Reorienting Islamic curriculum and pedagogy in Indonesia: Aligning with national character education policy

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Article Info

Abstract

Although character values are embedded in the Islamic education curriculum in Indonesia, a gap persists between policy and classroom implementation. The main objective of this study is to reorient Islamic curriculum and pedagogy in alignment with Indonesia's national character education policy. This study explores how character education is applied in Islamic education through curriculum, teaching, and assessment. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining a survey of 22 teachers and analysis of curriculum documents. The findings revealed that while values such as honesty, responsibility, and respect were included in lesson plans and textbooks, they were rarely implemented through interactive teaching methods or assessed using formal tools. Most teachers used lectures and moral preaching, with limited application of reflective or student-centered strategies. The study concludes that character education remains superficial without integrated pedagogy and assessment. The proposed reoriented model suggests a threefold transformation. First, policy-aligned value mapping should explicitly link Islamic moral concepts with the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. Second, reflective pedagogies must replace or complement the current didactic model. Third, assessment reform is essential. These findings offer insights for policymakers and educators seeking to enhance the effectiveness of character education in schools.

Keywords: assessment, character education, curriculum, Islamic education, pedagogy, reflective teaching

INTRODUCTION

The integration of character education into the broader framework of Islamic education has become increasingly urgent in the face of contemporary moral and ethical challenges confronting school-age learners. In recent years, the rise of individualism, moral relativism, and a weakening of communal values among students have prompted educators and policymakers to reassess the role of curriculum and pedagogy in shaping students' character. Islamic education, with its inherent emphasis on values, adab (ethics), and holistic human development, possesses a significant potential to support national character education policy (Alhamuddin et al., 2020). However, this potential remains underutilized due to fragmented curriculum

frameworks and pedagogical approaches that do not align with the dynamic needs of character development in modern school settings (Zuhdi, 2006a).

Several studies have underscored the relevance of Islamic education in promoting moral values. For example, Al-Attas (1999) emphasized the integration of knowledge and ethics in Islamic education, while Abrianto (2023) highlighted its potential to foster virtues such as honesty, responsibility, and respect. Furthermore, empirical studies such as those by Muna et al. (2024), and Hasanah and Asrori (2024) affirm that Islamic education can play a pivotal role in nurturing character if delivered through value-oriented pedagogies and curriculum models. Despite these insights, many implementations of Islamic education still emphasize rote memorization and doctrinal transmission rather than dialogic, reflective, and values-based learning processes.

This study highlights a research gap that even though many agree that character education is important in Islamic education, few studies explain how the curriculum and teaching methods can be adjusted to match national character education policies in practical and innovative ways. Most research stays at the theoretical level and does not give clear guidance for curriculum or teaching changes. Also, the connection between Islamic education and national education policy is often seen as secondary, causing a gap between religious education and national goals (Akrim et al., 2022; Moslimany et al., 2024).

Positioned within this scholarly context, the present research supports and extends previous studies by proposing a more structured integration of character education policy into Islamic education. It builds upon the foundational work of Memon et al. (2021), who called for a shift from preservationist Islamic curricula to models that are responsive to national educational priorities. Similarly, Aziz (2022) emphasized the need to overcome educational dualism by aligning Islamic teachings with contemporary policy and pedagogical expectations. In the context of Indonesia, Dayou and Markus (2024) observed the persistent tension between religious and general education goals, underscoring the importance of curricular alignment. The present study addresses these gaps by analyzing how curriculum design and pedagogical strategies within Islamic education can be reoriented to fulfill character education mandates, particularly in school contexts where religious and civic education intersect. Rather than merely reaffirming existing literature, this research operationalizes prior theoretical insights (Malik, 2024; Nasir, 2021) into practical models for curriculum planning and instructional delivery that are consistent with current educational frameworks.

This research addresses the persistent gap between character education policy and classroom implementation in Islamic education. While previous studies have explored Islamic pedagogy and character education separately, few have examined how curriculum and teaching practices can be integrated to support national character goals. The novelty of this study lies in its synthesis of policy analysis, curriculum development, and pedagogical innovation within the context of Islamic education. The main objective is to develop a comprehensive model that reorients Islamic curriculum and pedagogy in alignment with Indonesia's national character education policy. To achieve this, the study identifies core values shared between Islamic teachings and national frameworks, analyzes current curriculum practices, and proposes practical teaching strategies that can translate character goals into meaningful classroom experiences. By bridging theoretical and policy dimensions, this study contributes to ongoing efforts to reform Islamic education in pluralistic and policy-driven school environments.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to investigate the alignment of the Islamic education curriculum with character education policies. The primary aim was to explore how character values are integrated into teaching practices, curriculum design, and assessment strategies in Islamic education classrooms. A

cross-sectional survey was conducted involving 22 Islamic education teachers from public and private schools across various cities and regencies in West Java Province. The participants were randomly selected from elementary to senior high school levels (or equivalent). The inclusion criteria required teachers to have at least one year or more than 15 years of teaching experience, hold formal teaching certification, and currently teach Islamic education.

Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire focused on teaching methods used by Islamic education teachers, from traditional approaches such as lectures and rote memorization to interactive strategies such as group discussions and project-based learning. It consisted of three sections: demographic information, frequency of pedagogical approaches, and teachers' perceptions of character education. Indicators were adapted from Islamic education competency frameworks and refined through expert consultation. Content validity was confirmed by three experts, and reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha yielded 0.87, indicating high internal consistency. To complement the survey findings, a qualitative content analysis was conducted on curriculum documents—including lesson plans, syllabi, and textbooks—to examine how character values were embedded and operationalized within instructional materials. This mixed methods design, with a dominant quantitative strand and embedded qualitative analysis, provided a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how character education is implemented in practice within the context of Islamic education.

The data analysis employed both quantitative and qualitative techniques. For the quantitative component, descriptive statistics—including frequencies and percentages—were used to analyze teachers' responses from the survey, providing insights into their perceptions and practices regarding character education. For the qualitative component, a content analysis was conducted on curriculum documents—such as lesson plans, syllabi, and textbooks—to identify the presence, depth, and integration of character values. This mixed-methods approach offered a more comprehensive understanding of how character education is implemented across both teaching practices and curricular design.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Curriculum Alignment with Character Values: A Critical Evaluation

The analysis of Islamic Religious Education curriculum documents—including lesson plans, syllabi, and textbooks—reveals that character values are indeed explicitly stated. However, these statements are generally declarative and normative in nature, appearing more as general moral themes rather than concrete, measurable learning objectives aimed at developing character competencies. Terms such as "honesty," "noble character," or "responsibility" are frequently mentioned as intended values, but they are rarely accompanied by operational indicators that can be pedagogically evaluated within the teaching and learning process. As a result, these values are difficult to internalize systematically and tend to function as symbolic or rhetorical elements rather than actionable components in classroom practice, as also critiqued by Abbas et al. (2021), Hosaini et al. (2024), Komalasari and Yakubu (2023), and Maslani et al. (2023).

Furthermore, the connection between character values embedded in the PAI curriculum and national education policies—such as the *Profile of Pancasila Students*—is still minimal. There is an absence of a value mapping or curricular framework that systematically bridges Islamic principles with the six-character dimensions of 21st-century Indonesian learners as outlined by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Alhamuddin & Murniati, 2024; Kemendikbud-Ristek, 2022; Lathif & Suprapto, 2023.). The Islamic education curriculum remains predominantly text-based and normative, with limited engagement with broader social contexts such as diversity, social justice, and global citizenship. This approach

contradicts the *backward design* model proposed by Ostinelli (2024), and Wiggins and McTighe (2021), which emphasizes starting curriculum design with the desired end goals—in this case, learners who are both religious and actively engaged citizens in a multicultural society. This situation illustrates a critical dilemma: while the Islamic education curriculum carries the mandate of shaping national character, it still lacks the pedagogical and assessment design necessary to achieve this goal. As Alshumaimeri (2023) argues, curriculum reform without a clear implementation and evaluation strategy risks becoming merely cosmetic—elegant on paper, yet ineffective in practice.

Table 1. Alignment of Core Character Values in the Islamic Education Curriculum

No.	Character Value	Included in Curriculum	Applied in Instruction	Assessed in Evaluation
1	Ṣidq – Honesty	Strong	Inconsistent	Not Assessed
2	Iṣlāḥ – Discipline	Moderate	Weak	Not Assessed
3	Mas'ūliyyah – Responsibility	Strong	Strong	Occasionally Assessed
4	Iḥtirām – Respect	Strong	Strong	Formatively Assessed
5	Tasāmuḥ – Tolerance	Weak	Rare	Not Assessed
6	Ta'āwun – Cooperation	Superficial	Minimal Group Work	Not Assessed
7	'Adl – Justice	Absent	Not Observed	Not Assessed

