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Islamic Education and Children's Character Development: Educational Methods, Value Internalization, and Environmental Influences

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Abstract: *Islamic education provides a fundamental framework for children's character development by integrating spiritual awareness, moral consciousness, and social responsibility through faith, worship, and noble conduct. This study examines the implementation of Islamic education in children's character formation, focusing on pedagogical methods, value internalization, and the complementary roles of family, school, and society. Employing a qualitative literature review, this study draws upon the Quran, Hadith, scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and relevant previous studies. Data were analyzed through content analysis using a descriptive-analytical approach. The findings reveal that effective character formation requires continuous educational practices, including exemplary conduct (uswatun hasanah), habituation (ta'wid), constructive advice (mau'izhah hasanah), supervision, guidance, and educational reinforcement through rewards and appropriate consequences. These approaches facilitate the internalization of Islamic values, particularly religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, politeness, patience, and social concern. Furthermore, character development depends on the synergy between family as the primary foundation of moral socialization, school as a structured learning environment, and society as a broader context for behavioral reinforcement. The study also emphasizes adapting Islamic education to globalization and digital transformation while maintaining its foundations in the Quran and Hadith. This study contributes a holistic conceptual understanding of Islamic character education through the integration of pedagogical methods, value internalization, and educational environments.*
Keywords: *Character Formation, Islamic Education, Islamic Moral Values, Pedagogical Approaches, Value Internalization*

INTRODUCTION

Education constitutes a fundamental instrument for developing human potential and shaping the intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions of individuals (Huda, 2024; Muhaemin et al., 2023; Muttaqin, 2023). Its significance extends beyond the acquisition of knowledge and the development of cognitive abilities, encompassing the formation of values, attitudes, dispositions, and behavioral patterns that guide individuals in their everyday lives. Educational success,

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therefore, should not be assessed exclusively through academic achievement or intellectual competence, but also through individuals' capacity to demonstrate moral integrity, social responsibility, self-discipline, and ethical awareness. This perspective highlights the importance of character education as an integral component of human development (Günther, 2020; Kawuryan et al., 2021; Sudarsono et al., 2025). Without adequate moral and spiritual foundations, intellectual advancement does not necessarily translate into responsible behavior or meaningful social contributions. Accordingly, education should facilitate the development of individuals who possess not only intellectual capabilities but also the moral consciousness and ethical commitments necessary to navigate increasingly complex social environments.

Within the Islamic educational perspective, education represents a comprehensive process of human development grounded in the integration of faith (*aqidah*), worship (*ibadah*), and noble conduct (*akhlaq*). Islamic education is not merely concerned with transmitting religious knowledge or teaching the formal obligations of religious practice, rather it seeks to cultivate individuals whose beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, and actions consistently reflect Islamic principles (Zarkasyi, 2021). Its fundamental orientation encompasses the relationship between human beings and Allah (*hablum minallah*), relationships among individuals (*hablum minannas*), and responsibilities toward the natural and social environment. These dimensions establish an integrated conception of education in which spiritual consciousness and moral responsibility are mutually reinforcing (Mutaqin et al., 2024). The Qur'anic account of Luqman's advice to his son, particularly in Surah Luqman, verses 13–19, illustrates this comprehensive educational orientation. The passage emphasizes monotheistic belief, filial responsibility, religious observance, moral perseverance, and appropriate social conduct. These teachings demonstrate that character formation in Islam begins with the development of spiritual awareness and progresses toward the practical expression of ethical values in individual and social life (Ardiansyah et al., 2025; Azizah et al., 2026; Feriska & Dewi, 2026; Paea et al., 2024; Tatto, 2021). Consequently, Islamic education provides a normative and pedagogical foundation for cultivating character that integrates religious commitment with responsible human behavior.

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Children's character development represents a particularly important educational concern because childhood constitutes a formative period during which fundamental attitudes, behavioral tendencies, and moral orientations begin to emerge (Çilingir Altiner, 2026; Gasteiger & Benz, 2018; Saffari et al., 2013). During this developmental stage, children acquire values and behavioral patterns through observation, imitation, social interaction, and repeated experiences within their surrounding environments. The values encountered during childhood can influence how individuals understand moral responsibilities, regulate their behavior, respond to social expectations, and establish relationships with others (Bulut et al., 2022). Character formation, therefore, cannot be regarded as an incidental outcome of educational activities; it requires deliberate, continuous, and developmentally appropriate guidance (Albar & Southcott, 2021). In this context, Islamic education provides a value-based framework for cultivating religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, politeness, patience, tolerance, and social concern. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these values depends not simply on their introduction through religious instruction, but on the extent to which children understand their significance, accept them as personal principles, and consistently translate them into observable behavior. This distinction emphasizes the importance of moving beyond knowledge-oriented religious education toward a more comprehensive process of moral internalization.

