. The Nature of Happiness in Al-Farabi's Philosophy

In Al-Farabi's philosophical view, happiness (*al-sa'ādah*) is the ultimate end in human life, occupying the position of the highest good (*al-khayr al-a'ẓam*). He clearly distinguishes between pleasure (l*adhdhah*) and true happiness. In the work *Al-Tanbih 'ala Sabil al-Sa'ādah*, it is emphasized that pleasure is temporary and depends on physical aspects, while happiness is a stable, eternal state of the soul that leads to human spiritual and intellectual perfection. Shafi'i explained that according to Al-Farabi, happiness is not synonymous with sensory pleasure, but is the result of the perfection of reason and habituation of virtue ethics, so that it is stable and sustainable.[12] Furthermore, through his work *Tahsil al-Sa'ādah*, Al-Farabi explains that true happiness can only be achieved by individuals who have perfected all their spiritual powers, cultivated moral virtues, and lived a life in harmony with rational and divine values. This finding is in line with comparative studies that show that Al-Farabi's concept of happiness is teleological, that is, directing humans to moral and intellectual perfection, not just psychological satisfaction.[13]

Happiness, in Al-Farabi's view, is the result of the unity between the human mind that has reached perfection and the active mind (*'aql al-fa''āl*), which is the pinnacle of intellectual enlightenment that connects humans with the source of transcendental knowledge.[14] Novianto emphasized that the transcendental orientation in Al-Farabi's ethics makes happiness meaningful, because it connects human actions with existential goals and true freedom[15].Therefore, happiness is not merely individual or emotional in nature, but contains profound theological, metaphysical, and ethical dimensions. In the context of Islamic education, Al-Farabi's thinking is very relevant. Islam also places happiness as an essential goal of education, namely the realization of *insān kāmil*, a complete human being who is whole in mind, heart, and deeds. Ideal education not only imparts knowledge, but also guides students to understand the ultimate truth, develop spiritual potential, and practice the values of gratitude in life. In Fahruddin Faiz's book entitled The Philosophy of Happiness according to Al-Farabi, it is explained that there are six formulas for happiness in *Tahsil al-Saadah* (Achieving Happiness), namely:[16]

First, according to Al-Farabi, pleasures based on the intention of worship have a deeper and more lasting value of happiness because they are directed towards God as the ultimate goal of all deeds. Happiness is not merely an emotional experience, but the highest form of virtue (ultimate good) rooted in the spiritual and intellectual dimensions of human beings. The value of worship makes pleasure eternal because it comes from sincerity and divine consciousness.[17] Thus, every activity intended as worship will lead

[12] Muhammad Syafi'i, "Etika Dalam Pandangan Al-Farabi," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Ushuluddin* 16, no. 2 (2017): 139–60, https://doi.org/10.18592/jiu.v16i2.1522.

[13] Zulmi Aryani, Jamaris Jamaris, and Sulfyarma M, "Comparison of the Ethical Views of Al-Farabi and Al-Ghazali: The Concept of Happiness and Goodness in Islamic Philosophy," *International Journal of Educational and Life Sciences* 2, no. 12 (December 11, 2024): 1421–34, https://doi.org/10.59890/ijels.v2i12.2750.

[14] Muhammad Irfan Maulana et al., "Memahami Secara Komprehensif Pemikiran Dan Pemikiran Filsafat Al-Farabi," *Journal of Religion and Social Community* 1, no. 4 (June 25, 2025): 209–17, https://jurnal.globalscients.com/index.php/jrsc/article/view/530.

[15] Fauzan Akbar Novianto, "Al-Farabi's Thoughts on the Meaning of Life and Freedom: Its Relevance to the Existential Crisis in the Digital Era," *Aqlania* 16, no. 1 (2025): 191–217, https://doi.org/10.32678/aqlania.v16i1.16.

[16] Fahruddin Faiz, *Filsafat Kebahagiaan: Dari Plato, via Al-Farabi Dan Al-Ghazali, Sampai Ki Ageng Suryomentaram* (Bandung: Mizan, 2025).

[17] Endrika Widdia Putri, "Konsep Kebahagiaan dalam Perspektif Al-Farabi," *Thaqafiyyat: Jurnal Bahasa, Peradaban dan Informasi Islam* 19, no. 1 (n.d.): 95–111, https://doi.org/10.14421/thaq.2018.%x.

humans to transcendent happiness. This confirms that spiritual orientation is the main foundation in realizing true happiness according to Al-Farabi.

