

A COMPARATIVE ETHICAL STUDY OF *BUSHIDŌ* VALUES AND ISLAMIC AKHLAK: CONCEPTUAL CONTEXTUALIZATION IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the ongoing moral crisis in Indonesian society, manifested in declining integrity, weakened moral responsibility, and the limited effectiveness of character education. Although Islamic akhlaq offers a comprehensive normative ethical framework, engagement with non-Islamic ethical traditions is often conducted without clear methodological boundaries. One ethical tradition that merits examination is Bushidō, widely recognized as a virtue-based ethical system emphasizing character formation. This study aims to conduct a comparative ethical analysis of selected Bushidō values; makoto, yū, jin, and meiyō, in relation to their corresponding concepts in Islamic akhlaq, namely šidq, šajā'ah, rahmah, and murū'ah, and to contextualize these values within the Indonesian setting. The research employs a qualitative library-based method using a conceptual-normative and philosophical-comparative approach. Data are analyzed through classical and contemporary texts using the virtue ethics framework and Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement approach. The findings reveal meaningful ethical convergence at the level of universal moral virtues, though without implying normative equivalence. Islamic akhlaq remains the primary evaluative standard, particularly in relation to the preservation of human life (hiḏz an-nafs). This study concludes that cross-cultural ethical contextualization can contribute constructively to character formation when conducted selectively and critically, without compromising the normative foundations of Islamic ethics.

Keywords: Bushidō; Islamic akhlaq; comparative ethics; character education; Indonesia

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh krisis moral yang masih berlangsung dalam masyarakat Indonesia, seperti melemahnya integritas, tanggung jawab moral, dan efektivitas pendidikan karakter. Meskipun akhlak Islam menyediakan kerangka etika normatif yang komprehensif, dialog dengan tradisi etika non-Islam sering kali dilakukan tanpa batas metodologis yang jelas. Salah satu tradisi etika yang menarik untuk dikaji adalah Bushidō, yang dikenal sebagai sistem etika berbasis kebajikan dengan penekanan pada pembentukan karakter. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis secara komparatif nilai-nilai Bushidō, yaitu makoto, yū, jin, dan meiyō, dengan konsep-konsep akhlak Islam yang sepadan, yakni šidq, šajā'ah, rahmah, dan murū'ah, serta mengkontekstualisasikannya dalam konteks Indonesia. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian kepustakaan dengan pendekatan konseptual-normatif dan filosofis-komparatif. Analisis dilakukan melalui kajian teks klasik dan kontemporer menggunakan kerangka etika kebajikan dan pendekatan Double Movement Fazlur Rahman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya titik temu etis pada level nilai moral universal, namun tidak bersifat ekuivalen secara normatif. Akhlak Islam tetap menjadi standar evaluatif utama yang membatasi penerimaan nilai Bushidō, terutama terkait penjagaan jiwa (hiḏz an-nafs). Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa kontekstualisasi nilai lintas budaya dapat berkontribusi pada penguatan karakter bangsa secara selektif dan kritis tanpa mengaburkan prinsip normatif Islam.

Kata kunci: Bushidō; akhlak Islam; etika komparatif; pendidikan karakter; Indonesia



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INTRODUCTION

Ethics occupies a central position in both religious and philosophical traditions as a normative framework guiding human conduct and social interaction. In contemporary life, rapid social change and technological advancement have generated increasingly complex ethical challenges that reflect a broader crisis of moral integrity. In Indonesia, persistent issues such as corruption, injustice, weakened personal integrity, and declining work ethics continue to emerge across various sectors of society.¹ These conditions indicate that existing approaches to character development, particularly through formal education and social institutions, have not yet succeeded in producing morally grounded individuals. Consequently, there is a growing need to explore and contextualize ethical value systems capable of contributing meaningfully to moral and character formation in Indonesia.

