

ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MANAGEMENT FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyse the process of Islamic education in Elementary Schools. It is assumed that the curriculum guides students to achieve the expected goals. In addition to developing intelligent and competent human resources, education must focus on religion, morality, noble morals, and culture. This research method is qualitative with library research; researchers use theories and relationships between variables or effects from books and online journals from Mendeley, Google Scholar and other online media. The results of the study indicate that Islamic religious education at the Elementary School level is moderate Islamic religious education. Students are invited to study Islamic teachings on how to respond to many things politely or prioritise tolerance. Students are taught morals in a broader relationship through the subjects of aqidah, the history of Islamic culture in the Qur'an, and morals in their relationship with Allah SWT, themselves and nature. Teachers are positioned as individuals who understand the basic teachings of the Qur'an and Islam and teach as directors and mentors of students.

Keywords: *Educational Management, Elementary School, Islamic Religion.*

INTRODUCTION

Moral and ethical education in religion is an important thing in life. Religion is still considered an important factor in moral and ethical training for students in educational institutions (Iman et al., 2023). Two reasons support this; the first is that religious

educators are the first to blame students who make moral mistakes or act outside the limits of good morals (Dewi et al., 2023). This shows that society still considers religion the main source of moral and ethical values. If students make moral mistakes, religious educators are considered responsible for teaching these moral values to students (Karlina et al., 2023). Both religious subjects are the core of education about religious attitudes and empathy. The transfer of full authority to religious educators to assess these two skills shows that the government considers religion an important part of students' character education. This also shows that the government believes religious educators are the most competent in assessing these skills (Lambe & Widyastuti, 2020).

In many countries, religious education is included in the school curriculum to understand the community's values, ethics, and religious teachings. Religious education can also help students understand the various religious beliefs that exist in their society (Karlina et al., 2023). Indonesia is a country with diverse religious groups. The Indonesian constitution emphasises that this country is based on *Pancasila*, which includes principles such as social justice, democracy, unity, and various beliefs. This aligns with the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (different but still one), which recognizes diversity but upholds diversity in unity. Therefore, Indonesia is not a religious state, which means that this country does not have one official religion recognized by the constitution. The principle of a neutral state towards religion in Indonesia creates a strong foundation for religious freedom (Ikhwan, Zuhdi, et al., 2020). Although the relationship between the state and religion is close, the state must still respect and protect everyone's rights to practice their beliefs without discrimination, which must be protected. In this context, the goal of religious education in schools is to increase understanding of different values and beliefs and tolerance and understanding between religions. in a diverse society like Indonesia (Sabrifha et al., 2023).

According to Nasaruddin Umar, a religious state is a state that uses religion as the basis and reference in organizing and resolving problems of national and state life. This category includes countries with an official religion used as the basis for the constitution or basic law of the state. The official religion then becomes the basis for organising government and social life. Religion becomes the basis for forming laws, policies, and social norms (Nurdiyanto et al., 2023). In addition, religion has also become the basis for education and public morality. One example of a religious state is Saudi Arabia. In this country, Islam is the official religion. The state's basic law, the Saudi Arabian Constitution, is based on Islamic teachings. Islam is also the basis for the organization of government and social life in Saudi Arabia. Besides Saudi Arabia, several other countries are categorized as religious states, namely Kuwait, Syria, and the Vatican. In these countries, religion plays a very important role in the life of the nation and state. Apart from religious states, there are also secular states. A secular state is a state that separates religious and state affairs (Ikhwan, 2021b).

The state has no official religion, and religion has no role in government or social life. In a secular state, religion is a personal matter for each individual. The state and religion have their respective scopes and should not interfere with each other. One example of a secular state is the United States. This country has no official religion, and religion has no role in government or social life. The relationship between religion

and state is complex and dynamic. The relationship between state and religion is dynamic and can adapt to changes in society and politics (Hastuti et al., 2023).