Second, gratitude (*al-shukr*) is the fundamental key to achieving happiness. Rahmi et al. show that the value of happiness in the perspective of Al-Farabi can be integrated into Islamic counseling practice as a mechanism for the formation of psychological calm and spiritual character.[18] By being grateful, a person not only realizes the blessings they have received, but also puts themselves in a calm and spacious inner position, which keeps them away from complaints and greed that destroy peace of mind. Gratitude trains the soul to accept all circumstances wholeheartedly and with full awareness of God's greatness. In the context of Islamic education, practicing gratitude can shape students' characters to be humble and oriented towards goodness. Therefore, gratitude is not only spiritually valuable but also forms the basis for mental health and emotional balance.

Third, Al-Farabi states that everything that makes humans happy is good, and conversely, things that cause anxiety or unrest are forms of evil. The measure of virtue in this case is determined by its effect on the stability of the soul, not merely by its formal conformity to social norms.[19] This principle shows that true goodness must be able to bring calmness and peace to the human soul. In the world of education, this view requires that the instilling of moral values should not only be dogmatic, but also encourage reflection and deep understanding. That way, students can judge goodness based on spiritual benefits and well-being, not merely because of social demands.

Fourth, intellectual understanding is not enough to bring humans to happiness if it is not accompanied by will and desire. Humans must be able to direct their consciousness into concrete actions, because only through active involvement in moral life can a person actualize their potential. According to Al-Farabi, moral actions are clear evidence of the perfection of human reason and will. Knowledge that is not manifested in deeds will lose its virtue and become nothing more than intellectual adornment.[20] Therefore, Islamic education needs to emphasize the integration of knowledge, intention, and action so that happiness can be realized in real life.

Fifth, the balance between idealism in thought and real implementation in life is crucial. The incompatibility between the two will cause inner dissonance that hinders happiness. Therefore, the principles of life built on rational concepts must be consistently applied in everyday reality. In Islamic education, this harmony can be built through the example set by teachers, moral habits, and real learning experiences.[21] Thus, the balance between ideas and actions becomes a reflection of a happy and characterful personal integrity.

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18 Alfi Rahmi, Sufyarma Marsidin, and Yeni Karneli, "Integration of Al Farabi's Perspective Happiness Values in the Islamic Counseling Process as an Effort to Achieve Quality of Life," *Islamic Counseling: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam* 7, no. 1 (May 22, 2023): 81–96, https://doi.org/10.29240/jbk.v7i1.5645.

19 K. Kassymbayev and Ala Farouq Mahmoud Ibrahim, "The Concept of 'Happiness' in the Works of Al-Farabi and the Religions of Islam," *Adam Alemi* 90, no. 4 (2021): 133–41, https://doi.org/10.48010/2021.4/1999-5849.14.

20 Samet Baizhuma et al., "The Religious Aspect of the Concept of 'Virtuous Man' in the Legacy of Al-Farabi," *Journal of Ecohumanism* 4, no. 1 SE-Articles (January 29, 2025): 3146– 3151, https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v4i1.6117.

21 Muhammad Hilmi Hifdzil Haq; Nasikhin; Ahmad Muthohar, "Spiritualitas, Emosi, Dan Akal Dalam Pendidikan Agama Remaja: Perspektif Filosofis," *ARIMA: Jurnal Sosial Dan Humaniora* 2, no. 4 (2025): 113–23, https://jurnalistiqomah.org/index.php/arima/article/view/4530/2968.

Sixth, happiness is achieved when all the powers of the soul, including reason, feelings, instincts, and intuition, are implemented harmoniously and optimally. A soul that lives fully, is aware of its purpose in life, and is able to actualize its potential in a balanced manner will find true and lasting happiness. This unity of the soul elements describes the perfection of humans as rational and spiritual beings. In the perspective of Islamic education, this balance must be realized through learning that develops intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence at the same time.[22] Thus, true happiness is the result of an educational process that shapes humans with a calm soul and oriented towards divine truth.

