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Islamic Education and its Value: A Vital Means for the Formation of National Character

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Abstract

This study examines the significance of Islamic education in forming national character. By exploring the historical context, conceptual framework, and values of Islamic education, this research demonstrates the vital role of Islamic education in shaping the character, values, and worldview of individuals and communities. The study argues Islamic education provides a moral and spiritual foundation for individuals and societies, promoting integrity, justice, compassion, responsibility, and unity. The study results show that Islamic education consistently educates values such as honesty, responsibility, truth, justice, and respect for others, which are very important in forming individual character with integrity. Islamic education also plays a role in strengthening students' cultural and religious identity, promoting tolerance, mutual respect, and social solidarity amidst the cultural and religious diversity of Nigerian society. Not only that, the integration of modern knowledge and life skills in the Islamic education curriculum ensures that individuals develop not only moral qualities but also relevant competencies to face global challenges. However, challenges such as limited competent human resources, relevance of the curriculum to the needs of the times, and lack of funds and infrastructure, are obstacles that need to be overcome. The findings of this research have implications for education policymakers, practitioners, and scholars seeking to promote holistic and balanced education that fosters national character and social cohesion.

Keywords: *Islamic Education; Spirituality; Morality; National Character; Values.*

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Introduction

Islamic education is one of the sciences that facilitates humans in learning and practicing their potential. The main function of Islamic education is to integrate knowledge that is physical (physical) and non-physical (spiritual). One of the most trusted references in Islam is the word given by Allah in the Qur'an, namely the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as an *ulul al-bab* figure, as a complete Muslim human, namely a man who is faithful, knowledgeable, and always productive in doing righteous deeds under the guidance of the teachings Islam [1]. Therefore, to reconstruct Islamic education we need to pay attention to the principles of Islamic education, which include: (1) Islamic education is part of the Islamic life system [2]; (2) Islamic education is something that is integrated [3]; (3) Islamic education is a lifelong process [4]; (4) Islamic education takes place through a dynamic process [5]; (5) Islamic education is done by giving more moral messages to students [6]. Islamic religious education is guidance, education aimed at inviting children to understand, appreciate and practice their religious teachings which is carried out by providing understanding, habituation, exemplary, creating a religious atmosphere so that the child appears as a believer and devoted to Allah.

Islamic education is a vital component of a Muslim's life, playing a significant role in shaping an individual's character, values, and worldview. The importance of Islamic education cannot be overstated, as it provides a moral and spiritual foundation for individuals, communities, and nations. The quality of a society is determined by the quality of education of its members [7]. One way to increase the knowledge and skills of community members is to improve the quality of knowledge from the community itself. The community is the third educational institution after education in the family environment and school environment [8]. In other words, religious education can be defined as to actualize the qualities of perfection that Allah has bestowed upon humans, these efforts are carried out without any strings attached except for the sole purpose of worshipping Allah.

The length of education is considered to have a lot of influence on the formation of one's competitiveness. The higher one's education level, the higher one's chances of improving oneself, and the lower the level of education, the more difficult it is to grow one's abilities and competitiveness [9]. Islamic education should be integrated into the development of human beings who are cultured, civilized, moral, knowledgeable both in science and technology, and skilled in innovative and competitive [10].

Islamic education is rooted in the Qur'an and the Hadith, providing a comprehensive framework for learning and personal growth. The Allah

emphasizes in the Glorious Qur'an importance of knowledge and education, stating:

Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing (in prayer) during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord (like one who disbelieves)? say: "Are those who know equal to those who know not?" it is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allah's signs and verses) [11].

Character education is very important to shape students into individuals with noble and superior morals. By educating noble values from an early age such as honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, and the spirit of hard work, it is expected that students will grow into individuals who are resilient to face every challenge of the times. Strong character is the main capital to lead the nation to a glorious future. Character education plays a major role in shaping the next generation of the nation that is sensitive to various social problems [12]. By instilling a sense of empathy and responsibility for others, students are honed to have the ability to think critically and solve various global challenges such as poverty, injustice, and climate change. They will be moved to be actively involved in creating positive changes for the betterment of the nation and humanity [13].

