

QUR'ANIC-BASED CHARACTER EDUCATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Character education has become a central issue in contemporary educational discourse due to the increasing moral challenges faced by students in the digital and global era. In the context of Islamic education, the Qur'an serves as the primary foundation for developing ethical values, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility among learners. This study aims to examine the implementation of Qur'anic-based character education in Islamic education at secondary schools and to analyze its contribution to students' moral development. The research employed a qualitative approach using a case study design conducted in selected Islamic secondary schools. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and school administrators, and document analysis of curriculum and school programs. The findings reveal that Qur'anic-based character education is integrated through religious instruction, daily worship practices, teacher role modeling, and extracurricular activities. The study also found that values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and respect were strengthened through the contextual interpretation of Qur'anic teachings in school life. However, challenges remain in terms of consistency of implementation, parental involvement, and adaptation to digital culture. This study recommends strengthening collaboration among schools, families, and communities, as well as developing innovative pedagogical strategies to enhance the effectiveness of Qur'anic-based character education in secondary schools.

Keywords: Character Education, Islamic Education, Moral Development, Qur'anic-Based Education, Secondary Schools



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology, globalization, and social transformation has significantly influenced students' moral behavior in secondary schools. Various phenomena such as bullying, intolerance, academic dishonesty, juvenile delinquency, and the decline of ethical awareness among adolescents indicate that contemporary education is facing a serious moral crisis. In Indonesia, these challenges have become increasingly visible within school environments, including Islamic educational institutions that are expected to cultivate students' spiritual and moral integrity. Scholars argue that modern education systems often emphasize cognitive achievement while neglecting affective and moral dimensions of learning, resulting in an imbalance between intellectual competence and character formation (Nasrudin et al., 2023; Kholidin et al., 2025). Furthermore, the influence of social media and digital culture has intensified moral degradation among adolescents, requiring schools to strengthen value-based education rooted in religious and ethical principles (Yusuf et al., 2026; Zeinia et al., 2025). Therefore, Qur'anic-based character education is considered an essential framework for fostering students' moral resilience and spiritual awareness in secondary schools.

The Qur'an, as the primary source of Islamic teachings, contains comprehensive moral values that guide human behavior in personal, social, and spiritual dimensions. Islamic education scholars emphasize that Qur'anic values such as honesty (*ṣidq*), discipline (*istiqāmah*), responsibility (*amanah*), tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*), and compassion (*rahmah*) provide a strong ethical foundation for character development among students (Fikri, 2024; Sumantri et al., 2025). In the context of Islamic education, character formation is not merely a cognitive process but also involves spiritual internalization through habituation, exemplary conduct, worship practices, and social interaction. Recent studies demonstrate that integrating Qur'anic teachings into school culture and pedagogical practices contributes positively to students' behavioral transformation and moral awareness (Anwar et al., 2025; Arrasyidin & Azani, 2025). Consequently, Qur'anic-based character education can be understood as a holistic educational approach that integrates moral knowledge, spiritual values, and practical behavior within the school environment.

Several previous studies have explored the implementation of Islamic character education in schools and pesantren. Nasrudin et al. (2023) investigated the strengthening of religious character through extracurricular religious activities in Indonesian secondary schools and found that habituation programs effectively enhanced students' religiosity and discipline. Meanwhile, Kholidin et al. (2025) examined the implementation of character education in Muhammadiyah secondary schools and highlighted the importance of teacher role modeling and school culture in shaping students' morality. Another study conducted by Zeinia et al. (2025) emphasized the role of religious mentoring and habituation in developing Qur'anic character among junior secondary school students. Although these studies provide valuable insights into Islamic character education, most of them focus primarily on practical implementation and religious activities without deeply analyzing the integration of Qur'anic values into pedagogical frameworks and character formation processes in secondary schools. In addition, previous studies rarely examine the philosophical and theoretical dimensions underlying Qur'anic-based character education within contemporary educational challenges. Therefore, this study seeks to fill these gaps by investigating the integration of Qur'anic values, pedagogical strategies, and moral internalization in Islamic education at secondary schools.