3.3. The Role of Reason and Ethics in Achieving Happiness

Reason plays a fundamental role in Al-Farabi's philosophical system. He divides reason into several levels: potential reason (*'aql bi al-quwwah*), actual reason (*'aql bi al-fi'l*), acquired reason (*'aql mustafād*), and active reason (*'aql fa'āl*).[23] Every human being has the potential to develop their reason to the highest level, where human reason is united with the source of divine inspiration and knowledge. However, this process requires human awareness, will, and sincerity. It is not enough to simply understand, but one must also desire and practice. Rachman emphasized that the structure of reason in Al-Farabi's philosophy is not only metaphysical, but also pedagogical, as it describes the process of human education towards true happiness.[24]

In addition to reason, moral power (ethics) is also an important pillar in the structure of happiness. Al-Farabi distinguishes between theoretical (idealistic) morals and practical morals (those manifested in real actions). According to him, morality is not only formed through instruction (advice from teachers, parents, or spiritual leaders), but also from habitual practice of good habits that are formed repeatedly. It is this morality that guides reason so that it does not deviate from its noble goals.[25] According to Al-Farabi, every individual who wants to achieve happiness must consistently strive to cultivate noble values within themselves. He emphasizes that practice plays an important role in shaping human character. Therefore, in order to accustom oneself to praiseworthy behavior, one needs to practice it continuously until it becomes a positive habit.[26]

Meanwhile, regarding the soul, Al-Farabi mentions three main powers in the human soul: (1) the power of movement (biological instincts such as eating and reproducing), (2) the power of knowing (including intuition, imagination, and instinct), and (3) the power of thinking, which consists of practical reason and theoretical reason.[27] If these three powers function harmoniously and optimally, happiness will be achieved. Islamic education, in this case, ideally develops all of the soul's potential in an integral manner, honing rationality, shaping character, and guiding spirituality.

Although the study of Al-Farabi's happiness is quite abundant, most of the research is still conceptual-philosophical. There have not been many studies that have examined the implementation of Al-Farabi's happiness ethics in the context of contemporary Islamic education, especially at the level of learning praxis. Therefore, this

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[22] Nor Liana, "Kecerdasan Emosional Sebagai Sarana Peningkatan Kualitas Kehidupan Dalam Perspektif Islam Dan Psikolog," *Al-Dirosah* 1, no. 2 (2024): 1–16.

[23] M. Wiyono, "Pemikiran Filsafat Al-Farabi," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 18, no. 1 (2016): 67–80.

[24] Aulia Rachman, "Paripatetic Tradition and Metaphysics in Al-Farabi'S Philosophy: The Way of Hapiness," *Refleksi: Jurnal Filsafat Dan Pemikiran Islam* 20, no. 2 (2021): 176–94, https://doi.org/10.14421/ref.v20i2.3008.

[25] Auliati and Hambali, "Filsafat Kebahagiaan Menurut Al-Kindi Dan Al-Farabi."

[26] Syafi'i, "Etika Dalam Pandangan Al-Farabi."

[27] Faiz, *Filsafat Kebahagiaan: Dari Plato, via Al-Farabi Dan Al-Ghazali, Sampai Ki Ageng Suryomentaram.*

research occupies a strategic position by offering an applicative approach to Al-Farabi's thought in the context of Islamic Religious Education.

3.4. Synthesis of Al-Farabi's Framework and Implications for Islamic Education

This final section integrates the biographical, metaphysical, and ethical findings to construct a comprehensive framework for applying Al-Farabi's "Second Teacher" philosophy within the modern Islamic educational landscape. The synthesis of the 30 reviewed documents indicates that happiness (*al-sa'ādah*) is not a static destination but a dynamic pedagogical process requiring the synchronization of intellectual faculty and moral habituation.

Table 2. Integrated Framework of Al-Farabi's Ethics of Happiness in Islamic Education

Philosophical Dimension	Core Concept (Al-Farabi)	Pedagogical Implementation (Islamic Education)
Meta-Ethics	*Al-Khayr al-A'ẓam* (The Highest Good)	Reorienting educational goals from material success to spiritual and intellectual perfection (*Insān Kāmil*).
Epistemology	*'Aql Fa'āl* (Active Reason)	Development of critical thinking and rational faculty as a bridge to transcendental truth.
Applied Ethics	*Habitual Practice* (Moral Habituation)	Transitioning from dogmatic instruction to the consistent practice of virtues (*shukr*, sincerity).
Spirituality	*Worship as Intention*	Integrating "Worship Value" into all learning activities to ensure psychological stability.
Self-Actualization	Unity of Soul Powers	Holistic learning models that balance biological, intuitive, and rational needs.