In this regard, several nations demonstrate how traditional ethical systems continue to function as strong foundations of national character. Japan offers a notable example through *Bushidō*, an ethical tradition historically associated with the samurai class. *Bushidō* emphasizes the cultivation of moral character through values such as sincerity (*makoto*: 誠), moral courage (*yū*: 勇), compassion (*jin*: 仁), and honor (*meiyo*: 名誉), which have been transmitted not only through formal education but also through culture, literature, and social traditions, forming an enduring moral identity.² Although rooted in a specific historical and cultural context, *Bushidō* represents a coherent virtue-based ethical system that continues to shape moral imagination beyond Japan.

Previous studies indicate that *Bushidō* values continue to function as an ethical framework for character formation beyond their historical origins. Research on the internalization of *Bushidō* values demonstrates their relevance in shaping sincerity, discipline, moral responsibility, and social accountability in contemporary contexts.³ These findings suggest that *Bushidō* may be examined not merely as a cultural artifact but as a virtue-based ethical system whose values intersect with broader moral discourses.

¹ Ahmad Afandi et al., "Konsep Etika, Moral, Dan Akhlak Terpuji Dalam Islam Dan Implementasinya Dalam Kehidupan Sehari-Hari," *Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan* 7, no. 5 (2024): 152–60, <https://ojs.co.id/1/index.php/jip/article/view/1266>; Mahsunudin, "Pendidikan Akhlak Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *AL-IFKAR* 16, no. 2 (2021): 126–46, <https://ejournal.kopertais4.or.id/mataraman/index.php/ifkar/article/view/4670>; Ainna Khoiron Nawali, "Hakikat, Nilai-Nilai Dan Strategi Pembentukan Karakter (Akhlak) Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah Iqra'* 12, no. 1 (2018): 1–13, <http://journal.iain-manado.ac.id/index.php/JII>.

² Inazo. Nitobe, *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan, An Exposition of Japanese Thought* (Antonius R. Pujo Purnomo, Trans.) (Era Media Publisher, 2008); D Risda, K A Hakam, and M Hidayat, "Eksistensi Mental Bushido Sebagai Basis Pembentukan Karakter Melayani Bagi Birokrat Jepang," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 6, no. 1 (2022): 4624–31, <https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/3603>.

³ Nobumichi Watahiki et al., "The Application of the Bushido-Samurai Code Principles within Romanian Companies," *Amfiteatru Economic* 22, no. 53 (2020): 152–63, <https://doi.org/10.24818/EA/2019/53/152>.

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, ethics is articulated through the concept of akhlaq, a comprehensive moral system rooted in the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the prophetic example. Islamic akhlaq integrates faith (*īmān*), moral conduct, and spiritual excellence (*iḥsān*), viewing ethical behavior as inseparable from accountability before God and the preservation of human dignity.⁴ The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is positioned as the ultimate moral exemplar, whose character embodies normative ethical standards that guide both individual conduct and social life.⁵

Despite extensive scholarship on Islamic ethics and growing academic interest in East Asian moral philosophy, comparative ethical studies between *Bushidō* and Islamic akhlaq remain limited, particularly within the Indonesian context. Existing studies often remain descriptive or lack a structured value-to-value analytical framework grounded in Islamic moral terminology.⁶ As a result, the ethical convergence and normative boundaries between these two traditions have not been sufficiently examined from an Islamic perspective.

Comparative ethical studies further show that distinct moral traditions often converge at the level of universal virtues while maintaining different normative foundations. Studies comparing Islamic ethics with other ethical systems emphasize the importance of preserving Islamic normative boundaries while engaging constructively with non-Islamic moral traditions.⁷ This approach provides a methodological precedent for the present comparative analysis between *Bushidō* values and Islamic akhlaq.

Accordingly, this article undertakes a comparative ethical analysis of selected *Bushidō* values which are *makoto*, *yū jin*, and *meiyō*, in relation to their corresponding concepts in Islamic akhlaq, namely *ṣidq*, *shajā'ah*, *raḥmah*, and *murū'ah*, and situates this comparison within the sociocultural context of Indonesia to assess its relevance for moral discourse, character education, and intercultural engagement. By positioning Islamic akhlaq as the primary normative standard rather than a parallel ethical tradition, this study offers a normative, value-to-value analytical framework through which *Bushidō* is critically evaluated, thereby advancing a selective and

⁴ Ahmad ibn Muhammad Ibn Misykawaih, *Kitab Tahdhib Al-Akhlaq Wa Tathir Al-A'raq* (Al-Matba'ah al-Husayniyah, 1329); Al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn* (Dar al-Manhaj, 2011); Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, *Akhlaq Islam* (Fuad SM, Trans) (Pustaka al-Kautsar, 2022).

