



The Challenges of Islamic Education Management in Facing Moral and Social Crises

Indrita¹, Hamdi Rudji², Hajar Anna³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu, Indonesia

¹indrita.sita78@gmail.com, ²hamdirudji74@gmail.com, ³hajarannasister@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Character education is a crucial and strategic effort to rebuild the nation's identity and strengthen the formation of a new Indonesian society. In the current era, rapid lifestyle changes have brought both significant opportunities and challenges for the younger generation. However, the ongoing moral degradation among the nation's youth remains a serious concern for the educational sector. The purpose of this study is to explore effective management strategies for Islamic education amid moral and social crises through a character-based and spiritual education approach. This study employs a qualitative research method, with data collected through an extensive literature review. The collected data were systematically analyzed, interpreted, and synthesized to draw meaningful conclusions. The results of the study indicate that developing students with strong moral character is a complex and long-term process that requires continuous effort and deep moral reflection in making and implementing ethical decisions. Humans were created as sacred beings entrusted by God to preserve their inherent purity. Generally, spiritual-based education emphasizes spirituality as both the core foundation and ultimate goal of all educational and instructional activities. It positions spirituality not only as a normative and inspirational source but also as the guiding principle of educational practice. The application of the concept of the spiritualization of education—integrating faith with knowledge, reason with religion, and heart with mind—serves as an effective model for developing holistic and balanced human personalities. This study contributes to the field of Islamic education management by offering a conceptual framework that integrates character formation and spiritual development as strategic responses to contemporary moral and social crises.



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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in human life. Its function extends beyond developing cognitive abilities; it also shapes character and personality so that individuals can discover the complete meaning of their lives. Throughout the history of human civilization, education has always served as the fundamental foundation for building and sustaining the progress of a nation.

According to Article 3 of Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, national education functions to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the life of the nation. This objective emphasizes that education is not solely oriented toward intellectual intelligence, but also toward building character grounded in faith, piety, and noble morals.

However, amid the rapid development of the disruptive era marked by technological advancement and digitalization, education in Indonesia faces serious challenges in the form of moral degradation and a crisis of social values. This phenomenon reveals a gap between academic success and the failure of character formation. The crisis is evident in the weakening of integrity, diminishing social empathy, and increasing intolerance among the younger generation.

The government has made efforts to improve the quality of educational institutions through curriculum policies and the strengthening of character education. Nevertheless, the predominant focus

on cognitive aspects has resulted in emotional and spiritual intelligence not being optimally developed. Consequently, an imbalance emerges between students' intellectual abilities and their moral maturity. In the context of Islam, education should integrate three dimensions of intelligence: the intellect (IQ), the heart (EQ), and the soul (SQ), as taught in the tradition of Sufism. This integration serves as the foundation for forming *insan kamil*—a human being perfected intellectually, morally, and spiritually.

Previous studies have discussed character education and Islamic education separately, yet only a few have examined their integration comprehensively within the context of contemporary moral and social crises. Research focusing on spirituality-based educational approaches also tends to remain at a normative level, without offering practical managerial models within the Islamic educational system. Thus, a research gap remains in developing a management model for Islamic education that can respond to social change while fostering students' character and spirituality in a sustainable manner.

In response to this gap, the present study seeks to fill the void in the literature by offering an Islamic education management approach oriented toward character and spirituality. This approach positions spiritual education not merely as an additional moral component but as the core of the learning process that guides students to become ethical, knowledgeable, and well-rounded individuals.

This research employs a qualitative method using a literature study approach, drawing on various scholarly works, books, and journal articles as primary sources for analysis. The main focus of this study is to formulate how Islamic education management can be effectively implemented to address moral and social crises in the disruptive era.

Thus, the primary contribution of this study lies in conceptualizing a character- and spirituality-based Islamic education management model that can serve as a theoretical and practical solution to the moral degradation of Indonesia's young generation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design using a library research approach. This approach is selected because it enables the researcher to conduct an in-depth examination of various relevant scholarly sources in order to understand the concept of Islamic education management within the context of moral and social crises. Research data are obtained from a wide range of academic literature, including books, national and international journals, scholarly articles, research reports, and credible, verified online sources.