Keith A. Roberts analyzes the relationship between state and religion in the context of political-religious power based on three models. This reflects the various ways state and religion can interact in state governance. *The first* is the unification model, which unites the state and religion into inseparable entities. State and religion are considered as a single entity. The state's leader is also a religious leader, and religion plays a central role in policy-making and regulating the life of society. Examples of this unification model may be found in countries that make one official religion the basis of their constitution, as previously mentioned in Saudi Arabia or the Vatican.

Second, the symbiosis model emphasizes the importance of cooperation between the state and religion to realize the welfare and harmony of society. The state and religion work together to achieve common goals and promote the values held by society. The positive interdependence between state and religion can influence policy and decision-making in both domains. The state recognizes the positive role of religion in society and tries to maintain a harmonious relationship between the two.

Third, the secular model, in the secular model, there is no formal relationship between state and religion. The state operates without religious interference and officially recognizes no religion. Legal policies do not depend on the teachings of a particular religion, and the state tries to remain neutral in matters of religion. Examples of countries with a secular model are many countries in Western Europe, such as France or the Netherlands, which adhere to the principle of separation between religion and state. The state carries out its functions independently of religion. The state does not make policies or regulations based on the teachings of a particular religion. The writing of textbooks, like many books, is based on the syllabus and syllabus. Islamic religious education textbooks are an important source of information for understanding the nature of Islam taught in schools through Islamic religious education subjects (Bucky et al. et al., 2024)

A good curriculum is a curriculum that can help students develop their thinking, feelings, and skills. A good curriculum must also help students become whole and balanced individuals. The curriculum must also be based on the needs and conditions of students. Education must not only aim to produce intelligent and competent people but also to produce faithful people, loyal, noble characters, and cultured. This is because intelligent and competent people alone are not enough to become whole people. Humans must also have faith, noble morals, and good culture (Nurdiyanto et al., 2023). On the other hand, national education goals cannot be achieved without school leaders who support the development of quality and effective educational institutions. The principal is a leader who has an important role in determining the success of school education (Ikhwan, 2020a); (Ikhwan, 2016a). Therefore, the principal must be empowered to carry out his duties effectively.

Several elementary schools have experienced many changes during their development. This is certainly inseparable from the ups and downs of school development since its establishment. Changes can occur due to various factors, such

as changes in the curriculum, changes in government policies, or changes in social conditions (Ikhwan, 2018). Therefore, schools must continue to develop themselves in order to provide quality education that is relevant to the needs of the community.

Changes made must be based on an analysis of the needs and conditions of the school. Through fundamental changes over the past three years, his leadership model has brought about effective institutional change and development. These fundamental changes can be in the form of changes in the curriculum, changes in learning methods, changes in facilities and infrastructure, or changes in school culture (Ikhwan, Aderi Che Noh, et al., 2020). From the background that has been described, it can be concluded that this study aims to find out how the concept of Islamic religious education management for elementary school students in Islamic educational institutions is and to find out what the challenges are for Islamic religious education management for elementary school students in Islamic educational institutions.

METHODS

This article uses qualitative methods and literature reviews to examine concepts and relationships between variables in books, journals, and online publications (Ikhwan, 2021a). Qualitative methods emphasize a deeper understanding of a phenomenon through experience and interaction. Therefore, literature reviews should provide a theoretical basis for research but not limit the research scope. Literature reviews that are used inductively can help researchers develop open-ended and non-directive hypotheses or research questions (Ikhwan, 2020b). This is important for qualitative research because qualitative research aims to understand a phenomenon in depth and comprehensively. The author conducted qualitative research mainly because the research is exploratory (Hasanuddin et al., 2023). Exploratory research aims to explore a phenomenon that is not widely known. Therefore, qualitative research requires an open approach and does not limit the scope of research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

From the initial observations and surveys, we found that the characteristics of the two educational institutions we studied were different. State Junior High School (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri/MTsN*) Tulungagung is an Islamic educational institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion (*Kemenag*) Indonesia. At the same time, Public Junior High School (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri/SMPN*) 1 Tulungagung is a general educational institution under the auspices of the Education Office of the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kemdikbud RI*).