As shown in the analysis (Table 1), while respect is relatively well integrated across instructional and evaluative dimensions, other critical values—such as tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*), cooperation (*ta'āwun*), and justice (*'adl*)—are either weakly represented or entirely absent. This is particularly concerning given the increasing need for religious education to prepare students for pluralistic, multicultural societies. Research by Berkowitz and Bier (2004) emphasizes that effective character education must be intentional, explicit, and systematic, bridging values with real-world competencies and decision-making skills. Yet, in the current state of the Islamic curriculum, the absence of structured character-based assessments means that values are not only under-taught but also under-valued in the learning process. The table underscores a major disconnect between curriculum intentions and classroom realities. For instance, although the value of *ṣidq* (honesty) is listed in many lesson plans, teachers report challenges in operationalizing this value in activities or classroom culture (Karwadi & Indrawan, 2023). The lack of alignment is even more pronounced in terms of assessment: values are rarely translated into learning outcomes or included in rubric-based evaluations, rendering them invisible in both student feedback and school reporting systems (Kemendikbud-Ristek, 2022).

Moreover, the curriculum lacks a clear mechanism for mapping Islamic character values to national frameworks such as the *Pancasila Student Profile*, which defines six key dimensions of the ideal Indonesian learner—faith and piety, global diversity, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and independence (Kemendikbud-Ristek, 2022). Without a value-mapping framework that connects Islamic ethics with these competencies, Islamic Education risks becoming isolated from national character education objectives and fails to address real-world social and civic issues. This gap reflects what Wiggins and McTighe (2021) describe as a failure in *backward curriculum design*—whereby learning goals, instructional methods, and assessments must be aligned from the outset to ensure coherence and relevance.

Furthermore, the current curriculum does not differentiate between *value inculcation* and *value internalization*. As Nucci (2024) emphasizes, values cannot simply be "taught" through instruction but must be actively constructed through experience, reflection, and guided engagement. Without inquiry-based learning, student discourse, and authentic community-based projects, character values risk remaining abstract ideals rather than lived realities. The lack of pedagogical innovation in this area reflects a deeper structural conservatism within

Islamic education, which remains heavily text-driven and less responsive to contemporary educational theory and practice (Jackson, 2019). The misalignment between the stated character values in the Islamic Education curriculum and their operational implementation reveals a significant curricular and pedagogical gap. Addressing this requires a multi-pronged approach: the development of value-mapping frameworks, integration of authentic assessment tools, teacher professional development focused on character pedagogy, and alignment with national and global citizenship frameworks. Without these reforms, Islamic Education will continue to underperform in its mandate to shape morally grounded and socially engaged citizens.

The current Islamic Education curriculum exhibits a lack of systematic curricular mapping that connects Islamic moral values with the broader objectives of national character formation and global citizenship. While values such as honesty (*ṣidq*), responsibility (*mas'ūliyyah*), and respect (*iḥtirām*) are mentioned in curriculum documents, lesson plans, and textbooks, their presence remains largely declarative and normative. They are framed more as general moral ideals than as concrete, measurable learning objectives that can be integrated into instructional practice or evaluated meaningfully. For example, goals such as "students are expected to be honest and have noble character" are not accompanied by operational indicators or behavioral benchmarks, making it difficult for teachers to implement or assess them effectively in daily instruction.

This disconnection reflects a deeper structural issue: the curriculum appears textually value-laden, but lacks the pedagogical and evaluative scaffolding necessary to make those values real in students' learning experiences. Critiques Islamic curricula in many Muslim-majority countries for this very reason, noting their overemphasis on ritualistic content and insufficient engagement with broader humanistic and civic dimensions such as pluralism, justice, and global ethics (Ahmed & Chowdhury, 2024; Moslimany et al., 2024; Ushama et al., 2023). In the Indonesian context, this problem is compounded by the absence of a clear curricular integration between Islamic values and the six dimensions of the *Pancasila Student Profile*, which represent the national character framework endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud-Ristek, 2022). Without an explicit and intentional bridge between religious teachings and civic character formation, PAI risks becoming insular and normatively abstract.

This gap has real implications for classroom practice. First, character values risk becoming mere slogans, repeated in school rituals or textbook introductions but failing to shape student behavior in meaningful ways. Second, teachers face significant challenges in assessing character because of the absence of validated instruments or observable indicators. Many rely on subjective judgments or informal observations, which do not provide reliable evidence of student development. Third, students are rarely provided with opportunities to internalize values through reflective practice, dialogic learning, or real-life application. Instead, character instruction often becomes incidental, rather than embedded systematically across the curriculum.