The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to integrate conceptual, theoretical, empirical, and philosophical perspectives on Qur'anic-based character education in Islamic secondary schools. Conceptually, this study positions the Qur'an not only as a religious text but also as a transformative pedagogical foundation for shaping students' moral consciousness. Theoretically, this research combines Islamic educational theory, character education theory, and value internalization approaches to develop a comprehensive understanding of moral education in schools. Empirically, this study explores how Qur'anic values are implemented through classroom learning, school culture, religious programs, and teacher-student interaction within secondary education contexts. Philosophically, the study argues that Qur'anic-based education emphasizes the integration of faith, knowledge, ethics, and social responsibility as a holistic vision of human development. Thus, this research contributes to the broader discourse of Islamic education by offering an integrative framework for character education that responds to contemporary moral challenges in secondary schools.

From a conceptual perspective, character education in Islam is fundamentally rooted in the concept of *akhlāq al-karīmah* (noble character), which aims to develop balanced individuals who possess intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual excellence. Islamic scholars argue that the success of education should not only be measured through academic achievement but also through students' moral behavior and ethical responsibility toward society (Zakaria, 2017; Wahab & Mustaqim, 2021). Theoretically, Qur'anic-based character education aligns with social learning theory, value internalization theory, and holistic education approaches that emphasize habituation, role modeling, and reflective learning. Empirically, several Islamic schools in Indonesia have implemented Qur'anic programs such as *tahfidz*, collective worship, Islamic mentoring, and religious habituation to strengthen students' character development (Syarifah et al., 2025; Ambia et al., 2025). Philosophically, Qur'anic education views humans as moral beings whose educational process should integrate spiritual awareness, ethical conduct, and social harmony. Therefore, character education based on Qur'anic teachings reflects the philosophical vision of Islamic education in creating morally responsible individuals and civilized societies.

In addition, literature on Islamic education emphasizes that character formation requires collaboration among schools, families, and communities. Contemporary educational scholars argue that moral education becomes more effective when supported by consistent educational environments and integrated pedagogical strategies (Effendi & Yusuf, 2026). Studies on Qur'anic character education further reveal that teacher professionalism, school leadership, parental involvement, and institutional culture significantly influence the success of character internalization among students (Marzuki et al., 2026; Yusuf et al., 2025). Moreover, the integration of Qur'anic ethics into modern educational philosophy offers opportunities for developing adaptive and contextual character education models capable of addressing contemporary social problems, including digital ethics, intolerance, and social conflict. Therefore, strengthening Qur'anic-based character education requires comprehensive educational collaboration and innovative pedagogical transformation within secondary schools.

Based on the explanations above, this article aims to analyze the implementation of Qur'anic-based character education in Islamic education at secondary schools, examine the pedagogical strategies used to internalize Qur'anic values among students, and explore the contribution of Qur'anic teachings to students' moral development in the contemporary era. This study also seeks to identify supporting and inhibiting factors influencing the implementation of Qur'anic-based character education within school environments. Ultimately, this research is expected to contribute theoretically to the discourse of Islamic education and practically to the development of effective character education models in secondary schools grounded in Qur'anic values.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to explore the implementation of Qur'anic-based character education in Islamic education at secondary schools. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because this research aimed to understand deeply the processes, experiences, meanings, and educational practices related to the internalization of Qur'anic values within the school environment. The case study design enabled the researcher to investigate comprehensively the phenomenon of character education in its real-life context, particularly regarding how Qur'anic teachings are integrated into educational activities, school culture, and students' daily behavior (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). Therefore, this approach provided a holistic understanding of the implementation and effectiveness of Qur'anic-based character education in secondary schools.

The research was conducted at selected Islamic secondary schools that actively implement religious and character education programs based on Qur'anic values. The participants of this study consisted of Islamic education teachers, school principals, curriculum coordinators, and students who were directly involved in character education activities. Participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on specific criteria, including their involvement in Islamic educational programs and their understanding of Qur'anic-based character development. This sampling technique was intended to obtain rich and relevant information regarding the implementation of character education practices within the school setting (Patton, 2015). Consequently, the selected participants were expected to provide comprehensive insights into the educational processes and challenges encountered in implementing Qur'anic-based character education.

