



## **The Integration of Islamic Religious Education Values in Higher Education: Strategies for Fostering a Character-Building Generation**

**Ririn Khairunnisa\***

Bridge Engineering Technology, Politeknik Negeri Tanah Laut, Tanah Laut, South Kalimantan, Indonesia

**Dhia Alfa Della**

Bridge Engineering Technology, Politeknik Negeri Tanah Laut, Tanah Laut, South Kalimantan, Indonesia

**Uswatun Hasanah**

Bridge Engineering Technology, Politeknik Negeri Tanah Laut, Tanah Laut, South Kalimantan, Indonesia

**Taufik Abdullah At Tamimi**

Bridge Engineering Technology, Politeknik Negeri Tanah Laut, Tanah Laut, South Kalimantan, Indonesia

\*Correspondence author: [ririn@politala.ac.id](mailto:ririn@politala.ac.id)

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### **Key Words:**

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### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study is to identify strategies for integrating Islamic Religious Education values in higher education institutions as an effort to develop a generation with strong character. The method employed in this study is library research through the collection of secondary data derived from books, scientific articles, and other relevant sources. The data were analyzed qualitatively to examine concepts, implementation practices, and alternative approaches to integrating these values within both academic and non-academic environments. The findings indicate that the integration of Islamic Religious Education values can be implemented through curriculum development, learning practices, the cultivation of campus culture, extracurricular activities, Islamic-based community service programs, and the utilization of technology and digital media. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of synergy among educators, institutions, and society in continuously internalizing Islamic Religious Education values to produce a generation that is knowledgeable in both faith and piety (Iman and Taqwa) and science and technology, while making positive contributions to the nation.

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### Introduction

The challenges emerging in the current era of globalization are increasingly complex compared to those faced in previous periods. Moral degradation has become more prevalent within society regardless of age groups. Indonesia, as a multicultural nation, faces various problems related to the moral standards of its people (Khoiruddin, 2019; Musthofa & Lutfiah, 2024). Higher education institutions, which represent the pinnacle and center of scientific development, are not exempt from these challenges. Therefore, education should be designed with positive dimensions and guided by values and norms that support human life. The objective of character-based education is to produce human resources who possess not only high intellectual capacity but also strong moral values. Moral education has been shown to significantly influence other important aspects of life, particularly individuals' future opportunities (Britwum & Aidoo, 2022; Rohmah & Diana, 2023).

The role of Islamic Religious Education is essential in actualizing character education in Indonesia (Annur et al., 2025; Muthoharoh, 2021), particularly at the higher education level, which is often regarded as the ultimate indicator of educational success. The values embedded in Islamic Religious Education encompass all dimensions of life required by students, including the mastery of knowledge, technological advancement, and character formation. Islam carries a mission to encourage human beings to engage in education and learning, where education functions as a process of knowledge transfer, while instruction is grounded in experiences gained throughout the learning process (Khairuddin et al, 2023; Putri, 2021). The implementation of Islamic Religious Education aims to strengthen devotion to Allah SWT, while noble character serves as a manifestation of faith that prevents individuals from engaging in destructive behaviors that may harm society and threaten national unity and cohesion (Komariah & Nihayah, 2023; Zakariyyah, 2009). Consequently, it plays a crucial role in developing a generation characterized by good conduct and noble morality. Islamic education itself adopts a holistic approach that integrates spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical development simultaneously (Moslimany et al, 2024; Rudiyanto & Kasanova, 2023).

One alternative for achieving national and universal educational objectives within higher education institutions is to optimize Islamic Religious Education. Its implementation requires the integration and internalization of Islamic values into all fields of general knowledge taught at universities. Through this process, a harmonious integration between religious sciences and secular sciences can be established. Such integration also serves as an effort to address moral degradation while simultaneously supporting the practice of character education (Rohmah & Diana, 2023; Ruswandi & Heri, 2021). Islamic Religious Education encompasses three primary dimensions. First, the cognitive dimension (transfer of knowledge), which focuses on developing students' intellectual capacities, ranging from memorization to higher-order analytical thinking. Second, the affective dimension (transfer of values), which seeks to cultivate a love for goodness and an aversion to wrongdoing. Third, the behavioral dimension (transfer of activity), which encourages individuals to practice virtuous actions and avoid undesirable behavior (Ruswandi & Heri, 2021; Tolchah & Arfan, 2019).