A good curriculum should start with clear goals, including character development, and then align teaching and assessment with those goals. However, the current Islamic education curriculum focuses more on religious texts and rules, without showing how to teach and assess character values in practice. This makes character education seem strong in theory but weak in real classroom use. As a result, students may know moral values but struggle to live them out. Reforms without clear strategies and follow-up often look good in documents but fail in real situations. To fix this, Islamic education needs to be adjusted to focus on real character development. This includes setting clear character-based goals, connecting Islamic values with the Pancasila Student Profile, and using tools like portfolios, rubrics, and reflections to track students' growth. With this approach, Islamic education can better shape students who are both morally strong and socially responsible

Pedagogical Approaches in Islamic Education

Pedagogical practices in Islamic Education classrooms, as revealed through field in-depth interviews with teachers across various regions, are still dominated by traditional, teacher-centered approaches. Most teaching in Islamic education still uses lectures, memorization, and one-way delivery of religious content. While these methods follow traditional Islamic teaching styles like *ta'līm* and *tadrīs*, they are not enough to help students develop critical thinking, moral understanding, and strong character in today's education context.

The data revealed notable variations in teaching practices. While 94% of teachers engaged in moral preaching—often in the form of direct advice and sermon-like delivery—only 50% predominantly used lecturing as their core method, indicating a partial shift from traditional teacher-centered approaches. Memorization remained a common strategy, employed by 44% of respondents, typically without deeper contextual analysis. Group discussions were reported by 61% of teachers, suggesting moderate use of interactive learning. However, more reflective and student-centered approaches were still underutilized: only 44% of teachers implemented reflective journaling (muḥāsabah), and just 33% used project-based learning to foster character values. Experiential strategies such as role-playing and simulation, which are known to enhance moral reasoning and empathy, were applied by only 22% of teachers, indicating a significant gap in pedagogical innovation for character formation. This pedagogical pattern reflects what Hashim (2024) calls a "content-heavy, soul-light" model of Islamic education—emphasizing textual knowledge while neglecting inner transformation (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Killen, 2013).

The theoretical disjuncture is clear. Contemporary Islamic education theorists such as Alwani propose an *ethical pedagogy*, grounded in dialogical engagement (*ḥiwār*), critical reflection, compassion (*raḥmah*), and moral contextualization (Islam & Al-alwani, 2024). In his framework, learning is not merely about cognitive acquisition of doctrine but a transformative journey involving the heart, intellect, and social responsibility. Similarly, the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum advocated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education (Kemendikbud-Ristek, 2022) calls for student-centered, inquiry-based, and contextually relevant pedagogies that nurture autonomy, creativity, and moral agency—dimensions that Islamic education instruction has yet to meaningfully adopt.

In addition, there is a lack of teaching models that connect Islamic values with real-life activities or character-building projects. As a result, character education stays abstract. Teachers often rely on giving advice or explaining texts, without giving students chances to practice values through real actions or reflection. As (Abbas et al., 2021) Without alignment between curriculum, teaching methods, and learning goals, even good reforms can become just for show. To improve character education in Islamic studies, teaching needs to change. This means using methods like problem-based learning, group discussions on ethics, reflective journals, and community service. These approaches fit both Islamic values and modern education practices. (Ahmed & Chowdhury, 2024; Hashim, 2024; Moslimany et al., 2024; Hashim & Langgulung, 2008). This also requires proper teacher training, enough learning resources, and a flexible curriculum that allows teachers to move beyond strict, lecture-based teaching.

Tabel 2. Frequency of Pedagogical Methods Used in Islamic Education

Pedagogical Method	Freq (%)	Description
Lecture	50%	Dominant method of teacher-centered delivery, primarily focusing on religious content without interactive elements.
Memorization	44%	Rote memorization of texts (such as Qur'an verses and Hadith), often without deeper contextual understanding.
Moral Preaching	94%	Direct moral advice and guidance given by teachers, generally in a sermon-like fashion.
Group Discussion	61%	Peer interaction with teacher facilitation; minimal use in practice. Encourages limited student engagement.
Reflective Journaling	44%	Students write personal reflections on moral or ethical topics, but this approach is not widely applied.
Project-Based Learning	33%	Only one teacher attempted project-based learning focused on character values.
Role-play / Simulation	22%	No use of experiential learning techniques like role-playing or simulation to explore ethical dilemmas.