In the midst of increasingly strong globalisation, character education plays a role in strengthening the nation's identity. By instilling indigenous culture and morals, the nation can walk according to its ancestral values despite being exposed to various foreign influences. The nation's strong character will make it able to compete in the international arena with high dignity [14]. Therefore, character education is very strategic as a long-term investment to build a competitive and dignified nation.

National character, which is formed from moral, ethical and social values, is an important basis for the progress and welfare of society. In Indonesia, which is rich in cultural and religious diversity, Islamic education plays a significant role in shaping the nation's character based on religious values [15]. Islamic education, both formal such as in madrasah and conventional educational system, and non-formal such as in the family and community environment, has been recognized as making a major contribution in shaping the morals and morals of students. The values taught in Islamic education such as honesty, responsibility, hard work, and tolerance are in line with the values of Pancasila which is the basic ideology of the Indonesian nation [16].

However, although Islamic education has potential in character building, challenges in implementation in the field cannot be ignored. Various obstacles such as the lack of educational facilities, an un-optimal curriculum, and social

and economic challenges often become obstacles in the character education process. Various obstacles such as limited educational facilities, a curriculum that is not yet optimal, as well as social and economic challenges are often the main obstacles in the process of character-building through education [17].

Islamic religious education has a very important meaning in the social and cultural context, especially in building and maintaining moral and ethical values in society. In many communities, Islamic education does not merely convey knowledge about religion but also instills universal values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance [18]. These noble values are essential in creating an atmosphere of social life that is harmonious and full of a sense of togetherness. Islamic education, whether organized in madrassas, Islamic boarding schools, or through recitation in the community, provides a solid ethical framework that encourages each individual to behave well and wisely in social interactions. These noble values serve as guidelines in everyday life help reduce various social problems and increase the sense of solidarity in society [19].

Since ancient times, Islamic education has been recognized as an important means of preserving and developing the cultural heritage of the Ummah. Through various methods such as learning hadith, Tafsir, and Fiqh, Islamic education enriches the understanding of Islam's rich and diverse cultural heritage [20]. This not only enhances pride in cultural identity but also deepens understanding of literature, art, and cultural practices rooted in Islamic tradition. Islamic education also encourages tolerance and intercultural dialogue, which are indispensable in a pluralistic society [21].

Thus, Islamic education is an important bridge that connects the past with the present, strengthening cultural identity while preparing an inclusive and superior society in the global era. Therefore, this research intends to explore the role of Islamic education in shaping the nation's character, and how these challenges can be overcome. This study, therefore, aims to explore the value of Islamic education in forming national character. By examining the historical context, conceptual framework, and values of Islamic education, this study seeks to demonstrate the significance of Islamic education in shaping the character, values, and worldview of individuals and communities.

Method

The research methodology adopted in this paper is a literature study approach. The study of literature is the same as research in general, but the data obtained by the researcher is secondary data using the literature study method. Some steps that the researcher will take in preparing this article include: first, the researchers search for and collect reference sources that are relevant to the theme of this research. Second, several scientific papers that have been collected are then

processed and elaborated, to comprehensively explain the inter-sections of this article. Third, Islamic education and its value are a vital means for the formation of national character.

Result and Discussion

Definition of Islamic Education

Islamic education, also known as Tarbiyah, refers to the process of educating and nurturing individuals under Islamic values, principles, and practices. The primary aim of Islamic education is to develop individuals who are morally upright, intellectually curious, and spiritually grounded. Islamic education is the process of nurturing and developing an individual's intellectual, spiritual, and moral faculties in line with the teachings laid down by Islam [33].

Islamic education is an educational process based on the teachings and values contained in Islam, aiming to form humans who have a balance between life in the world and what they will experience in the afterlife [34]. Islamic education not only instills knowledge about religion such as the Qur'an, Hadith, Jurisprudence, Tawhid, and Islamic history, but also instills deep moral, ethical, and spiritual values. Through this comprehensive approach, Islamic education aims to develop the potential of the individual as a whole, both in terms of intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and social. Thus, Islamic education is expected to produce individuals who are faithful, pious, knowledgeable, and have noble character [35].