⁵ Syaikh Mahmud Al-Mishri, *Ensiklopedia Akhlak Rasulullah ﷺ* (Pustaka al-Kautsar, 2019); Zulfahmi Alwi, Rika Dwi Ayu Parmitasari, and Alim Syariati, "An Assessment on Islamic Banking Ethics through Some Salient Points in the Prophetic Tradition," *Heliyon* 7, no. 5 (2021): 07103, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07103>.

⁶ Yusuf Siswantara and Dominicus Subyar Mujihandono, "Semangat Bushido Analisa Kultural Untuk Pengembangan Karakter Masyarakat," *Sapientia Humana: Jurnal Sosial Humaniora* 01, no. 01 (2021): 29–38, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26593/jsh.v1i01.4970>; Andrew Horvat, "Bushidō and the Legacy of 'Samurai Values' in Contemporary Japan," *Asian Studies* 6, no. 2 (2018): 189–208, <https://doi.org/10.4312/as.2018.6.2.189-208>.

⁷ Endrika Widdia Putri, "Comparative Study Of Classical Greek Ethics And Islamic Ethics," *Ulumuna* 23, no. 1 (2019): 90–112, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v23i1.346>; Sefa Bulut, "Self-Transcendence through Futuwah and Dharma: Islam and Hinduism Perspectives," *Walisongo Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 29, no. 1 (2021): 101–20, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.29.1.8193>.

reflective model of ethical contextualization. This approach contributes to the field of comparative ethics by demonstrating that cross-cultural ethical inquiry can engage non-Islamic moral traditions constructively while maintaining the normative boundaries and foundational principles of Islamic ethics, particularly within plural societies such as Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative library-based research method using a conceptual-normative and philosophical-comparative approach. The research design is intended to resolve the identified problem by systematically comparing ethical values at the level of moral concepts, normative orientation, and philosophical foundations, rather than examining empirical behavior.

The methodological architecture of this research follows sequential analytical stages from raw textual sources to normative conclusions. First, primary and secondary textual sources related to *Bushidō* ethics and Islamic akhlaq are collected. These include Inazō Nitobe's *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan*, classical and contemporary works on Islamic moral philosophy, Qur'anic exegesis, Hadith literature, and relevant scholarly studies on comparative ethics and character education. All sources are selected purposively based on their relevance to ethical theory and normative evaluation.

Second, four selected *Bushidō* values which are *makoto* (sincerity), *yū* (moral courage), *jin* (benevolence), and *meiyo* (honor), are identified and conceptually analyzed as ethical constructs within the *Bushidō* tradition.⁸ These values are treated as moral concepts rather than socio-cultural practices. Third, corresponding Islamic akhlaq concepts which are *ṣidq*, *shajā'ah*, *rahmah*, and *murū'ah*, are identified and examined based on Qur'anic principles, Prophetic traditions, and classical Islamic ethical scholarship, with the moral character of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ serving as the primary ethical reference.⁹

Fourth, a normative-critical comparative analysis is conducted to assess areas of ethical convergence and divergence between *Bushidō* values and Islamic akhlaq, with Islamic akhlaq functioning as the main evaluative standard. To support contextual interpretation, this study applies Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement approach, which enables the reinterpretation of ethical values from classical sources in light of contemporary socio-cultural realities while preserving their normative integrity.¹⁰ Through this process, *Bushidō* values are not adopted as a

⁸ Nitobe, *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan, An Exposition of Japanese Thought* (Antonius R. Pujo Purnomo, Trans.).