These considerations indicate that the implementation of Islamic values within general education occupies a strategic position in enhancing the curriculum and educational system. The integration of secular and religious learning serves as a central mechanism for producing individuals who are knowledgeable in both faith and piety (*Iman* and *Taqwa*) and science and technology. As a result, the implementation of Islamic-oriented learning indirectly contributes to improved morality, ethics, and behavior while fostering awareness and interest that are reflected in intellectual intelligence (IQ), emotional intelligence (EQ), and spiritual intelligence (SQ) (Moslimany et al., 2024; Rosyida et al, 2023).

Given its universal nature, Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in character development, particularly within higher education institutions. Therefore, integrating Islamic Religious Education values with character-building initiatives aims to create synergy among the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning. This integration process must be conducted in a structured and systematic manner so that Islamic Religious Education can function as the guiding spirit of the entire educational process, from planning to evaluation. Based on the foregoing discussion, it is important to further explore how the integration of Islamic Religious Education values can be implemented effectively and efficiently in higher education as a means of supporting character education. Amid the rapid advancement of science and technology, Islamic Religious Education remains a relevant solution and strategic approach for instilling strong moral values in future generations who will lead the nation.

### Research Method

This study employed a library research approach. Library research involves the systematic examination of theories and concepts derived from various literature sources relevant to the research topic and data collection process (Adlini et al., 2022). Data were collected through an extensive review of scholarly literature, including academic books, journal articles, and other relevant references that support the issues addressed in this study. The study adopted a qualitative approach to data analysis by examining, interpreting, and synthesizing scholarly opinions, theoretical perspectives, concepts, and issues related to the research context.

### Results and Discussion

According to Horrock, values are defined as principles that enable individuals or particular social groups to determine the goals or aspirations they consider necessary to achieve. From a dynamic perspective, values originate as social products that are gradually internalized by individuals and accepted as shared possessions within their social groups. Values serve as relatively stable conceptual standards that, either implicitly or explicitly, guide individuals in determining goals that fulfill their psychological needs (Zakariyyah, 2009).

The values embedded in Islamic education encompass three fundamental pillars: *aqidah* (faith), *ibadah* (worship and devotion), and *akhlaq* (morality and ethics). *Aqidah* includes belief in Allah, His angels, His revealed scriptures, His messengers, the Day of Judgment, and divine decree (*qadha* and *qadar*). It teaches

individuals to develop a strong conviction based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith as their primary sources of guidance. Ibadah encompasses the norms governing various aspects of social life, including the formulation of societal norms, economic organization, and systems of authority. As a manifestation of devotion to God, ibadah is regulated through Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), which provides legal and ethical guidelines for religious practice. Meanwhile, akhlaq encompasses both the vertical relationship between humans and Allah (*hablum minallah*) and the horizontal relationship among human beings (*hablum minannas*), which includes social etiquette and interpersonal conduct. Akhlaq serves as a guide for determining whether one's attitudes and behaviors reflect goodness or wrongdoing. Through the integration of these three dimensions, an individual can develop into what Islamic teachings describe as an *insan kamil* (the complete or perfected human being) (Ikhwan, 2014; Maksum, 2016).

The value system in Islamic Religious Education possesses universal significance and is characterized by several fundamental principles, including the following:

**a. Seeking the Pleasure of Allah (Ridhā Allah) as the Primary Goal of a Muslim's Life**

In the Islamic worldview, attaining the pleasure of Allah is the highest objective of a Muslim's life. The pleasure of Allah represents His mercy, acceptance, and approval of those who consistently obey His commands and avoid His prohibitions. It serves as the foundation for all human activities and life decisions, encompassing both religious obligations and worldly affairs. As stated in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah (2:207):

“And among the people is he who sells himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is Most Kind to His servants.”

This verse emphasizes that a Muslim is willing to sacrifice personal interests, time, effort, and even wealth in pursuit of Allah's pleasure. Consequently, the pleasure of Allah becomes the ultimate determinant of success in both worldly life and the Hereafter.