In its implementation, Islamic education can occur in various conventional educational institutions and madrasah, and Islamic schools with mixed conventional systems. In addition, Islamic education is also widely carried out through non-formal activities such as recitation, Majalis Ta'alim, and Da'wah programs [36]. In the social and cultural context, Islamic education plays an important role in instilling universal human values such as tolerance, justice, and cooperation. For this reason, Islamic education serves not only for individual development but also for the development of a more moral, harmonious, and peaceful society [37].

Islamic education aims to form an entity that has faith, piety, and desirable behavior according to Islamic teachings. More specifically, this education aims to develop the potential of each individual as a whole in terms of intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. The hope is that through Islamic education, a person can become a caliph on earth, who can carry out social duties and responsibilities well while continuing to obey Allah's commands and stay away from His prohibitions [38]. In addition, Islamic education also aims to form a noble character and high character. It emphasizes the importance of manners

and ethics in daily life and teaches how to interact with fellow humans and other creatures properly. Islamic education seeks to create humans who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have high moral integrity and a universal human spirit [39].

The first basic principle of Islamic education is that all curriculum arrangements, teaching methods, and educational goals must be based on the Glorious Qur'an and Hadith. These two primary sources serve as guidelines and measures of truth in every aspect of education. In practice, this principle ensures that Islamic education does not deviate from religious teachings and always prioritizes Islamic values [40].

The next principle is that Islamic education is holistic and comprehensive. That is, this education covers all aspects of human life, both worldly and hereafter. It does not only emphasize the spiritual aspect, but also encourages the development of intellectual, emotional, and physical abilities. It aims to create individuals who are balanced and able to live life well in various fields, both in the world and in preparation for the hereafter [41].

In Islamic education, ethics (adab) are often taught before knowledge. This means that good attitudes and behavior are considered an important foundation before one can properly absorb knowledge. Teaching adab allows students to better appreciate knowledge, teachers, and the learning process itself, which ultimately contributes to a conducive and productive learning environment [42]. Therefore, Islamic Education does not only stop at the realm of theory and knowledge. The importance of implementing the teachings in daily life is another basic principle. Students are taught how to apply Islamic values in concrete actions, both in the context of worship, muamalah (social relations), and akhlaq. Therefore, the concrete practice of Islamic principles is very important in Islamic education. By upholding these basic goals and principles, Islamic education is expected to produce a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has a strong commitment to religious and social values, to make a positive contribution to the community and society at large.

The concept of Islamic education is rooted in the Islamic worldview, which emphasizes the unity and interconnectedness of all knowledge. Islamic education seeks to integrate the spiritual, moral, and intellectual dimensions of human experience, providing a holistic and balanced approach to learning [43]. The values and principles of Islamic education are derived from the Glorious Qur'an and Sunnah, which guide all aspects of human life. These values include justice, compassion, equality, and responsibility, which are essential for building a just and harmonious society. These values according to Al-Ghazali, are

significant in balancing the intellectual and spiritual pursuits in Islamic education [44].

Concept of National Character

National character refers to the unique set of values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that define a nation and its people. It is shaped by a combination of factors, including history, culture, religion, education, and social and economic conditions.

National character has been viewed in various ways by scholars and researchers. To Inkeles it is a nation's "personality" or "temperament" [45]. While Almond & Verba sees the national character as a nation's "values, norms, and institutions" [46]. But on his side, Pye sees national character as a nation's "cultural identity" or "national identity" [47]. And according to Adorno, it is a nation's "collective personality" or "national psyche" [48].

The main characteristic that colors the identity of a nation is called national character, a collection of values, attitudes, and patterns of behavior that become a common characteristic and identity. It encompasses moral, ethical, and cultural aspects, as well as social dimensions that are formed from a long process throughout history, under the influence of education, and through complex social interactions in society [49]. It reflects the collective personality that distinguishes a nation from others and serves as a guide for individual and group behavior in daily life, as well as when dealing with other nations at the global level. A strong and positive national character plays an important role in building unity, progress, and prosperity together [50].