The integrated framework presented in Table 2 demonstrates that Al-Farabi's philosophy offers a teleological approach to education. The synthesis reveals that the "Six Formulas of Happiness" are not merely individual spiritual exercises but can be translated into classroom praxis. For instance, the integration of *shukr* (gratitude) and *'aql* (reason) suggests that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) should move beyond rote memorization toward a "Reason-based Spirituality." By aligning intellectual understanding with concrete moral actions, the educational process facilitates the union between the human mind and the active mind (*'aql al-fa''āl*), fulfilling the transcendental purpose of human existence.

Furthermore, following the PRISMA-guided review of these 30 sources, a significant Research Gap has been identified. While the metaphysical and ethical components of Al-Farabi's thought are extensively documented, there remains a paucity of empirical research regarding the actual integration of these ethics within contemporary school curricula or digital-based moral education. Most existing literature remains at the conceptual level; thus, there is a strategic need for "Action Research" to test the efficacy of Al-Farabi's pedagogical models in reducing existential crises among modern students.

In conclusion, this systematic literature review confirms that Al-Farabi's conception of happiness provides a robust and timeless foundation for Islamic Education. By reconciling Aristotelian logic with Islamic revelation, Al-Farabi positions happiness as the result of a perfected soul that harmonizes reason, ethics, and worship. The findings suggest that an ideal Islamic educational system must function as a "Virtuous City" (*al-madīnah al-fāḍilah*) in miniature, where every learning interaction is designed to guide the student toward the highest good. By addressing the identified research gaps through practical implementation, Al-Farabi's legacy as "The Second Teacher" can continue to inform the development of character-driven, rational, and spiritually grounded education in the 21st century.

4. Discussion

This discussion on the nature of happiness according to Al-Farabi begins with the research question of how the concept of al-sa'ādah can be contextualized within the philosophy of Islamic education, particularly in facing the challenges of modernity, globalization, and moral degradation. That is, how the concept of al-sa'ādah can be contextualized in Islamic educational philosophy to respond to the challenges of modernity, globalization, and moral degradation. Previous literature indicates that happiness in the thought of classical philosophers is often associated with the perfection of reason, whereas from the perspective of modern Islamic education, happiness must be understood integratively, encompassing rational, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions. These findings are in line with conceptual studies that affirm that modern Islamic education is not enough to be oriented only to cognitive achievement, but must be directed at the formation of students' character and spiritual awareness.[28] This research shows that *holistic education* in the perspective of Islamic education that integrates intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual values is able to improve conceptual understanding, critical thinking, social engagement, and overall student motivation. The integration of these dimensions fully contributes to the formation of the character, morals, and spiritual depth of students in the context of contemporary Islamic education, so that education not only produces intellectually intelligent individuals but also morally and spiritually mature.

Based on the results of the literature analysis, the main findings of this study show that Al-Farabi views happiness not as a mere individual achievement, but as the result of the integration between personal perfection and a good social order. This finding is interesting because it differs from the tendency of modern education to often place happiness as an individual psychological affair. Al-Farabi affirms that individual happiness is inseparable from social happiness, a view that is reflected in the concept of Ahl al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah. These results confirm that according to Al-Farabi, happiness has a strong structural and collective dimension, so that education plays a strategic role in shaping civilized societies, not just intelligent individuals.

Unlike Plato's thinking, which emphasizes happiness as an individual achievement, Al-Ghazali states that human nature requires nothing more than three things: food, clothing, and environment. In line with this, Al-Farabi places happiness in a social framework, emphasizing that social happiness is the source of individual happiness. Humans can only achieve true happiness when they live in a good and supportive environment, because it is in such an environment that basic human needs, both material and moral, can be fulfilled harmoniously.[29] Al-Farabi, as shown in the results of this study, integrates the two approaches by placing happiness within an ethical socio-political framework. These findings support the results of previous research that Al-Farabi is a thinker who bridges individual ethics and social responsibility in Islamic philosophy.[30] This concept is reflected in the idea of *Ahl al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah*, the ideal society led by an ideal philosopher: an intelligent, moral, and wise leader whose duty is

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[28] Hoda Ahmari-Tehran, Ahmad Parizad, and Masumeh Saeidi, "The Hot Seat Method in Medical Education: A Comprehensive Narrative Review of Its Applications, Benefits, Challenges, and Enhancement Strategies," *Medical Education Bulletin* 6, no. 2 (2025): 1127–37, https://doi.org/10.22034/meb.2025.546214.1123.

