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THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION AS A FOUNDATION FOR CHARACTER FORMATION IN ADDRESSING THE MORAL CRISIS OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION

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Development (JISED), 10 (76), 272 – 283.

Abstract: The moral crisis affecting Indonesia's young generation has become a critical challenge in education. Issues such as student brawls, the erosion of manners, and permissive social behavior reflect a significant decline in character values. Islamic education, rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith, offers a comprehensive framework for moral and spiritual development. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with library research to analyze the role of Islamic education in character formation and its relevance in addressing modern moral challenges. The findings highlight that values such as sidq (honesty), amānah (trustworthiness), 'iffah (self-restraint), and ta'āwun (mutual assistance) possess transformational potential in shaping youth character. However, challenges such as lack of role models, dominance of cognitive approaches, and weak integration of Islamic values into curricula hinder effective implementation. The study concludes that Islamic education must be internalized holistically within both curriculum and practice to serve as a moral and spiritual safeguard in the globalization era.

Keywords: Character Formation; Educational Values; Globalization Challenges; Islamic Education; Moral Crisis; Qualitative Approach; Youth Generation

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Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's personality and character. Amid the rapid currents of globalization and technological advancement, moral crises and the erosion of ethical values have become pressing issues in many societies, including within the Muslim world. In this context, Islamic education does not merely serve as a medium for transmitting knowledge, but also as a powerful instrument for instilling morality and reinforcing spiritual values derived from the Qur'an and Hadith.

Islamic education emphasizes character formation rooted in integrity, honesty, responsibility, and empathy. These values are not only taught as theoretical concepts but are also internalized through daily practices, religious observances, and moral exemplars demonstrated by educators. Thus, Islamic education holds significant potential in shaping individuals who excel not only intellectually but also spiritually and ethically.

The Challenge of Moral Degradation in the Modern Era

The advancement of human civilization in the modern era has brought numerous benefits across various aspects of life, including technology, economy, and communication. However, behind these achievements lies a major and alarming challenge—moral degradation. Moral degradation reflects the decline of noble values in both personal and social life, with farreaching impacts on the younger generation and the societal order as a whole (Hidayatullah, 2010).

Moral degradation can be defined as the decline or deterioration of ethical and moral values in individual or communal life. Symptoms of moral degradation may be observed in the following forms:

- The prevalence of deviant behaviors (such as promiscuity and drug abuse)
- The rise of violence and bullying
- A decline in mutual respect and empathy
- The loss of integrity and responsibility in professional and social life (Arifin, 2012).

Philosophical and Theological Foundations of Character Education in Islam

1. Philosophical Foundation

The philosophical foundation of Islamic character education is based on the Islamic worldview, which sees humans as beings with potential in fitrah (innate nature), intellect, and conscience. This philosophy emphasizes that:

- a. Humans are born in a state of fitrah, a pure nature inclined toward goodness. Character education serves to protect and develop this inherent potential.
- b. Humans have a dual nature—physical and spiritual—and exist as both individuals and social beings. Therefore, character education must shape a balanced personality: intellectually smart, emotionally mature, spiritually healthy, and socially caring.
- c. The purpose of human life is not only worldly but also spiritual. Character education aims to produce a complete human being (insan kamil) who is happy both physically and spiritually.
- d. The direction of education in the Islamic philosophical perspective is to cultivate knowledgeable, faithful, and morally upright individuals capable of managing life responsibly.



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2. Theological Foundation

The theological foundation of Islamic character education relies on religious beliefs and teachings sourced from divine revelation and the example of the Prophet Muhammad. Key points include:

- a. Religion as a source of values: Islamic teachings provide a set of universal moral values such as honesty, trustworthiness, justice, patience, and compassion, which form the basis of character education.
- b. The Prophet as the main role model: Prophet Muhammad is viewed as the perfect moral figure, making his example central to Islamic character education.
- c. The concept of worship: Every human activity, including education, is considered an act of worship if intended correctly. This guides that character formation is not only for social purposes but also as devotion to Allah.
- d. Accountability of actions: The belief that all human deeds will be accounted for instills strong moral awareness and consistency in doing good.

3. Integration of Philosophical and Theological Foundations

- a. Philosophical \rightarrow explains human nature, direction, and purpose of character education.
- b. Theological → provides value basis, role models, and spiritual-moral orientation. Together, they create an Islamic character education system that prepares humans to be intellectually smart, morally upright, faithful, and responsible toward themselves, society, and God.

Relevance of Islamic Education for Future Generations

1. Moral Foundation in the Era of Globalization

Future generations face moral crises, individualism, and free-flowing cultural influences. Islamic education remains relevant by instilling moral values such as honesty, justice, discipline, and responsibility, forming the foundation for personal and social life.

