

THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL CHARACTER

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Abstract

Islamic education is a core component in shaping the nation's character based on noble moral, ethical and spiritual values. The study conducted in this research uses the literature research method. The results of the study show that Islamic education consistently educates values such as honesty, responsibility, truth, justice and respect for others, which are very important in the formation of individual character with integrity. Islamic education also plays a role in strengthening students' cultural and religious identity, promoting tolerance, mutual respect and social solidarity amidst the cultural and religious diversity of Indonesian society. In addition, the integration of modern knowledge and life skills in the Islamic education curriculum ensures that students develop not only moral qualities but also relevant competencies to face global challenges. However, challenges such as limited competent human resources, relevance of the curriculum to the needs of the times, and lack of funds and infrastructure, are obstacles that need to be overcome. Therefore, the implementation of strategies such as training and professional development for educators, development of relevant and applicable curricula, and investment in technology and adequate educational facilities, are essential to improve the quality of Islamic education. With this approach, Islamic education can effectively contribute to the formation of a superior and highly competitive national character in the global context.

Keywords: Role, Islamic Education, National Character.

Introduction

Character education is very important to shape students into individuals with noble and superior morals. By educating noble values from an early age such as honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, and the spirit of hard work, it is expected that students will grow into individuals who are resilient to face every challenge of the times. Strong character is the main capital to lead the nation to a glorious future.

Character education plays a major role in shaping the next generation of the nation that is sensitive to various social problems (Sitopu et al., 2024). By instilling a sense of empathy and responsibility for others, students are honed to have the ability

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to think critically and solve various global challenges such as poverty, injustice, and climate change. They will be moved to be actively involved in creating positive changes for the betterment of the nation and humanity (Azizah, 2022).

In the midst of increasingly strong globalisation, character education plays a role in strengthening the nation's identity. By instilling indigenous culture and morals, the nation can walk according to its ancestral values despite being exposed to various foreign influences. The nation's strong character will make it able to compete in the international arena with high dignity (Arthur, 2021). Therefore, character education is very strategic as a long-term investment to build a competitive and dignified nation.

National character, which is formed from moral, ethical and social values, is an important basis for the progress and welfare of society. In Indonesia, which is rich in cultural and religious diversity, Islamic education plays a significant role in shaping the nation's character based on religious values (Fathurohman et al., 2022). Islamic education, both formal such as in madrasah and pesantren and non-formal such as in the family and community environment, has been recognised as making a major contribution in shaping the morals and morals of students. The values taught in Islamic education such as honesty, responsibility, hard work, and tolerance are in line with the values of Pancasila which is the basic ideology of the Indonesian nation (Guna et al., 2024); (Hairiyanto et al., 2024).

However, although Islamic education has potential in character building, challenges in implementation in the field cannot be ignored. Various obstacles such as the lack of educational facilities, an unoptimal curriculum, and social and economic challenges often become obstacles in the character education process. Various obstacles such as limited educational facilities, curriculum that is not yet optimal, as well as social and economic challenges are often the main obstacles in the process of character building through education (Amri, 2024); (Khoiruddin & Masrukin, 2022).

Islamic religious education has a very important meaning in the social and cultural context, especially in building and maintaining moral and ethical values in society. In many communities, Islamic education does not merely convey knowledge about religion but also instils universal values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance (Muslim, 2020). These noble values are essential in creating an atmosphere of social life that is harmonious and full of a sense of togetherness. Islamic education, whether organised in madrassas, Islamic boarding schools, or through recitation in the community, provides a solid ethical framework that encourages each individual to behave well and wisely in social interactions. These noble values serve as guidelines in everyday life and help reduce various social problems and increase the sense of solidarity in society (Ritonga, 2021).

Since ancient times, Islamic education has been recognised as an important means of preserving and developing the cultural heritage of the ummah. Through various methods such as learning hadith, tafsir, and fiqh, Islamic education enriches the

understanding of Islam's rich and diverse cultural heritage (Suyono, 2021). This not only enhances pride in cultural identity but also deepens understanding of literature, art and cultural practices rooted in Islamic tradition. Islamic education also encourages tolerance and intercultural dialogue, which are indispensable in a pluralistic society (Aini & Fitria, 2021).