From a pedagogical perspective, character formation requires an educational process that connects moral understanding with habitual conduct and personal responsibility. Islamic educational thought recognizes that the development of noble character cannot be achieved instantaneously through verbal instruction or the memorization of religious teachings (Badrun, 2024; Faizin, 2024; Manisha et al., 2025; Qornain et al., 2022; Sunardi et al., 2025). Instead, it requires sustained guidance through exemplary behavior (*uswatun hasanah*), habituation (*ta'wid*), constructive advice (*mau'izhah hasanah*), supervision, and educational reinforcement. Exemplary behavior provides children with concrete representations of moral principles, allowing them to observe how religious values are expressed through everyday actions. Habituation reinforces these principles through repeated practices until positive behaviors gradually become established dispositions. Constructive advice helps children understand the moral reasoning underlying

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particular actions, while supervision and guidance provide opportunities to correct inappropriate behavior and strengthen self-regulation. Rewards and appropriate educational consequences can further reinforce behavioral awareness when implemented proportionately and accompanied by constructive explanations. These approaches suggest that Islamic character education involves the integration of cognitive understanding, emotional awareness, behavioral practice, and moral responsibility. Such an integrated process is essential for ensuring that religious values become meaningful personal commitments rather than merely externally imposed expectations.

The family constitutes the primary educational environment in which children initially encounter religious values, moral expectations, and patterns of interpersonal behavior. Parents play a central role in establishing the foundations of children's spiritual and moral development through religious instruction, daily interactions, behavioral guidance, and personal example. The educational influence of the family is particularly significant because children experience repeated interactions with parents and other family members within an environment characterized by emotional attachment and everyday behavioral observation. Through these interactions, children learn fundamental practices such as honesty, respect, discipline, responsibility, empathy, and religious observance. The consistency between parental instructions and actual behavior is particularly important because children are more likely to internalize values when these principles are demonstrated through concrete actions (Tunceli et al., 2026). Conversely, discrepancies between what parents communicate and how they behave may weaken the credibility of moral instruction. Therefore, Islamic education within the family should extend beyond the provision of religious knowledge to include supportive parenting, constructive communication, emotional guidance, and consistent behavioral modeling. The family consequently serves not only as the initial setting for character development but also as the foundation upon which subsequent educational experiences are interpreted and reinforced.

In addition to the family, formal educational institutions play an essential role in systematically developing and strengthening children's character. Schools provide structured environments in which religious knowledge, moral principles, academic learning, and social interaction can be integrated into educational activities (Sarfika et al., 2023). Within Islamic

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education, teachers function not only as instructors responsible for delivering curricular content but also as educators whose attitudes, decisions, and interpersonal conduct provide important behavioral examples (Al Ayyubi, Prayetno, Apriyanti, et al., 2024; Al Ayyubi, Prayetno, Jamaliah, et al., 2024; Al Ayyubi, Yasmin, et al., 2024). The implementation of Islamic educational values can be incorporated through Islamic Religious Education, Qur'anic learning activities, congregational prayers, religious celebrations, community service, and school cultures that promote discipline, mutual respect, honesty, and responsibility. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives depends on their integration into the broader educational environment rather than their implementation as isolated religious activities. Character education becomes more meaningful when institutional policies, teacher behavior, classroom interactions, and extracurricular programs consistently communicate the same moral expectations. Accordingly, schools should establish an educational culture in which Islamic values are not only taught as curricular content but also practiced as shared principles governing everyday institutional life. This approach enables children to connect religious understanding with social conduct and responsible participation within their communities.

The broader social environment also contributes significantly to children's character development by providing opportunities for social interaction, cultural participation, and the practical application of moral values. Communities influence children's behavioral development through prevailing social norms, interpersonal relationships, religious activities, and collective expectations concerning appropriate conduct. Islamic educational values can be reinforced through participation in mosque activities, Qur'anic learning institutions, community-based religious programs, and social initiatives that encourage cooperation, compassion, tolerance, and responsibility. Informal Islamic educational institutions, including Qur'anic learning centers such as *Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an* (TPQ), can complement family and school education by providing additional opportunities for religious instruction and behavioral habituation. Nevertheless, the social environment may also expose children to behavioral influences that conflict with Islamic moral principles. Unconstructive peer relationships, declining social sensitivity, inappropriate communication patterns, and negative cultural influences can undermine

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the consistency of character education (Ikromi et al., 2025). These circumstances demonstrate that the development of Islamic character requires collective educational responsibility and a supportive social environment in which moral principles are reinforced through meaningful participation and everyday interactions.

The complexity of character education has become increasingly pronounced amid globalization and the rapid expansion of digital technology. Internet connectivity, social media, and digital communication platforms have transformed the ways children access information, construct relationships, and engage with their surrounding environments. Although these developments provide substantial opportunities for learning, creativity, and communication, they also introduce challenges concerning moral judgment, behavioral regulation, and social responsibility. Exposure to inappropriate digital content, cyberbullying, consumerist tendencies, excessive dependence on digital entertainment, and disrespectful communication may influence children's attitudes and behavioral development. Furthermore, unrestricted digital engagement may reduce opportunities for direct interpersonal interaction and weaken the consistency of positive behavioral habits. These challenges indicate that contemporary Islamic education must address not only conventional moral concerns but also the ethical implications of children's participation in digital environments. Parents, teachers, and communities therefore need to strengthen children's digital literacy, critical awareness, self-control, and ethical responsibility. The adaptation of Islamic education to technological developments should not compromise its fundamental religious principles; rather, it should enable Islamic values to provide relevant moral guidance for navigating contemporary social and technological realities.