⁹ Ibn Misykawaih, *Kitab Tahdhib Al-Akhlaq Wa Tathir Al-A'raq*; Al-Ghazali, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm Al-Dīn*; Al-Mishri, *Ensiklopedia Akhlak Rasulullah* ﷺ.

¹⁰ Kharis Nugroho, Muhammad Zawil Kiram, and Didik Andriawan, "The Influence of Hermeneutics in Double Movement Theory (Critical Analysis of Fazlurrahman's Interpretation

complete ethical system but are selectively and critically contextualized insofar as they align with Islamic moral principles, the preservation of human life (*ḥifẓ an-nafs*), and the broader objectives of Islamic ethics (*maqāṣid asy-syarī'ah*).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ethical Convergence between *Bushidō* Values and Islamic Akhlaq

The ethical convergence identified in this study aligns with broader findings in contemporary Islamic ethical discourse, which recognize that universal moral virtues such as sincerity, compassion, and courage may appear across different ethical traditions while remaining subject to Islamic normative evaluation.¹¹

The results of this study demonstrate that the four selected *Bushidō* values (*makoto*, *jin*, *yū*, and *meiyo*) exhibit meaningful ethical convergence with Islamic akhlaq at the level of universal moral principles. This convergence is particularly visible in the shared concern for sincerity, compassion, moral courage, and personal dignity as foundational elements of moral character. Nevertheless, such convergence does not imply ethical equivalence or normative compatibility in all respects. Rather, it indicates that certain moral values may be shared across traditions while remaining embedded within distinct epistemological and theological frameworks.

The value of *makoto* occupies a central position in *Bushidō* ethics as a principle of sincerity, honesty, and moral authenticity. Within the *Bushidō* tradition, *makoto* reflects the unity between intention, speech, and action, serving as the basis for trust and moral credibility within society. Ethical behavior is therefore considered meaningless if it is not grounded in genuine sincerity.¹²

In Islamic akhlaq, *ṣidq* is regarded as a fundamental indicator of moral integrity and spiritual authenticity, encompassing truthfulness in intention (*niyyah*), speech, and conduct. Closely associated with faith and moral accountability before God, *ṣidq* functions not merely as a social virtue but as an essential component of ethical and spiritual life.¹³ The ethical obligation of *ṣidq* is further emphasized in the Qur'an, where God commands: "O you who believe, fear God and be with those who are truthful" (Qur'an 9:119), indicating that truthfulness is a defining characteristic of faith and moral commitment.

Methodology)," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 2, no. 3 (2023): 275–89, <https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v2i3.2531>.

¹¹ Naeni Amanulloh, Muhammad Nurul Huda, and Hanifa Maulidia, "The Akhlak Revolution: A Triadic Interplay Between Piety, Islamization, and Neoliberal Ethics," *Komunitas* 12, no. 1 (2020): 43–57, <https://doi.org/10.15294/komunitas.v12i1.23868>; Putri, "COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CLASSICAL GREEK ETHICS AND ISLAMIC ETHICS."

¹² Nitobe, *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan, An Exposition of Japanese Thought* (Antonius R. Pujio Purnomo, Trans.).

¹³ Al-Qardhawi, *Akhlaq Islam* (Fuad SM, Trans); Al-Mishri, *Ensiklopedia Akhlak Rasulullah* ﷺ.

This understanding reveals a clear ethical convergence between *makoto* and *ṣidq*, particularly in their shared emphasis on moral authenticity and consistency between inner intention and outward behavior. Similar patterns of convergence have been identified in studies on character formation and moral education, which emphasize sincerity and moral integrity as foundational virtues across religious and cultural ethical systems.¹⁴

Despite this convergence, an important distinction must be noted. While *makoto* operates primarily within a human-centered ethical framework oriented toward social trust and honor, *ṣidq* is firmly grounded in a theocentric moral worldview. In Islam, truthfulness is not only a social obligation but also a form of worship and moral accountability before God. This distinction underscores that ethical similarity does not negate foundational differences in moral orientation, thereby delineating the normative boundaries of comparative ethical engagement.