**b. The Affirmation of Islamic Values as Comprehensive Guidelines for Human Life**

Islam is regarded as a *kaffah* (complete and comprehensive) religion. This principle is closely associated with the concept of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* (a mercy to all creation), which forms the foundation of Islam's universal teachings encompassing social, economic, cultural, and other aspects of human life. Islam provides guidance for all dimensions of existence, ranging from the simplest daily matters to the most significant and complex issues. Ultimately, all aspects of life are directed toward achieving the pleasure of Allah SWT.

This principle is reflected in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:3):

“This day I have perfected for you your religion, completed My favor upon you, and have approved for you Islam as your religion.”

This verse highlights the completeness and perfection of Islam as a comprehensive way of life. It provides the principles, values, and regulations

necessary for human beings to live harmoniously, maintain balance in their lives, and conduct themselves in accordance with the divine laws established by Allah SWT.

**c. Islam Requires Human Beings to Live According to Virtuous Norms and Avoid Prohibited Wrongdoings**

Islam emphasizes that all aspects of human life should be guided by principles of virtue and should remain distant from actions that are considered harmful or prohibited (Aspiyah, 2024; Khoiruddin, 2019; Mufarochah et al, 2023).

One of the fundamental teachings of Islam is that human beings were created to serve as *khalifah* (stewards or leaders) on earth. As *khalifah*, individuals bear the responsibility of maintaining social order based on moral values and preventing corruption and destruction. Therefore, Muslims are encouraged to lead meaningful lives by making Islamic teachings the foundation of their attitudes and behavior. Human beings possess tendencies toward greed and selfishness when their actions are not guided by Islamic moral principles. Among the virtues emphasized in Islam are obedience to Allah, honesty and integrity, justice, concern for others, trustworthiness, and responsibility.

The following are several Islamic Religious Education values that can be integrated into higher education institutions:

First, the values of faith (*iman*) and piety (*taqwa*) within the context of aqidah (Islamic creed). During the learning process, educators can instill sound Islamic beliefs by introducing students to Allah as their Creator and helping them understand their obligations as servants of Allah SWT. Through the cultivation of faith and conviction, students are expected to develop a mindset that regards all activities, including academic pursuits, as forms of worship and devotion to Allah SWT.

The objective is to guide students toward establishing a strong foundation of faith and belief that enables them to confront contemporary challenges without neglecting spiritual values. Within the framework of character education, one of the essential competencies that educational practices should develop is the ability to recognize and acknowledge the existence of God. In the Indonesian context, students should be encouraged to strengthen their devotion to God, cultivate the ability to live harmoniously with fellow human beings and other living creatures, and contribute to making the world a place of greater prosperity and collective well-being (Jayanegara et al, 2024; Zubaedi, 2011).

Second, the value of noble character (*akhlaq*), which constitutes a fundamental pillar of Islamic Religious Education. In higher education institutions, students should be guided to develop attitudes and behaviors that reflect Islamic values. These include honesty, responsibility, tolerance, discipline, and respect for others. Practical examples include demonstrating responsibility in completing academic assignments without engaging in plagiarism, showing mutual respect during discussions despite differences of opinion, and exhibiting obedience and respect toward lecturers and educators.

Third, the value of upholding knowledge and scholarship. Islam strongly emphasizes the pursuit of knowledge as a fundamental obligation for every Muslim. In the context of higher education, Islamic Religious Education encourages students

to seek knowledge without distinguishing between religious sciences and general sciences. This pursuit should be accompanied by sincerity in overcoming challenges, a strong sense of moral responsibility, and positive motivation. The ultimate objective is to produce graduates who are intellectually competent, progressive in their thinking, ethically grounded, and capable of utilizing their knowledge for the welfare of society.

Individuals who possess a strong commitment to learning, supported by moral ethics and spirituality, will naturally demonstrate behaviors consistent with the teachings of Islamic Religious Education. They continuously strive to improve their intellectual capacities while maintaining religion as the foundation of their lives.

Fourth, the values of diversity and tolerance. These values are particularly relevant within higher education institutions, where students come from diverse religious, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds. In this regard, Islamic Religious Education teaches respect for differences as a means of fostering harmonious relationships among individuals regardless of their ethnicity, religion, race, or cultural background.

