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The Importance of Islamic Religious Education in Forming Students Character

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a presentation about the role of Islamic religious education for the process of forming religious character for students. Islamic religious education is the most important foundation that realizes charachter education.. Education according to these important components is also believed to have an effective role in the formation of student character, especially in realizing the religious character, without ignoring the important things of the contents that associated with Islamic religious education. Where stakeholders in the live of students with religious character models both in the world and in the hereafter. The growth and development of a human identity can begin with the religious soul embedded in the students. This is where the meaning of character education is, therefore the material of Islamic religious education taught in the school environment is one of the supporting values that underlie character education. Through Islamic religious education, students are taught aqidah when they are able to recognize elements. Islamic religious education is education that teaches religious teachings based ob the Qur'an and hadist by using guidelines to protect themself in life. The main objective of Islamic religious education is to shape the personality of students in the context that reflection when behaving and determining thought patterns in life. In addition, the success value of various types of islamic religious education learning in the school environment can be determined by example of appropriate learning methods that are of interest to students.

Keywords:
Aqidah;
Character Education;
Islamic Religious Education;
Qur'an and Hadith;
Religious Character

INTRODUCTION

Religious education is a learning process aimed at shaping students into faithful individuals who possess noble character and a strong understanding of religious teachings. It is not limited to explaining doctrines, rituals, or religious history, but also guides students to internalize values that direct their attitudes and choices. Through this process, students are expected to develop spiritual awareness and learn to connect religious principles with real-life situations.

In addition to teaching beliefs and worship practices, religious education plays an important role in forming students' character and behavior. It trains students to

distinguish right from wrong, to respect others, and to behave responsibly. By learning religious values consistently, students can build self-control, discipline, honesty, and empathy, which later influence how they interact in school, at home, and in society.

Religious education also helps students understand moral and ethical principles that shape their daily conduct. Lessons about integrity, justice, kindness, and accountability provide students with guidance for making decisions in challenging situations. When students understand that moral actions have consequences, they become more careful in speech and behavior, and more willing to uphold ethical standards even when facing peer pressure.

Education in general is one of the main media for developing students into individuals who are moral, intelligent, skilled, and creative, so they can become quality human resources. In this context, Islamic education is one approach that can be used to support character development. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) offers value-based learning that encourages students to practice good conduct and strengthen their spiritual identity, which can contribute to a healthier learning environment.

However, various social problems still occur both in schools and the wider community, such as sexual harassment, student brawls, violence, and other human rights violations. One alternative to reduce these negative behaviors is strengthening character education through Islamic Religious Education (PAI), especially by optimizing learning methods so they are meaningful and engaging for students. Because religious education has a strategic role in character formation, improving its implementation can help create students who are devout and uphold high moral values.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the role of religious education in forming students' character. Through this approach, the study seeks to describe and interpret real conditions in the educational setting, focusing on how religious education is implemented in everyday learning activities. Qualitative description is chosen because it allows the researcher to capture participants' perspectives, classroom dynamics, and the context that shapes how religious education is delivered and received.

The aim is to obtain an in-depth understanding of how religious values are integrated into the learning process and how they influence students' attitudes and

behavior. The research examines how teachers present religious concepts, how students respond to and practice these values, and what changes appear in their daily conduct, such as discipline, respect, responsibility, and empathy. By analyzing these experiences and patterns, the study provides a clearer picture of the contribution of religious education to character development in students.

FINDINGS

Character Education

Education is the process of transferring knowledge and skills from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or other methods. Education is a universal process in human life (Ahmad Taufik & Novitasari, 2021). It plays a crucial role in developing all the potential of learners. Educators are the most influential figures in designing and preparing the educational process, particularly in transforming knowledge and shaping learners' behavior toward more positive directions (Ahmad Taufik & Budiyono, 2022).

According to Thomas Lickona, character refers to a person's natural disposition in responding morally to situations, which is reflected in actions such as good behavior, honesty, fairness, respect for others, discipline, and responsibility (Fadilah, 2021). In line with this view, Berkowitz and Bier (2005) define character education as a national movement aimed at developing students' good behavior, ethics, responsibility, and care for others by emphasizing universal values.

In Islam, the formation of children's character requires an internalization process so that religious values become an integrated part of the individual. This internalization can take place within the family through the natural involvement of parents, without artificial intervention. Parents can employ various methods to instill religious values in children, such as giving good advice, consistent habituation, and exemplary behavior. In addition, the use of rewards and punishments as motivation and consequences can also help foster good character in children (Setiardi, 2017).

The process of internalizing Islamic educational values in shaping children's character essentially involves instilling religiously rooted feelings, attitudes, and beliefs so that they become part of the child's identity (Parhan et al., 2020). The learning interactions between parents and children in developing attitudes, knowledge, skills, and

emotions form a foundation for the child's future life. These values are derived from religious teachings conveyed through advice, habituation, and role modeling (Gade, 2012).