A similar ethical convergence is observed between *jin* in *Bushidō* and *rahmah* in Islamic akhlaq. In Islamic ethics, *rahmah* constitutes a foundational and comprehensive moral principle, extending beyond interpersonal kindness to include social justice, protection of the vulnerable, and ethical responsibility toward all creation. Derived from divine attributes, *rahmah* is deeply embedded in the Qur'anic worldview and prophetic practice, functioning as a moral foundation for both individual conduct and social relations.¹⁵ The Qur'an explicitly affirms this ethical orientation by stating: "We have not sent you [O Muhammad] except as a mercy to all creation" (Qur'an 21:107), establishing compassion as a comprehensive moral paradigm rather than a limited personal virtue.

Within the *Bushidō* tradition, *jin* represents benevolence, compassion, and humane concern for others. Although *Bushidō* developed within a warrior culture, *jin* functions as a moral restraint on power, emphasizing that strength must be guided by empathy and responsibility.¹⁶ Compassion is therefore viewed as a sign of moral refinement rather than weakness, serving to temper authority and force with ethical sensitivity.

Research on ethical humanism within Islamic and cross-cultural contexts further supports the centrality of compassion as a moral restraint on power and authority, reinforcing the ethical alignment between *jin* and *rahmah* identified in this study.¹⁷ This convergence highlights a shared ethical commitment to compassion as a defining feature of moral excellence across traditions.

However, this ethical convergence does not imply normative equivalence. Islamic *rahmah* is inseparable from divine command and moral accountability before God, whereas *jin*

¹⁴ Risda, Hakam, and Hidayat, "Eksistensi Mental Bushido Sebagai Basis Pembentukan Karakter Melayani Bagi Birokrat Jepang."

¹⁵ Al-Qardhawi, *Akhlak Islam (Fuad SM, Trans)*.

¹⁶ Nitobe, *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan, An Exposition of Japanese Thought (Antonius R. Pujio Purnomo, Trans.)*.

¹⁷ Bulut, "Self-Transcendence through Futuwah and Dharma: Islam and Hinduism Perspectives."

remains rooted in humanistic and cultural ideals of virtue. This distinction underscores the theocentric orientation of Islamic ethics and delineates the normative boundaries within which comparative ethical engagement may be conducted.

The value of *yū* in *Bushidō* demonstrates a degree of ethical alignment with the Islamic concept of *shajā'ah*. In Islamic moral philosophy, *shajā'ah* is defined as courage governed by wisdom and moderation. Classical scholars describe *shajā'ah* as a balanced moral disposition situated between cowardice and recklessness, enabling individuals to uphold truth and justice without excess or negligence.¹⁸ Courage in Islam is therefore ethically regulated and oriented toward moral responsibility. This ethical understanding is reinforced in the Prophetic tradition, where the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated: “The strong person is not the one who overcomes others by force, but the one who controls himself when angry” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 5763)¹⁹. This narration highlights that Islamic courage is fundamentally tied to ethical self-restraint and moral discipline.

Within the *Bushidō* ethical framework, *yū* refers to moral courage, understood as the capacity to act rightly in the face of fear, danger, or social pressure. It is not confined to physical bravery but encompasses the courage to uphold ethical principles and moral responsibility through disciplined self-control.²⁰ Courage is thus framed as an expression of self-discipline and ethical maturity within the *Bushidō* tradition.

This comparison reveals an ethical convergence between *yū* and *shajā'ah*, particularly in their shared emphasis on courage as a morally regulated virtue rather than impulsive bravery. However, this convergence does not imply normative equivalence. Islamic *shajā'ah* is inseparable from obedience to God and the realization of moral justice, reinforcing the theocentric grounding of Islamic ethics. This distinction delineates the normative boundaries within which comparative ethical engagement may be responsibly conducted.

