

The Role of Islamic Education in the Formation of the Nation's Character

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the role of Islamic education in shaping the national character among students in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) schools in Indonesia. Employing a quantitative approach, the study surveyed a diverse sample of students across different regions, focusing on the perceived impact of Islamic education on moral values and character development. Results indicate a highly positive perception among participants, with the majority acknowledging the significant influence of Islamic teachings on character traits aligned with the Pancasila principles. The study also reveals regional variations, suggesting that the impact of Islamic education on national character may be nuanced by geographic context. The findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on character formation within the unique educational setting of MAN schools, providing valuable insights for educational policymakers and practitioners.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) schools in Indonesia are unique educational institutions that integrate Islamic education with the national curriculum. These schools are part of the broader cultural and educational landscape of Indonesia, a country known for its cultural diversity and pluralistic society.

The MAN schools' curriculum is designed to foster a sense of national identity while also promoting religious teachings. This approach is in line with Indonesia's cultural policy, which aims to maintain the dynamic of local traditions and protect traditional communities and their cultural works [1]. The

cultural policy also seeks to manage cultural diversity in Indonesia, which is a pluralistic country with diverse traditions [1]. The concept of Bhineka Tunggal Ika, which is the country's motto, plays a significant role in Indonesia's pluralistic society. This concept emphasizes unity in diversity and is a guiding principle in the country's approach to managing its diverse cultural and religious landscape [2].

In the context of religious education, MAN schools are part of a broader network of Islamic educational institutions, including pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), which have transformed into multicultural institutions in response to Indonesia's

multicultural society [3]. These institutions are seen as forums for negotiating Islamic identity and promoting religious moderation [4]. The teaching of history in MAN schools is implemented effectively, with evaluations showing good quality of learning among teachers, adequate learning facilities, and positive student learning attitudes [5]. This approach to teaching history is part of the broader effort to integrate national values into the curriculum.

Islamic education plays a significant role in shaping the national character of students in MAN schools in Indonesia. This is achieved through the integration of religious and nationalistic values into the education system, which promotes the development of a nationalism-religious character among students [6]. Pancasila, the national ideology of Indonesia, is a crucial element in this process. Pancasila promotes unity in diversity and harmonious relations between different religions and cultures [6]. It is seen as a unifying factor for Indonesia, shaping the political behavior ideals of the country and acting as the state identity of Indonesia [7].

The project to strengthen Pancasila and Rahmatan lil Alamin student profiles in Indonesia is a key initiative in this regard. It aims to instill in students a sense of responsibility towards their country and their fellow citizens, thereby promoting national identity, peace, and countering radicalism [6].

Moreover, the principles of Pancasila are in line with Islamic law, further reinforcing its relevance and importance in Islamic education [8], [9]. The first precept of Pancasila, belief in One God, aligns with Islamic teachings, and the economic policies that underlie Indonesia's economic order rely on economists and the socio-cultural considerations of social and religious rules [10].

In conclusion, Islamic education in MAN schools in Indonesia, through the integration of Pancasila values and fostering religious tolerance, plays a significant role in shaping the national character of students. This is crucial for promoting national identity, peace, and countering radicalism, thereby

contributing to Indonesia's commitment to developing a unified national identity that incorporates Islamic principles and the values embodied in Pancasila.

Against the backdrop of this distinctive educational environment, this study seeks to investigate the important question of how Islamic education influences the formation of national character among students in MAN schools. Understanding this dynamic is crucial in the broader context of Indonesia's commitment to developing a unified national identity that incorporates Islamic principles and the values embodied in Pancasila. The coexistence of diverse cultural and religious traditions in Indonesia has prompted the nation to seek a harmonious balance in its national character.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *National Character and Education in Indonesia*

The concept of national character holds particular significance in the Indonesian context, where the nation's identity is intricately woven with the Pancasila, the foundational philosophy that encapsulates principles such as belief in one God, justice, unity, democracy, and social justice. Education is recognized as a primary vehicle for instilling these values, fostering a sense of shared identity, and contributing to the overarching goal of national unity [11]–[13]. In the Indonesian education system, Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) schools stand out as institutions where both Islamic teachings and national values are seamlessly integrated into the curriculum, offering a unique environment for exploring the intersection of religious and national identity formation [14]–[16].

2.2 *Role of Islamic Education in Character Formation*

Islamic education has long been acknowledged as a potent force in shaping the character of individuals. Rooted in the Quran and Hadith, Islamic teachings emphasize moral integrity, compassion, and social responsibility. Studies worldwide have demonstrated the positive impact of Islamic

education on character development, influencing traits such as honesty, humility, and empathy. In the Indonesian context, where Islam is the predominant religion, understanding the role of Islamic education in shaping national character is pivotal for comprehending the holistic development of students in MAN schools [17]–[20].

2.3 Integration of Islamic Education in MAN Schools

Madrasah Aliyah Negeri schools, as a distinctive feature of the Indonesian education system, integrate Islamic teachings into the national curriculum. This integration is not merely additive but seeks a harmonious synthesis of Islamic principles and national values. The manner in which Islamic education is incorporated into MAN schools, including the curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and extracurricular activities, becomes a focal point for understanding the potential impact on character development. Previous research has suggested that this integration fosters an environment where students are exposed to a rich tapestry of religious teachings while simultaneously being grounded in the broader national ethos [21]–[27].

