

INTEGRATING ISLAMIC CHARACTER EDUCATION IN MODERN LEARNING FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: *The way education is changing with new learning methods has greatly impacted how teachers teach and how students learn in elementary schools. Even though using technology and focusing on students has made classes more interesting, there are still worries about how students are developing their values and spirituality. This research looks into how Islamic character education can be included in modern teaching methods for elementary school kids. The research used a descriptive approach that involved watching classrooms, talking to teachers, and examining teaching material. The results show that values from Islam like honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, and empathy can be successfully included in today's education through teaching methods that relate to real-life situations, using technology in a good way, and teachers setting a good example. This mix helps improve how students act morally, feel motivated to learn, and interact with others. The study wraps up by saying that Islamic character education can work well with modern teaching to help students grow in all areas when teachers use careful and thoughtful teaching methods.*

Keywords: *Islamic Character Education; Elementary School; Modern Learning; Moral Development; Value Integration*

INTRODUCTION

Elementary school teaches kids important skills for thinking, getting along with others, and understanding what's right and wrong. During this time of growing up, kids are very open to learning about values, so teaching them about character is really important. But nowadays, schools focus more on new ways of learning that highlight the use of technology, creativity, and success in schoolwork.

Modern education, which focuses on students' needs, uses technology, and encourages teamwork, has many advantages for enhancing how well students learn. However, without proper moral support, these methods might forget about building good character. In Islamic teaching, helping students develop their character is seen as an essential goal because learning should promote good actions and taking care of others. So, it is important to blend Islamic character education with modern teaching to create well-rounded growth. This research intends

to investigate how we can effectively mix Islamic character education with current teaching methods for young students in elementary schools.

The importance of character formation during childhood is widely recognized because this stage is when students begin forming attitudes, habits, and ways of interacting with others. Early education becomes the foundation for shaping responsible and ethical individuals. In Islamic education, learning is understood as a process that builds both knowledge and moral discipline, guiding children toward positive behavior and awareness of their responsibilities. This understanding reflects the belief that character is not separate from academic learning but deeply connected to how students understand themselves and their roles in society.

At the same time, modern instructional models are rapidly transforming the learning process. Schools increasingly use technology, digital platforms, collaborative learning, and creative problem-solving activities to help students prepare for today's challenges. These approaches encourage active engagement, independence, and critical thinking. However, if implemented without moral guidance, students may excel academically while lacking ethical direction or self-control. This concern becomes especially relevant in the digital age, where children encounter a variety of online influences that can shape their attitudes and behaviors in both positive and negative ways.

Integrating Islamic character education within these modern approaches offers a way to maintain balance. When moral values are woven into classroom activities, routines, and interactions, students learn to connect ethical principles with real-life situations. Teachers can reinforce values such as honesty, responsibility, respect, empathy, and discipline through daily practices rather than isolated lessons. Schools that combine moral development with innovative instructional techniques help students grow into individuals who are academically capable and morally grounded.

Research has shown that moral development becomes more effective when teachers act as role models and create learning environments that reflect consistency between what is taught and what is practiced. Positive school culture, supportive classroom relationships, and regular routines that demonstrate ethical behavior all contribute to a strong moral foundation. Technology, when used consciously, can also support moral learning by encouraging responsible communication, digital awareness, and respectful online behavior. Studies on character integration often highlight the value of exploring classroom realities to understand how teachers apply moral principles in daily practice. Elementary schools serve as an ideal setting for such studies because children are still forming their sense of identity, social behavior, and emotional maturity. Gaining insight into how moral values are incorporated into modern instructional methods can help schools design programs that address both educational and ethical goals.