The concept of tolerance encompasses two dimensions: first, the attitude of allowing and refraining from harming individuals or groups who may be either different from or similar to oneself; and second, a positive attitude that emphasizes the importance of providing support and assistance to others and to different social groups (Baidarus & Fithri, 2024; Hamdanah et al., 2022). One way to implement this value is by emphasizing that exclusivism and excessive fanaticism are not encouraged in Islam. This principle is reflected in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Kafirun (109:6):

“For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.”

This verse illustrates that Muslims should not interfere with the religious beliefs and practices of others, even when those beliefs differ from their own. It therefore serves as an important foundation for religious tolerance that can be promoted within higher education institutions.

Fifth, the value of social concern and social responsibility. Islamic Religious Education emphasizes the importance of social concern toward fellow human beings, both in relation to individual interests and collective welfare. This value aims to cultivate students' sensitivity toward social events, challenges, and issues, thereby encouraging them to contribute actively to addressing societal problems. Social concern is not merely an individual responsibility; rather, it serves as a foundation for establishing a just, prosperous, and divinely blessed society.

One example of its implementation is mutual assistance during times of hardship. It is common to observe university students organizing fundraising initiatives to support victims of natural disasters and other humanitarian crises. Such activities foster a spirit of social awareness and solidarity among students. This principle is supported by the Qur'an, Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:2):

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression.”

In addition, the value of social concern emphasizes the cultivation of social responsibility, namely the awareness of one's obligation to contribute positively to the well-being of others. This responsibility can be demonstrated through active participation in community development, environmental stewardship, and respect for the rights and dignity of others.

### **Integration of Islamic Religious Education Values in Developing a Character-Based Generation**

Character education has become one of the most important concerns across all sectors, particularly in the field of education. This concern is closely related to the current phenomenon of moral degradation within society. Various forms of criminal activity, corruption, and violations of human rights serve as indicators that the nation is facing a moral crisis and a decline in character values (Komariah & Nihayah, 2023; Rohmah & Diana, 2023). The prevalence of these phenomena has become a source of growing concern for society.

Character education has emerged as a viable solution and alternative approach to addressing these challenges. Character education, often referred to as moral education, aims to enhance individuals' social attitudes and empathy toward others while enabling them to make ethical decisions based on their beliefs and principles of right and wrong (Moslimany, 2024; Qutni, 2018). Educational institutions, particularly higher education institutions, play a crucial role in realizing the objectives of character education. Religious education, especially Islamic Religious Education, occupies a strategic position in planning and implementing character development initiatives.

Religious education also functions as a medium for cultivating religious values, implementing humanitarian norms and ethical principles, and guiding behavior to foster the development of a holistic human personality. According to Malik Fadjar, the integration of Islamic Religious Education and character education holds significant potential for instilling noble character and moral virtues (Khairuddin et al., 2023; Noor, 2024).

One of the primary objectives of Islamic Religious Education is the cultivation of character itself. As exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad as the ultimate role model, Islamic teachings place great emphasis on the importance of noble character (*akhlak*). Essential moral values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and compassion toward fellow human beings and all living creatures are comprehensively articulated within Islamic teachings and are fundamental to the establishment of a harmonious society.

Furthermore, within the context of the national education system, the integration of Islamic Religious Education values is implemented through various approaches. One such approach involves incorporating Islamic values into a holistic curriculum. Through this integration, students are better able to understand the relevance of Islamic teachings in various aspects of life, enabling them to connect religious principles with contemporary social, educational, and professional contexts (Khozin & Umiarso, 2019; Sinaga, 2023).

he following alternatives may serve as models for integrating Islamic Religious Education values with the implementation of character education at the higher education level:

### 1. Integration within Curriculum Design and Learning Processes

Education should be capable of safeguarding students and preparing them to respond to increasingly complex life demands. It must equip learners with the competencies necessary to live in accordance with the socio-cultural norms that exist within society. Furthermore, education should produce graduates who are able to understand society comprehensively, including the various factors that may contribute to success or lead to failure in life (Tolchah & Arfan, 2019).