Normative Divergence and Ethical Boundaries

Despite the ethical convergences identified above, the findings of this study reveal fundamental normative divergences, particularly in relation to the value of *meiyo* and its ethical implications. In *Bushidō* ethics, *meiyo* signifies honor, reputation, and moral dignity, often regarded as the highest ethical value. Honor functions as the primary source of moral accountability, shaping individual behavior and social expectations.²¹

¹⁸ Al-Qardhawi, *Akhlak Islam* (Fuad SM, Trans.).

¹⁹ Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Damaskus: Dār Ibn Kathīr dan Dār al-Yamāmah, 1993).

²⁰ Nitobe, *Bushidō: The Soul of Japan, An Exposition of Japanese Thought* (Antonius R. Pujo Purnomo, Trans.).

²¹ Nitobe.

In certain historical and cultural contexts, the absolute prioritization of *meiyo* has led to the ethical legitimization of self-destructive practices such as *seppuku*, which is perceived as a means of restoring lost honor.²² This reflects an honor-centered ethical orientation in which moral value is measured by social recognition and personal reputation, even at the cost of human life.

The Islamic concept of *murū'ah*, while emphasizing moral dignity and self-respect, is inseparable from the preservation of human life (*ḥifẓ an-nafs*) as a fundamental ethical objective. The Qur'an establishes this normative boundary explicitly: "And do not kill yourselves. Indeed, God is ever Merciful to you" (Qur'an 4:29). This principle categorically rejects any ethical justification for self-destructive behavior, regardless of honor-based motivations. Consequently, any interpretation of *meiyo* that prioritizes honor above the sanctity of life is incompatible with Islamic akhlaq and must be rejected.²³ Human life is viewed as a divine trust that cannot be sacrificed for the sake of honor or reputation.

This divergence highlights the critical importance of normative boundaries in comparative ethics. While *meiyo* and *murū'ah* share a concern for dignity, their ethical foundations differ substantially. Islamic akhlaq rejects any moral framework that places honor above life, thereby establishing clear limits on ethical convergence. As a result, *Bushidō* values cannot be adopted as a unified ethical system within Islamic moral thought. Ethical convergence is therefore selective and conditional, requiring critical interpretation and normative evaluation.

Contextualization in the Indonesian Context

The contextualization of *Bushidō* values within the Indonesian context must be understood as a process of ethical adaptation rather than cultural transplantation. In this study, the values of *makoto*, *jin*, *yū*, and *meiyo* are not positioned as Japanese cultural norms to be adopted wholesale, but as ethical concepts that may be selectively interpreted at the level of universal moral ethics, provided that they are evaluated through the normative framework of Islamic akhlaq and aligned with Indonesia's socio-cultural foundations.²⁴

Within this framework, the values of *makoto* (*ṣidq*), *jin* (*raḥmah*), and *yū* (*shajā'ah*) demonstrate clear relevance for the Indonesian context, particularly in addressing contemporary

²² Siti Mafrukha, Dian Bayu Firmansyah, and Anggita Stovia, "Animal Elements on Japanese Kotowaza and the Implementation of Japanese Socio-Cultural Values: A Cognitive Linguistics Point of View," *Japanese Research on Linguistics, Literature, and Culture* 3, no. 2 (2021): 141–56, <https://doi.org/10.33633/jr.v3i2.4599>; Yuliani Rahmah and Muhammad Naufal Wibawanto, "Nilai Budaya Malu Masyarakat Jepang (Kajian Sosiologi Sastra Pada Cerpen Yabu No Naka)," *Humanika* 30, no. 1 (2023): 45–57, <https://doi.org/10.14710/humanika.v30i1.52163>.

²³ Al-Qardhawi, *Akhlaq Islam* (Fuad SM, Trans).

²⁴ Risda, Hakam, and Hidayat, "Eksistensi Mental Bushido Sebagai Basis Pembentukan Karakter Melayani Bagi Birokrat Jepang"; Heni Kurniasih, Valentina Y D; Utari, and Akhmadi, "Character Education Policy and Its Implications for Learning in Indonesia 's Education System," *RISE Insight Series*, 2018, 1–7, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35489/bsg-rise-ri_2018/007.

moral challenges such as declining integrity, weakened social responsibility, and ethical inconsistency. These values support character formation that emphasizes sincerity, compassion, and moral courage; principles that are central to Islamic moral education and compatible with the ethical ideals embodied in Pancasila.

