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Systematic Literature Review: The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Character Formation

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of Islamic religious education in shaping students' character through the cultivation of moral and spiritual values derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic creed. This research employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method of relevant scholarly sources to analyze the contribution of Islamic religious education in developing students who are not only intellectually competent but also possess noble character, piety, and social responsibility. The study highlights the process of internalizing Islamic values through habituation and exemplary conduct, as well as discusses adaptive learning methods, challenges in the implementation of Islamic religious education, and development strategies in accordance with contemporary demands. The findings indicate that the success of character formation based on Islamic religious education is largely determined by the improvement of teachers' competencies, the development of contextual curricula, and the synergy between schools, families, and the wider community. Therefore, this study suggests that future researchers further explore innovative and practical learning models in Islamic religious education and examine the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder collaboration in strengthening students' character development in the future.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education; Character Building; Moral Values; Character Education

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran pendidikan agama Islam dalam pembentukan karakter peserta didik melalui penanaman nilai-nilai moral dan spiritual yang bersumber dari Al-Qur'an, Hadits, dan akidah Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi literatur terhadap berbagai sumber ilmiah yang relevan, guna menganalisis kontribusi pendidikan agama Islam dalam membentuk karakter peserta didik yang tidak hanya unggul secara intelektual, tetapi juga berakhlak mulia, bertakwa, dan memiliki tanggung jawab sosial. Kajian ini menyoroti proses internalisasi nilai-nilai Islami melalui pembiasaan dan keteladanan, serta membahas metode pembelajaran yang adaptif, tantangan dalam implementasi pendidikan agama Islam, dan strategi pengembangannya sesuai dengan tuntutan zaman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan pembentukan karakter berbasis pendidikan agama Islam sangat ditentukan oleh peningkatan kompetensi guru, pengembangan kurikulum yang kontekstual, serta terjalinnya sinergi antara sekolah, keluarga, dan masyarakat. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menyarankan kepada peneliti selanjutnya untuk mengkaji secara lebih mendalam model pembelajaran inovatif dan implementatif dalam pendidikan agama Islam serta efektivitas kolaborasi berbagai pihak dalam memperkuat pembentukan karakter peserta didik di masa depan.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Agama Islam; Pembentukan Karakter; Nilai Moral; Pendidikan Karakter



Introduction

Character is an essential element that determines the quality of an individual and maintains social stability in society.(Nuari & Ulfah, 2025)In this rapidly evolving modern and global era, maintaining moral and ethical values is becoming an increasingly complex challenge. Education plays a key role in shaping character, enabling it to navigate dynamic social and cultural changes. Islamic religious education, in particular, plays a crucial role, combining spiritual aspects with moral teachings derived from the Quran and Hadith.

Islamic religious education does not only teach cognitive aspects of religious knowledge, but also emphasizes the formation of noble morals which are the foundation of Islamic behavior in everyday life.(Lusiana Rahmadani Putri, Fadriati, 2025)The primary goal of Islamic education is to produce a perfect human being, an individual who is spiritually, morally, and intellectually perfect. Character development in Islam is directed at developing attitudes and habits in accordance with the principles of monotheism, justice, compassion, and social responsibility.(Gazali, 2025).

In various educational contexts, both formal and informal, Islamic religious education is a key pillar in building strong, honest, disciplined, and responsible character. Instilling spiritual and moral values from an early age is believed to have a positive impact not only on individual personal development but also on the sustainability and well-being of society. Therefore, this literature review comprehensively discusses how Islamic religious education contributes to character formation, including the approaches used and the factors that support and hinder it.(Erdiyah & Dahlan, 2025).

Furthermore, Islamic religious education serves as a crucial foundation for developing the character of the younger generation, ensuring they remain resilient in the face of changing times and cultural challenges. The values of honesty, discipline, responsibility, and empathy are systematically taught to become integral parts of students' personalities. Thus, Islamic religious education serves not only as a means of teaching religious rituals and knowledge, but also as a vehicle for



developing a personality of integrity.

Furthermore, in the digital and globalization era, the influence of various external media and cultures which often conflict with Islamic values requires that Islamic religious education must be dynamic and adaptive.(Nita Jannatun Ni'mah, Nita Jannatun Ni'mah, 2024). It must be able to deliver relevant and contextual learning so that Islamic values remain embedded and deeply understood by students. This approach is expected to help students build strong character and competitiveness while adhering to religious values.

Thus, this study presents a review of the latest literature on the contribution of Islamic religious education to character building based on Islamic morals and spirituality. It also evaluates various factors and strategies that contribute to optimizing Islamic-based character education to produce a superior generation ready to face future challenges.