Thus, Islamic education is an important bridge that connects the past with the present, strengthening cultural identity while preparing an inclusive and superior society in the global era. Therefore, this research intends to explore the role of Islamic education in shaping the nation's character, and how these challenges can be overcome.

Research Methods

The study conducted in this research uses the literature research method. Literature research method is an approach in research that uses written sources to collect, process, analyse, and interpret data. This research is often conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular topic based on relevant studies, articles, books, and documents. (Sukmadinata, 2009); (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022).

Results and Discussion

Definition of Islamic Education

Islamic education is an educational process based on the teachings and values contained in Islam, aiming to form humans who have a balance between life in the world and what they will experience in the afterlife (Tubagus et al., 2023). Islamic education not only instils knowledge about religion such as the Qur'an, Hadith, Jurisprudence, Tawhid, and Islamic history, but also instils deep moral, ethical, and spiritual values. Through this comprehensive approach, Islamic education aims to develop the potential of the individual as a whole, both in terms of intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and social. Thus, Islamic education is expected to produce individuals who are faithful, pious, knowledgeable, and have noble character (Aslan & Shiong, 2023).

In its implementation, Islamic education can occur in various official educational institutions such as madrasah, pesantren, Islamic schools, and Islamic universities. In addition, Islamic education is also widely carried out through non-formal activities such as recitation, majelis taklim, and da'wah programmes (Supa'at & Muslim, 2023). In the social and cultural context, Islamic education plays an important role in instilling universal human values such as tolerance, justice and co-operation. For this reason, Islamic education serves not only for individual development, but also for the development of a more moral, harmonious and peaceful society (Rohman & Muhiid, 2022).

Islamic education aims to form an entity that has faith, piety, and desirable behaviour according to Islamic teachings. More specifically, this education aims to

develop the potential of each individual as a whole in terms of intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. The hope is that through Islamic education, a person can become a caliph on earth, who is able to carry out social duties and responsibilities well while continuing to obey Allah's commands and stay away from His prohibitions (Arthur, 2021).

In addition, Islamic education also aims to form a noble character and high character. It emphasises the importance of manners and ethics in daily life, and teaches how to interact with fellow humans and other creatures properly. Islamic education seeks to create humans who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have high moral integrity and a universal human spirit (Pangalila et al., 2020).

The first basic principle of Islamic education is that all curriculum arrangements, teaching methods, and educational goals must be based on the Qur'an and Hadith. These two primary sources serve as guidelines and measures of truth in every aspect of education. In practice, this principle ensures that Islamic education does not deviate from religious teachings and always prioritises Islamic values (Sukirman, 2023).

The next principle is that Islamic education is holistic and comprehensive. That is, this education covers all aspects of human life, both worldly and ukhrawi (hereafter). It does not only emphasise the spiritual aspect, but also encourages the development of intellectual, emotional, and physical abilities. It aims to create individuals who are balanced and able to live life well in various fields, both in the world and in preparation for the hereafter (Mujib, 2021).

In Islamic education, adab or ethics are often taught before knowledge. This means that good attitudes and behaviour are considered an important foundation before one can properly absorb knowledge. Teaching adab allows students to better appreciate knowledge, teachers, and the learning process itself, which ultimately contributes to a conducive and productive learning environment (Nurdiana et al., 2023); (Sarmila et al., 2023).

Therefore, Islamic Education does not only stop at the realm of theory and knowledge. The importance of implementing the teachings in daily life is another basic principle. Students are taught how to apply Islamic values in concrete actions, both in the context of worship, muamalah (social relations), and akhlaq. Therefore, the concrete practice of Islamic principles is very important in Islamic education.

By upholding these basic goals and principles, Islamic education is expected to produce a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has a strong commitment to religious and social values, so as to make a positive contribution to the community and society at large.

Concept of National Character

The main characteristic that colours the identity of a nation is called national character, a collection of values, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour that become a

common characteristic and identity. It encompasses moral, ethical, cultural aspects, as well as social dimensions that are formed from a long process throughout history, under the influence of education, and through complex social interactions in society (Huda et al., 2023). It reflects the collective personality that distinguishes a nation from others and serves as a guide for individual and group behaviour in daily life, as well as when dealing with other nations at the global level. A strong and positive national character plays an important role in building unity, progress and prosperity together (Mu'min, 2023).