2. Strengthening Identity and Character

Technology and globalization often make youth lose their identity. Islamic education reinforces identity, provides life direction, preserves faith values, and builds strong character while remaining open to positive change.

3. Integration of Knowledge and Spirituality

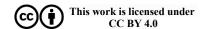
Islamic education teaches balance between knowledge and spiritual values. Future generations are expected not only to master science and technology but also to develop moral awareness and ethics, applying knowledge for the common good.

4. Formation of Integrity-Based Leadership

The future requires leaders who can handle global challenges with honesty, trustworthiness, and justice. Islamic education fosters leadership values oriented toward responsibility, fairness, and community welfare.

5. Ethics in the Digital Era

Digital advances offer great opportunities but also serious risks. Islamic education provides ethical guidance so that future generations use technology productively, critically, and responsibly, avoiding misuse.





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6. **Building Resilient and Strong Generations**

Global challenges such as social changes, environmental crises, and economic competition require resilient generations. Islamic education instills patience, perseverance, optimism, and lifelong learning, enabling adaptation and competitiveness.

Islamic Values in Forming Noble Character

1. Faith (Iman)

Faith forms the foundation of morality, creating awareness to always do good, avoid wrongdoing, and maintain personal integrity.

2. **Obedience in Worship**

Worship nurtures moral development: prayer teaches discipline, fasting builds self-control, zakat fosters empathy, and Hajj teaches brotherhood.

3. Honesty and Trustworthiness

Honesty builds trust, and trustworthiness develops responsibility, forming an individual with integrity.

4. Justice

Justice ensures fairness, respect for others' rights, and avoidance of wrongdoing.

5. Compassion

Compassion fosters care, empathy, and mutual respect, preserving harmony in family, society, and environment.

6. **Patience**

Patience trains perseverance, emotional control, and resilience, making one strong and wise in facing challenges.

7. **Gratitude**

Gratitude cultivates humility and appreciation for blessings, encouraging optimism and generosity.

8. **Responsibility**

Responsibility fosters awareness of duties and consequences, promoting discipline and care for self, society, and environment.

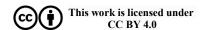
9. **Responsibility**

Responsibility fosters awareness of duties and consequences, promoting discipline and care for self, society, and environment.

Exemplification as an Effective Method of Character Education

1. What is Exemplification?

Exemplification is an educational method that teaches through real examples in behavior, speech, and attitude aligned with the desired moral values. Children learn more effectively by observing than by verbal instruction alone.





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2. Why is Exemplification Effective?

- a. Learning through imitation: Children naturally imitate people around them.
- b. Values are easier to understand: Real examples make abstract values tangible.
- c. Reinforces habituation: Repeated good examples form permanent character traits.
- d. Builds educator authority: Consistent behavior earns respect and trust.

e.

3. Forms of Exemplification in Character Education

- a. **Family:** Parents demonstrate honesty, patience, compassion, discipline, and responsibility; children learn through daily interactions.
- b. **School:** Teachers arrive on time, act fairly, and are consistent; students imitate their behavior.
- c. **Society:** Leaders and community figures show justice, humility, and care; social environment strengthens individual character.

4. Examples of Character Values Taught Through Exemplification

- a. Honesty: avoiding lies even in small matters.
- b. Discipline: keeping promises, punctuality.
- c. Responsibility: completing entrusted tasks.
- d. Compassion: helping those in difficulty.
- e. Patience: facing problems without excessive emotion.

5. Exemplification in Islamic Education

The Prophet Muhammad is a historical example of successful character education through exemplification, demonstrating honesty, trustworthiness, patience, compassion, and justice. This shows exemplification as the most effective method of character education.

Optimizing the Role of Teachers as Moral Exemplars

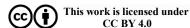
Teachers play a crucial role in character education because their behavior, attitude, and values directly influence students. Optimizing teachers' role as moral exemplars means they not only teach academic knowledge but also model ethical and moral values.

- 1. **Exemplifying Daily Behavior** Teachers must align words and actions. For example, teaching discipline requires punctuality; teaching honesty requires consistent truthful behavior.
- 2. **Applying Moral and Ethical Values** Teachers internalize values such as honesty, responsibility, patience, empathy, and justice. In Islam, these values are derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, and other relevant teachings.
- 3. Educational and Inspirational Communication Moral example is conveyed through stories, advice, and discussion, influencing students' thinking and behavior.
- 4. Creating a Positive School Environment Teachers foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive classroom atmosphere to facilitate moral value absorption.
- 5. **Reflection and Self-Development** Effective teachers evaluate and improve themselves to remain authentic and inspiring moral role models.