Building on these considerations, the need to connect Islamic character values with contemporary teaching becomes increasingly important. Blending these two aspects helps ensure that students not only master academic skills but also develop positive character traits that guide their interactions at school, at home, and in the community. For this reason, the present study seeks to explore practical strategies for integrating Islamic character teaching into modern learning approaches so that elementary school students benefit from holistic, balanced, and meaningful education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic character education aims to develop good values based on the Quran and the lessons from the Prophet Muhammad. Important values like honesty, responsibility, discipline,

respect, and kindness are highlighted as vital qualities for both individual growth and community living. The Islamic approach to education sees building character as an ongoing journey that takes place through everyday actions, mentorship, and role models. Current teaching methods focus on getting students involved, thinking critically, being creative, and using technology. Techniques like project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, and blended learning settings are often used in elementary schools. The goal of these methods is to make learning more interesting and meaningful, but they also need guidelines to help students behave and work well with each other.

Past studies show that teaching character education works best when it is mixed into regular schoolwork instead of being a standalone class. Teachers are crucial in putting values into lessons, managing the classroom, and interacting with students. By including moral values in what students are learning, they can truly grasp character qualities through important experiences.

Additional studies highlight that Islamic character education becomes more effective when students are consistently exposed to learning situations that connect moral values with real experiences. Activities that promote group problem solving, reflection, and guided discussion help students internalize values because they learn how moral principles operate within social interactions. Collaborative tasks in particular encourage students to practice responsibility, cooperation, and respect as part of their learning routine.

Research also notes that technology enriched learning environments require careful guidance to preserve the moral dimension of education. Digital tools can support character formation when teachers design tasks that demand ethical decision making, digital responsibility, and respectful communication. Interactive learning materials, online quizzes, and multimedia activities have the potential to strengthen student engagement while maintaining alignment with Islamic ethical principles, especially when teachers monitor how students use technology.

Scholars further discuss the role of school culture in shaping students' moral development. A school environment that consistently models positive behavior reinforces character values more strongly than isolated lessons. Daily routines such as prayers, respectful greetings, and organized classroom transitions cultivate discipline and emotional balance. When school leaders and teachers demonstrate fairness, compassion, and professionalism, students perceive these behaviors as part of the expected moral standard.

Another theme that appears across the literature is the importance of teacher competency. Teachers are expected to understand both pedagogical strategies and Islamic ethical foundations to integrate values effectively into academic content. Studies indicate that professional development, reflective practice, and collaborative planning assist teachers in strengthening their ability to embed values into lessons naturally. Teachers who exemplify moral behavior in their own actions provide powerful examples for students and contribute significantly to the success of character education.

Continuous assessment is also emphasized as an important component of character based programs. Instruments such as observational notes, self reflection activities, group performance records, and informal discussions help educators identify students' progress. The literature encourages a developmental approach to assessment that supports students' growth and helps them recognize character as an ongoing learning process rather than a fixed outcome.

METHOD

This study used a method called qualitative descriptive research to look into how Islamic character education is included in today's learning method in elementary schools. The research took place at an Islamic elementary school that uses technology and focuses on students in their learning. The participants were teachers in the classrooms who consistently incorporate character education into what they teach. Information was gathered by watching classes, having informal interviews with teachers, and looking over lesson plans and learning resources. These methods gave a detailed view of teaching techniques and how values are included. The information was examined through thematic analysis. This process included sorting the data, labeling it, finding themes, and understanding what it meant to spot trends about how Islamic character education is included in today's learning.

The study expanded its descriptive approach by observing classroom practices during various learning activities to capture a broad picture of how values were embedded. Observations focused on how teachers guided discussions, reinforced moral behavior, and connected lesson content with Islamic teachings. Notes were taken to document the flow of learning activities, student responses, and teacher interventions that reflected value integration. Data collected from interviews, observations, and lesson plans were compared to ensure consistency and credibility. This comparison helped determine whether the values emphasized in planning were implemented during instruction. Alignments and differences between planned strategies and actual classroom practices were noted to understand how teachers adapted their approaches in real situations.

Clarification sessions were conducted with teachers to review the interpretations that emerged from the analysis. Teachers provided input regarding whether the themes accurately represented their experiences, which helped refine the meaning of each theme and strengthened the reliability of the findings.