Both schools are state schools that are popular with the people of Tulungagung and its surroundings; this is evident from the many applicants who register. This shows that both schools have good quality education and can produce quality graduates. Both schools have a strong commitment to producing quality graduates. This can be seen from their efforts to continue improving the quality of education, including student development. Both schools have superior strategies and programs that support students in achieving academic and non-academic achievements. The graduation rate

of both schools also always reaches 100%; this shows that both schools are well prepared to face the national exam.

The fact that both *madrasahs/schools* continue to strive to improve the quality of their education and get more input shows their commitment to providing the best education to their students. The high level of public trust in both institutions and the fact that they are consistently the first choice strongly indicates the good reputation they have built in the community (Ikhwan & Qomariyah, 2022). *First*, the high public trust in both *madrasahs/schools* may result from their strong track record of achievement and the good reputation they have developed over the years. It may also reflect the quality of education and support the school's teaching and staff provide. *Second*, both *madrasahs/schools* are benchmarks for secondary education in Indonesia, regardless of whether state or private, indicating that they provide a high standard of education (Ikhwan & Yuniana, 2022). This may serve as an inspiration for other schools to strive to improve their quality of education. *Third*, efforts to develop excellence for graduates are a positive step. This may involve character development programs, skills training, or career preparation that help students better prepare for the future.

State Junior High School (*MTsN*) Tulungagung and Public Junior High School (*SMPN*) 1 Tulungagung were selected as research projects because they were the right schools to study and had conditions that supported the research project. Factors such as student selection systems, student development programs, student achievement, and student management significantly impact the quality of education and student success in schools. These factors include the new student selection system, including written tests and online and offline selection, which is an important aspect of understanding how schools can attract high-potential students (Ikhwan et al., 2023). It can also be a basis for understanding the diversity of students accepted at both schools. *Second*, the priority and student development programs implemented at both schools will help to understand how they achieve high academic and non-academic achievements. You can explore these programs, their approaches, and their impact on student development. *Third*, an analysis of the thorough preparation for the national exams that resulted in a 100% pass rate will help to understand how schools prepare students well to face academic challenges. This can also involve teacher support, facilities, and other supporting resources. *Fourth*, studying effective student management is crucial because it can significantly impact students' learning experiences and achievements.

This can include discipline, character building, social support, and managing student problems. Good student management can help students achieve optimal performance. Therefore, student management in schools is an important and urgent problem. Authorities must pay more attention to student management so that students can achieve optimal performance. The strategic location of *MTsN* Tulungagung between various schools, from elementary school to university level, and close to various government offices and office centres is an important aspect that can affect the accessibility and relationship of the school with various related entities (Ikhwan, 2019). A strategic location can make it easier for students, teachers, and school staff to access various educational facilities and resources around them. This can facilitate collaboration between schools and educational institutions.

Islamic Education Management

Management in the context of education is very relevant. Educational management is an effort to manage, coordinate and control all management of educational activities effectively and efficiently to achieve predetermined educational goals (Ahyani et al., 2021). Educators, be they lecturers, teachers, tutors, and facilitators, have an important role in implementing the educational process and contributing to students' success in academic achievement and development and personal development. Educational management includes planning, organizing, implementing and monitoring various aspects such as curriculum, teaching methods, resources, assessment, classroom management, administrative time, etc (Ikhwan, 2016b). These efforts create a positive and safe learning environment for students and ensure a good educational experience. Educators have an important role in implementing this educational management strategy and maintaining the quality of the educational process. They also contribute to the development of students in various aspects, such as academic talent, character, and other skills (Sulhan, 2020).