By optimizing their role as moral exemplars, teachers contribute directly to character formation, making education not only cognitive but also morally enduring.

Contribution of Islamic Education to National Development

Islamic education plays a strategic role in national development by combining knowledge acquisition with moral, ethical, and social responsibility. Its contributions include:





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- 1. Character and Moral Formation Instilling honesty, discipline, responsibility, patience, and social care, producing individuals who act positively and contribute socially, economically, and politically.
- 2. **Developing Quality Human Resources** Integrating religious and general knowledge creates intelligent, creative, and innovative generations, driving development in education, technology, economy, and governance.
- 3. Encouraging Social Responsibility and Entrepreneurship Islamic values foster care, justice, and social responsibility, supporting social activities and entrepreneurship beneficial to society and national economy.
- 4. Strengthening Unity and National Identity Islamic education emphasizes tolerance, cooperation, and respect for diversity, fostering social stability and inclusive national identity.
- 5. **Supporting Sustainable Development** Islamic education cultivates environmental responsibility, ethical business conduct, and social justice, preparing generations for equitable and sustainable development.

Islamic education contributes to national development through character building, human resource development, social responsibility, unity, and sustainability, preparing a generation of intelligent, morally upright, and integrity-driven citizens.

Family as the Primary Foundation of Character Education

The family is the first and most influential environment for shaping children's character. Early character education within the family provides moral, ethical, and behavioral foundations that guide lifelong development. Key aspects include:

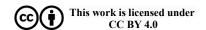
- 1. **Early Value Instillation** Parents instill honesty, discipline, responsibility, empathy, and courtesy through daily interaction, house rules, and positive routines.
- 2. **Role Modeling** Children tend to imitate parental behavior; positive actions like respect, cooperation, and wise problem-solving serve as effective examples.
- 3. **Safe and Supportive Emotional Environment** Families offer a safe space for learning, experimenting, and self-expression. Love, attention, and emotional support foster confidence and positive attitudes.
- 4. **Developing Discipline and Responsibility** Daily routines, rules, and shared tasks teach time management, discipline, and accountability.
- 5. **Reinforcing Moral and Religious Values** Parents guide children morally and spiritually through advice, prayers, and consistent communication.

Thus, the family is the **primary foundation of character education**, shaping attitudes, behavior, and future success in formal education and social life.

The family is the first and foremost environment for a child in the process of character education. From birth to adulthood, children spend much of their time within the family. Therefore, the family plays a very important role as the initial foundation in shaping morals, attitudes, and personality.

1. The Role of Parents in Instilling Moral Values

Parents are the first educators as well as the primary role models for their children. Through daily interactions, parents instill fundamental values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and empathy. These values serve as guidelines for children in their behavior, both within the family and when interacting with the wider community.





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2. The Family Environment as the First Place of Learning

The family is often referred to as the child's first school. It is here that children first learn to speak, socialize, and understand the norms of life. Through habits built at home, children learn how to be polite, respect others, and carry out daily responsibilities. Thus, the family does not only function as a place of shelter but also as the most essential arena for character education.

3. Behavioral Role Models in Everyday Life

Children essentially learn by imitating. What they see in their parents' behavior becomes a reflection in their own lives. If parents consistently practice honesty, politeness, and compassion, children will internalize these values. Therefore, the consistency of parents in providing positive role models is a key factor in shaping their children's character.

4. Emotional and Spiritual Support in the Family

In addition to being role models, families must also provide warm emotional support. Love, care, and good communication help children grow with confidence and develop a positive outlook toward their environment. Equally important is the cultivation of spiritual and religious values, which serve as the foundation of noble character. By teaching prayer, worship, and piety, children will have strong moral grounding to face life's challenges.

5. Synergy Between Family and Other Environments

Although the family is the primary foundation, a child's character is also influenced by school and society. Therefore, families need to work in synergy with the surrounding environment so that children receive consistent character education. Parents must be able to collaborate with teachers at school and supervise their children's social interactions outside the home, ensuring that positive values taught at home are not undermined by negative external influences.

The Role of Family, School, and Society in Character Education

Character education for children is a shared responsibility that involves the family, school, and society. These three environments complement each other and play a role in shaping a personality that is morally upright, disciplined, and responsible.

1. Role of the Family

The family is the first and most influential environment in character education.

a. Instilling Moral Values

Parents instill basic values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, empathy, and courtesy through daily interactions.

b. Behavioral Role Modeling

Children imitate the attitudes and behaviors of their parents. Parental exemplification serves as a concrete example that shapes the child's character.