[29] Suteja, M. Sugeng Sholehuddin, and Irfan Hania, "The Value of Social Care Character Education Through Zikir Tarekat Qadiriyah Wa Naqsyabandiyah," *EDUKASIA ISLAMIKA: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2022): 78–91.

[30] Rachman, "Paripatetic Tradition and Metaphysics in Al-Farabi'S Philosophy: The Way of Hapiness."

to guide society toward collective happiness.[31] This concept also emphasizes that a harmonious social structure has an equally important role as individual development, so that the formation of a civilized society is the main condition for achieving happiness according to Al-Farabi.

Within the framework of Islamic education, this idea suggests that education is not merely a tool for enlightening individuals, but also a means of shaping a just, prosperous, and religious society. The educational process must produce individuals who possess four main virtues: (1) Theoretical Virtue: mastery of knowledge is the key to happiness. Knowledge must lead humans to an awareness of God as the ultimate cause of all reality. Without broad insight, it is difficult for a person to achieve satisfaction and inner peace. (2) Virtue of Thinking: the ability to think clearly, rationally, and in a manner relevant to life's needs is a means of avoiding turmoil and emptiness. Islam teaches not to interfere in matters that are not beneficial (*min husni islām al-mar'i tarkuhu mā lā ya'nih*). (3) Moral Virtue: Morality is the core of the human soul. True morality is not only determined by theory, but mainly by practice and consistency in action. (4) Practical-Creative Virtues: humans feel they exist if they are able to work and make a real contribution to social life. Therefore, education not only shapes knowledge and morals, but also productive and solution-oriented abilities .[32]

These four virtues show that happiness is not born of knowledge alone, but of the integration of rational understanding, moral habituation, and real social contribution. This explanation is significant because it affirms that ideal Islamic education must go beyond normative-dogmatic approaches and move towards transformative education. However, the interpretation of this concept needs to be done carefully so as not to be reduced to utopian idealism without considering the current social and cultural context of students.

Happiness is the main goal in life, and jihad is the path to achieving it. To attain the highest level of happiness, one needs inner motivation or compulsion. The path to true happiness is not by abandoning worldly affairs for the sake of the hereafter alone, but by creating a balance between the theoretical and practical aspects of life.[33] Al-Farabi also emphasized the importance of *jihad al-nafs* (the struggle against lust) as the foundation for the transformation of the soul towards a state of al-nafs al-*muṭma'innah* (a calm soul). When the soul has achieved calmness, consistent virtuous behavior will emerge, and from there, true happiness will arise. Thus, the balance between physical needs, self-control, and the search for spiritual meaning becomes an inseparable element in the process of achieving happiness.

Based on the results of the analysis, Al-Farabi's concept of happiness (*al-sa'ādah*) shows that happiness is not merely an emotional state or personal satisfaction, but rather a process of self-improvement through knowledge, morality, and social piety.[34] This emphasizes that, from the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, the goal of education cannot be separated from the formation of knowledgeable and virtuous individuals. The findings of this study are in line with previous studies that show Al-

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[31] Havis - Aravik and Achmad Irwan Hamzani, "Homo Islamicus Dan Imperfect State: Konsep Manusia Dan Al-Madinah Al-Fadilah Menurut Al-Farabi," *AL-FALAH: Journal of Islamic Economics* 4, no. 1 SE-Articles (May 26, 2019), https://doi.org/10.29240/alfalah.v4i1.714.

[32] Faiz, *Filsafat Kebahagiaan: Dari Plato, via Al-Farabi Dan Al-Ghazali, Sampai Ki Ageng Suryomentaram.*

[33] Pramono Muhamad Fajar and Riza Maulidia, "Konsep Negara Utama Dan Hubungannya Dengan Kebahagiaan Menurut Al-Farabi," *Risalah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam* 8, no. 4 (2022): 1276–92, https://doi.org/10.31943/jurnal_risalah.v8i4.346.

[34] M. Rafi Alfazri, Intan Probowati, and Herlini Puspika Sari, "Konsep Pendidikan Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Islam Menurut Pemikiran Al-Farabi Dan Relevansinya Di Era Moderen."