Despite the recognized importance of Islamic education in character development, a comprehensive understanding of how educational principles, pedagogical methods, and environmental influences interact remains necessary. Discussions of Islamic character education can become fragmented when religious values, instructional methods, and the responsibilities of educational institutions are examined independently. Identifying desirable character values, for example, does not necessarily explain how children internalize those values or how internalization is translated into consistent behavioral practices. Similarly, describing the roles of parents,

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teachers, and communities does not sufficiently explain how these educational environments can establish continuity in moral development. A more integrated perspective is therefore required to examine the relationship between pedagogical practices, the internalization of Islamic values, and the complementary functions of family, school, and society. Moreover, the emergence of digital environments introduces additional considerations concerning the relevance and sustainability of Islamic character education in contemporary childhood development. Addressing these interconnected dimensions is important for developing a more comprehensive conceptual understanding of Islamic education as a continuous process of spiritual, moral, and social formation.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the implementation of Islamic education in children's character formation by examining the pedagogical methods employed, the Islamic values internalized, and the complementary roles of family, school, and society. It also explores the relevance of Islamic educational principles in responding to contemporary challenges associated with globalization and digital technological development. Using a qualitative literature review, this study synthesizes relevant religious, conceptual, and scholarly sources to develop an integrated understanding of the relationship between educational practices, value internalization, and environmental support in children's character development. The study seeks to contribute to Islamic education scholarship by presenting character formation as an interconnected educational process rather than merely the transmission of religious knowledge or the cultivation of isolated moral behaviors. Its central argument emphasizes that sustainable Islamic character development requires the alignment of pedagogical methods, personal example, habitual practices, and supportive educational environments. Through this perspective, Islamic education can be understood as a holistic foundation for cultivating generations who demonstrate intellectual competence, spiritual maturity, moral integrity, and social responsibility.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach using a library research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), to examine the implementation of Islamic education in children's character

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development. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the study seeks to interpret educational concepts, identify underlying principles, and understand the relationships between Islamic educational practices and the internalization of character values. Rather than examining numerical relationships or measuring behavioral outcomes statistically, this research focuses on the interpretation and synthesis of textual information derived from religious sources, academic publications, and relevant scholarly discussions. Library research provides a methodological framework for systematically examining existing knowledge, evaluating different conceptual perspectives, and developing an integrated understanding of the research problem. Through this approach, the study explores how Islamic educational principles are translated into pedagogical practices and how these practices contribute conceptually to children's spiritual, moral, and social development.

The research materials consist of primary and secondary literature selected according to their relevance to the research objectives. Primary sources include the Quran and Hadith, which provide the normative foundations for understanding Islamic educational principles, moral responsibilities, and character formation. These sources are examined to identify fundamental Islamic values and educational guidance relevant to children's development. Secondary sources include academic books on Islamic education, educational philosophy, child development, and character education, as well as peer-reviewed journal articles and previous scholarly studies addressing related themes. Particular attention is given to literature discussing educational methods such as exemplary conduct (*uswatun hasanah*), habituation (*ta'wid*), constructive advice (*mau'izhah hasanah*), supervision, guidance, and educational reinforcement. Literature addressing the roles of family, school, and society is also considered to establish a comprehensive understanding of the educational environments that support character development. The selection of literature is guided by its relevance, academic credibility, conceptual contribution, and consistency with the scope of the study.

The literature collection process involves identifying, gathering, reading, and examining relevant publications and textual sources related to Islamic education and children's character formation. The materials are organized according to several interconnected themes, including the

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philosophical foundations of Islamic education, the concept and dimensions of children's character development, pedagogical methods for internalizing Islamic values, the roles of family, school, and society, and the challenges associated with globalization and digital technological development. This thematic organization enables the researcher to distinguish between normative Islamic principles, theoretical explanations, and practical educational approaches discussed in the literature. Relevant information is subsequently extracted by identifying recurring concepts, central arguments, educational principles, and findings from previous studies. Particular attention is given to the relationships among these themes rather than treating each educational dimension as an independent subject. This process facilitates the identification of conceptual similarities, differences, and complementary perspectives across the selected literature.

Data analysis is conducted through qualitative content analysis using a descriptive-analytical approach. The analytical process begins with identifying relevant textual information and classifying it according to the established research themes. Subsequently, the identified information is interpreted to examine the meaning, significance, and educational implications of the concepts discussed in the literature. The analysis focuses on understanding how Islamic educational values are translated into pedagogical practices, how these practices facilitate the internalization of character values, and how different educational environments contribute to the continuity of character formation. The researcher then compares and synthesizes the perspectives identified across religious sources, theoretical literature, and previous empirical studies to develop an integrated interpretation. This analytical process also considers the relevance of Islamic educational principles to contemporary challenges, particularly the influence of globalization and digital technology on children's moral and social development. The findings are subsequently organized into interconnected conceptual categories to explain the relationship between educational methods, value internalization, and the roles of family, school, and society in character development.

To strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study applies source triangulation by comparing information obtained from different categories of literature. The comparison involves examining the normative principles presented in the Quran and Hadith

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alongside theoretical explanations in Islamic educational scholarship and findings reported in relevant academic studies. This process allows the researcher to identify areas of conceptual convergence, differences in interpretation, and complementary arguments concerning the implementation of Islamic education. Particular consideration is given to the consistency of information, the relevance of supporting arguments, and the credibility of the publications examined. Contradictory perspectives are not automatically excluded but are considered critically to provide a more balanced interpretation of the research subject. Through this comparative process, the study seeks to minimize dependence on individual interpretations and establish conclusions grounded in multiple relevant sources. Overall, the methodological framework enables the development of a comprehensive conceptual synthesis concerning the implementation of Islamic education as a continuous process of children's character formation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The Concept and Objectives of Islamic Education

The literature analysis indicates that Islamic education represents a comprehensive process of developing human potential based on the fundamental values of Islamic teachings. Its scope extends beyond the transmission of religious knowledge to include the development of faith, intellectual capacity, spirituality, morality, and social responsibility. Within the Islamic educational framework, three fundamental concepts provide the basis for understanding its objectives and implementation: *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *ta'dib*. *Tarbiyah* refers to the gradual nurturing and development of human potential, *ta'lim* emphasizes the acquisition and transmission of knowledge, while *ta'dib* concerns the formation of proper conduct, manners, and moral responsibility. These three dimensions demonstrate that Islamic education integrates knowledge acquisition, personal development, and ethical formation into a unified educational process.

The findings further indicate that the objectives of Islamic education are closely associated with the development of individuals who possess strong faith, religious commitment, intellectual competence, and noble character. In the context of childhood education, these objectives are

directed toward establishing a foundation of religious understanding and moral behavior that can guide children's actions throughout their development. The educational principles reflected in Surah Luqman (31:13–19) illustrate this orientation through the integration of monotheistic belief, filial responsibility, prayer, the promotion of good conduct, the avoidance of wrongdoing, patience, and appropriate social behavior. This sequence demonstrates that Islamic character education encompasses spiritual development and the practical expression of moral values in everyday interactions.

The perspectives of Imam Al-Ghazali and Abdullah Nashih Ulwan also reveal the multidimensional orientation of Islamic education. Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of education in bringing individuals closer to Allah (*taqarrub ilallah*) and cultivating moral perfection, while Abdullah Nashih Ulwan identifies the importance of developing children's faith, morality, physical well-being, intellectual capacity, psychological maturity, and social competence. Iskandar (2024) similarly explains five educational orientations in Ulwan's thought, namely the development of monotheistic belief, morality, physical health, intellectual intelligence, and social intelligence. Based on these perspectives, the objectives of Islamic education in children's character formation can be identified across five interconnected dimensions: spiritual development, moral development, intellectual development, social development, and personal development.

Islamic Character Values in Children's Development

The literature reveals that character formation in Islamic education is fundamentally associated with the concept of *akhlaq*. Character refers to relatively consistent patterns of attitudes and behavior that influence how individuals respond to situations and make decisions. In the Islamic perspective, *akhlaq* describes an internal condition of the soul that enables individuals to perform certain actions naturally and consistently. Al-Ghazali explains that moral behavior emerges from qualities deeply embedded within the soul, allowing individuals to act without requiring prolonged deliberation. This understanding indicates that Islamic character formation is concerned not merely with teaching children to recognize appropriate behavior but also with cultivating internal dispositions that encourage them to practice good conduct.

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The analysis identifies several fundamental Islamic character values that are relevant to children's development. These values include religiosity and faith, honesty (*shiddiq*), discipline, responsibility (*amanah*), politeness and respect (*adab*), social cooperation (*ta'awun*), and patience. Each value represents a distinct but interconnected dimension of Islamic character. Religiosity provides the spiritual foundation for moral awareness, honesty reflects integrity in personal conduct, discipline develops consistency in fulfilling responsibilities, and *amanah* encourages children to demonstrate trustworthiness in carrying out their obligations. Meanwhile, *adab* regulates interpersonal relationships through respectful behavior, *ta'awun* strengthens social concern and cooperation, and patience develops emotional control when facing difficulties.

These values collectively demonstrate that Islamic character education encompasses more than individual religious observance. Its objectives also concern the development of ethical relationships with other people and responsible participation in social life. Consequently, the formation of Islamic character requires the integration of spiritual commitment, personal integrity, self-regulation, and social responsibility.

Educational Methods for Implementing Islamic Values in Character Formation

The literature analysis identifies five principal educational methods through which Islamic values can be introduced, internalized, and reinforced in children's behavior: exemplary conduct, habituation, constructive advice, supervision and guidance, and educational rewards and consequences. These methods perform complementary functions in the character development process and should not be treated as independent approaches.

First, exemplary conduct (*uswatun hasanah*) functions as a model through which children observe and imitate appropriate behavior. Surah Al-Ahzab (33:21) establishes the Prophet Muhammad as an excellent example for believers. In children's education, this principle emphasizes the responsibility of parents and teachers to demonstrate honesty, discipline, politeness, responsibility, and respect through their daily actions. Abdullah Nashih Ulwan identifies exemplary conduct as an important method of child education because children are strongly influenced by the behavior of individuals within their immediate environment. Sanusi

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(2020), in examining the educational perspectives of Al-Ghazali and Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, also identifies exemplary conduct as an important approach to developing children's moral character.

