

The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Shaping the Character of Students' at SMAS NWDI Korleko

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Abstract

Islamic Religious Education plays a crucial role in shaping the Islamic character of students at SMAS NWDI Korleko. Through well-planned instruction, teachers not only deliver knowledge but also guide and instill Islamic values so that students are able to understand, internalize, and practice these teachings in their daily lives. This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design, with data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Islamic Religious Education is expected to contribute significantly to the formation of a morally responsible society with strong Islamic character. Therefore, it serves as a long-term investment in producing individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also possess noble character in accordance with Islamic values.

Keywords: *islamic religious education, islamic character*

Abstrak

Pendidikan Agama Islam memegang peranan sentral dalam membentuk kepribadian Islami peserta didik di SMAS NWDI Korleko. Melalui perencanaan pembelajaran yang terstruktur, guru tidak hanya menyampaikan materi, tetapi juga membimbing serta menanamkan nilai-nilai Islam agar siswa mampu memahami, menginternalisasi, dan mengamalkannya dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, melalui pengumpulan data berupa wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Pendidikan Agama Islam diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi yang signifikan dalam mewujudkan masyarakat yang mempunyai kewajiban moral dan karakter yang mumpuni. Oleh karena itu, Pendidikan Islam merupakan masa depan cemerlang dalam membentuk manusia yang kuat di bidang secara intelektual, namun juga beradab mulia sesuai dengan tujuan Islam.

Kata Kunci. *pendidikan agama islam, karakter Islami*

Introduction

Islamic Religious Education is characterized by a systematic approach. It not only develops, expands, and strengthens students' spiritual values and the foundations of their faith, but also embodies those values in their daily behavior, both outwardly and inwardly. These values serve as a foundation that motivates and guides personal actions. Furthermore, Islamic education seeks to cultivate students' emotional sensitivity toward Islamic moral and spiritual principles, so that their daily attitudes and actions are guided by these values.

Islamic education aims to shape students so that they not only possess academic knowledge and skills but also become individuals who think logically, are obedient, and are capable of playing a role in family, community, and national life with a strong foundation of morality, ethics, and spirituality. All these aspects are rooted in a firm faith in Allah SWT.

As mandated by Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, character education occupies a strategic position as a key pillar in the implementation of national education, aimed at developing abilities and shaping the character and civilization of a dignified nation. Character education is designed to help students develop their full potential so that they become people who have faith in and are devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, intelligent, creative, and independent, as well as becoming democratic and responsible citizens¹. Character development does not only take place in the school environment, but also within the family and the community. Therefore, teachers, parents, and the community play complementary roles in ensuring the success of character education.

Based on the above, the author considers it necessary to conduct further research on the role of teachers in teaching Islamic Religious Education, particularly in shaping students with Islamic character. This study aims to examine the process of character formation through Islamic Religious Education as well as

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative method using a case study approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation.² This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth, holistic, and contextual understanding of the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in character development within a specific school environment. The subjects of this study are Islamic religious education teachers, the vice principal for student affairs, and students at SMAS NWDI Korleko. The object of the study is the role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping students' character, which encompasses values of faith, noble moral conduct, and religious practices.

¹ Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. (2017). Konsep dan Pedoman Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter (PPK). Jakarta: Kemendikbud.

² Arikunto, S. (2013). Prosedur Penelitian : Suatu Pendekatan Praktik. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.

The data collection technique used was passive participant observation, which involved directly observing the PAI learning process in the classroom, religious activities (such as congregational prayer and religious study sessions), and social interactions at school to observe the internalization of character values. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach with Islamic Education teachers (to understand strategies, materials, and evaluations regarding character development), class representatives (to gather data on general student behavior), and students (to explore their perceptions, acceptance, and the impact of PAI instruction on their character), and finally, a documentary analysis involving the examination of documents such as PAI teachers' lesson plans (RPP), syllabi, student grades, school religious activity schedules, and school regulations.

The data was analyzed interactively using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes: Data Reduction—selecting, focusing, and simplifying data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Next is Data Presentation—presenting data in the form of descriptive narratives, matrices, or charts to facilitate drawing conclusions. Finally, Drawing Conclusions/Verification involves deriving meaning from the presented data, verifying it through triangulation to ensure data validity, and formulating the final research findings³.