Thematic analysis was conducted by reading the data repeatedly, identifying meaningful segments, and organizing them into conceptual categories. These categories were reviewed and adjusted to ensure that the themes accurately reflected the patterns found in the data. Themes were then interpreted in relation to contemporary models of Islamic character education and student centered learning.

Descriptions of the findings were written in a detailed narrative to illustrate how character values appeared in daily learning. The narrative explained how teachers incorporated moral teachings through discussions, technology based activities, cooperative learning, and classroom routines. This detailed portrayal allows the findings to be understood and applied in similar Islamic elementary school setting

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results show that character education based on Islam can be successfully included in today's education using various methods.

Result 1: learning in context allows teachers to link school subjects with Islamic teachings. For example, group projects promote teamwork and responsibility, while solving problems encourages honesty and determination.

Result 2: using technology can support character education if it is done the right way. Things like educational videos, interactive slideshows, and online chats can present moral lessons in fun and interesting ways.

Result 3: teachers acting as role models have a big impact on how students develop their character. When teachers show traits like discipline, respect, and fairness in their everyday interactions, they set real-life examples for students to emulate.

These results indicate that adding Islamic character lessons to today's education not only helps students grow morally but also keeps them interested and improves their social abilities. The findings connect with theories of whole-person education that focus on bringing together thinking, feelings, and moral values.

Beyond the strategies previously identified, the integration of Islamic character education into modern learning environments requires structured planning and strong institutional commitment. Character education should not depend solely on individual teacher efforts, but must be systematically embedded within the curriculum, instructional objectives, and evaluation processes. When Islamic values are clearly aligned with learning goals, students receive consistent reinforcement of moral principles alongside academic learning.

Curriculum integration enables Islamic character values to be applied across various subjects, including language, science, mathematics, and social studies. For example, environmental topics in science lessons can be connected to Islamic principles of stewardship and responsibility toward nature. In mathematics, values such as honesty, discipline, and fairness can be developed through transparent assessment and cooperative problem-solving activities. This approach ensures that character education becomes an inherent part of the learning process rather than an additional or separate component.

Assessment strategies also contribute significantly to character education. While modern education often prioritizes cognitive outcomes, formative assessment methods allow teachers to observe and evaluate students attitudes, cooperation, responsibility, and ethical behavior. Tools such as reflective writing, observation notes, and peer evaluation help document students moral development constructively. These practices align with Islamic educational principles that emphasize self-reflection and accountability.

School Culture and Learning Environment

A positive school culture plays a vital role in supporting the integration of Islamic character education within modern learning. School routines, rules, and daily practices should consistently reflect Islamic values. Activities such as respectful greetings, collective worship, and courteous communication help create an environment where character education is practiced naturally.

Both the physical and social environments of the school influence student behavior. Classrooms designed to promote cooperation, respect, and active participation reinforce moral values through everyday interactions. Positive relationships among teachers, students, and staff demonstrate the practical application of Islamic character education. When fairness, empathy, and discipline are consistently experienced, students are more likely to internalize these values. Parental involvement further strengthens character education efforts. Collaboration between schools and families ensures continuity between moral values taught at school and those reinforced at home. Regular communication with parents regarding character development supports a shared understanding of educational goals and student behavior.

Challenges in the Implementation of Islamic Character Education

Despite its positive impact, integrating Islamic character education into modern learning contexts presents several challenges. One major challenge is the rapid growth of digital technology, which may expose students to content that conflicts with moral and religious values. Teachers therefore need to guide students in using technology responsibly while maintaining its educational benefits.

Another challenge relates to time constraints within dense curricula. Teachers may feel pressured to prioritize academic content, leaving limited space for explicit character education. This issue highlights the importance of integrating moral values into existing learning activities rather than adding separate lessons.

Teacher preparedness also affects successful implementation. Some teachers may lack confidence or training in integrating character education into modern pedagogical approaches. Ongoing professional development and institutional support are essential to help teachers align instructional strategies with Islamic values effectively.

CONCLUSION

Implications for Practice and Policy

The results of this study highlight several important implications for teaching practice and educational policy. Teachers are encouraged to design learning activities that deliberately integrate Islamic character values into academic material. Continuous professional development is also essential to help educators strengthen reflective teaching skills and ensure the responsible use of digital tools in the classroom.