Some of the characteristics of national character:

- i. **Shared Values:** A set of core values that are shared by the majority of the population, such as respect for authority, individual freedom, and social justice.
- ii. **Cultural Identity:** A sense of cultural identity that is shaped by the nation's history, traditions, and customs.
- iii. **National Pride:** A sense of national pride and loyalty that is felt by citizens towards their country.
- iv. **Social Cohesion:** A sense of social cohesion and unity among citizens, despite their differences.
- v. **Resilience:** The ability of a nation to withstand challenges and adversity, and to bounce back from setbacks.

Impact of Islamic Education on Character Building of a Nation

Islamic education has a central role in shaping the character of a moral and ethical Nigerian nation. As a country with many Muslim population, Islamic education not only aims to teach religious knowledge but also to shape morals and morals [51]. This education instills values such as honesty, humility, responsibility, and concern for others. These values are in line with the principles of life that society expects, so they become a solid foundation for shaping individual and community character [52]. In addition, Islamic education also has a role in instilling a spirit of justice and equality. Islamic teachings state that all humans are created equal before Allah and have the same right to be treated fairly and honorably [53]. Islamic education emphasizes the importance of respecting the rights of others, avoiding discrimination, and building harmonious relationships between people. With an emphasis on the principles of justice and equality, Islamic education can form a just generation, and contribute to creating an inclusive and tolerant society [54].

Islamic education also plays a major role in shaping religious-spiritual character, which strengthens an individual's relationship with Allah. Through teaching that includes worship, prayer, and daily behavior by true Islamic teachings, this education fosters awareness of the importance of spirituality in life [55]. The religious character formed through Islamic education is expected to guide individuals to live a blessed life, have integrity, and always adhere to religious values in every action [56].

To this end, Islamic education emphasizes the importance of knowledge and lifelong learning. By teaching that studying is obligatory for every Muslim, Islamic education encourages individuals to continue learning and developing themselves [57]. This attitude not only shapes the character of individuals who love knowledge but also promotes the progress of society as a whole. Thus, Islamic education not only forms a strong and moral individual character but also contributes to creating a smart, competitive, and advanced society [58]. Thus, Islamic education plays a vital role in shaping the character of a moral and ethical Indonesian nation. By instilling values such as honesty, responsibility, justice, equality, and concern for others, Islamic education helps build a strong foundation of character in individuals and society. In addition, Islamic education strengthens religious-spiritual character, brings individuals closer to the Creator, and fosters awareness of the importance of spirituality in daily life. Through its emphasis on the obligation to seek knowledge, Islamic education encourages students to continue learning and strive forward, ultimately contributing to the progress of society. With all the positive values taught, Islamic education plays

an important role in creating a generation with integrity, intelligence, and morality, and shaping an inclusive, tolerant, and developed society.

Islamic education is a vital component of a Muslim's life, playing a significant role in shaping an individual's character, values, and worldview. The importance of Islamic education cannot be overstated, as it provides a moral and spiritual foundation for individuals, communities, and nations. Islamic education has a profound impact on the formation of a nation's character. By instilling Islamic values and principles, individuals are equipped with a moral compass that guides their actions and decisions. This, in turn, contributes to the development of a nation's character, marked by:

- i. **Promoting Integrity:** Islamic education emphasizes the importance of honesty, transparency, and accountability. By instilling these values, Islamic education promotes a culture of integrity, essential for building trust and credibility in individuals and institutions.
- ii. **Fostering Justice:** Islamic values promote fairness, equality, and compassion, essential for building a just society. Islamic education encourages individuals to stand up for justice, even if it means challenging unjust systems or authority.
- iii. **Encouraging Compassion:** Islamic education fosters empathy, kindness, and generosity, vital for creating a harmonious and cohesive community. By promoting compassion, Islamic education helps to break down social barriers and promote social cohesion.
- iv. **Developing Responsibility:** Islamic values encourage individuals to take responsibility for their actions, contributing to a culture of accountability and civic engagement. By promoting responsibility, Islamic education helps to develop active citizens who contribute positively to their communities.
- v. **Promoting Unity:** Islamic education emphasizes the importance of unity and solidarity among Muslims. By promoting a sense of shared identity and purpose, Islamic education helps to foster a sense of national unity and cohesion.