As one of the fundamental components of educational programs and a key determinant of educational quality, the curriculum must be able to address these societal challenges (Noor, 2024). A well-designed and appropriate curriculum plays a crucial role in achieving the objectives of educational institutions (Khoiruddin, 2019). The success of education can ultimately be assessed through the quality of its graduates and the extent to which learning outcomes are effectively integrated into their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Consequently, students become individuals who contribute to shaping the future of the nation (Limbong et al, 2022; Manik, 2022).

The presentation of curriculum content through learning design and the selection of subject matter significantly influences the development of students' ways of thinking. To ensure effective implementation, curriculum content must be supported by appropriate pedagogical approaches and implementation strategies (Komariah & Nihayah, 2023). Curriculum implementation should also be responsive to various societal developments, as changes within society inevitably influence educational institutions and necessitate continuous curriculum development and adaptation (Aryani & Yuliarti, 2023; Rudiyanto & Kasanova, 2023).

Within the educational system, the curriculum plays a central role as the primary guideline for teaching and learning activities at all levels of education (Haningsih, 2022; Khairuddin et al., 2023). In higher education institutions, Islamic Religious Education has been established as a compulsory subject. This policy reflects a commitment to instilling Islamic values that can serve as a moral and spiritual foundation for students in facing the challenges of globalization.

The values of Islamic Religious Education should not be taught merely as theoretical concepts but should also be integrated with other academic disciplines. The concept of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* (a mercy to all creation) demonstrates that Islam upholds universal, humanistic, dynamic, and contextual values. This principle serves as evidence that Islamic teachings can be integrated harmoniously with various branches of knowledge while maintaining balance and avoiding exclusivity or partiality (Munawir et al., 2024).

The integration of these values contributes to the development of individuals who are socially responsible, committed to fostering harmony within diverse communities, and capable of reducing negative behaviors among youth. At the same time, it strengthens character education, which is inherently embedded within the values and teachings of Islamic Religious Education.

Curriculum integration is implemented as an effort and innovation to establish a meaningful correlation between religious and secular knowledge among students. Consequently, the content embedded within the curriculum influences not only students' academic intelligence but also their character development (Aspiyah, 2024; Zubaedi, 2011). According to Ahmad Tafsir, the process of integrating religious education or character education into learning activities can be carried out through several approaches, namely: the integration of subject matter, the integration of learning processes, the integration of teaching materials, and the integration of instructional media (Hamzah et al, 2025). The curriculum is also regarded as one of the internal factors that influence the implementation of educational programs, alongside other internal factors such as educational facilities, infrastructure, teacher discipline, and related elements (Komariah & Nihayah, 2023; Moslimany et al., 2024).

Curriculum integration provides opportunities for students to understand various issues and challenges from multiple perspectives (Limbong et al., 2022; Qutni, 2018). Several models of curriculum integration can be applied in higher education institutions. The first is integration within a single discipline, the second is integration across several disciplines, and the third is mixed integration, which combines three or more disciplines within an educational institution (Khozin & Umiarso, 2019).

The instructional approach used in Islamic Religious Education is also expected to adopt more contemporary and innovative methods. Discussions on current social phenomena, including issues that are widely discussed on social media or frequently encountered in everyday life, can serve as effective teaching strategies. Value-based projects grounded in Islamic teachings represent another promising approach, as they encourage students to become more active, reflective, and critical in understanding their religion. Through the integration of Islamic values across various dimensions of teaching and learning, students are expected to develop a comprehensive understanding that encompasses cognitive competence while simultaneously fostering moral integrity and spiritual maturity (Hamzah, 2013; Hamzah et al, 2025).

In line with contemporary developments and a commitment to effective learning outcomes, all components associated with the teaching process should be continuously adapted to support the development of desired character traits. The more innovative the instructional methods employed, the greater the potential to enhance students' learning motivation and improve the achievement of educational objectives (Jayanegara et al., 2024).

## 2. Integration within Campus Culture

In general, campus culture refers to the collective patterns of behavior, traditions, values, norms, interactions, and social practices that develop and are maintained within the higher education environment. Campus culture also encompasses the dynamic development of the campus environment and the surrounding communities that interact with and influence academic life (Aisyah et al., 2022; Rosyida et al, 2023). Within the context of campus culture, the integration of Islamic Religious Education values can be implemented through the cultivation of daily habits and routines. Examples include greeting others with Islamic salutations (*salam*), dressing modestly in accordance with Islamic principles, and regularly reciting prayers before engaging in academic or other daily activities. These practices contribute to the internalization of Islamic values and help foster a campus environment that supports character development and moral awareness among students.