The process of selecting data sources is carried out systematically through several stages. First, the researcher searches for literature using academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and DOAJ with keywords such as "Islamic education management," "character education," "spiritual education," and "moral crisis." Second, the researcher establishes inclusion criteria, namely literature published within the last ten years (2014–2024), written in either Indonesian or English, relevant to the research focus, and academically reputable (published in indexed journals or issued by credible academic institutions). Literature that does not meet the relevance and credibility criteria is excluded from the analysis.

The main characteristics of this method are as follows:

1. Researcher as the primary instrument: The researcher directly selects, interprets, and analyzes the literature by considering theoretical and empirical contexts.
2. Descriptive nature: The research findings are presented in analytical narratives rather than numerical data, in order to illustrate the meaning contained within each data source.
3. Process-oriented: The research emphasizes deep understanding through a step-by-step interpretative process, beginning with issue identification, theme categorization, and concept synthesis.
4. Inductive analysis: Conclusions are drawn based on patterns, themes, and conceptual relationships emerging from the analyzed literature.

5. Meaning as the core of the research: The primary focus of the study is to uncover conceptual meanings and thematic relationships within the literature related to character- and spirituality-based Islamic education management.

The data analysis process is conducted in three stages: (1) data reduction, namely selecting and simplifying information from relevant literature; (2) data presentation, namely categorizing the reviewed information based on themes such as moral challenges, character-based approaches, and spiritualization of education; and (3) drawing conclusions, namely formulating conceptual findings that address the research problems.

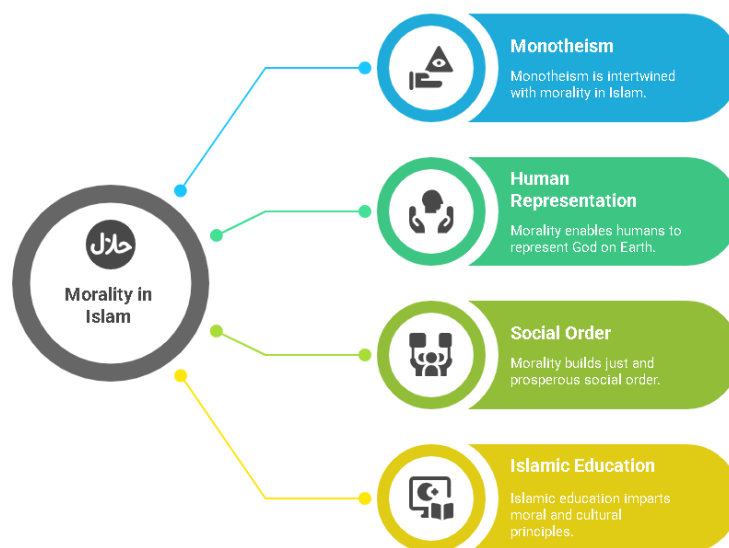
Through this approach, the study is expected to demonstrate strong credibility, as each analytical step is carried out systematically, transparently, and in a manner that allows other researchers to trace and verify the process.

1. Researcher as the primary instrument: The researcher directly analyzes the literature.
2. Descriptive: Research findings are presented in words rather than numbers.
3. Process-oriented: The study emphasizes interpretation and deep understanding.
4. Inductive analysis: Conclusions are drawn based on patterns identified in the data.
5. Meaning as the core of the research: The primary focus lies in interpreting the analyzed literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The significance of morality for human beings is so profound that Islam places the command of monotheism alongside the command of human morality. It is through these two potentials that human beings can become God's representatives, or khalifah, on earth—organizing worldly life, building a just and prosperous social order, and fostering a humane and democratic society. To actualize these potentials of monotheism and morality, Islamic education serves as the primary medium for imparting knowledge of religious values as well as ihsani and akhlaqi cultural principles, not only cognitively but also in an applied and practical manner.

Unveiling the Dimensions of Morality in Islam



Throughout its development, Islamic education has fundamentally been an inseparable part of human life. From the moment an embryo grows in a mother's womb, the educational process has already begun through the formation of an educative communication between the fetus and its Creator, as well as through interactions between the fetus, its parents, and the surrounding environment. Therefore, Islamic education constitutes the earliest and most essential element accompanying a person's life journey, playing a crucial role in helping individuals grow and develop intellectual maturity, enabling them to live confidently within a pluralistic society.