In the context of education, the achievement of educational goals cannot be separated from good educational management, including improving the quality of education, improving student achievement, and developing students' potential as a whole. Education is an effort that aims to foster, train, direct, educate, and shape, and it is aimed at all students, both formal, informal, and unofficial. Formal education is structured and hierarchical education, where students follow the curriculum set by the government (P. H. Putra, 2019). Informal education occurs unstructured, non-sequitur or non-graded, where students learn independently or participate in activities outside of school. Unofficial education is education that someone receives from their daily life experiences, according to Omar Muhammad al-Toumi al-Syaibani's view of Islamic education. He defines Islamic education as a process of changing individual behaviour in personal life, society, and the natural environment. The process involves teaching as a fundamental activity and is considered one of the basic professions of society. This approach emphasizes the importance of Islamic education in shaping the character and behaviour of individuals, as well as in understanding Islamic values and teachings as a foundation for achieving positive change in the lives of individuals and society. Islamic education often plays a key role in shaping personal ethics, morals, and worldviews consistent with Islamic teachings (P. H. Putra, 2019).

Management is the ability to organize everything, be it institutions, organizations, or individuals and families. This is in accordance with the word of Allah SWT in Surah At Tahrir verse 6:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

This verse provides a lesson about management and relationship management in the family context (Ikhwan et al., 2019). In this verse, Noah's wife and Lot's wife are given as examples because they did not manage their relationship well, which resulted in mistakes and inappropriate actions. Managing personal and family life includes

understanding, communication, balancing needs and managing conflicts for smooth family relationships. Therefore, according to religious teachings, management principles can be used to achieve harmony and well-being in personal and family life (Hutagaol et al., 2024).

The knowledge and skills needed to carry out tasks well are very important in various formal, informal, or non-formal leadership roles. This applies to maintaining stability, safety and welfare of individuals and the surrounding environment. The Word of Allah SWT in Surah Al-Insyirah verse 7-8:

وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَأَرْجِعْ فَاَنْصَبْ

In the context of leadership, leaders who understand and instill these values can become strong characters who are able to overcome challenges and lead the people around them. Understanding religious teachings can be a source of inspiration and moral guidance to carry out leadership duties well. This is in accordance with the word of Allah SWT in Surah Ali Imran verse 14:

رُئِيَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْخَرْبِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ

The verse explains that worldly life is full of pleasure and enjoyment. This can be seen from the many people who are willing to do various things for worldly pleasure, even not in a *halal* way. However, God reminds us that worldly pleasure is only superficial and does not last long. Mortal life is forever. Therefore, believers should be patient and restrain themselves from the temptations of worldly pleasures. This verse also explains that pious people will rank higher than unbelievers on the Day of Resurrection. Because pious people The pious have prepared themselves to face the afterlife by obeying Allah's commands and avoiding His prohibitions.

Management is often considered a combination of science and art. This reflects that management includes aspects based on principles and knowledge that can be learned (science), as well as wisdom, creativity and expertise in making decisions that require accuracy and understanding of the situation (art). Nurdiansyah & Hudriyah, as a science, management involves understanding management based on certain principles: planning, organizing, leading, controlling, and evaluating (Nurdiansyah & Hudriyah, 2021). This involves knowledge of management theories and concepts that can be applied in various contexts. As an art, management allows managers to make decisions and overcome specific challenges in certain situations. This involves creativity, good decision making and the ability to adapt to changes in the business or organizational environment.

A manager's success often depends on his ability to combine scientific and intellectual knowledge in managing resources and achieving predetermined goals. Therefore, Management is a combination of science and art that involves applying principles and wisdom learned and needed to realize the desired goals in changing situations. The scope of Islamic education is very broad, including formal Islamic

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education (educational institutions), non-formal Islamic education (homeschooling), and non-formal Islamic education (Islamic boarding schools and dance councils). This is a fundamental and urgent difference between educational and Islamic educational management (Khasanah, 2019). Islamic educational management is the act of managing or organizing Islamic education. Islamic educational management fundamentally differs from general educational management in its philosophical foundation (Hamamah, 2023); (Maesaroh et al., 2022).