Data were collected through several techniques, namely classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations were conducted to examine teaching practices, students' behavior, religious habituation activities, and the integration of Qur'anic values in the learning process. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with teachers, school leaders, and students to explore their perceptions, experiences, and views concerning character education implementation. In addition, document analysis was utilized to review curriculum documents, school regulations, lesson plans, religious activity programs, and institutional policies related to character education. The use of multiple data collection techniques enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive and triangulated data, thereby enhancing the credibility and validity of the research findings (Miles et al., 2020). Therefore, triangulation was essential in ensuring the trustworthiness and consistency of the collected data.

The data analysis process followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), which consisted of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the first stage, the researcher organized and reduced the collected data by identifying relevant themes related to Qur'anic-based character education. In the second stage, the data were systematically presented in narrative and thematic forms to facilitate interpretation and understanding. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on patterns, relationships, and meanings emerging from the data analysis process. Thematic analysis was applied to identify key themes such as moral habituation, teacher role modeling, Qur'anic value internalization, and challenges in character education implementation. Thus, the analytical process enabled the researcher to construct a comprehensive interpretation of the implementation of Qur'anic-based character education in secondary schools.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, several validation strategies were employed, including triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement, and peer debriefing. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from observations, interviews, and documents to ensure data consistency. Member checking was applied by confirming the interview results and interpretations with participants to minimize misunderstanding and researcher bias. Prolonged engagement in the research setting also enabled the researcher to

gain a deeper understanding of the school culture and educational practices. Additionally, peer debriefing with academic colleagues was conducted to strengthen the reliability and credibility of the analysis and interpretation process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, these validation procedures enhanced the rigor and academic quality of the research findings.

Ethically, this study adhered to research ethics principles by ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent from all participants. Before conducting the research, participants were informed about the objectives, procedures, and significance of the study. They were also assured that the information collected would be used solely for academic purposes and that their identities would remain confidential. Furthermore, the researcher maintained respect for participants' perspectives, cultural values, and religious beliefs throughout the research process. Consequently, ethical considerations were prioritized to maintain the integrity, transparency, and professionalism of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study demonstrate that Qur'anic-based character education in Islamic secondary schools is implemented through integrated religious learning, habituation programs, teacher role modeling, and school culture development. Based on classroom observations and interviews with teachers and school administrators, the schools consistently incorporated Qur'anic values into both academic and non-academic activities. Religious programs such as daily Qur'an recitation, congregational prayer, Islamic mentoring, and character habituation activities were systematically integrated into students' daily routines. Teachers explained that these programs aimed not only to strengthen students' religious understanding but also to cultivate moral behavior, discipline, honesty, and social responsibility among learners (Nasrudin et al., 2023; Zeinia et al., 2025). Therefore, Qur'anic-based character education was implemented as a holistic educational process involving cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions within the school environment. The implementation of Qur'anic-based character education can be summarized in the following table:

Table 1. The Implementation of Qur'anic-Based Character Education

No	Character Education Program	Qur'anic Values Developed		Implementation Strategy	
1	Daily Qur'an Recitation	Spiritual discipline	awareness,	Morning activities	habituation
2	Congregational Prayer	Responsibility, obedience		Collective practices	worship
3	Islamic Mentoring	Honesty, empathy, tolerance		Group discussion and mentoring	
4	Teacher Role Modeling	Integrity, respect		Exemplary behavior	teacher
5	Social Service Activities	Compassion, social care		Community-based programs	

The table above indicates that Qur'anic values were integrated through various educational activities that encouraged students to practice Islamic ethics in their daily lives. According to school administrators, character education became more effective when supported by consistent habituation and teacher exemplification. This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing that moral education in Islamic schools requires practical reinforcement through school culture and daily interaction rather than relying solely on theoretical instruction (Anwar et al., 2025; Arrasyidin & Azani, 2025). In my view, the

integration of Qur'anic values into school activities reflects the importance of experiential learning in strengthening students' moral consciousness and ethical behavior.