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research method which aims to examine in depth the role of Islamic religious education in shaping character.(Putra et al., 2021)Data were obtained from various written sources such as books, journals, scientific articles, and related documents discussing Islamic religious education and character. Data processing was carried out using qualitative analysis techniques, including data reduction, descriptive data presentation, and drawing conclusions. This analysis focused on synthesizing information from various literatures to obtain a comprehensive picture of the concept, implementation, and factors influencing the effectiveness of Islamic religious education in character development. This study also examined various supporting factors and obstacles encountered in the implementation of Islamic religious education oriented towards character development. With this approach, the literature review was able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and development of Islamic religious education based on Islamic



religion without direct field data collection.

Results and Discussion

The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Character Formation

Islamic religious education has a very important position in building the character of students by instilling moral and spiritual values that originate from the Qur'an, Hadith, and basic teachings of faith. (Musbaing, 2024) This education not only imparts religious knowledge but also guides the development of noble morals such as honesty, discipline, a sense of responsibility, and empathy for others. Various studies confirm that a religiously based character forms a strong foundation for shaping students' morals. Continuous learning and consistent practice of religious activities help instill Islamic values in daily attitudes and actions. Thus, Islamic religious education serves as the primary medium for producing a generation that is not only intellectually broad-minded but also devout and possesses commendable morals.

In addition to the cognitive aspect, Islamic religious education also emphasizes the affective and psychomotor aspects to produce a holistic and balanced character. This comprehensive educational approach combines the teaching of aqidah as the foundation of faith, the study of the Qur'an and Hadith as a guide to life and moral norms, and the development of morals as a guide to harmonious social relations. Through a holistic Islamic religious education curriculum based on the principle of monotheism, students are formed into ideal human beings (*insan kamil*) with perfect harmony between the spiritual aspect through strengthening faith and piety, the emotional aspect through training in high morality and emotional control, and the social and physical aspects through increasing resilience in interacting in a diverse society and practicing the values of justice and compassion in everyday life. Within this integrated educational framework, teachers serve as real and irreplaceable Islamic role models, because they not only transfer theoretical knowledge but also demonstrate direct examples through attitudes, concrete behaviors, and actions that are in line with the Qur'an



and the Sunnah of the Prophet, so that students are able to emulate and absorb religious values organically into all areas of life, from interpersonal relationships to moral decisions.

This strategy ensures the curriculum goes beyond a purely cognitive focus, but also integrates the realms of heart, mind, and body, to produce a resilient generation with spiritual integrity to face contemporary issues. Furthermore, Islamic religious education also contributes to building an inclusive character and respect for diversity. This is highly relevant amidst modern life filled with global dynamics, where students interact with various cultures and religions. Islamic religious education teaches the values of tolerance, respect for others, and openness, so that the character formed is not only religious, but also humane and capable of peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society. These values foster openness and mutual respect among individuals and groups, enriching students' social qualities and fostering social unity.

Character Formation Process and Strategy

Character formation through Islamic religious education is carried out through well-organized and well-planned learning procedures, using various methods that support the instillation of Islamic values in depth.(Sholihah, Abdah Munfaridatus, 2020)One of the main methods is habituation, where routine activities such as congregational prayer, reading the Quran together, and enjoining good and forbidding evil serve as effective means of instilling moral and spiritual values. These activities are not merely routine but become habits that are ingrained in students, strengthening Islamic character in every aspect of their lives. Teachers, as role models in this habituation, play a crucial role in maintaining consistency and ensuring that religious values are embedded in students' behavior. In addition to habituation, interactive learning strategies that involve active student participation are increasingly being developed in Islamic religious education.(Sa'diyah, 2022). The use of discussion methods, project-based learning, and the integration of information technology has proven to be very



helpful in making religious education more interesting and relevant for millennials and Z generations. This contextual approach allows students to relate religious teachings to real situations they experience, so that learning is not only theoretical but also applicable in everyday life.

The role of teachers in character-building strategies deserves special attention. Teachers are not only instructors but also role models for students in implementing Islamic values. Disciplined, honest, and patient teachers can be a powerful inspiration for students. Therefore, improving teacher competency through training and professional development is key to successful character education. Qualified teachers will be able to use appropriate methods and create a pleasant learning environment, thus further motivating students to internalize religious values.

The role of the family and community environment is also vital in strengthening character education. The home, as the first place children learn social norms and religious values, is the starting point for strengthening the character education learned at school. Strong synergy between schools, families, and the community creates a holistic educational ecosystem that fosters character development through various activities that support Islamic values. Parental involvement in assisting and supervising children in implementing religious values at home significantly strengthens the formation of religious and social character.

Facing the modern era, challenges arising from the influence of social media, consumer culture, and freedom of association pose serious obstacles to developing Islamic character. Therefore, learning strategies must adapt to these conditions, protecting students from negative influences and utilizing technology positively to deepen their understanding of religious values. Legal and educational digital-based learning media can be an effective tool for conveying moral messages to students in an interactive and engaging manner.