Islamic educational management is based on Islamic values and processes, so its organizers must have in-depth and comprehensive knowledge and skills in these values and processes. Educational management is based on communal philosophy, while Islamic educational management is based on Islamic philosophy. Islamic philosophy is based on healthy Islamic values and teachings, such as monotheism, Sharia law, ethics, and Sufism. Islamic educational administration and education are two related concepts but have important differences (Ramli et al., 2023); (Rochim et al., 2021). These differences can be analyzed based on their goals, objectives and tasks. The goal of Islamic educational management is to realize the goals of Islamic education. The goal of Islamic education is to produce a generation of Muslims who are faithful, have noble characters, and are competent in science and technology.

Thus, the goal of the Islamic educational organization is to ensure the achievement of the goals of Islamic education. The goal of Islamic educational management is to create quality Islamic educational institutions that can produce graduates in accordance with the goals of Islamic education. Islamic education management is managing Islamic educational institutions effectively and efficiently to achieve the goals of Islamic education (Anwar, 2021). Thus, Islamic education management aims to ensure that Islamic educational institutions can achieve their goals well. The task of the Islamic Education Council is to plan, organize, direct and supervise Islamic education activities. Planning is the process of making plans for Islamic education activities. Organizing prepares Islamic education institutions' organizational structure and division of labour. Teaching is providing instructions and guidance to teaching staff in implementing Islamic education activities. Inspection is a process that monitors and evaluates the implementation of Islamic education activities.

The difference between educational and Islamic educational management can also be seen in the management process. The Islamic educational management process must be based on Islamic values and teachings. For example, in recruiting educators and education personnel, priority must be given to candidates who understand and are committed to Islamic values and teachings. The learning process must be integrated with Islamic values and teachings. In managing the school curriculum, Islamic values and teachings must be considered. Islamic Education Management manages Islamic educational institutions based on Islamic values and teachings.

This process includes planning, implementation, organizing and evaluation. Planning is determining the intent and purpose of Islamic educational institutions and developing strategies to achieve them. Planning must be based on an analysis of the needs and potential of Islamic educational institutions. Implementation is the process

of implementing a plan that has been prepared. Its implementation must be carried out effectively and efficiently in accordance with Islamic values and teachings (Abu et al., 2022); (Agustini & W, 2021). Organizing is organizing human, material and financial resources to support the plan's implementation. Organizing must be carried out systematically and structured in accordance with Islamic values and teachings. Evaluation is the process of assessing the success of the plan's implementation. Evaluation must be done objectively and transparently to improve and develop Islamic educational institutions. Islamic Education Management at least has the following methods:

- a) Has an epistemology that includes reason-revelation/reason-reality. Management of Islamic educational institutions must be based on the power of revelation (hadith of the Qur'an), understood with contextual reasoning (based on the dynamics of the development of science and technology).
- b) There is a mission of science and a mission of *da'wah*. Islamic educational institutions are not enough to only fulfil their scientific mission (producing knowledge, character and skills) but must also strive to be accessible to Muslims and other non-Muslims.
- c) The essence of *da'wah* is to bring understanding so that Islam is not misinterpreted as a true religion that spreads love to all mankind. Islamic Education Management (MPI) subjects include human, material, and spiritual resources. Orientation occurs in two directions: World-Beyond, Work-Wolf, Salary and Rewards.
- d) Every leader of an Islamic educational institution must be able to integrate these two aspects synergistically and in an integrated manner (Y. Hidayat et al., 2023).

Islamic Education

A teacher with sufficient knowledge of his/her subject so that later the teacher can explain the material clearly and easily understood by students. The teacher can also answer students' questions accurately and precisely. To gain knowledge in the field he/she teaches, teachers need to broaden their knowledge by reading many books and following developments in print media such as newspapers and electronic media. By continuing to read, you will broaden your horizons, enrich your knowledge, make you smarter, and be suitable and appropriate for educators requiring special abilities as required by the Education Law and the Teachers Law (Tazkiya et al., 2022).