The availability of religious facilities, such as campus mosques or prayer rooms (*musholla*) in various campus buildings, can enhance students' interest in strengthening their religiosity and worship practices (Aryani & Yuliarti, 2023). Campus mosques, for example, can serve as important educational facilities that, when utilized optimally, contribute to the development of highly competent individuals with strong character and diverse capabilities (Rahayu & Chusniatun, 2025). Furthermore, campus mosques are often regarded as laboratories for character education, providing opportunities to cultivate the concept of *spiritual-centered leadership*. Through this approach, emphasis is placed on the importance of character values and spiritual development among university students (Khoirurrijal, 2020).

Academics, lecturers, and even university staff have a responsibility to provide guidance and education regarding the values of Islamic Religious Education that should be practiced within the academic environment. Beyond merely conveying these values through instruction, they are also expected to demonstrate them through exemplary conduct, thereby serving as positive role models for students. Exemplary behavior (*uswah hasanah*) is considered one of the most effective interactive methods and strategies that can be directly observed and emulated by students (Aryani & Yuliarti, 2023; Baidarus & Fithri, 2024). Through the positive examples demonstrated by lecturers and other members of the academic community, students are more likely to adopt and internalize similar behaviors. This tendency arises from students' perceptions of academics as role models whose attitudes, values, and conduct deserve to be imitated (Setiowati et al, 2023).

## 3. Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations

The process of internalizing the values of Islamic Religious Education within educational institutions, particularly higher education institutions, is of great importance. Through this process, students are expected to understand,

practice, and implement Islamic teachings and values in their daily lives, thereby developing an Islamic character that is aligned with the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Rahayu & Chusniatun, 2025). The cultivation of such values requires continuous habituation and exemplary guidance, as changes in attitudes and behavior cannot occur instantly but instead require a gradual and sustained process.

Extracurricular activities constitute an important component of structured and planned self-development programs that are designed to meet students' individual needs (Tolchah & Arfan, 2019). Essentially, extracurricular activities can serve as an effective means of integrating Islamic Religious Education values by incorporating Islamic principles and ethical teachings into various student programs and activities (Rosyida et al, 2023).

Although such activities may not always be directly related to religious practices or Islamic studies, their objectives and implementation can still be aligned with and supportive of Islamic values (Fiqriani et al, 2025). This approach reflects the relevance and applicability of Islamic values across all aspects of campus life and student engagement, demonstrating that Islamic principles can serve as a foundation for a wide range of educational, social, cultural, and organizational activities conducted within higher education institutions (Baidarus & Fithri, 2024; Munawir et al., 2024).

There are numerous student organizations within university environments that can serve as effective platforms and instruments for promoting the values of Islamic Religious Education in higher education institutions. Although not all of these organizations operate within an explicitly Islamic framework, they often embody principles and values that are consistent with Islamic teachings and can therefore serve as a foundation for the programs and activities they develop. The integration of Islamic values through student organizations can have a significant impact on organizational performance, ethical conduct, social responsibility, goal attainment, and the long-term sustainability of the institution itself. By embedding Islamic principles into organizational activities and leadership practices, universities can foster a culture of integrity, accountability, and mutual respect, thereby contributing to the overall development of students' character and the strengthening of the campus community (Khoiruddin, 2019; Munawir et al., 2024).

#### **4. Islamic-Based Community Service**

Islamic-based community service represents the direct involvement of individuals and institutions in serving and empowering society based on Islamic values and teachings. Such community service can be viewed as a manifestation of Islamic principles concerning the importance of *amal salih* (righteous deeds), *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), and social responsibility toward fellow human beings. It also serves as a form of *amal jariyah* (continuous charitable deeds), whose benefits extend beyond the immediate implementation of the

activity. According to Suryana, there are three key factors that contribute positively to national development. These include: first, the improvement of educational quality; second, the production of research with broad societal impact; and third, community service as a manifestation of social concern and responsibility (Muna, 2022).