The value of *meiyo* may also be contextualized to a certain extent, as long as it is interpreted at the level of moral dignity and ethical self-respect rather than honor-based absolutism. At this level, *meiyo* shows ethical convergence with the Islamic concept of *murū'ah*, which emphasizes personal dignity, self-restraint, and the maintenance of honorable conduct in social life.²⁵ Both concepts underline the importance of moral reputation and ethical consistency as components of virtuous character.

However, this convergence is not absolute. As emphasized in Islamic akhlaq, moral dignity (*murū'ah*) can never justify actions that violate the sanctity of human life (*ḥifẓ an-nafs*). Any interpretation of *meiyo* that prioritizes honor above life or legitimizes self-destructive behavior is therefore incompatible with Islamic ethical principles and must be rejected.²⁶ This normative boundary reflects the theocentric orientation of Islamic ethics, which places moral accountability before God above social recognition or personal reputation.

Accordingly, the contextualization of *meiyo* in Indonesia must remain selective and normatively filtered. When detached from its historical manifestations that contradict Islamic moral objectives, *meiyo* may contribute positively to Indonesian moral discourse by reinforcing values of responsibility, ethical self-discipline, and respect for personal dignity. This selective contextualization ensures that comparative ethics functions as a constructive tool for moral reflection and character education without compromising Islamic ethical foundations or Indonesia's cultural and ideological identity.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that comparative engagement between Bushidō and Islamic *akhlaq* reveals meaningful ethical convergence without implying normative equivalence between the two traditions. The values of *makoto*, *jin*, and *yū* correspond respectively with *ṣidq*, *raḥmah*, and *shajā'ah* in their shared emphasis on sincerity, compassion, and morally regulated courage. Likewise, *meiyo* and *murū'ah* share a concern for dignity and honorable conduct. These convergences indicate that moral traditions emerging from different historical and cultural environments may encounter one another at the level of universal virtues while retaining distinctive philosophical and theological foundations.

²⁵ Al-Mishri, *Ensiklopedia Akhlak Rasulullah* ﷺ.

²⁶ Al-Mishri.

The comparison also confirms that Islamic *akhlaq* possesses a fundamentally theocentric orientation. *Ṣidq* is not limited to social honesty but is connected to faith and accountability before Allah; *raḥmah* extends beyond interpersonal benevolence toward a broader moral responsibility toward creation; and *shajā'ah* is regulated by wisdom, justice, and self-restraint. Consequently, similarities with *Bushidō* values must be interpreted at the level of ethical substance rather than treated as evidence that both traditions possess identical moral structures. This distinction is essential for maintaining the normative integrity of Islamic ethics within comparative ethical discourse.

The clearest normative boundary appears in the comparison between *meiyo* and *murū'ah*. Both concepts acknowledge the importance of dignity and moral reputation, yet Islamic ethics subjects the preservation of dignity to higher moral objectives, particularly the protection and sanctity of human life. Any interpretation of honor that conflicts with this principle cannot be incorporated into Islamic *akhlaq*. This finding demonstrates that cross-cultural ethical engagement requires not only the identification of similarities but also critical evaluation of those elements that differ from or contradict foundational Islamic principles.

In the Indonesian context, *Bushidō* values therefore remain relevant only through selective and reflective contextualization rather than wholesale cultural transplantation. *Makoto*, *jin*, and *yū* may enrich discussions of integrity, compassion, responsibility, and moral courage when interpreted through the normative framework of *ṣidq*, *raḥmah*, and *shajā'ah*. *Meiyo* may likewise contribute to the cultivation of responsibility and personal dignity insofar as it is detached from interpretations that conflict with Islamic moral principles. Such contextualization allows intercultural ethical resources to contribute to character education while remaining compatible with Indonesia's religious and socio-cultural plurality.