Second, habituation (*ta'wid*) involves the consistent repetition of positive behavior until it becomes an established part of children's daily lives. In Islamic education, this method can be implemented through regular prayer, reading the Quran, reciting supplications before and after activities, maintaining cleanliness, speaking honestly, respecting parents and teachers, and helping others. Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of practice and moral training in developing good character, while Abdullah Nashih Ulwan also recognizes habituation as an essential component of children's education. Sanusi (2020) supports the relevance of habituation in moral education, particularly when it is implemented alongside exemplary conduct and supervision.

Third, constructive advice (*mau'izhah hasanah*) functions as a means of developing children's understanding of religious and moral principles. This method involves providing guidance, explanations, and moral messages through language that is appropriate to children's developmental levels. The educational narrative in Surah Luqman (31:13–19) illustrates this approach through advice concerning monotheism, worship, filial responsibility, patience, and appropriate social conduct. Advice therefore serves not merely as a means of communicating commands and prohibitions but also as a process of helping children understand the meaning and consequences of their actions.

Fourth, supervision and guidance provide continuous support to ensure that the values introduced through education are reflected in children's daily behavior. This method involves parental and educational attention to children's activities, social interactions, behavioral development, and religious practices. Surah At-Tahrim (66:6) emphasizes the responsibility of believers to protect themselves and their families. In contemporary contexts, this responsibility also includes guiding children's use of digital technology, particularly their access to online content and participation in social media. Iskandar (2024) highlights the importance of educational supervision as part of children's development. Accordingly, supervision should be accompanied by communication and guidance rather than excessive restrictions.

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Fifth, educational rewards and consequences can reinforce the development of positive behavior and encourage children to recognize the implications of their actions. Rewards may take the form of praise, appreciation, attention, and encouragement, while consequences should help children understand mistakes and develop better behavioral choices. Within Islamic education, both approaches should be implemented according to the principles of compassion, fairness, proportionality, and the protection of children's dignity. Physical violence, humiliation, and excessive punishment are inconsistent with an educational approach that prioritizes moral development and the well-being of children.

Overall, these five methods represent interconnected dimensions of Islamic educational practice. Exemplary conduct provides observable behavioral models, habituation strengthens consistency, advice develops moral understanding, supervision offers continuous guidance, and educational reinforcement supports behavioral improvement.

The Roles of Family, School, and Society in Character Formation

The findings indicate that children's character development is influenced by three interconnected educational environments: family, school, and society. Each environment provides different forms of educational experience, but their contributions are mutually reinforcing in the process of internalizing Islamic values.

The family constitutes the first and primary environment in which children encounter religious teachings, moral expectations, and patterns of social interaction. Parents introduce foundational religious values through instruction, daily practices, and personal examples. The educational perspectives of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan emphasize that children's development should encompass faith, morality, intellectual capacity, physical development, and social competence. Similarly, Zakiah Daradjat highlights the importance of religious education within the family through early religious experiences, worship practices, and a household environment that reflects Islamic values (Hambal, 2019). Rizal (2017) also discusses the influential position of the family in children's personality and behavioral development. In practical terms, family-based character education includes introducing monotheistic belief, encouraging regular worship, demonstrating

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honesty and discipline, cultivating respectful communication, supervising digital activities, and providing continuous attention to children's moral and spiritual development.

The school functions as a structured educational environment in which children's intellectual, spiritual, and social capacities can be developed through formal learning activities. Teachers, particularly Islamic Religious Education teachers, have responsibilities that extend beyond explaining the Quran, Hadith, Islamic theology, jurisprudence, and Islamic history. They also need to demonstrate the values being taught through their own behavior and classroom practices. The literature identifies several approaches to implementing Islamic values in schools, including integrating moral principles into classroom instruction, establishing regular religious activities, developing teacher role models, cultivating an Islamic school culture, and organizing social and humanitarian activities such as charitable giving and community service. Rizal and Samsu (2017) emphasize the importance of integrating educational content, teaching methods, and learning environments in children's religious education. These approaches indicate that the school contributes to character formation through both formal instruction and the development of a supportive institutional culture.

Society provides a broader social environment in which children encounter norms, cultural practices, relationships, and behavioral expectations. Its contribution is reflected in religious and social activities that provide opportunities for children to practice Islamic values beyond the family and school. Such activities include Quranic education through Islamic learning institutions and Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ), participation in mosque and prayer-room activities, community cooperation, social assistance, and involvement in youth programs. Iskandar (2024) emphasizes the importance of developing children's social intelligence as part of Islamic education. This perspective reinforces the idea that character formation should extend beyond the relationship between individuals and Allah to include responsible and constructive relationships with other members of society.

The analysis also identifies the importance of coordination among family, school, and society. These environments are most effective when they communicate consistent expectations and reinforce similar moral values. For example, discipline introduced within the family can be

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strengthened through school routines and supported by positive community practices. Conversely, contradictory behavioral expectations across these environments may create difficulties in the internalization of Islamic values. Therefore, communication between parents and teachers, joint religious activities, parental involvement in school programs, and community participation in children's development constitute important elements of an integrated educational environment.