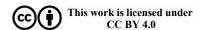
c. Emotional Support

Love, attention, and recognition of children's efforts help build confidence and positive attitudes.

2. Role of the School

Schools are formal institutions that reinforce character education.

- a. **Integration of Values into the Curriculum:** Moral and ethical values are taught through academic subjects and extracurricular activities.
- b. **Positive Habituation:** School rules, discipline, and social activities teach students responsibility, cooperation, and respect for others.





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c. Guidance from Teachers: Teachers act as role models and mentors in instilling positive attitudes in students.

3. **Role of Society**

Society strengthens and applies character values outside the family and school.

- a. Social Exemplification: Values such as care, tolerance, and mutual cooperation are demonstrated through social interactions in the community.
- b. Participation in Character Education: Community organizations, religious activities, and youth groups support character development through social and cultural programs.
- c. Conducive Environment: A safe and harmonious environment helps children apply positive behaviors and develop a sense of social responsibility.

Challenges and Solutions in Islamic Character Education

In the current era of globalization, character education grounded in Islamic values faces several major challenges, including:

- Secularization of education: The separation of religious values from mainstream education restricts the holistic development of students.
- Lack of role models: The decline of moral leadership among educators and community figures reduces opportunities to transmit values.
- iii. Negative influences of media and modern lifestyles: Exposure to materialism, individualism, and moral relativism can weaken Islamic values.
- address these challenges, several solutions can be implemented, such as: To
- i. Strengthening the integration of Islamic values within the curriculum and school culture.
- ii. Providing professional training for teachers focused on moral and spiritual formation.
- iii. Encouraging collaboration among schools, families, and communities in the shared responsibility of character building.

Opportunities and Challenges: Islamic Education in Character Formation for the Future Islamic education holds a strategic role in shaping the character of the younger generation, particularly amid the challenges of globalization, digitalization, and moral degradation. Holistic Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and compassion serve as the essential foundation for moral excellence. Nevertheless, in practice, Islamic education faces significant challenges as well as opportunities in the future.

Opportunities

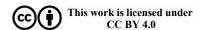
1. Availability of Strong Philosophical and Normative Foundations

Islamic education possesses clear and timeless sources of values, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah. These two sources provide moral and ethical principles that remain relevant across ages. The concept of tarbiyah in Islam encompasses not only cognitive aspects but also affective and psychomotor dimensions, making it highly relevant to comprehensive character formation (M. Quraish Shihab, 1992).

2. Government Support for Strengthening Character Education

The Indonesian government, through policies such as the Strengthening of Character Education (*Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter* or PPK), has created significant opportunities for Islamic education to serve as a primary pillar in shaping a virtuous generation. The Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes local values and contexts, also provides

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opportunities for the creative and contextual integration of Islamic values (Jakarta: Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017).

3. Advancement of Technology as a Medium for Da'wah and Learning

Information technology presents vast opportunities for the development of Islamic education through digital media. E-learning platforms, Islamic learning applications, and educational da'wah content are increasingly popular among younger generations, creating more interactive and engaging avenues for character education (Ahmad Husni, 2020).

Challenges

1. Gap Between Theory and Practice

A major challenge lies in the limited implementation of Islamic values in students' reallife practices. Islamic education often remains trapped in cognitive formalism, while role modeling and practical application receive less attention (Abuddin Nata, 2002).

2. Influence of Popular Culture and Secularization

Today's youth are increasingly exposed to values and lifestyles incompatible with Islamic principles. Social media, entertainment, and popular culture often promote hedonistic and individualistic lifestyles, which may erode the internalization of Islamic character values (Yusuf Qardhawi, 2005).

3. Curriculum Fragmentation and Lack of Integration of Islamic Values Across Subjects

Islamic education is frequently isolated as a subject of religious studies, rather than being fully integrated into the entire curriculum. Consequently, character formation is seen as a limited responsibility rather than a collective endeavor of all educational components (Zubaedi, 2011).

4. Inequality of Access and Quality of Islamic Education Across Regions

In some remote areas, access to quality Islamic education remains limited. Infrastructure, human resources, and technological support are unevenly distributed, resulting in disparities in the quality of character education across regions (Munir Mulkhan, 2015).