Overall, this study contributes to comparative ethics by proposing a value-to-value analytical model in which Islamic *akhlaq* functions as the primary normative framework for engaging non-Islamic ethical traditions. The study shows that constructive intercultural dialogue does not require the dissolution of normative boundaries; instead, ethical convergence can be accepted selectively while divergence is critically evaluated. Nevertheless, the research is conceptual and literature-based, and therefore does not examine how these values are interpreted or internalized empirically. Future research may investigate their application in educational institutions, youth character development, or intercultural learning through field-based and comparative empirical approaches.

Research Novelty

The novelty of this study lies in developing a structured value-to-value comparative framework between *Bushidō* and Islamic *akhlaq* in which Islamic ethics functions explicitly as the primary normative standard. Rather than placing both traditions as equivalent ethical systems, the study compares *makoto*, *yū*, *jin*, and *meiyo* with *ṣidq*, *shajā'ah*, *raḥmah*, and *murū'ah* at the levels of moral meaning, normative orientation, and philosophical foundation. This approach enables the analysis to move beyond descriptive identification of similarities toward a critical examination of both ethical convergence and normative boundaries.

A further contribution is the study's distinction between ethical contextualization and cultural transplantation. *Bushidō* is not proposed as a complete moral system to be transferred into the Indonesian context; instead, its individual virtues are selectively examined according to their compatibility with Islamic *akhlaq*, the preservation of human life, and broader Islamic ethical objectives. This model provides a methodological pathway for engaging non-Islamic moral traditions without weakening the theological and normative foundations of Islamic ethics. It therefore offers a more reflective form of intercultural ethical dialogue based on selective appropriation rather than unrestricted synthesis.

The study also contributes to contemporary character education discourse by linking cross-cultural ethical comparison with Indonesia's socio-cultural context. Through this framework, sincerity, compassion, courage, and dignity are not merely identified as abstract universal virtues but are reinterpreted as potential resources for addressing contemporary concerns related to integrity, social responsibility, moral courage, and ethical consistency. This extends comparative ethics from philosophical discussion toward a contextual framework that can inform moral education and intercultural engagement in plural societies.

Research Implications

Theoretically, the findings imply that comparative Islamic ethics should distinguish carefully between ethical convergence and normative equivalence. The presence of similar virtues across traditions does not necessarily indicate identical moral foundations. Comparative analysis should therefore examine not only what values appear similar but also the sources of moral authority, purposes of ethical action, and limits governing their implementation. Positioning Islamic *akhlaq* as the evaluative framework enables constructive engagement with external ethical traditions while preserving its theocentric orientation and normative integrity.

Pedagogically, the findings provide a basis for developing comparative character education that introduces students to cross-cultural virtues while simultaneously strengthening their ability to evaluate those virtues critically. Values such as sincerity, compassion, moral

courage, responsibility, and dignity may be explored through comparisons between Bushidō and Islamic *akhlak*, but teachers should clearly explain both their areas of convergence and their normative differences. Such an approach can develop moral reasoning, intercultural literacy, and appreciation of other traditions without reducing Islamic ethics to cultural relativism or treating all ethical systems as interchangeable.

Practically, the proposed contextualization framework may inform the development of character education materials, intercultural learning programs, and ethical training in educational and social institutions in Indonesia. Bushidō-derived virtues can serve as comparative illustrations or supplementary ethical resources when they reinforce values already recognized within Islamic morality and the broader Indonesian socio-cultural context. However, their adoption must remain selective and critically filtered so that intercultural engagement strengthens integrity, compassion, responsibility, and human dignity without compromising fundamental Islamic ethical principles.

Suggestion and Recommendations

Future research may extend this study by empirically examining the application of selectively contextualized Bushidō values within Indonesian educational or social institutions. Additionally, comparative analysis using alternative ethical frameworks beyond virtue ethics may further enrich the philosophical depth of cross-cultural ethical engagement. Comparative studies involving other non-Islamic ethical traditions could also test the transferability of the normative-selective model proposed in this study. Finally, further theoretical refinement of normative-selective contextualization as a methodological approach would strengthen its contribution to comparative ethics and Islamic moral philosophy.

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