DISCUSSION

Islamic Education as an Integrated Foundation for Character Development

The findings demonstrate that Islamic education should be understood as an integrated process of human development rather than a limited instructional activity concerned with religious knowledge. The relationship among *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *ta'dib* provides a conceptual explanation of this integration. Knowledge acquisition through *ta'lim* enables children to understand religious principles, while *tarbiyah* supports the gradual development of their intellectual, spiritual, and personal potential. Meanwhile, *ta'dib* directs this development toward the formation of appropriate conduct and moral responsibility. These dimensions are interdependent because religious knowledge without moral application may remain theoretical (Günther, 2020; Habibah et al., 2023; Huda, 2024; Muhaemin et al., 2023; Przybylska & Wajsprych, 2020), whereas moral instruction without adequate understanding may produce behavioral compliance without meaningful internalization.

This integrated perspective is consistent with Al-Ghazali's emphasis on spiritual orientation and moral refinement (Arroisi et al., 2023; Sari & Marhaban, 2023; Supriyanto, 2022). His conception of education suggests that the ultimate objective of learning is not simply intellectual achievement or worldly success but the development of a person whose knowledge and behavior are directed toward closeness to Allah. In this context, character formation becomes an essential indicator of educational achievement because the quality of education should be reflected in how individuals translate their understanding into everyday conduct. The perspective of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan further strengthens this argument by positioning children's development within

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multiple dimensions, including faith, morality, physical well-being, intellectual competence, psychological maturity, and social responsibility.

The educational principles reflected in Surah Luqman (31:13–19) provide an important illustration of this integrated orientation. The sequence of advice begins with monotheistic belief and continues through religious obligations, respect for parents, moral responsibility, patience, and appropriate social behavior. This sequence indicates that Islamic education connects spiritual awareness with practical ethical conduct. Faith is not presented as an isolated dimension of personal identity; rather, it provides the foundation for responsible behavior toward family members and the wider community. Therefore, Islamic character education should integrate religious commitment with observable moral practices, enabling children to understand that worship and social ethics are complementary dimensions of Islamic life. The implication is that the effectiveness of Islamic education cannot be assessed solely through children's ability to memorize religious concepts or perform specific religious activities. It should also be considered in terms of their developing ability to demonstrate honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, patience, and social concern. Such an approach positions character formation as a continuous educational objective rather than an additional component of religious instruction.

Internalization of Islamic Values as the Core of Character Formation

The findings concerning Islamic character values indicate that character development involves a process of transforming religious principles into relatively stable personal dispositions. The concept of *akhlaq* is particularly relevant because it explains why the possession of moral knowledge does not automatically result in moral behavior. Children may understand that honesty, discipline, and respect are desirable, yet their understanding must be reinforced through experiences and practices before these values become part of their behavioral patterns. From this perspective, the internalization of Islamic values involves interconnected processes of understanding, acceptance, practice, and the gradual development of behavioral consistency. Understanding enables children to recognize the meaning of a particular value, while acceptance helps them develop an awareness of why the value is important. Repeated practice provides opportunities to express the value in concrete situations, and consistent reinforcement supports its

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development into a more stable behavioral disposition. This process is particularly important in childhood because children are still developing their capacity for self-regulation, moral judgment, and independent decision-making.

The seven identified values also demonstrate that Islamic character development requires a balance between spiritual, personal, and social dimensions. Religiosity and faith provide the foundation for a relationship with Allah, while honesty and responsibility guide children's conduct in fulfilling personal and social obligations. Discipline supports the ability to regulate behavior, whereas *adab* establishes appropriate ways of interacting with others. Similarly, *ta'awun* encourages cooperation and concern for the needs of other people, while patience helps children manage difficulties and emotional challenges. These values should therefore be understood as a connected moral framework rather than separate educational targets. An important implication is that religious education should avoid reducing character formation to the visible performance of religious routines (Cinta et al., 2023; Hasib & Khasanah, 2025; Kirabaev & Chistyakova, 2023). Regular prayer, Quranic reading, and other religious activities are important practices, but their educational significance becomes more comprehensive when accompanied by the internalization of the values underlying those activities. For instance, discipline in worship can be connected to responsibility in completing daily tasks, while religious teachings about honesty should be reflected in children's communication, academic activities, and relationships with peers. This integration allows Islamic values to become relevant across different areas of children's lives.

Complementary Educational Methods in the Formation of Children's Character

The five educational methods identified in the findings reveal that effective Islamic character formation requires a combination of modeling, practice, explanation, guidance, and behavioral reinforcement. Their effectiveness is associated with their complementary functions rather than the independent application of any single method. Exemplary conduct is particularly important because children encounter moral values through the behavior of people around them. The principle of *uswatun hasanah* establishes that educators should embody the values they communicate. When parents encourage honesty but demonstrate dishonesty in everyday situations, or when teachers demand discipline but fail to demonstrate consistency, children may encounter

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conflicting messages. Therefore, the credibility of character education depends partly on the alignment between educational instruction and the actual conduct of adults. This interpretation is consistent with the educational perspectives of Al-Ghazali and Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, as discussed by (Lubis & Azzahra, 2021).