2.4 Gaps in the Existing Literature

While existing literature provides valuable insights, there are noticeable gaps that warrant further exploration. Few studies offer a quantitative analysis of the specific impact of Islamic education on the national character of students in MAN schools. The majority of existing research leans toward qualitative assessments, and there is a need for a more comprehensive, quantitative understanding of the relationships between Islamic education and the development of national character traits.

3. METHODS

This study adopted a quantitative research design to systematically investigate the relationship between Islamic education and national character building among students at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) in Indonesia. A cross-sectional survey approach was used to collect data at a single

point in time, which made it possible to examine current perceptions and experiences.

3.1 Population and Sample

The population of this study included students enrolled in MAN schools in different regions of Indonesia. To ensure representativeness, a stratified random sampling technique was used, taking into account the diverse geographical locations of MAN schools. The sample size was determined through statistical power calculation to achieve sufficient precision in the analysis, a total of 300 samples were involved in the study.

3.2 Data Collection

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure various dimensions related to the research objectives. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections:

1. Perception of the Impact of Islamic Education: This section explored students' perceptions of the influence of Islamic education on their moral values and character development.
2. Identification of the Nation's Main Characters: Participants were asked to identify and rank the characters that they believe are most influenced by Islamic education.
3. Demographic Information: This section collected demographic data, including gender, socio-economic background and geographic location, to analyze potential variations in the impact of Islamic education on national character.

The questionnaire was distributed electronically, and the participants were assured confidentiality of their answers. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants.

3.3 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software, with a focus on achieving meaningful insights into the research questions. The analysis included: Descriptive Statistics, Demographic characteristics of the sample were summarized, providing a profile of the participants. Correlation Analysis, Statistical

techniques such as Pearson's correlation coefficient were used to examine the strength and direction of relationships between variables, specifically assessing the correlation between exposure to Islamic education and perceived character development.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The majority of participants were men, who made up 60% of the sample, while women made up the remaining 40%. This gender distribution may affect the generalizability of the study, and future research may consider strategies to ensure a more balanced representation of both genders.

The socioeconomic status of the participants was categorized into three groups: Low, Middle, and High. The largest proportion was in the middle socioeconomic status, comprising 65% of the sample. This suggests that most of the participants came from middle economic backgrounds. The distribution of participants across socio-economic strata is critical to understanding how socio-economic factors may intersect with the study variables. The prevalence of participants from middle-income backgrounds may influence the interpretation of the findings as their perspectives may reflect a particular socio-economic context.

4.1 Perceptions of the Impact of Islamic Education

A significant majority of respondents, about 85%, expressed positive perceptions of the impact of Islamic education on their moral values and character development. The mean scores for questions assessing the perceived influence of Islamic teachings on honesty, integrity and compassion ranged between 4.2 and 4.8 on a 5-point Likert scale. These high mean scores indicate strong affirmative views regarding the positive role of Islamic education in shaping personal character.

4.2 Identification of the Nation's Main Characters

Participants were asked to rank the character traits that they believe are most

influenced by Islamic education. The top three characters identified were:

1. Respect for Others (Average Rank: 1.7)
2. Social Responsibility (Average Rank: 2.3)
3. Ethical Decision Making (Average Rating: 2.8)

These findings are in line with the moral and ethical teachings emphasized in Islamic education and suggest a strong correlation between Islamic teachings and character priorities aligned with Pancasila.

4.3 Demographic Variations

Analysis of demographic factors showed important variations in the perceived impact of Islamic education on national character by geographic location. Participants from the regions of [East Java, West Java, Aceh and West Sumatra] reported higher average scores (4.6) than the national average (4.4), indicating a potentially greater influence of Islamic education on character development in certain regions.

Discussion

The very positive perceptions among students regarding the impact of Islamic education on their moral values are consistent with the existing literature on the positive role of religious education. The high mean scores for honesty, integrity and compassion suggest that Islamic education plays an important role in nurturing these values among students.

The identified key national traits, especially the emphasis on respect for others, social responsibility, and ethical decision-making, underscore the success of MAN schools in integrating Islamic principles with national values. The congruence between the identified traits and the principles of Pancasila suggests that the synthesis of Islamic education with the national curriculum effectively fosters character traits that are aligned with broader national goals.

Implications for Education Policy and Practice

These positive results confirm the importance of integrating Islamic education into the national curriculum, especially in MAN schools. Policy makers should consider these findings when formulating and revising educational policies to ensure holistic student

development, aligned with religious and national values. The success of this integration model in fostering positive characters highlights its potential as a model for character education in other educational settings.

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

While the findings provide valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The reliance on self-reported data and the cross-sectional design may introduce bias and limit the generalizability of the results. Future research could use a longitudinal approach to track the long-term impact of Islamic education on national character building. In addition, qualitative research methods can provide deeper insights into the lived experiences of students in MAN schools.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the pivotal role of Islamic education in shaping the national character of students in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri schools in Indonesia. The overwhelmingly positive perceptions of participants regarding the influence of Islamic teachings on their moral values underscore the integrative success of MAN schools in aligning religious principles with national values. The identified key character traits, such as respect for others and social responsibility, resonate with the broader goals of the Pancasila, reinforcing the significance of the integration of Islamic education into the national curriculum. However, regional variations suggest that the impact of Islamic education may differ across geographic locations, calling for nuanced approaches in educational policies and practices. As Indonesia strives to foster a cohesive national identity, this research provides actionable insights for policymakers and educators seeking to cultivate character traits that harmoniously blend religious and national values within the diverse landscape of MAN schools.

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