Table 2 underscores the prevailing didactic orientation in most Islamic education classrooms, where traditional pedagogical practices dominate, particularly lecture-based teaching and rote memorization These methods are often associated with the "transmission model" of education, where knowledge is primarily passed from the teacher to the students in a one-way flow. This model has been critiqued by many scholars (Ahmed & Chowdhury, 2024; Freire, 1970; Hashim, 2024; Hashim & Langgulung, 2008). This approach views students as passive listeners, not active learners. In Islamic education, it reduces student engagement, especially in character education, which needs reflection, discussion, and real-life practice. As a result, character education often becomes symbolic rather than practical. Values like honesty, discipline, and responsibility are taught as abstract ideas without clear goals or real-life connection. Without linking these values to students' daily lives, it's hard for them to truly understand and apply them. This is echoed by Wiggins and McTighe (2021) in their work on understanding by design, where they emphasize the need for curricula that focus on long-term, meaningful learning outcomes rather than short-term knowledge acquisition. In the case of PAI, this means shifting away from rote learning and focusing on the development of moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, and personal reflection—skills that are essential for cultivating well-rounded character.

Furthermore, as pointed out by Alwani (Islam & Al-alwani, 2024), teaching models in Islamic education often focus mainly on religious doctrines, without fully addressing character development that includes both religious and civic values. The current curriculum, which relies heavily on texts and rituals, is not well connected to broader character education goals like the Pancasila Student Profile in Indonesia. As a result, students may learn religious knowledge but miss the chance to grow into responsible citizens who can engage well in a diverse and multicultural society.

The urgent need for pedagogical innovation, as highlighted in the table, calls for a shift towards more student-centered, interactive, and inquiry-based teaching methods. These approaches encourage students to engage with the material more critically and reflectively, fostering deeper understanding and internalization of character values. Methods such as project-based learning, group discussions, and reflective journaling are consistent with the work of educators, the importance of experiential and social learning in the development of critical thinking and moral character (Alhamuddin & Murniati, 2024).

Character education in Islamic Education classrooms must evolve from superficial, didactic methods to a more dynamic and interactive pedagogy to be meaningful and impactful.

Traditional approaches, often centered around lectures and rote memorization, do not create a deep connection between students and the core values being taught (Alifuddin et al., 2021). Shifting to student-centered learning helps students think critically, reflect on themselves, and grow personally. To make this happen, teachers need to master both the subject and how to teach it well. Training in interactive methods—like project-based learning, group discussions, and hands-on activities—can help teachers create a classroom that supports moral thinking and ethical reflection.

Learning should not only transfer knowledge but also help students live out character values in ways that relate to their own lives. Character education needs to be connected to real-world issues, so students can practice these values in everyday situations. This makes character education more than just theory—it becomes part of their lived experience. When taught in a way that is intellectually, emotionally, and ethically meaningful, character education can truly shape students' growth. By combining thinking, feeling, and moral action, it can help students become responsible, caring, and thoughtful individuals. This change is essential to prepare them for life in a diverse and connected world.

Toward a Reoriented Model of Islamic Character Education

The findings of this study indicate an urgent imperative to reorient the Islamic Education curriculum and pedagogy—not by marginalizing doctrinal content, but by redefining how Islamic values are delivered, integrated into learning processes, and assessed in alignment with national character education policies. The current model of Islamic education, which predominantly relies on textual transmission and ritualistic instruction, does not sufficiently support the development of character competencies required in the 21st-century educational landscape (Memon et al., 2021)

Table 3. Reoriented Model of Character Education in Islamic Education

Component	Current Condition	Recommended Reorientation
Learning Objectives	General, declarative, non-operational	Clearly defined, measurable character-based objectives (e.g., honesty, responsibility, tolerance)
Value Content	Islamic values are stated, but not systematically linked to Pancasila Student Profile	Systematic integration of Islamic values with national and global character dimensions through curricular mapping
Teaching Strategies	Lectures, memorization, moral preaching	Reflective approaches (journaling, ethical discussion), collaborative learning, and problem-based learning (PBL)
Teacher's Role	Doctrinal transmitter, one-way communication	Facilitator of critical, contextual, and dialogical value-based learning
Student Engagement	Passive, information receivers	Active involvement in moral reflection, ethical debates, simulations, and social action projects
Character Assessment	Unstructured, inconsistent	Formative assessments using portfolios, behavior observations, and integrated character rubrics
Learning Environment	Focused on normative religious texts	Contextualized to address real-world issues like diversity, justice, and global responsibility
Policy & System Support	Curriculum lacks systemic character support	Teacher training, character-integrated teaching materials, and ongoing value-based supervision and monitoring