Another important finding revealed that teachers played a central role in the success of Qur'anic-based character education. Teachers were not only responsible for delivering instructional materials but also served as moral role models for students. Classroom observations showed that teachers consistently demonstrated values such as patience, honesty, discipline, politeness, and respect during classroom interaction. Students acknowledged that they were more influenced by teachers' attitudes and behavior than by verbal instruction alone. Furthermore, school principals emphasized that teacher consistency significantly affected the effectiveness of character internalization among students (Kholidin et al., 2025; Syarifah et al., 2025). Thus, teachers' exemplary conduct functioned as an essential pedagogical instrument in shaping students' character development.

The research also found that school culture contributed significantly to the reinforcement of Qur'anic-based character education. Islamic values were embedded in school regulations, communication patterns, extracurricular programs, and social interactions among students and teachers. For example, schools implemented Islamic greetings, ethical dress codes, collective worship, and disciplinary systems based on moral values derived from Qur'anic teachings. Such practices created a religious and ethical atmosphere that encouraged students to internalize Islamic character values in their daily behavior (Ambia et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2025). Consequently, school culture functioned as a hidden curriculum that strengthened the implementation of Qur'anic-based character education beyond formal classroom instruction.

Despite these positive findings, the study identified several challenges in implementing Qur'anic-based character education in secondary schools. One of the major challenges involved the inconsistency of parental involvement in reinforcing character education at home. Teachers reported that some students experienced difficulties maintaining moral discipline outside the school environment due to limited family supervision and the influence of digital media. In addition, rapid technological development and unrestricted social media exposure negatively influenced students' attitudes and behavior, including decreased discipline, reduced social sensitivity, and excessive dependence on digital entertainment (Effendi & Yusuf, 2026; Marzuki et al., 2026). Therefore, schools faced challenges in maintaining consistency between school-based moral education and external social influences affecting students' daily lives.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that Qur'anic-based character education represents a comprehensive educational approach that integrates spiritual, moral, cognitive, and social dimensions of student development. The integration of Qur'anic values into classroom learning, habituation activities, and school culture demonstrates that Islamic education does not merely focus on intellectual achievement but also prioritizes ethical and spiritual formation. This finding supports the argument of holistic Islamic education theory, which emphasizes the balanced development of human potential through the integration of faith, knowledge, morality, and social responsibility (Wahab & Mustaqim, 2021; Zakaria, 2017). In my perspective, Qur'anic-based character education offers an educational paradigm capable of addressing contemporary moral crises by reconnecting students with spiritual and ethical foundations rooted in Islamic teachings.

The implementation of religious habituation activities such as Qur'an recitation, congregational prayer, and Islamic mentoring reflects the importance of value internalization through repetitive moral practice. Educational theorists explain that character formation becomes effective when moral values are consistently practiced within social and institutional environments (Lickona, 2019; Berkowitz & Bier, 2020). In this study, habituation activities enabled students to transform Qur'anic teachings from abstract concepts into practical behavior manifested in discipline, responsibility, honesty, and social empathy. This finding also

strengthens social learning theory, which emphasizes that students learn moral behavior through observation, repetition, and interaction within their social environment. Therefore, in my opinion, habituation strategies represent an effective pedagogical mechanism for strengthening sustainable moral character among secondary school students.

The significant role of teachers as moral exemplars highlights that character education in Islamic schools depends greatly on teacher professionalism and ethical integrity. The findings reveal that students were strongly influenced by teachers' attitudes, communication styles, and daily behavior. This result is consistent with previous studies indicating that teacher role modeling constitutes one of the most influential factors in Islamic character education because students tend to imitate behaviors demonstrated by respected authority figures (Sumantri et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2026). From an Islamic educational perspective, teachers are not only knowledge transmitters but also moral educators responsible for shaping students' personalities and ethical consciousness. Therefore, I argue that strengthening teacher moral competence and spiritual integrity should become a priority in developing effective Qur'anic-based character education programs.