Technical competence is an ability directly related to a particular field or profession. In education, technical competence is the ability to master the content of learning comprehensively and in-depth. Thus, the obligation of teachers to carry out their duties in schools through religious education activities optimally, on the one hand and the other hand, is balanced by increasing their knowledge and insight proportionally. Integrated learning is a method that combines several subjects with one particular subject or topic. This integration is applied so students understand the studied concepts more deeply and meaningfully. Interesting learning involves students actively participating in the learning process so that students can understand the concepts learned through direct experience and relate them to other concepts they already know.

Effective integrated learning can help students visualize and construct related concepts. This is because integrated learning presents concepts wholly and comprehensively so students can understand the relationships between concepts. Integrated learning can also help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Katni et al., 2022). Students can better understand problems and develop more creative solutions by seeing the relationships between different concepts.

The importance of Islamic religious education in Indonesia, where Islam is one of the majority religions. Islamic religious education is a structured and directed learning activity to equip students with knowledge, understanding, appreciation, and practice of Islamic teachings. The goal is for the younger generation of Muslims to be implemented in everyday life. However, this declaration also reflects the values of tolerance and harmony between religious communities, including respect for adherents of other religions, which is important to maintain harmony between religious communities in Indonesia with many religions and beliefs.

By prioritizing understanding and tolerance between religious communities, Islamic religious education can contribute to unity in a pluralistic society like Indonesia. This reflects the principles of *Pancasila*, which is the ideological basis of Indonesia that encourages tolerance, pluralism, and social justice (Sonafist, 2022). Thus, Islamic religious education that combines religious understanding with the values of harmony between religious communities is one of Indonesia's most important aspects of building a harmonious and parallel society.

In this context, Islamic religious education is not just knowledge but also includes faith, deep understanding and active practice in everyday life. In addition, this statement emphasizes that Islam is not just a part of life but a deep vision of life that underlies human behaviour and actions. This emphasizes the importance of Islam as a guideline for achieving salvation in this world and the hereafter. The importance of loving Islam as a way of life also illustrates a strong commitment to religious values and teachings that should be a guideline for everyday behaviour. Thus, Islamic religious education functions in this context to develop better moral, ethical, and spiritual individuals to achieve their religious goals and positively contribute to society and society in general (Fitria et al., 2023).

Ahmad Munir Mulkhan's view on the existence of Islamic education in the modernization process is relevant (Munir, 2021). It reflects the importance of the role of education in the modernization process in various fields of community life. It is important to remember that modernization of the education sector is the most important part of social, economic and political modernization. Education plays a vital role in shaping individuals and societies that can keep up with current developments, drive economic growth and participate in democratic political processes.

Along with globalization, it is important to ensure that Islamic education also prepares students to face challenges and opportunities at the global level. The importance of Islamic education is that it must adapt to the development of the times both intellectually and spiritually. Islamic education should include a deep understanding of religious teachings, science, and various life aspects relevant to

today's society. This is important to ensure that Islamic education functions well and adheres to ethical and moral principles. In solving emerging problems, it is important to focus on reforming Islamic education, improving the quality of teaching and finding solutions that are in accordance with the needs of society and current developments. This will help Islamic education remain relevant and effective and benefit students and the wider community (Na'im et al., 2021).

Basics of Islamic Education

The Qur'an is God's guidance for mankind and plays an important role in regulating their lives. Acceptance of faith in the Qur'an is the foundation for Muslims to live and follow His teachings. In addition to faith, the rational approach (*'aql*) also plays an important role in understanding the teachings of the Qur'an and implementing them in everyday life (Matofiani & Prastowo, 2022). The combination of faith and reason helps humans to interpret and apply the teachings of the Qur'an correctly and in the context of their lives. Islamic education based on the teachings of the Qur'an can help create a generation with strong values and a commitment to goodness in all areas of life. Therefore, Islamic education also plays an important role in leading to a better life according to the teachings of the Qur'an. This is by the word of Allah SAT, in QS. Al-'Alaq 1-5:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ١ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ٢ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ٣ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ٤ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