Furthermore, Zakiah Daradjat states that the goal of Islamic education is “to form human beings who believe in and are devoted to Allah Almighty throughout their lives, and who die in a state of submission as Muslims.” This view is grounded in the words of Allah in Surah Āli ‘Imrān verse 102.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

“O you who believe, fear Allah with true and utmost piety, and do not die except in a state of submission as Muslims.”

There are three core values in Islam, namely akhlaq (ethics), adab (proper conduct), and exemplary behavior. Akhlaq refers to duties and responsibilities beyond sharia and the general teachings of Islam. Adab refers to attitudes associated with good behavior. Meanwhile, exemplary behavior refers to the quality of character demonstrated by a good Muslim who follows the example set by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These three values form the pillars of character in Islam. Religious values and democratic values are not contradictory; when understood in a comprehensive and integrated manner, these values can effectively contribute to the creation of a stable society capable of cooperation in achieving shared goals. This, in fact, embodies the spirit found within the principles of Pancasila. Therefore, religious education serves as an irreplaceable fundamental support for the integrity of character education, as religion contains noble values whose goodness and truth are absolute. Based on various religious values, social norms, laws and regulations, academic ethics, and human rights principles, several value components have been identified and grouped into five main categories: human behavioral values in relation to God Almighty, oneself, fellow human beings, the environment, and the nation.

In recent years, the world of education has been introduced to a concept known as “character education”—a form of education that not only emphasizes students’ intellectual capacity but also enables them to apply what they understand as right in accordance with religious, moral, and cultural values. Religious values can be taught through Islamic education. For this reason, it is crucial to examine character education from the perspective of Islamic education in order to assess the ability of character education to restore the positive image of the educational landscape. Character education is believed to be capable of addressing the challenges faced by Islamic education, which is presumed to have not fully achieved its overarching goals. Thus, we can formulate Islamic education based on character formation, as both character formation and Islamic education share the same orientation.

Discussing character is both essential and fundamental. Character is the jewel of life that distinguishes humans from animals. A human being without character is essentially a person who has “become animalistic.” Individuals with strong and virtuous character, both personally and socially, are those who possess good morals, ethics, and noble conduct. Given the importance of character, educational institutions hold the responsibility of instilling these values through learning processes.

Strengthening character education is highly relevant in addressing the moral crisis currently occurring in our nation. Whether admitted or not, a real and alarming crisis is affecting society today, involving our most precious asset—our children. This crisis includes the rise of free sexual behavior, increasing violence among children and teenagers, crimes against peers, juvenile theft, habitual cheating, drug abuse, pornography, rape, robbery, and vandalism—problems that remain unresolved. The behavior of our youth is also marked by a tendency to cheat, bullying habits in schools, and brawls. The consequences are serious and can no longer be considered trivial, as these actions have led to criminal behavior. The behavior of adults mirrors this, with tendencies toward conflict, acts of violence, widespread corruption, and infidelity.

This crisis and moral decline indicate that religious and moral knowledge acquired in schools has not influenced changes in the behavior of Indonesian society. What is visible instead is the inconsistency of many Indonesians—saying one thing and doing another. Many believe that this condition stems from the outcomes of the education system itself. Demoralization occurs because learning processes tend to teach moral and character education merely as text, failing to prepare students to respond to and face contradictory real-life situations. Education, therefore, is the factor that contributes most significantly to this condition. In the context of formal schooling, one of the possible causes is that education in Indonesia focuses primarily on intellectual or cognitive development, while

soft skills or non-academic aspects—key components of character education—are not optimally addressed and are often neglected. Currently, academic targets, such as national examinations, remain the primary objectives of education, making the implementation of character education challenging.

Suprpto explains that character education has a deeper meaning than moral education, as it does not merely teach what is right and wrong. More than that, character education instills habits of goodness so that learners understand, feel, and willingly perform good actions. According to Megawati, this distinction exists because morality and character are two different concepts. Morality refers to a person's knowledge of good and bad, while character refers to the disposition driven directly by the brain. From this perspective, the emergence of the term "character education" can be seen as a critique and expression of dissatisfaction with the practice of moral education thus far. Hence, the widely discussed term today is character education, not moral education. Although substantively, the two are not fundamentally different, character education shares the same orientation as Islamic moral (akhlaq) education: the formation of character. Character education aims to shape an individual's personality through noble behavioral cultivation, which is reflected in real actions—such as good behavior, honesty, responsibility, respect for others' rights, diligence, and so forth.