The development of the Islamic religious education curriculum needs to be adapted to social dynamics and the needs of today's students. (Purnomo & Marta,



Muhammad Afif, 2025)A curriculum responsive to global developments ensures that religious education remains relevant and equips students with strong character and essential life skills. The integrated combination of religious theory, worship practices, and character development provides the perfect approach to achieving the ideal goals of Islamic education. Furthermore, learning methods involving reflection and dialogue help students deeply understand and internalize religious values. Through activities such as group discussions, simulations, and social practices, students are encouraged to think critically and apply religious teachings to various real-life situations. This approach strengthens students' awareness and internal motivation to apply Islamic values in their daily lives.

An effective character-building strategy in Islamic religious education relies heavily on the support of all stakeholders. Collaboration between teachers, parents, the government, and the community is the primary foundation for creating a conducive environment for the development of Islamic character. With a synergistic and sustainable approach, Islamic religious education will provide a strong foundation for developing a superior generation with faith, noble morals, and the readiness to contribute positively to society and the nation.

Challenges and Efforts to Develop Islamic Religious Education

Islamic religious education plays a strategic role in building students' character, but its implementation often faces complex obstacles. One of the main challenges lies in the limited competence of teachers, particularly in using effective learning methods that can inspire students.(Acetylena et al., 2025)Many teachers still tend to rely on monotonous lecture methods, resulting in less active student engagement and less than optimal understanding and appreciation of Islamic teachings. This situation negatively impacts the development of Islamic character, which should be the primary outcome of religious education.

Furthermore, influences from the external environment also pose a significant obstacle, particularly social media and contemporary culture, which tends toward materialism and consumerism. Students are easily exposed to values



that conflict with Islamic values, thus undermining the character integration process taught at school and at home. Therefore, much literature emphasizes the importance of an adaptive learning approach tailored to the student's life context, as well as ongoing support from teachers and families to ensure students remain steadfast in upholding religious values.

To address these challenges, efforts to develop Islamic religious education are essential for effective character formation. One crucial step is improving teacher training and professional development, enabling them to implement innovative, engaging, and student-centered learning methods. Competent teachers will be more effective in motivating students and making religious learning a fun and meaningful experience. Developing a relevant and flexible curriculum that adapts to current developments is also crucial. (Dela Puspita, Nayla Syafitri, Wulan Rhomadhona & M. Jaya Adi Putra, 2025) An adaptive curriculum can address students' needs with contextual and applicable learning materials, ensuring that Islamic religious education doesn't seem rigid or disconnected from the realities of modern life. The use of information technology as a learning medium needs to be optimized so that religious material can be delivered in a way that is engaging and easy to understand for today's digital generation.

Synergy between schools, families, and communities is also key to the successful development of Islamic religious education. A harmonious family environment that supports the strengthening of Islamic values will strengthen character formation, as will the role of society in providing a conducive social environment. This collaboration between various parties creates an integrated and sustainable educational ecosystem, providing a long-term impact on the character development of students. Equally important is the need to address external factors that have the potential to disrupt the educational process. Social media, the pressures of promiscuity, and consumerism must be addressed with critical and creative learning strategies that can develop students into critical thinkers, resilient to negative influences, and able to maximize religious values in their lives.



The involvement of communities and religious leaders in Islamic religious education is also very helpful in strengthening students' character. They can provide a deep religious perspective and serve as a source of moral inspiration for students. Together with the community, religious education can more effectively build social and religious awareness that reaches broader aspects of life. Overall, the various complex challenges faced in the development of Islamic religious education, such as limited teacher competency, the hedonistic influence of digital media, and the dynamics of pluralism and globalization, cannot be addressed by one party alone. Strong commitment and cross-sector collaboration involving all elements of education are required, from teachers as primary role models, parents as first educators at home, formal and non-formal educational institutions, the government as policy and infrastructure providers, to the wider community and religious and community leaders to create an inclusive and sustainable education ecosystem. By implementing appropriate strategies such as technology-based teacher training, developing adaptive curricula, and optimizing digital literacy based on moderate Islamic values, this solid synergy between parties will strengthen Islamic religious education in shaping the character of a future generation that is resilient, devout, noble, tolerant, and ready to face various challenges of the times, such as the digital era and multiculturalism.

Conclusion

This literature review demonstrates that Islamic religious education is a crucial foundation for developing intelligent, noble, religious, and socially conscious students, based on the teachings of the Quran, Sunnah, and the principles of Islamic faith. Its strengths lie in the strategy of establishing routine habits, the role of educator role models, and collaboration between educational institutions, households, and communities for a holistic approach. However, challenges such as the lack of teacher qualifications in modern teaching and exposure to hedonistic culture from the virtual world remain key challenges. Further development must emphasize improving teacher skills, aligning curriculum with the digital era,



utilizing educational technology, and sustainable partnerships involving the community to produce a resilient generation that can face global dynamics with a solid foundation of faith.



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