Habituation complements exemplary conduct by providing repeated opportunities for children to practice positive behavior. A good example may introduce a behavioral model, but consistent practice helps children develop the ability to reproduce that behavior in different situations. For example, teaching children to respect others becomes more meaningful when respectful communication is consistently practiced at home, in classrooms, and in social interactions. Similarly, religious routines can support the development of discipline when they are introduced gradually and accompanied by an understanding of their significance. Nevertheless, habituation should not be interpreted as mechanical repetition. Its educational purpose is to help children develop awareness and gradually assume responsibility for their own behavior.

Constructive advice provides the cognitive and moral explanation that complements these practical methods. Through *mau'izhah hasanah*, children are guided to understand why certain actions are encouraged and why others should be avoided. The example of Luqman's advice illustrates the importance of communicating moral principles through a caring and instructive relationship. Advice is more likely to contribute to moral understanding when it is expressed through language appropriate to children's developmental levels and supported by concrete examples. Consequently, advice should function as a dialogical educational process rather than merely a series of commands. Supervision and guidance are necessary because children may not yet possess sufficient experience or self-regulatory capacity to apply moral principles independently in every situation. The responsibility emphasized in Surah At-Tahrim (66:6) can be understood as a foundation for sustained parental attention to children's religious and moral development. However, supervision should gradually encourage autonomy rather than create permanent dependence on external control. In contemporary contexts, this principle is particularly relevant to digital activities, where children require guidance in evaluating information, responding to online interactions, and recognizing inappropriate content (Maulana et al., 2021). Open

communication and age-appropriate guidance can help children develop responsible digital behavior.

Finally, rewards and educational consequences can provide additional reinforcement. Appreciation may strengthen positive behavior, while proportionate consequences can help children recognize mistakes and understand the need for behavioral improvement. However, the use of these approaches should remain consistent with compassion, fairness, and respect for children's dignity. Excessive reliance on external rewards may encourage children to behave appropriately only when recognition is available. Therefore, reinforcement should gradually support the development of internal motivation and moral awareness. Taken together, these methods suggest that Islamic character education requires a coherent pedagogical process. Modeling introduces values through observable examples, habituation provides practical experience, advice develops understanding, supervision supports behavioral guidance, and reinforcement helps children evaluate and improve their actions. Their integration offers a more comprehensive approach than relying exclusively on religious instruction or behavioral control.

The Complementary Roles of Family, School, and Society

The findings indicate that family, school, and society function as interconnected environments that shape children's moral experiences. Their contributions are not interchangeable because each environment provides different forms of interaction and educational influence. Nevertheless, their combined influence is important because children encounter values and behavioral expectations across multiple contexts. The family has a foundational role because it is generally the earliest environment in which children experience relationships, behavioral models, and religious practices. Parental conduct can influence how children understand honesty, responsibility, discipline, and respect. The importance of family education, as discussed by Rizal (2017), Ulwan, and Zakiah Daradjat, suggests that moral development requires more than formal religious instruction. It also depends on the quality of daily interactions and the extent to which Islamic values are reflected in household practices. A family environment characterized by consistent examples, supportive communication, and appropriate guidance can provide an important foundation for children's moral development.

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Schools extend this foundation by providing structured educational experiences and opportunities for interaction with teachers and peers. The role of schools is not limited to delivering Islamic Religious Education as a subject. Rather, Islamic values can be incorporated into institutional culture, classroom relationships, school routines, and social activities. This means that character formation should be treated as a shared educational responsibility involving teachers and the broader school environment. The discussion of Rizal and Samsu (2017) supports the importance of integrating educational materials, methods, and learning environments. In practical terms, a school that teaches responsibility should also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate responsibility through classroom tasks, collaborative activities, and participation in school programs.

Society provides opportunities for children to encounter moral values within broader social relationships. Activities in mosques, TPQ institutions, community programs, and social initiatives can extend children's experiences beyond formal educational institutions. Through these activities, children can practice cooperation, respect, empathy, and social responsibility. The importance of this environment is also connected to the social dimension of Islamic education emphasized (Bahri et al., 2025; Daud, 2023; Efendi et al., 2025; Habibah et al., 2023; Zarkasyi, 2021). Character formation is therefore not exclusively a private or institutional process; it also involves preparing children to participate constructively in community life.

The relationship among these environments is especially important because children may encounter different behavioral expectations across home, school, and society. When these environments reinforce similar values, children receive consistent messages that can support the internalization of Islamic principles. Conversely, inconsistency between parental instruction, school practices, and community behavior may weaken the educational messages received by children. For example, teaching respect at home may be less effective if children regularly encounter disrespectful interactions in their immediate social environment. This illustrates why communication and collaboration among parents, teachers, religious leaders, and community members are necessary. The synergy among these environments should therefore be understood as a process of shared responsibility rather than the simple division of educational tasks. Families

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provide foundational moral socialization, schools organize structured learning and behavioral practice, and society offers broader opportunities for social participation. Their coordination creates continuity between the values children learn and the situations in which they are expected to practice them.