Pancasila, as the state principle and the outlook of life of the Indonesian nation, is the cornerstone of the core values in the character of the Indonesian nation. The five precepts of Pancasila - Belief in One God, Fair and Dignified Humanity, Indonesian Unity, Democracy Led by Wisdom in Deliberation, and Social Justice for All Indonesian People - describe spiritual values, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice that are expected to be realised in daily life (Mu'ammam & Hadi, 2020). These values become the guidelines and working spirit of the Indonesian people in various aspects of life, both in personal, social and national contexts.

Then, the Principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which means "Different but Still One," expresses the spirit of unity in diversity, which is one of the core values in the character of the Indonesian nation. The Indonesian state consists of various ethnicities, languages, religions, and cultures that coexist in harmony (Ikhwan et al., 2020). This diversity is considered a wealth that must be preserved and respected. This value encourages an attitude of tolerance, respect for differences, as well as a spirit of cooperation and help among the community, which strengthens social cohesion and national unity (Abdunnasir, 2023).

Furthermore, *Gotong royong*, as a distinctive Indonesian culture, is another core value that emphasises the importance of cooperation and social solidarity. Through *gotong royong*, Indonesians are taught to hold hands, help each other, and work together to achieve common goals (Daryono & Syukur, 2023). This culture forms the character of a nation that is communal, caring, and ready to sacrifice for the common good. The value of *gotong royong* is seen in various social activities, ranging from traditional events, village infrastructure development, to responses to natural disasters, showing a strong spirit of collectivity (Badawi, 2024).

Furthermore, integrity and sincerity are basic values that are expected in every individual and become an integral part of the Indonesian character. These values teach the importance of having solid principles, speaking and acting honestly, and taking responsibility for every action taken (Irawan et al., 2023). In a broader context, integrity and sincerity are the basis for creating a clean and transparent government, and become social capital for society in realising sustainable and equitable development. These values not only shape individual behaviour, but also create an environment conducive to the nation's progress (Pratama, 2022).

Social justice is a noble value that is aspired to in Indonesian society. Justice means providing equal legal protection to all citizens without discriminating against their backgrounds. Meanwhile, public welfare encompasses efforts to improve people's standard of living, including in education, health and the economy. These values are implicit in various government policies that aim to reduce social and economic disparities and create equal access for all people (Anbia et al., 2024).

The value of divinity embedded in the first principle of Pancasila shows how important spirituality is in shaping the character of the Indonesian nation. A peaceful and harmonious religious life is an integral part of the nation's identity (Muzakki & Nurdin, 2022). The value of divinity teaches people to instil faith and piety, practice religious teachings, and respect each other's beliefs. A life based on these inner values builds a solid moral foundation, encourages ethical behaviour, and strengthens the spirit of peace and tolerance amid the diversity of religions in Indonesia (Silvia et al., 2023).

Self-reliance and hard work are key values that Indonesians hold dear in building themselves and their country. Independence teaches the importance of not depending on others and being able to stand alone in facing various challenges (Santosa et al., 2023). Meanwhile, hard work encompasses a high work ethic, an unyielding spirit and dedication to achieving goals. These values are reflected in the entrepreneurial spirit, perseverance in running a business, and innovation and creativity that continue to grow in society. These two values drive the nation's progress and independence (Daryono & Syukur, 2023).

Nationalism and patriotism are values that are deeply rooted in the character of the Indonesian nation. Nationalism emphasises pride and love for the country, as well as the willingness to sacrifice for the survival of the nation and state. Love of country includes an awareness of history, culture and ancestral heritage that must be maintained and preserved. These values encourage active participation in nation-building, compliance with laws and regulations, and a willingness to defend the country against threats. Together, nationalism and patriotism foster a strong spirit of patriotism and strengthen national unity (Triwantoro & Darmawan, 2020).

Democracy based on the principles of consensus is an important value in the Indonesian system of government and social relations. Democracy means providing equal opportunities for all citizens to be involved in political and social decision-making processes (Sholeh et al., 2023). Mutual consensus emphasises the process of discussing together to reach a fair and wise agreement. This value teaches the importance of listening to various opinions, respecting differences, and prioritising common interests over personal or group interests. The values of democracy and mutual consensus create an atmosphere conducive to dialogue, cooperation and the achievement of solutions based on mutual agreement (Karimullah, 2023).