Research Findings

1. Islamic Religious Education

Islamic Religious Education is a process of cultural formation that takes place throughout human life, both in the school environment and within society, aimed at enhancing human dignity and worth. Thus, families, society, and the government each hold distinct roles and responsibilities in the implementation of education. The implementation of this education must operate within an integrated and mutually supportive system to ensure that the intended objectives are achieved.

The word “education” originates from the Greek terms “pedagogy” and “pedagogia,” which refer to the process of guiding and directing children toward independence and responsibility. In essence, education is a conscious and planned effort undertaken by humans to help one another develop their full potential, while also

³ Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

passing on the values of life within society. This process of transmitting values can be carried out through teaching, training, and mentoring⁴.

Through education, people are guided to live in accordance with Islamic values, meeting life's needs alongside advancements in science and technology, without neglecting the principles of Sharia established by Allah SWT. According to Chabib Thoha and Abdul Mu'ti, Islamic Religious Education is a conscious and planned effort to teach, train, and guide students so that they are able to foster an attitude of tolerance toward followers of other religions, while simultaneously strengthening their faith, understanding, and internalization of Islamic teachings. Islamic Religious Education also aims to guide students so that they are able to understand, appreciate, and practice Islamic values in their daily lives⁵.

The primary objective of Islamic Religious Education is to shape individuals who have faith in and are devout toward Allah SWT, and who are aware of their role as stewards on Earth, grounded in sound moral principles. In short, Islamic Religious Education is oriented toward the formation of the “insan kamil”—that is, a complete human being of noble character who is capable of fulfilling their responsibilities in society⁶.

2. Building Islamic Character

The development of Islamic character is a planned and measurable effort to ensure that a Muslim possesses good morals, behaves honestly, and always follows the teachings of Islam. This process not only teaches students about praiseworthy and unpraiseworthy conduct but also cultivates habits so that Islamic values can be consistently applied in all situations and at all times.

The development of Islamic character aims to cultivate Muslims of noble character. From an Islamic perspective, morality encompasses virtues such as emotional stability, ethical behavior, fundamental character traits, habits, and civility. The approach employed is normative and perennial, meaning it is grounded in authentic Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith. This approach emphasizes that Islamic character must reflect the entirety of Islamic teachings (kaffah), as exemplified by the

⁴ Susanto, A. (2017). *Filsafat Ilmu: Suatu Kajian dalam Dimensi Ontologis, Epistemologis, dan Aksiologis* (Edisi Revisi). Bumi Aksara.

⁵ Thoha, C., & Mu'ti, A. (2018). *Pendidikan Agama Islam untuk Membangun Sikap Toleransi dan Keyakinan*. Kencana Prenada Media Group.

⁶ Nata, A. (2016). *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*. Kencana Prenada Media Group.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and involves spiritual intelligence in addressing questions regarding meaning and value.

At the high school level, the development of Islamic character plays a highly strategic role in strengthening students' sense of self-identity and shaping a personality of noble character. Through this guidance, students are directed to understand and practice the fundamental values of Islam, such as tolerance, honesty, kindness, and sincerity. Islamic teachings prioritize moral character over mere mastery of knowledge, as emphasized in various verses of the Qur'an and hadiths that underscore the importance of good conduct.

Thus, the development of Islamic character, both within and outside the school environment, is a crucial step in shaping individuals who prioritize noble moral values, possess strong self-confidence, and live their lives in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

3. The Process of Islamic Character Development

The character development of students is influenced by the values of Islamic education, as religion provides the foundation of faith that forms the basis of moral character. Through this moral character, students are guided toward a religious dimension of life. However, character development is a complex process that requires a significant amount of time. This process is not only influenced by the surrounding environment but also by internal factors, such as instinct, willpower, conscience, and heredity, as well as external factors, including education and the social environment.

Character education has actually existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as the primary mission of prophethood was to perfect human character. From an Islamic perspective, the concept of akhlak aligns with the concept of character. Al-Ghazali defines akhlak as an attitude deeply ingrained in the soul, leading to spontaneous actions without requiring much deliberation⁷. Meanwhile, Suwito states that morality is the science of character that enables a person to understand the virtues of the soul, strive to achieve them, and purify the soul from blameworthy traits⁸. Thus, character is essentially a set of moral principles that determine a person's behavior.