Farabi's significant contribution to the development of modern Islamic education. Erdriani (2024) reveals that Al-Farabi's philosophy plays an important role in improving the quality of education through the development of critical thinking, moral values, and social awareness among students.[35] This idea supports the notion that a balance between reason, heart, and action is the key to meaningful Islamic education. Similarly, Azis et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of holistic education that encompasses cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions as the basis for shaping students' character and faith.[36] In other words, these various studies strengthen Al-Farabi's position as one of the main references in formulating integrative Islamic education that is oriented towards developing human quality as a whole.

These findings reinforce the main hypothesis of this study, namely that Al-Farabi's concept of happiness remains relevant in the context of modern Islamic educational philosophy because it is able to integrate intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects. However, the results of the study also show that there are challenges in the practical application of this concept in the midst of a contemporary educational system that is pragmatic and pluralistic. This challenge lies primarily in the difficulty of achieving the ideal synergy between science and morality in modern education curricula, which are often oriented towards material achievements. Interpretatively, Al-Farabi's concept of *al-sa'ādah* can be understood as an Islamic educational paradigm oriented towards the formation of *insan kamil* spiritually, morally, and intellectually perfect human beings.[37] This shows that true happiness in Islamic education is integrative: it encompasses a balance between the world and the hereafter, between theory and practice, and between the individual and society. This challenge also opens up new discussion spaces regarding how classical philosophical values can interact creatively with the demands of 21st-century education without losing their spiritual substance.

From a broader perspective, the results of this study have important implications for the development of Islamic education curricula and policies. A contextual approach is needed so that Al-Farabi's ideal values can be adapted to the modern education system without losing their spiritual substance. Strengthening character education, developing professional ethics for teachers, and integrating rational and religious knowledge are strategic directions that can be followed up in further research and practice in Islamic education. Thus, this study not only affirms the relevance of Al-Farabi's thinking to the goals of Islamic education, but also opens up space for future research directions that highlight the concrete implementation of *al-sa'ādah* values in policies, learning models, and evaluations of Islamic education oriented towards spiritual and social happiness. Thus, the contribution of this research is not only theoretical, but also opens up space for the development of Islamic education models that are oriented towards the spiritual happiness and social welfare of the ummah, as well as a foothold for further research that is more empirical and applicative.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine Al-Farabi's concept of happiness (*al-sa'ādah*) and analyze its relevance to the philosophy of Islamic education by exploring how he conceptualizes

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[35] Erdriani, Mukhaiyar Mukhaiyar, and Azwar Anananda, "Filosofis Dan Praktis Dalam Pemikiran Al Farabi Dalam Pendidikan."

[36] Azis et al., "Competency-Based Education Development: Al-Farabi's Perspective and Its Relevance to the Development of Islamic Religious Education in the Era of Society 5.0."

[37] Zulmi Aryani, Jamaris, and Sulfyarma M, "Comparison of the Ethical Views of Al-Farabi and Al-Ghazali: The Concept of Happiness and Goodness in Islamic Philosophy."

human perfection and holistic educational aims. The findings indicate that Al-Farabi defines happiness as the highest state of human perfection, achieved through the harmonious integration of intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Drawing on *Taḥṣīl al-Sa'ādah* and *Al-Tanbīh 'alā Sabīl al-Sa'ādah*, happiness is understood as a stable and enduring condition of the soul resulting from alignment between human reason and divine guidance. Perfect knowledge, virtuous character, and moral–social responsibility emerge as essential and interrelated pathways toward realizing true happiness, positioning education as a comprehensive process of forming the *insān kāmil*. These findings carry important implications for the philosophy of Islamic education. Al-Farabi's conception of *al-sa'ādah* provides a robust philosophical foundation for value-oriented and character-based education that transcends instrumental or utilitarian educational goals. His framework affirms the integration of reason and revelation, intellectual excellence and ethical integrity, as well as personal perfection and social responsibility. In this sense, Al-Farabi's thought offers a critical contribution to contemporary Islamic educational discourse by reaffirming education as a transformative endeavor aimed at holistic human development and moral-spiritual flourishing in response to modern educational fragmentation. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its reliance on philosophical-textual analysis without empirical investigation into the application of Al-Farabi's ideas in contemporary educational contexts, and by the absence of comparative perspectives with other Islamic thinkers. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore the practical implementation of *al-sa'ādah* in curriculum development, pedagogy, and character education models within Islamic educational institutions, as well as to conduct comparative and empirical studies. Such efforts would strengthen the operationalization of Al-Farabi's philosophical vision and enhance its relevance to contemporary and global educational challenges.

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