National resilience and defence of the homeland are core values that reflect the commitment of the Indonesian people in maintaining the continuity and sovereignty of the country. National resilience means the nation's ability to face various threats, challenges, obstacles and disturbances, both from within and outside the country. Defence of the homeland, on the other hand, demands the readiness of every citizen to play an active role in efforts to defend the country from all forms of threats (Barker, 2024). This value involves an awareness of the history of the nation's struggle, a spirit of patriotism, and a strong desire to protect the homeland and its sovereignty. Through homeland defence education and national awareness, it is hoped that a generation that is brave, resilient and ready to contribute to strengthening national resilience will be formed (Prayitno & Nur, 2022).

Dignity and honour are values that emphasise the importance of maintaining self-respect as individuals, families, communities and nations. Dignity means the quality or nature of a human being that deserves respect, appreciation, and recognition of their rights and freedoms. Honour relates to noble ethical and moral behaviour and commitment to good values. These values encourage Indonesians to behave honestly, fairly and with dignity in every aspect of life. Maintaining dignity and honour represents a strong character and creates a positive reputation in the eyes of the world (Sari et al., 2024).

Social care and empathy are values that teach the importance of sharing, helping others, and showing sympathy for others who are experiencing difficulties or suffering. This value forms a sense of solidarity, forms a caring community, and creates a warm and supportive social environment (Abidin et al., 2024). Social care can be realised through various concrete actions, such as charity work, disaster relief, voluntary teaching, and other community initiatives. Empathy, the ability to feel and understand the feelings of others, strengthens people-to-people relationships and creates stronger emotional bonds within the Community (Suminto, 2023).

By appreciating and applying these core values, Indonesian society is expected to build a resilient, harmonious and competitive national character, and maintain unity in diversity. These values guide every citizen to behave in accordance with the ideals and aspirations of the nation, direct positive behaviour, and support the creation of a just, prosperous, and socially just society.

The Role of Islamic Education in National Character Building

Islamic education has a central role in shaping the character of a moral and ethical Indonesian nation. As a country with a majority of Muslims, Islamic education not only aims to teach religious knowledge, but also to shape morals and ethics (Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023). This education instils values such as honesty, humility, responsibility and concern for others. These values are in line with the principles of life

that society expects, so they become a solid foundation for shaping individual and community character (Haddar et al., 2023).

In addition, Islamic education also has a role in instilling a spirit of justice and equality. Islamic teachings state that all humans are created equal before God and have the same right to be treated fairly and honourably (Erwan et al., 2023). Islamic education emphasises the importance of respecting the rights of others, avoiding discrimination, and building harmonious relationships between people. With an emphasis on the principles of justice and equality, Islamic education is able to form a just generation, and contribute to creating an inclusive and tolerant society (Sulastri et al., 2023).

Islamic education also plays a major role in shaping religious-spiritual character, which strengthens an individual's relationship with God. Through teaching that includes worship, prayer and daily behaviour in accordance with Islamic teachings, this education fosters awareness of the importance of spirituality in life (Tuhuteru et al., 2023). The religious character formed through Islamic education is expected to guide individuals to live a blessed life, have integrity, and always adhere to religious values in every action (Komariah & Nihayah, 2023).

Finally, Islamic education emphasises the importance of knowledge and lifelong learning. By teaching that studying is obligatory for every Muslim, Islamic education encourages students to continue learning and developing themselves (Shodiq, 2024). This attitude not only shapes the character of individuals who love knowledge, but also promotes the progress of society as a whole. Thus, Islamic education not only forms a strong and moral individual character, but also contributes to creating a smart, competitive and advanced society (Akbar et al., 2022).