Daniel Goleman, well known for his books *Multiple Intelligences* and *Emotional Intelligence*, states that character education is essentially value education, which encompasses nine interrelated core values:

- a. Responsibility;
- b. Respect;
- c. Fairness;
- d. Courage;
- e. Honesty;
- f. Citizenship;
- g. Self-discipline;
- h. Caring; and
- i. Perseverance.

According to Daniel Goleman, if value-based education succeeds in internalizing these nine fundamental values within learners, it will form a person with character and integrity. Furthermore, he emphasizes that value education must begin at home, be developed in educational institutions, and be applied concretely within society (including the political, industrial, and business sectors). In his view, value or character education is crucial because his research findings indicate that an individual's success in life is determined 80% by character (emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and spiritual intelligence) and only 20% by intellectual intelligence.

In the context of the moral and spiritual crisis faced by modern humanity today, character education based on the Qur'an emerges as a highly relevant solution. Islamic education does not only focus on cognitive aspects but also on forming character grounded in Qur'anic values. Through this character transformation, individuals are expected not only to be intellectually intelligent but also to possess noble morals. Various references on character education in Islam and its relevance in the modern era reveal that the moral crisis arises from the erosion of spiritual and ethical values in human life. Global modernization and secularization have shifted human focus away from moral values toward materialism and individualism.

Islamic education, particularly the Qur'an-based model, has significant potential to address this crisis. Character education in Islam emphasizes the development of virtuous conduct that benefits not only individuals but also society as a whole. Qur'anic values such as honesty, justice, patience, and compassion can serve as a foundation for restoring the moral character of modern humans.

One effective way to improve the quality of education is by integrating Qur'anic values into the curriculum. Qur'an-based character education requires a holistic approach that encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. This means that character education should not be taught merely through theory, but also through practice and exemplary conduct.

Prayer (du‘ā) is not merely a request but also a means of deep introspection and spiritual empowerment that aligns with the objectives of Islamic education. According to M. Quraish Shihab, prayer (ṣalāh) is a form of direct communication with God performed with sincerity and complete faith. Yunan Nasution views prayer as a form of self-reflection that helps purify the heart and improve one’s moral character.

In the context of Qur’an-based character education, as discussed in the article “Islam, Al-Qur’an, and Character Education: Character Transformation through Qur’anic Islamic Education,” prayer plays an essential role in cultivating character values such as honesty, patience, and steadfastness. By making prayer an integral part of the Islamic education curriculum, learners are taught to constantly remember God, respect themselves, and develop noble character. This aligns with the ultimate goal of Islamic education: to nurture individuals of exemplary moral character:

1. **Internalization of the Values of Honesty and Sincerity:** When praying, a Muslim is taught to be honest with themselves and with Allah. Sincerity in prayer teaches individuals to act with genuine intention, which forms the basis of honesty. This aligns with the teachings of the Qur’an, which emphasize the importance of honesty and integrity.
2. **Strengthening Patience and Perseverance:** Prayer teaches patience in awaiting Allah’s response and perseverance in striving. The consistent and wholehearted practice of praying trains individuals to remain steadfast in facing various life challenges. This is highly relevant to the values taught in character education, where patience and perseverance are key components of success.
3. **Reflection and Self-Introspection:** As expressed by Yunan Nasution, prayer is a moment of reflection and introspection. It allows individuals to evaluate themselves, recognize mistakes, and strive to improve. This self-reflection is an essential aspect of character education, as it helps individuals continuously grow and better themselves.
4. **Enhancement of Spiritual Quality:** Prayer contributes to the enhancement of spiritual quality, which is the foundation of good character. By drawing closer to Allah, individuals become more sensitive to the moral and ethical values taught in the Qur’an. This heightened awareness will be reflected in their daily actions and behavior.