Challenges and Obstacles of Islamic Education in National Character Building

One of the major obstacles to providing meaningful Islamic education to shape the nation's character is the limited number of reliable and dedicated human resources. Teachers and trainers who have a deep understanding of Islam and can teach moral values effectively are in short supply [59]. The quality of

education depends largely on the competence of educators, and the lack of training and professional development for them reduces the effectiveness of Islamic religious education. This is a major challenge in ensuring that the Islamic values taught can truly permeate and influence individuals' characters [60].

Not only that, it has been observed by the researchers that the Islamic education curriculum is often considered less relevant to the needs of modern times. Many Islamic schools or educational institutions still use a traditional curriculum that is not integrated with the latest developments in science and technology. This causes students to be less prepared to face dynamic global challenges. These limitations make Islamic education seem alienated and less attractive to the younger generation, who tend to want an education that prepares them holistically for the future [61].

The next challenge as observed is a less supportive environment and culture. This is because in some cases, the family and community environment are not always supportive or in line with the values taught in Islamic education. Individuals can face dilemmas when the values they learn at school are different from what they see and experience in their daily lives. Another problem is that of the influence of media and technology which often contradicts the moral and ethical values taught, thus complicating the character-building method.

Another major impediment is the lack of adequate funds and infrastructure to support Islamic education. Many Islamic educational institutions, especially in remote areas, face limitations in terms of physical facilities and learning resources [62]. Not only that, lack of access to information technology, books, and other supporting facilities also hinders the effective teaching and learning process. In fact, conducive environment and adequate resources are part of the requirements for quality education in any given society. These limitations restrict the ability of Islamic educational institutions to work optimally in shaping strong and good student characters [63].

Conversely, there are several hurdles that are often faced to realise it. Therefore, smart strategies are needed to overcome them. First, improving the competence of teachers is absolutely done through various means, such as training, workshops, seminars on an ongoing basis. This needs to be done together with various parties, such as the government, universities, and research institutions. With the provision of integrated mastery of science and technology, educators can better educate the younger generation [64]. Second, it is also important to update the curriculum so that it remains relevant in the midst of the times. Integration of Islamic values and modern science needs to be done. Project-based learning and real-world problem solving are important, so that students understand the application of religion in life [65]. Third, the positive image of

students also needs to be built in harmony with the school and family environment. Synergies between schools, parents and communities need to be made. Programmes that involve the community can unite school and life learning. Educators' role models are also very important. Fourth, alternative facilities and funds are also needed, such as waqf, donations, cooperation with the private sector and organisations. Technology investment needs to be prioritised to support learning. With smart and innovative resource management, Islamic education will excel in building the nation's character [66].

Thus, if these strategies are well implemented, the role of Islamic education in shaping the nation's identity will be optimised in the future.

Way Forward

State principle and the outlook of life of the Nigerian nation, is the cornerstone of the core values in the character of the Nigerian nation. The five precepts of that is supposed to be the foundation of the core character which is: Belief in Allah as the only Creator, Fair and Dignified Humanity, Nigerian unity, Democracy led by Wisdom in Deliberation, and Social Justice for all Nigerian people describe spiritual values, humanity, unity, and social justice that are expected to be realized in daily life [67]. These values become the guidelines and working spirit of the Nigerian people in various aspects of life, both in personal, social and national contexts.

Then, the Principle of "Different but Still One," which means expresses the spirit of unity in diversity, which is one of the core values in the character that is supposed of a nation. Nigerian as a nation consists of various ethnicities, languages, religions, and cultures that coexist in harmony [68]. This diversity is considered a wealth that must be preserved and respected. This value encourages an attitude of tolerance, respect for differences, as well as a spirit of cooperation and help among the community, which strengthens social cohesion and national unity [69].

Furthermore, integrity and sincerity are basic values that are expected in every individual and become an integral part of the Nigerian character. These values teach the importance of having solid principles, speaking and acting honestly, and taking responsibility for every action taken [70]. In a wider view, sincerity and integrity are the basis for creating a clean and transparent government, and become social capital for society in realising viable and equitable development. These values not only shape individual behaviour, but also create an environment conducive to the nation's progress.