Several forms of community service programs are commonly implemented within higher education institutions. The first is the *Voucher Program (VUCER)*, which focuses on the application of research outcomes, particularly in the fields of technology, management, and marketing. The second is the *Multi-Year Voucher Program (VMT)*, which involves the implementation and development of research projects conducted over a three-year period. The third is the *Business Service and Industry Unit Program*, which supports the development of a knowledge-based economy. The fourth is *Community Potential and Empowerment Synergy (SIBERMAS)*, a program designed to address various social problems and challenges faced by communities (Haryati et al., 2024).

Among these programs, SIBERMAS provides significant opportunities for incorporating Islamic values because it is directly related to the development of individuals, families, and communities. Community service activities are widely regarded as practical expressions of social concern and civic responsibility. Various forms of Islamic-based community service can be implemented, including religious outreach and education programs, social and health services, economic empowerment initiatives through Islamic entrepreneurship training, environmental awareness campaigns, and other activities that promote social welfare. Such programs contribute to the development of Muslim individuals who are socially responsible, compassionate, and committed to serving their communities.

Community service activities are inherently associated with generating meaningful benefits for society, particularly for local communities. Therefore, the relationship between community service and the values of Islamic Religious Education is particularly strong. For example, students participating in the *Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN)* program can engage in community-based da'wah activities tailored to local needs, support the development of Islamic economic practices, or provide guidance aimed at strengthening faith through various religious programs and activities (Haryati et al., 2024).

Furthermore, KKN programs have the potential to create tangible impacts on society through the implementation of community-oriented projects. These may include providing instruction in proper Qur'anic recitation according to the rules of *tajwid*, organizing religious study circles (*pengajian*), and conducting educational activities that promote knowledge development and community empowerment (Putri, 2021).

### 5. Utilizing Emerging Technologies and Digital Media

In the contemporary era, technology and digitalization have become essential tools that facilitate various aspects of human life. Technology has even evolved into a primary necessity that influences nearly every dimension of society, including individual behavior and character development (Imawan et al, 2023). The rapid advancement of technology and information has enabled the education sector to move toward greater progress, representing a significant form of innovation in teaching and learning processes (Khoriyah & Muhid, 2022).

Technology serves as an important medium for achieving the learning outcomes envisioned in educational goals and missions. Educators, in particular, are expected to continuously innovate and adapt to the changing demands of globalization. Likewise, the use of digital media for disseminating and teaching Islamic values has become increasingly important. Given the ongoing expansion of globalization, technology and digital media play a crucial role in contemporary education. The implementation of digital-based learning can take various forms, including the use of YouTube, internet-based resources, artificial intelligence (AI), and other digital platforms to support the teaching and promotion of Islamic values (Sinaga, 2023).

The utilization of technology and digital media demonstrates that religious knowledge and secular knowledge can be integrated harmoniously. Educational approaches should therefore consider the realities of technology-driven and digitalized learning environments while remaining grounded in strong moral and ethical values. Such an approach enables students to face the challenges of an increasingly complex digital era without compromising their moral integrity (Qowim et al., 2024).

Islam has never been detached from intellectual progress; rather, it remains balanced and compatible with the continuous advancement of scientific knowledge and technological development (Manik, 2022). Therefore, the integration of Islamic Religious Education values with technological innovation provides a strategic framework for character development in higher education institutions. Figure 1 presents a conceptual model for integrating Islamic Religious Education values with character education in higher education institutions based on the findings of the present literature review