The proposed reoriented model, as shown in Table 3, suggests a threefold transformation. First, policy-aligned value mapping should explicitly link Islamic moral concepts—such as *ṣidq* (honesty), *iḥtirām* (respect), and *taʿāwun* (cooperation)—with the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile (Kemendikbud-Ristek, 2022), such as integrity, global citizenship, and collaboration. This is essential to overcome the existing gap between religious education and civic-oriented character goals, ensuring that Islamic education is not isolated from broader national educational reforms (Ahmed & Chowdhury, 2024; Hashim, 2024; Memon et al., 2021; Zuhdi, 2006a, 2006b)

Second, reflective pedagogies must replace or complement the current didactic model. Approaches such as ethical dilemma discussions, personal journaling (*muḥāsabah*), and problem-based learning can provide students with experiential and dialogical opportunities to internalize values, rather than merely memorizing them. This aligns with Alwani's call for an "ethical pedagogy" that privileges dialogical inquiry (*ḥiwār*), empathy, and contextual relevance over authoritarian delivery (Islam & Al-alwani, 2024). It also resonates with constructivist models of learning, which view learning as a social, meaning-making process rather than a one-way transmission of facts.

Third, assessment reform is essential. Without valid and reliable assessment tools, character education remains symbolic and unmeasurable. The model suggests using performance-based assessments, such as rubrics for class participation, reflective writing, and peer feedback, which allow educators to track the development of character indicators over time. This is in line with Wiggins and McTighe's (2021) *Understanding by Design (UbD)* framework, which promotes backward design: starting with the desired learning outcomes (e.g., character traits), then designing learning experiences and assessments to achieve them.

Such reorientation is not merely a technical adjustment but a paradigm shift in how Islamic education defines its purpose. As argued by Alifuddin et al. (2021) and Memon et al. (2021), Islamic education needs to move from a "preservationist model" that mainly focuses on maintaining religious identity and rituals, to a "transformational model" that stays true to tradition while also responding to today's challenges—like diversity, ethical issues, and global citizenship. This change will help students not only understand religious values but also live them out in real and diverse social settings. The proposed new model aims to fix the structural and teaching gaps found in the field. It promotes Islamic education that is rooted in values, but also practical, measurable, and culturally relevant. Without this shift, the goal of shaping Muslim students who are strong in character and active in society will remain an ideal rather than a reality.

Theoretically, this reorientation contributes to the ongoing discourse on curriculum reform in Islamic education by offering a framework that integrates tradition with contemporary educational needs, thus enriching models of character-based pedagogy. Practically, it provides policymakers, curriculum designers, and teachers with a concrete guide to implement value-driven yet contextually adaptive Islamic education, enhancing its relevance and effectiveness in diverse learning environments.

CONCLUSION

This study found that although the Islamic education curriculum mentioned core character values like honesty, responsibility, and respect, these values were often only symbolic and not clearly reflected in teaching or assessment. Teachers mostly used lecture-based methods, with little use of interactive or reflective strategies that support real character development. The study explored how well character education was integrated into curriculum, teaching, and assessment. Results showed it was only partially embedded and lacked a clear structure. There was no strong connection between Islamic values and national character goals, and tools to

assess character growth were weak or missing. Without changes in curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment, character education risks being superficial rather than truly effective.

The proposed reoriented model suggests a threefold transformation. First, policy-aligned value mapping should explicitly link Islamic moral concepts—such as *ṣidq* (honesty), *iḥtirām* (respect), and *taʿāwun* (cooperation)—with the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile (Kemendikbud-Ristek, 2022), such as integrity, global citizenship, and collaboration. Second, reflective pedagogies must replace or complement the current didactic model. Approaches such as ethical dilemma discussions, personal journaling (*muḥāsabah*), and problem-based learning can provide students with experiential and dialogical opportunities to internalize values, rather than merely memorizing them. Third, assessment reform is essential. The model suggests using performance-based assessments, such as rubrics for class participation, reflective writing, and peer feedback, which allow educators to track the development of character indicators over time.

Given its limited geographic scope and small sample size, future research should explore more diverse educational contexts and examine the long-term impact of integrated Islamic character education. Investigating innovative pedagogical and assessment models that bridge Islamic values with modern educational demands is essential. Collaboration among policymakers, educators, and curriculum specialists is crucial to create practical, culturally relevant Islamic character education frameworks that nurture ethical, reflective, and socially responsible students.

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