⁷ Al-Ghazali, I. ([t.th](#)). *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* (Jilid 3). Dar al-Ma'rifah.

⁸ Suwito. (2015). *Filsafat Moral: Refleksi Kritis tentang Etika dan Akhlak*. Pustaka Pelajar.

Various hadiths emphasize the importance of moral education, including the recommendation to raise children to have good and praiseworthy attitudes. Islam views humans as being born with the potential to do good or cause harm, as well as possessing a spiritual potential that transcends the material dimension. It is this spiritual potential that must be developed through a comprehensive Islamic education, encompassing the aspects of knowledge, character, and faith.

Islam strongly emphasizes the importance of moral character, as reflected in numerous injunctions to instill values of goodness from an early age. The concept of Islamic education recognizes three fundamental human potentials: the potential to do good, the potential to cause harm, and the non-material divine potential. It is the development of this third potential that forms the basis of the holistic approach to Islamic education, encompassing morality, intellect, and spirituality⁹.

Ibn Faris asserts that Islamic education aims to develop the full potential of humanity comprehensively, encompassing the aspects of the soul, morality, intellect, physical well-being, religion, social life, economics, aesthetics, and the spirit of struggle. This concept reflects a holistic approach that harmoniously integrates the spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social dimensions of life.

Comprehensive moral education serves as a strategic effort to address human needs in fostering harmonious relationships—both with fellow human beings and the environment, as well as with God, fellow human beings, and the universe. Within this framework, Islamic education positions moral character as the foundation of a balanced life and the key to developing the full potential of human beings.

Moral teachings in Islam encompass four main principles, namely: (1) wisdom (hikmah) as the ability to distinguish between good and evil; (2) courage (syaja'ah) as the ability to control emotions rationally; (3) self-restraint (iffah) as the ability to curb one's desires in accordance with reason and religious law; and (4) justice ('adl) as the balance between emotional impulses and the guidance of wisdom. These principles indicate that the human soul has a tendency toward both good and evil, so education plays a role in directing those impulses toward the good.

Al-Ghazali asserts that closeness to Allah SWT is the benchmark of human perfection, while Ibn Miskawaih views the primary goal of moral education as devotion

⁹ Tim Penyusun. (2007). *Kurikulum dan Pendidikan Islam*. PT RajaGrafindo Persada.

to God. These moral values can be applied across all subjects without needing to be taught as a separate subject. This underscores that morality is a fundamental principle in Islamic education¹⁰.

By instilling moral values in every learning process, school education can make a tangible contribution to the character development of students. This effort is the first step toward building a society that is dignified, has integrity, and is globally competitive.

4. The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Shaping Islamic Character

Islamic religious education plays a central role in shaping Islamic character, especially within the school environment. It is regarded as a main pillar supporting students' character development through sources such as the Shahadah, the Qur'an, Hadith, fiqh, Islamic history, and akhlak. By placing knowledge within a religious framework, Islamic religious education helps build students' personalities. Furthermore, it is considered vital for preserving the spirit of sacrifice of the nation's founders and reinforcing national values as a social identity.

The primary objective of Islamic Religious Education is to shape students' personalities, as reflected in their faith, noble character, and behavior that aligns with Islamic teachings—specifically in their attitudes, conduct, and mindset in daily life. Asmaun Sahlan outlines several methods for fostering religious culture, including creating a religious environment, facilitating the internalization of values through deep understanding, continuous guidance, setting a good example, and incorporating these practices into daily life, as well as strengthening religious civilization. Practices such as reading the Qur'an, being humble, participating in istighasah, performing the dhuha prayer, and various other religious rituals are tangible manifestations of religious culture that can be applied in school life.

Islamic Religious Education holds a strategic position as the foundation for managing and developing students' character in the classroom. Thus, the implementation of strategies for developing religious character through Islamic Religious Education is highly relevant. Furthermore, creating a conducive learning environment outside the classroom also plays a crucial role as a supporting strategy in achieving learning objectives and fostering positive student character.

¹⁰ Miskawaih, I. ([t.th](#)). *Tahdzib al-Akhlaq wa Tathhir al-A'raq*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.