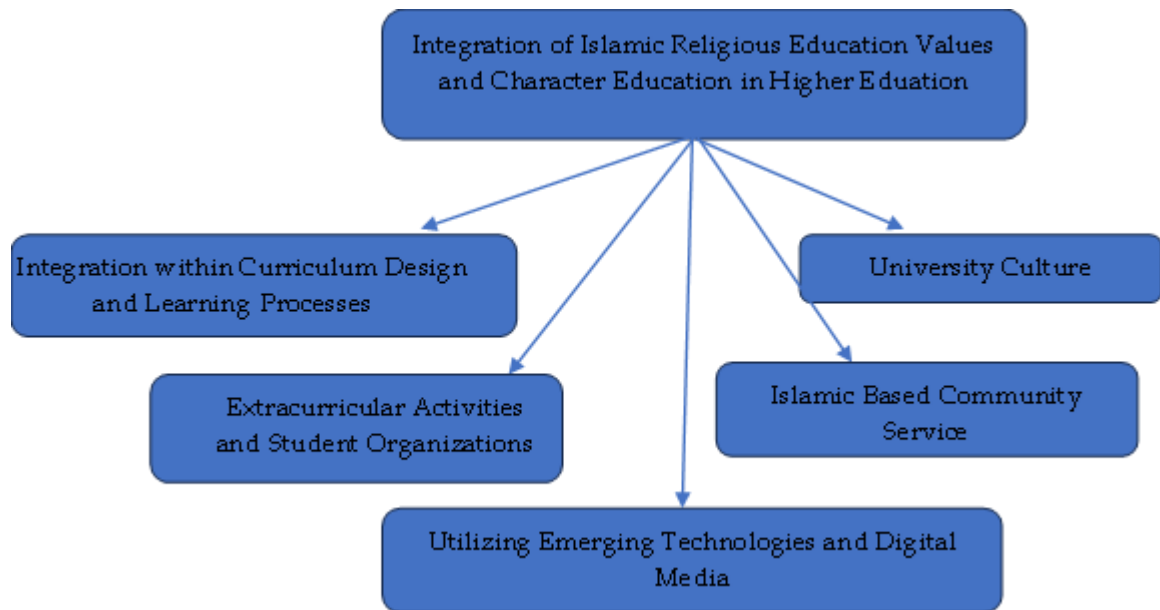


Figure 1. Conceptual model for integrating Islamic Religious Education values with character education

Overall, the alternatives discussed above may be regarded as contextual approaches or methods for integrating the values of Islamic Religious Education within higher education institutions to foster a generation characterized by strong moral values and noble character. In the Islamic perspective, education is not merely a means of acquiring intellectual knowledge; it is also a process of character formation that enables individuals to collectively embody Islamic values and fulfill their role as *khalifah* (stewards) of Allah on earth (Raudlotul & Mohd, 2013).

This contextual approach seeks to connect Islamic values with the realities and experiences encountered in everyday life, including social, cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions. Islamic teachings are therefore not conveyed solely in a normative manner; rather, emphasis is placed on understanding how these values remain relevant and can be effectively applied in real-life contexts. Such an approach is closely aligned with the Islamic concept of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* (a mercy to all creation).

A contextual approach plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between theoretical understanding of Islamic teachings and their practical application in daily life. Islam is not merely a dogmatic system of beliefs; it possesses the capacity to serve as a transformative force in shaping individuals into complete and well-rounded human beings, a concept referred to in Islam as *insan al-kamil* (the perfected human being).

Therefore, the integration of Islamic Religious Education values is essential for developing a generation characterized by strong moral character and noble conduct. Such integration can be achieved through various approaches and dimensions, encompassing both formal and informal settings as well as academic and non-academic activities. To realize this objective, collaboration and shared responsibility among multiple stakeholders—including parents, educators, surrounding communities, and society at large—are indispensable.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study on the processes and practices of integrating Islamic Religious Education in higher education institutions as a strategy for character development, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education plays a crucial role in actualizing character education in Indonesia, particularly at the university level. The values embedded within Islamic Religious Education encompass all dimensions of life that are essential for individual development and well-being. Therefore, the integration of Islamic Religious Education values is fundamental to fostering a generation characterized by strong moral principles and noble character. Such integration can be implemented through various approaches and dimensions, including both formal and informal settings as well as academic and non-academic activities. These approaches include curriculum development, learning and teaching practices, the cultivation of campus culture, extracurricular activities, Islamic-based community service programs, and the utilization of technology and digital media.

The successful implementation of these initiatives requires shared responsibility and collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including parents, educators, educational institutions, surrounding communities, and society at large. Higher education institutions should serve as catalysts for producing future generations who possess strong character, global competitiveness, and professional competence while remaining firmly grounded in the moral and spiritual values of Islam. Through the graduates they produce, universities can contribute significantly to the development of a society that is both intellectually advanced and ethically responsible.

## Daftar Pustaka

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