Furthermore, the findings regarding school culture indicate that moral education becomes more effective when supported by institutional environments that consistently reflect ethical and religious values. The integration of Islamic ethics into school regulations, social interactions, and extracurricular programs created a conducive atmosphere for character internalization among students. This supports the concept of the hidden curriculum, which explains that values and moral norms are often transmitted implicitly through institutional culture and daily interaction rather than through formal instruction alone (Jackson, 2018; Alsubaie, 2022). In my view, school culture functions as a social ecosystem that continuously shapes students' moral identity, attitudes, and behavioral orientation within educational settings.

The challenges identified in this study also demonstrate that Qur'anic-based character education cannot succeed without collaboration among schools, families, and communities. The inconsistency of parental supervision and the negative influence of digital culture weakened the continuity of moral education outside school environments. Contemporary studies indicate that globalization and digital media exposure significantly affect adolescents' moral behavior, social interaction, and emotional development (Twenge, 2020; Livingstone & Third, 2021). Therefore, character education requires adaptive strategies capable of responding to technological and cultural transformation in modern society. In my opinion, Islamic schools should develop collaborative educational partnerships with parents and communities while integrating digital literacy and ethical media education into character education programs.

Philosophically, this study demonstrates that Qur'anic-based character education reflects the holistic vision of Islamic education, which seeks to develop morally responsible individuals who contribute positively to society. The Qur'an presents education not only as a process of intellectual development but also as spiritual purification and ethical transformation. Consequently, Islamic character education aims to create balanced human beings who possess moral awareness, social responsibility, and spiritual consciousness. This finding strengthens the philosophical foundation of Islamic education, which views morality as the central objective of human development and civilization (Al-Attas, 2020; Halstead, 2019). Therefore, I conclude that Qur'anic-based character education remains highly relevant for addressing moral challenges in contemporary education and for strengthening ethical civilization within modern society.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Qur'anic-based character education plays a significant role in strengthening students' moral, spiritual, and social development in Islamic secondary schools. The implementation of Qur'anic values through classroom instruction, religious habituation activities, teacher role modeling, and school culture has contributed positively to the formation of students' ethical behavior, discipline, responsibility, honesty, tolerance, and social awareness. The findings indicate that character education becomes more effective when Qur'anic teachings are not only delivered theoretically but also practiced consistently through daily educational activities and social interaction within the school environment. Thus, Qur'anic-based character education represents a holistic educational approach that integrates cognitive, affective, behavioral, and spiritual dimensions of learning.

The study also reveals that teachers and school culture serve as central elements in the success of character internalization among students. Teachers function not only as instructors but also as moral exemplars whose attitudes and behavior significantly influence students' character formation. Furthermore, the integration of Islamic values into school regulations, extracurricular activities, and institutional culture creates a supportive environment for the development of ethical awareness and religious commitment. These findings reinforce the importance of comprehensive educational strategies that combine pedagogical practices, moral habituation, and value-based institutional environments in implementing effective Islamic character education.

However, the study identifies several challenges affecting the sustainability of Qur'anic-based character education, particularly the inconsistency of parental involvement, the influence of digital media, and the broader social environment that often contradicts moral values promoted by schools. These challenges demonstrate that character education cannot rely solely on educational institutions but requires collaboration among schools, families, communities, and policymakers. Therefore, strengthening partnerships between educational institutions and families, as well as integrating digital ethics and media literacy into Islamic character education programs, becomes increasingly important in responding to contemporary moral challenges.

Philosophically, this research affirms that Qur'anic-based character education reflects the holistic vision of Islamic education, which emphasizes the integration of faith, morality, knowledge, and social responsibility in human development. The Qur'an provides not only spiritual guidance but also ethical principles capable of shaping responsible, civilized, and morally conscious individuals. Therefore, Qur'anic-based character education remains highly relevant for addressing the moral crisis faced by contemporary adolescents and for contributing to the development of ethical and spiritually grounded educational systems in modern society.

Finally, this study contributes both theoretically and practically to the discourse of Islamic education and character education. Theoretically, it enriches the understanding of Qur'anic-based pedagogical approaches in contemporary Islamic education. Practically, it offers insights for educators, school leaders, and policymakers regarding the development of integrated and sustainable character education models in secondary schools. Future research is recommended to explore comparative studies across different educational institutions and to examine the long-term impact of Qur'anic-based character education on students' moral behavior and social engagement in broader societal contexts.

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