The cornerstone of character development in children is a strong understanding of Islamic beliefs. Islamic religious education serves as the foundation for the development of other disciplines, making its inclusion in the school curriculum critically important. This education aims to nurture students of noble character, firm faith, and profound knowledge. The primary principle in introducing Islamic values serves as the foundation for building character from an early age in school, emphasizing the instillation of moral values through the study of Islamic history, fiqh, the Qur'an, hadith, creed, and ethics.

Islamic education plays a vital role in shaping Islamic character, including:

- a. Providing a moral and ethical foundation rooted in Islamic principles—integrity, justice, and wisdom—that guides individuals toward virtuous actions.
- b. Students require guidance from educators to understand the positive impact of applying Islamic values in daily life, thereby establishing a strong foundation for Islamic character.
- c. Developing spiritual awareness through acts of worship, meditation, and reflection, which enhance inner peace and maturity in facing challenges.
- d. Fostering students with a character marked by kindness, empathy, humility, and noble ethics, thereby creating a positive environment.
- e. Cultivating an understanding of the moral consequences of actions, serving as a guide in decision-making.
- f. Preventing negative behavior by explaining its impact, which contradicts Islamic teachings
- g. Strengthening Islamic identity through history, cultural values, and religious practices, which enhance self-confidence and emotional stability.
- h. Fostering moral independence, enabling students to make sound moral decisions. Establishing cooperation between schools, parents, and the community to ensure consistency in the transmission of Islamic values, thereby fostering holistic character development.
- i. Teaching social and humanitarian concern, in accordance with Islamic teachings, so that students can contribute to and achieve shared prosperity.

Through a comprehensive and integrated approach, Islamic Religious Education can create an educational environment that supports the sustainable

development of Islamic character, producing religiously devout individuals who have a positive impact on society.

5. Challenges in Islamic Religious Education in Shaping Islamic Character

Islamic education faces numerous challenges in its ongoing efforts to prepare a morally upright generation in the global era. One of the main obstacles is the lack of instruction that emphasizes ethics, morality, and hands-on practice to cultivate Islamic behavior in daily life. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers also struggle to nurture students' character due to the influence of the environment and family. Furthermore, changing times demand a curriculum design that can adapt to new dynamics. Many students only behave according to the rules when under a teacher's supervision; when unsupervised, they tend to express their independence as they see fit.

The diversity of backgrounds means that every student is a unique individual, so a diverse approach is needed in the development of Muslim character. The family environment is not always supportive; not all students come from homes that emphasize education, tradition, or religion. Peer groups and social media exert a strong influence that can threaten moral development, as the majority of teenagers gain access to information about various styles of clothing, modes of transportation, and explicit content through social circles and the internet—content that clearly contradicts the values taught by our predecessors and teachers. Islamic education must provide solutions to strengthen the role of teachers, emphasize morality, and integrate experiential learning. The curriculum also needs to be improved so that it can contribute to preparing the future generation to be digitally empowered and globally competitive, as well as play a vital role in shaping the character of students at SMAS NWDI Korleko.

Conclusion

Islamic Religious Education plays a highly strategic role in shaping students' Islamic character. This education is not only focused on imparting religious knowledge but also serves as a means of fostering ethics, morality, and character. The development of Islamic character encompasses the cultivation of religious character, the practice of religious values, and the practice of divine values. Through this process, students are guided to live their lives in accordance with the objectives of Islamic teachings, namely

to become whole human beings who have faith and piety toward Allah SWT and are capable of fulfilling their role as vicegerents on Earth.

However, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education faces various challenges, such as a lack of attention to the cultivation of manners and behavior, the dynamics of contemporary challenges, and the influence of social interactions as a determining factor in the moral environment, family, and the future of a highly pluralistic society. Therefore, development measures are needed that are in line with the demands of global development, the strengthening of the active role of educators in moral guidance, and the renewal of the objectives of the Islamic education curriculum so that it remains relevant to modern developments. Through these efforts, Islamic education is expected to make a positive contribution to the development of a community that is ethically responsible and possesses a visionary Muslim character, and to serve as a foundation for the future in producing a generation that excels cognitively but also excels in terms of good moral character in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

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