Thus, Islamic education plays a vital role in shaping the character of a moral and ethical Indonesian nation. By instilling values such as honesty, responsibility, justice, equality and concern for others, Islamic education helps build a strong foundation of character in individuals and society. In addition, Islamic education strengthens religious-spiritual character, brings individuals closer to the Creator, and fosters awareness of the importance of spirituality in daily life. Through its emphasis on the obligation to seek knowledge, Islamic education encourages students to continue learning and strive forward, ultimately contributing to the progress of society. With all the positive values taught, Islamic education plays an important role in creating a generation with integrity, intelligence and morality, and shaping an inclusive, tolerant and developed society.

Challenges and obstacles of Islamic Education in National Character Building

One of the major obstacles in providing meaningful Islamic education to shape the nation's character is the limited number of reliable and dedicated human resources. Teachers and trainers who have a deep understanding of Islam and are able to teach moral values effectively are in short supply (Purwanto, 2020). The quality of education depends largely on the competence of educators, and the lack of training and

professional development for them reduces the effectiveness of Islamic religious education. This is a major challenge in ensuring that the Islamic values taught can truly permeate and influence students' characters (Aslan & Pong, 2023).

In addition, the Islamic education curriculum is often considered less relevant to the needs of modern times. Many Islamic schools or educational institutions still use a traditional curriculum that is not integrated with the latest developments in science and technology. This causes students to be less prepared in facing dynamic global challenges. These limitations make Islamic education seem alienated and less attractive to the younger generation, who tend to want an education that prepares them holistically for the future (Astuti et al., 2023).

The next challenge is a less supportive environment and culture. In some cases, the family and community environment is not always supportive or in line with the values taught in Islamic education (Purwanto, 2020). Students can face dilemmas when the values they learn at school are different from what they see and experience in their daily lives. The influence of media and technology often contradicts the moral and ethical values taught, thus complicating the character building process (Adiyono et al., 2024).

Another obstacle is the lack of adequate funds and infrastructure to support Islamic education. Many Islamic educational institutions, especially in remote areas, face limitations in terms of physical facilities and learning resources (Siregar, 2021). Lack of access to books, information technology, and other supporting facilities hinders the effective teaching and learning process. In fact, quality education requires a conducive environment and adequate resources. These limitations restrict the ability of Islamic educational institutions to work optimally in shaping strong and good student characters (Tabroni & Rahmawati, 2021).

However, various obstacles are often faced to realise it. Therefore, smart strategies are needed to overcome them.

First, improving the competence of teachers is absolutely done through various means, such as training, workshops, seminars on an ongoing basis. This needs to be done together with various parties, such as the government, universities, and research institutions. With the provision of integrated mastery of science and technology, educators can better educate the younger generation (Jamarudin & Pudir, 2020). Second, it is also important to update the curriculum so that it remains relevant in the midst of the times. Integration of Islamic values and modern science needs to be done. Project-based learning and real-world problem solving are important, so that students understand the application of religion in life (Jannah, 2023). Third, the positive image of students also needs to be built in harmony with the school and family environment. Synergies between schools, parents and communities need to be made. Programmes that involve the community can unite school and life learning. Educators' role models are also very important. Fourth, alternative facilities and funds are also needed, such as

waqf, donations, cooperation with the private sector and organisations. Technology investment needs to be prioritised to support learning. With smart and innovative resource management, Islamic education will excel in building the nation's character (Munawarsyah, 2023); (Amin et al., 2021).

Thus, if these strategies are well implemented, the role of Islamic education in shaping the nation's identity will be optimised in the future.

Conclusion

Islamic education is a very fundamental aspect in shaping the character of the nation's growth by instilling noble values such as truth, honesty, responsibility and respect between people. Through the gathering of religious education, students are guided to implement these principles not only in intellectual understanding, but also in daily actions as an integral part of their personality.

In addition, Islamic education plays a role in the formation of students' cultural and religious identity, which is essential in Indonesia's multicultural society. By understanding and applying the teachings of Islam as a whole, students can appreciate and protect the diversity of ethnic groups and religious beliefs that develop in the country. Religious education helps students develop mutual respect, tolerance and social solidarity, which are important foundations for national unity.

Moreover, quality Islamic education not only emphasises spiritual and normative aspects but also integrates contemporary knowledge and relevant skills for the future. This ensures that students not only become morally ethical individuals, but also competent and prepared to face current and future global challenges. Thus, religious education contributes to the formation of quality young people who are able to play an active role in the sustainable development and progress of the nation.

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