From a policy perspective, institutions should position Islamic character education as an essential component of quality learning. Curriculum guidelines and assessment systems need to incorporate indicators related to students' moral and character growth, ensuring that character education remains consistently implemented within modern educational settings.

In everyday classroom situations, the study shows that integrating Islamic values into contemporary learning is both achievable and effective. Through real-life examples, guided use of technology, and consistent demonstration of positive behavior, teachers can incorporate Islamic values naturally into daily lessons. Therefore, schools are encouraged to adopt instructional approaches that blend innovation with character and spiritual development so that students grow holistically and are better prepared to face the demands of modern society.

Limitations of the Study

This research was carried out in a single Islamic elementary school, which restricts the extent to which the findings can be generalized. The results may not fully represent schools with different characteristics or regional contexts. Moreover, the reliance on qualitative data limits the ability to make broader statistical comparisons.

Directions for Future Research

Subsequent studies should involve a wider range of schools in various regions to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the integration of Islamic character education. Quantitative approaches may also be employed to examine how character integration influences student behavior and academic outcomes over time.

Future researchers are further encouraged to investigate students' perspectives on character education in modern learning settings. Insight into how students perceive and internalize Islamic values can help refine teaching strategies and improve the overall effectiveness of character-based learning programs.

Overall, this study demonstrates that Islamic character education can be successfully embedded within modern instructional practices at the elementary level. Infusing moral values into teaching methods, assessment processes, and school culture contributes significantly to students' holistic growth. Rather than hindering educational advancement, Islamic character education provides an ethical foundation that guides the meaningful use of innovative learning approaches.

With thoughtful lesson planning, consistent modeling of positive behavior by teachers, and strong support from educational institutions, Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, and empathy can be continuously nurtured in contemporary classrooms. This integrated model not only enhances students' academic success but also prepares them to become morally responsible individuals and active participants in society.

Beyond the central results of this study, the extended discussion emphasizes that character education must adapt to the evolving realities of modern schooling. As classrooms today increasingly rely on digital platforms, interactive resources, and diverse learning experiences, Islamic character education provides a steady moral foundation that helps students navigate these changes responsibly. Rather than serving as an additional or isolated component, character education becomes a guiding framework that helps learners engage with new technologies in thoughtful and ethical ways.

Furthermore, embedding Islamic values in contemporary learning encourages students to perceive moral behavior as an integral part of their academic and personal growth. When virtues such as cooperation, integrity, respect, and self-control are introduced through everyday learning activities, students begin to adopt them naturally. This internalization is especially significant for young learners, whose character development is shaped not only by instruction but also by consistent exposure to positive habits within their school environment.

This study also highlights the importance of creating alignment between school culture, instructional practices, and value-based expectations. When school leadership, teachers, classroom rules, and parental guidance communicate the same moral messages, students experience a cohesive and reinforcing atmosphere. Such consistency encourages them to adopt Islamic values not out of obligation, but because they feel supported, understood, and connected to their learning environment.

On a broader scale, the findings suggest that Islamic character education has the potential to contribute meaningfully to national educational aims focused on holistic development and social responsibility. In an era where schools worldwide face issues such as lack of empathy, increased dependence on digital devices, and the need for ethical awareness, character-based learning rooted in religious principles offers practical and culturally grounded solutions. By nurturing reflective thinking, empathy, discipline, and moral awareness, Islamic character education supports students in becoming well-rounded individuals prepared for future academic and social challenges.

Overall, the integration of Islamic character values within modern education remains essential for shaping learners who can successfully balance intellectual growth with ethical maturity. Continued cooperation between educators, policymakers, families, and community institutions will be crucial in ensuring that character education remains dynamic and

meaningful. Through sustained effort and thoughtful refinement, Islamic character education can continue to guide students toward becoming morally responsible, socially engaged, and spiritually grounded individuals capable of contributing positively to society.

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