Strategies for Strengthening Islamic Education in the Future

- i. **Transforming the Integrative Curriculum**: Islamic education curricula should be developed integratively, ensuring that Islamic values are not confined to religious subjects but are embedded throughout all aspects of education.
- ii. **Enhancing Teacher Competence**: Teachers should be equipped with continuous training that emphasizes not only religious knowledge but also value-based pedagogy and contextual teaching methods.
- iii. **Prudent Use of Technology**: An Islamic digital ecosystem should be developed to support Qur'an-based character learning, capable of competing with popular culture content online.
- iv. Collaboration Among Educational Institutions, Families, and Communities: Character education cannot be the sole responsibility of schools. There must be synergy between families as the first *madrasah*, schools as the primary *madrasah*, and society as the social *madrasah*.



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Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research design. The descriptive qualitative method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth analysis of concepts, values, and principles within Islamic education that are relevant to character formation.

Data were collected from a variety of sources, including classical Islamic texts, contemporary scholarly works, journal articles, and relevant educational literature. The primary references are drawn from the Qur'an, Hadith, and authoritative commentaries, while secondary references consist of books, academic journals, and research reports that discuss Islamic education, character development, and moral issues in the modern era.

The data analysis process was carried out through three stages:

- 1. Data Reduction selecting and categorizing relevant information related to Islamic values and character education.
- 2. Data Display organizing and presenting findings in a systematic and thematic manner.
- 3. Conclusion Drawing/Verification interpreting and verifying the data to construct conclusions regarding the role of Islamic education as a foundation for character building.

This methodological framework ensures that the study not only provides descriptive insights but also offers critical analysis that can contribute to the discourse on Islamic education and its relevance to addressing the moral challenges of globalization.

Findings and Discussion

The Transformational Role of Islamic Values

The study highlights several core values in Islamic education that possess strong transformational potential:

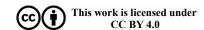
- 1. Sidq (honesty): Encourages transparency and truthfulness in personal and social interactions.
- 2. Amānah (trustworthiness): Builds responsibility and reliability in both professional and social settings.
- 3. 'Iffah (self-restraint): Promotes dignity, self-control, and the safeguarding of moral integrity.
- 4. Ta'āwun (mutual assistance): Strengthens social solidarity and empathy within communities.

These values, when internalized through the educational process, contribute significantly to shaping well-rounded individuals who are capable of navigating the challenges of globalization without losing their moral and spiritual compass.

Challenges in Implementation

Despite its potential, the integration of Islamic education into the formal education system continues to face several challenges:

- 1. Lack of role models: Educators often fail to embody the values they teach, weakening their influence on students.
- 2. Cognitive-dominant approaches: Education is frequently limited to the transfer of theoretical knowledge, neglecting the affective and practical dimensions of learning.





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3. Weak curriculum integration: Islamic values are often taught in isolation, without being embedded holistically across subjects and activities.

These challenges indicate the need for a more comprehensive strategy in implementing Islamic education, ensuring that it is not confined to theoretical instruction but is lived and practiced consistently within the school environment.

Implications for Character Formation in the Global Era

The study underscores that Islamic education, if effectively implemented, can serve as both a moral safeguard and a spiritual compass for the younger generation. By cultivating integrity, responsibility, and empathy, Islamic education equips students to face the complexities of modern life while upholding ethical principles. This highlights the urgent necessity of reorienting educational practices to prioritize moral and spiritual development alongside intellectual growth.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the moral crisis affecting Indonesia's younger generation is a serious challenge that demands urgent attention from the educational sector. Islamic education, as a value system rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith, provides a comprehensive foundation for character formation that integrates intellectual, spiritual, and ethical dimensions. Core values such as sidq (honesty), amānah (trustworthiness), 'iffah (self-restraint), and ta'āwun (mutual assistance) hold transformative potential in shaping youth character and strengthening social cohesion.

However, the implementation of Islamic education within the formal system continues to face obstacles, including a lack of role models, the dominance of cognitive-based teaching approaches, and limited integration of Islamic values into the curriculum. Without addressing these barriers, the potential of Islamic education as a moral and spiritual safeguard will remain underutilized.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be proposed:

- 1. Strengthening Role Models: Teachers and educators must embody Islamic values in their daily conduct, serving as living examples for students.
- 2. Holistic Curriculum Integration: Islamic values should be embedded across disciplines and extracurricular activities, not confined to religious studies alone.
- 3. Balanced Pedagogical Approach: Education should integrate cognitive, affective, and practical dimensions to ensure values are not only understood but also practiced.
- 4. Collaborative Efforts: Families, schools, and communities should work together in reinforcing moral and spiritual education.
- 5. Policy Support: Government and educational institutions need to design policies that prioritize moral and character education in line with Islamic principles.

By internalizing these strategies, Islamic education can function as a robust framework for nurturing a morally upright and spiritually resilient generation, capable of navigating the challenges of globalization without losing their ethical grounding.



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