Social justice is a noble value that is aspired to in Nigerian society. Justice means providing equal legal protection to all citizens without discriminating

against their backgrounds. Meanwhile, public welfare encompasses efforts to improve people's standard of living, including in education, health and the economy. These values are implicit in various government policies that aim to reduce social and economic disparities and create equal access for all people [71].

Self-reliance and hard work are key values that Nigerians hold dear in building themselves and their country. Independence teaches the importance of not depending on others and being able to stand alone in facing various challenges [72]. It has been noted that, hard work encompasses a high work ethic, an unyielding spirit and dedication to achieving goals. These values are echoed in the entrepreneurial spirit, determination in running a business, and innovation and creativity that continue to grow in society. These two values drive the nation's progress and independence.

It has also been observed that nationalism and patriotism are values that are deeply rooted in the character of any nation. Nationalism emphasises pride and love for the country, as well as the willingness to sacrifice for the survival of the nation and state. Love of country includes an awareness of history, culture and ancestral heritage that must be maintained and preserved. These values encourage active participation in nation-building, compliance with laws and regulations, and a willingness to defend the country against threats. Together, nationalism and patriotism foster a strong spirit of patriotism and strengthen national unity.

National resilience and defence of the homeland are core values that reflect the commitment of the Nigerian people in maintaining the continuity and sovereignty of the country. National resilience means the nation's ability to face various threats, challenges, obstacles and disturbances, both from within and outside the country [73]. Defence of the homeland, on the other hand, demands the readiness of every citizen to play an active role in efforts to defend the country from all forms of threats [74]. It has been observed by the researchers that this value encompasses consciousness of the history of the nation's struggle, a spirit of patriotism, and a strong desire to safeguard and defend homeland and its sovereignty. Through homeland defence education and national awareness, it is hoped that a generation that is brave, resilient and ready to contribute to strengthening national resilience will be formed.

Honour and Dignity are two values system that emphasises the importance of maintaining self-respect as individuals, families, communities and nations. Honour relates to noble ethical and moral behaviour and commitment to good values. Dignity means the quality or nature of a human being that deserves respect, appreciation, and recognition of their rights and freedoms. These values encourage people in a nation state to behave honestly, fairly and

with dignity in every aspect of life. Maintaining dignity and honour represents a strong character and creates a positive reputation in the eyes of the world [75].

By appreciating and applying these core values, Nigerian society is expected to build a resilient, harmonious and competitive national character, and maintain unity in diversity. These values guide every citizen to behave under the ideals and aspirations of the nation, direct positive behaviour, and support the creation of a just, prosperous, and socially just society.

Conclusion

Islamic education is a very fundamental aspect in shaping the character of the nation's growth by instilling noble values such as truth, honesty, responsibility and respect between people. Through the gathering of religious education, students are guided to implement these principles not only in intellectual understanding, but also in daily actions as an integral part of their personality. Islamic education has a profound impact on national character, promoting integrity, justice, compassion, responsibility, and unity. By instilling these values, Islamic education provides a moral and spiritual foundation for individuals, communities, and nations. As nations strive to develop and progress, the importance of Islamic education cannot be overstated.

In addition, Islamic education plays a role in the formation of students' cultural and religious identity, which is essential in Nigeria's multicultural society. By understanding and applying the teachings of Islam as a whole, students can appreciate and protect the diversity of ethnic groups and religious beliefs that develop in the country. Religious education helps students develop mutual respect, tolerance and social solidarity, which are important foundations for national unity. Moreover, quality Islamic education not only emphasises spiritual and normative aspects but also integrates contemporary knowledge and relevant skills for the future. This ensures that individuals not only become morally ethical persons, but also capable and equipped to face current and future global challenges. Thus, religious education contributes to the formation of quality young people who are able to play an active role in the sustainable development and progress of the nation.

Author Contributions

Umar Abdullahi Maidugu: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Adamu Tanko Isah:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation.

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Conflict of Interest

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