The Process of Forming the Religious Character of Students

Islamic education serves as a pillar in shaping students' character because it provides knowledge of faith that becomes the foundation for moral development. Through moral values, students are guided toward becoming religious individuals. However, character formation is a complex process that does not occur instantly. Besides environmental influences, character development is affected by internal factors—such as instincts, will, conscience, and lineage—and external factors (Novi et al., 2022).

To support the development of students' religious character, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers can implement effective and efficient strategies aligned with the curriculum. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, education is a continuous process of guidance aimed at developing students' potential. This guidance emphasizes accompanying students in refining their behavior. The enforcement of rules through continuous habituation highlights the importance of allowing students to undergo a process of adjustment so that positive behaviors become habits and rules can be consistently followed (Masruri, 2019).

Islam teaches that humans are created with intellect, speech, morals, and religion, placing them above other creatures. Therefore, Islam mandates that individuals and societies uphold good morals, as morality plays a vital role in both personal and social life. Poor moral behavior—such as lying, envy, and malice—can harm individuals and disrupt social harmony, leading to conflict, hostility, arrogance, and division within society (Fadilah, 2021).

Al-Ghazali emphasized education through example, practice, and habituation, followed by advice and guidance, as essential methods for nurturing children in accordance with Islamic teachings. Character formation, according to him, occurs gradually and represents a continuous process toward moral perfection (Masruri, 2019). Al-Ghazali stated that children who are accustomed to good deeds and receive proper education will grow into virtuous individuals, benefiting both themselves and others in this world and the hereafter. Conversely, neglecting education and allowing bad habits to form will result in moral corruption, for which parents and educators bear responsibility.

Thus, Al-Ghazali advocated educating children through consistent habits and training in virtuous behavior according to their developmental stages. Such habits become deeply rooted in the soul and form character. He identified four fundamental ethical foundations: virtue, courage, justice, and nobility of character. Ethics, in this view, is a divine gift bestowed upon individuals who sincerely strive to transform bad habits into good ones. Continuous moral practice eventually shapes a person's character and personality (Masruri, 2019).

Understanding Al-Ghazali's concept of human nature is essential in moral education. Humans consist of the body, heart, spirit, and intellect; therefore, outward behavior and values are influenced by the inner control of desires and emotions (Ali, 2018). Character education can also be developed within the family environment. The family—consisting of parents and children—plays the most significant role in shaping a child's character from early childhood to adulthood. Children first receive biological, social, and religious education within the family (Aziz, 2016). According to Qur'an Surah Luqman (30:13–19), family education includes introducing knowledge of the Creator, understanding human origins, teaching life principles, practicing prayer, encouraging good deeds, fostering patience, humility, social care, simplicity, and polite behavior (Khobir et al., 2025).

The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Shaping Students' Religious Character

According to Sahlan, fostering a religious culture involves creating a religious atmosphere, internalizing values through understanding and advice, providing examples, habituation, and cultural integration. Religious culture in schools can be reflected through practices such as greeting others, humility, istighasah, dhuha prayer, and recitation of the Qur'an (Masruri, 2019).

Islamic education is a crucial foundation for shaping students' character in schools. Therefore, implementing strategies that promote religious character through Islamic education is highly relevant (Margareta et al., 2025). Creating effective and efficient learning environments, including the application of outdoor classroom approaches, is one strategy to achieve educational goals and develop individuals with strong character and personality (Aisyah, 2018).

In addition to theoretical instruction, Islamic education can be implemented through practical activities such as congregational prayers, Yasin recitation, Clean Friday

programs, Sunnah prayers, charitable activities, practical examinations, and the application of the "4S" culture (smile, greeting, salutation, and courtesy), as well as commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Hamdani, 2007).

Religious education plays a vital role in shaping children's character and is one of the most important responsibilities of Muslim parents. Parents are obliged to protect their families from behaviors that may lead them astray. This responsibility includes educating children to live according to religious teachings, maintain harmonious relationships with others, strengthen family bonds, and become morally sound individuals both personally and socially (Ruli, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Early education and character formation are very important, as they have a significant impact on a child's future life. Many aspects must be considered in educating a child's character, one of which is Islamic Education. Many parents feel that instilling Islamic values in their children from an early age is very important because children will have a strong religious foundation by adhering to the Qur'an and Hadith. The environment is one of the factors that greatly influences a child's or individual's growth and development. This is because the environment is a place filled with many people from diverse backgrounds. If the environment is not good, it can negatively affect character formation.

Therefore, it is important for parents and children to be selective in determining and protecting themselves from negative influences. Islamic education can be integrated into all subjects. That the impact is real in life, namely by implementing Islamic religious education materials well, productively, effectively, and efficiently, and can be beneficial for the life of the community, nation, and state.

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