Integrating Islamic Character Education with Contemporary Digital Challenges

The findings concerning family supervision and the role of educational environments also indicate the importance of considering the contemporary context in which children develop. Digital technology has expanded children's access to information, communication, and entertainment. Although these developments provide opportunities for learning and interaction, they also expose children to content and social situations that may conflict with Islamic moral principles. Inappropriate online content, cyberbullying, excessive digital entertainment, consumerism, and disrespectful communication represent challenges that require educational attention. From the perspective of Islamic education, responding to these challenges should not be limited to restricting children's access to technology. Such restrictions may provide temporary protection, but they do not necessarily develop the awareness and judgment required for responsible digital participation. Children also need to understand the ethical implications of their online behavior, including honesty in communication, respect for others, responsible information sharing, and self-control in using digital media.

The values identified in this study provide a conceptual foundation for addressing these challenges. Honesty (*shiddiq*) can guide children in communicating truthfully and evaluating the reliability of information. *Amanah* can encourage responsibility in using digital platforms and protecting information entrusted to them. *Adab* can guide respectful online communication, while discipline and patience can support self-regulation and responsible management of screen time. Similarly, *ta'awun* can be expressed through constructive digital interactions and the use of technology to support educational and social activities. The responsibility for developing these competencies should be shared across educational environments. Parents can provide age-appropriate supervision and establish healthy digital routines, schools can integrate digital ethics into learning activities, and communities can encourage positive uses of technology. Such

coordination allows Islamic character education to remain relevant without abandoning its normative foundations in the Quran and Hadith (Nadhiroh & Khoir, 2025; Sabarudin et al., 2023; Zakaria, 2025). This discussion also reinforces the need to understand Islamic character formation as a dynamic educational process. Its fundamental values remain grounded in Islamic teachings, but their practical application must respond to changing social and technological conditions. Accordingly, contemporary Islamic education should connect traditional pedagogical principles with the development of critical awareness, digital responsibility, and ethical self-regulation.

An Integrated Framework for Islamic Character Formation

Based on the synthesis of the findings, this study proposes an integrated conceptual understanding of Islamic character formation through the relationship between educational foundations, pedagogical methods, value internalization, and educational environments. The framework begins with Islamic educational principles grounded in *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *ta'dib*. These principles provide the normative and pedagogical foundations for developing children's spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social capacities. The implementation of these foundations takes place through five complementary educational methods: exemplary conduct, habituation, constructive advice, supervision and guidance, and educational rewards and consequences. These methods create opportunities for children to encounter, understand, practice, and gradually internalize Islamic values. The values of religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, *adab*, social cooperation, and patience then provide the moral orientation of children's behavior.

The process is reinforced through the complementary roles of family, school, and society. The family provides initial moral and religious socialization, the school offers structured educational experiences, and society creates broader opportunities for the practice of social values. Contemporary digital conditions constitute an important contextual dimension that influences how these methods and values are implemented. This framework suggests that Islamic character formation should not be understood as a linear process in which religious knowledge automatically produces moral behavior. Rather, it is a continuous and mutually reinforcing process involving educational principles, pedagogical practices, value internalization, and environmental support. The central contribution of this synthesis is its integration of these dimensions into a single

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conceptual perspective, emphasizing that sustainable character development requires consistency between what children learn, what they observe, what they practice, and the environments in which they interact.

CONCLUSION

Islamic education constitutes a comprehensive foundation for children's character development by integrating spiritual formation, intellectual growth, moral awareness, and social responsibility. The findings indicate that its success is not merely determined by children's understanding of religious teachings or participation in religious activities, but also by their ability to internalize and consistently practice Islamic values in everyday life. The implementation of Islamic education requires the integration of five complementary methods: exemplary conduct (*uswatun hasanah*), habituation (*ta'wid*), constructive advice (*mau'izhah hasanah*), supervision and guidance, and educational rewards and consequences. These methods contribute to the development of moral understanding, positive behavioral patterns, and personal responsibility. Furthermore, character formation depends on the complementary roles of family, school, and society. The family establishes the initial foundation of religious and moral values, schools reinforce these values through structured learning and institutional culture, while society provides opportunities for their application in broader social interactions. Therefore, consistency and collaboration among these three educational environments are essential to ensuring that Islamic values become an integral part of children's personalities and behavior.

This study highlights that Islamic character formation should be understood as an integrated and continuous educational process involving the relationship between Islamic educational principles, pedagogical methods, value internalization, and supportive educational environments. In the context of globalization and digital transformation, the implementation of Islamic education also needs to adapt to contemporary challenges, including inappropriate digital content, cyberbullying, excessive technology use, and irresponsible online behavior, without abandoning its fundamental foundations in the Quran and Hadith. Accordingly, parents, teachers, and communities need to establish educational practices that combine exemplary conduct, consistent

guidance, digital literacy, ethical awareness, and responsible technology use. The conceptual contribution of this study lies in emphasizing that sustainable character development requires alignment between the values children learn, the behaviors they observe, the practices they develop, and the environments in which they interact. However, because this study employs qualitative literature analysis, its findings provide a conceptual synthesis rather than empirical evidence of the effectiveness of particular educational methods. Therefore, future research is recommended to employ empirical approaches, such as case studies, interviews, classroom observations, or mixed-method designs, to examine the implementation and effectiveness of Islamic educational methods across family, school, and community settings. Further research should also investigate the development of Islamic character education in digital environments and identify the factors that influence the internalization of Islamic values throughout children's development.

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