The explanations above demonstrate that prayer is one of the activities capable of educating individuals to develop good character and personality. In the Attadrib journal, the character transformation of Generation Alpha students through Islamic education is assessed as a process of shaping students’ character from an early age, particularly through emphasizing Qur’anic values.

Based on these explanations, it can be interpreted that character education is a highly effective solution for addressing the issue of moral and character degradation among students. Character education does not merely provide explanations about good and bad behavior; rather, it focuses on implementing core character values in daily life through continuous habituation until they become personal characteristics.

Limitations and Implications of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the literature review method employed relies solely on secondary data from available sources and does not involve primary field data collection. This limits the study’s ability to provide direct empirical evidence and affects the generalizability of its findings. Second, the interpretation of data, which depends entirely on the researcher’s analysis, may introduce subjective bias—particularly if the literature sources used are not diverse or fail to encompass multiple perspectives. Third, the absence of supporting quantitative data represents another weakness, as it restricts the study from offering more concrete statistical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the approaches proposed in this article.

Nevertheless, the study offers significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it contributes to the literature on Islamic education management by proposing a character- and spiritual-based approach to address contemporary moral and social crises. Practically, the findings provide guidance for educators, educational institutions, and policymakers in designing curricula and learning programs that integrate spiritual and character values into students’ daily lives. In addition, the study

encourages collaboration among families, schools, and communities to create an educational environment conducive to character formation.

This research also opens opportunities for further, more comprehensive studies. Future research may employ quantitative or mixed-method approaches to measure the effectiveness of implementing character- and spiritual-based education across various educational settings. Moreover, the development of learning models grounded in Qur'anic values, implemented at both school and community levels, may serve as a concrete step in responding to the current moral and social challenges.

Suggestions for Future Research

For future research, it is recommended to develop empirical studies involving field data collection to evaluate the effectiveness of character- and spirituality-based education across various educational contexts. Quantitative or mixed-methods approaches may be used to measure the impact of character education programs on students' behavioral changes at the primary, secondary, and higher education levels. In addition, longitudinal studies are also essential to observe students' character development over time and to understand the extent to which the taught values can be deeply internalized.

Subsequent research may also explore the integration of character education with digital technology, such as the development of Qur'anic-based applications or online learning platforms that embed character and spiritual values. This approach is relevant for addressing the challenges of the digital era and ensuring that character education remains applicable amid rapid social changes. Furthermore, it is important to broaden the scope of research by involving various stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and local communities, to understand their collective role in supporting sustainable character education. Such efforts can produce more practical recommendations to improve the quality of character education at the national level.

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that character education grounded in spirituality is a strategic solution for addressing moral and social crises in modern society. Islamic education management plays a central role in shaping a generation that is balanced in intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. The integration of Qur'anic values into the learning process not only enhances academic competence but also strengthens students' morals and integrity as the foundation of their daily behavior. The concept of the spiritualization of education emphasizes the importance of harmonizing faith, knowledge, reason, and the heart in forming individuals with holistic character. Character- and spirituality-based education cannot operate effectively without synergistic support from educational institutions, families, and social communities. Such collaboration is essential in creating an educational ecosystem that is conducive to the reinforcement of moral and spiritual values.

However, this study has limitations due to its library research approach, which relies on theoretical interpretations of existing literature and has not been validated through empirical data. Future research is recommended to develop field studies to examine the implementation of character- and spirituality-based Islamic education management across various educational institutions. In addition, comparative studies across institutions and mixed-method approaches could further enrich the understanding of the effectiveness of integrating spiritual values into the educational curriculum. Thus, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a conceptual foundation for the development of policies and practices in Islamic education that aim to foster character formation and strengthen spirituality in addressing the moral and social challenges of the modern era.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The researcher declares that there is no conflict of interest associated with this study. All research procedures, data analysis, and article preparation were carried out independently without any pressure or external influence that could compromise the integrity and objectivity of the research.

findings. All data sources used in this study were obtained from credible and relevant literature, selected based on responsible academic principles.

If this research received support from any institution, such support was solely facilitative in nature and did not influence the results or the interpretation of the data presented in this article. The researcher also has no financial affiliations or personal relationships with any parties that could create potential bias in this study. This is to ensure that the findings and recommendations presented in this research are fully accountable and scientifically reliable.

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