This verse teaches humans to always mention the name of Allah SWT in every activity they do, especially reading activities. Reading is one way to learn and increase knowledge. People can learn various things about nature, life and religion by reading. This verse also explains the process of human creation from a blood clot and forming it into a perfect creature. This shows that humans are noble creatures and have the potential to become better. This verse again emphasizes the importance of reading and learning. By reading and studying it, humans can increase their status before Allah SWT. Allah SWT is the Most Noble and Most Generous God, giving good rewards to His servants who always try to learn and seek knowledge. This verse explains that Allah SWT teaches humans to write and communicate information with a pen. The pen allows humans to express their thoughts and ideas to develop and disseminate knowledge. This verse emphasizes that Allah SWT teaches humans many things they do not know. Allah SWT is a source of unlimited knowledge, so He can teach humans things they cannot know with their abilities. Overall, Surah Al-Alaq verses 1-5 teach humans the importance of reading, studying and seeking knowledge. By reading and studying, humans can elevate their status before Allah SWT and become more perfect creatures.

The Qur'an invites humans to reflect and contemplate the signs of God's greatness in His creations. This term is often referred to as "*tadabbur*"; namely deep contemplation and observation of the teachings of the Qur'an and the signs of the universe. By understanding this concept, the application of Islamic education can integrate rational thinking, reasoning and deep observation into the educational process. Humans are taught to believe in themselves as God's noble creations and to use their minds to understand religious teachings and the world around them (S.

Hidayat et al., 2024). Through this approach, Islamic education produces humans with a deep understanding of religion, strong morals, and rational thinking that contributes to the welfare of the people and society.

The challenge of Islamic religious education is how it can maintain the importance of religious values in the present context and make them relevant to the younger generation. The challenge is how schools and religious education can provide a strong enough understanding and provision to ensure that students are not influenced by values that conflict with religious education (Afif & Ikhwan, 2024). The challenge is to create an interesting and relevant learning experience for students so that they have a good understanding and mastery of religious teachings. The challenge is to involve parents in the religious education process so that the religious values taught in schools are also strengthened in the home environment. It is important to ensure that students have religious knowledge and practice it correctly. The challenge is observing and assessing students' religious understanding and practice adequately. This requires cooperation between educational institutions, teachers, parents and the community to create an environment that supports the development of strong religious character in the younger generation (Abd et al., 2016).

The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam, which Muslims believe to be a revelation from Allah SWT to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In Islamic religious education, the Qur'an is often used as a guideline for teaching, understanding and guiding students in religious life. Apart from the Qur'an, two other important sources of Islamic religious education are often recognized, namely *Al-Hadith* (traditions or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW) and *Ijmaand* (Islamic Agreement). Combining these three sources creates a strong foundation for the teachings of the Islamic religion and helps understand and apply Islamic teachings in various aspects of daily life. The Qur'an as guidance is shown in His words QS. Al-Israa verse 9:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّيِّ هِيَ أَقْوَمٌ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا

“The verse above clarifies that the Qur'an is a guide and brings good news for those who believe and do good. The Qur'an teaches humans the right path, which aligns with human nature and brings happiness in this world and the hereafter. For those who believe and do good deeds, the Qur'an gives the good news that Allah SWT will give them great rewards. The rewards given by Allah SWT are unlimited, both in terms of worldly pleasures and happiness in the hereafter. By adhering to the Qur'an, Islamic education can help Muslims understand and internalize religious values, ethics, morals and the values Islam teaches. Islamic education based on the Qur'an can also help Muslims achieve the core values of *ubudiyah*, namely piety and obedience to Allah SWT as the Creator. The importance of following the Qur'an in Islamic education is so that education can encourage the development of good spirituality, morals, and ethics. This also helps individuals face challenges and changes in life-based on strong Islamic values (Dacholfany & Ikhwan, 2024).

Second, Sunnah. This position emphasizes the importance of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in understanding Islam. The *Sunnah* is a collection of actions, sayings and agreements recorded by the Prophet Muhammad SAW that clarify

and strengthen the teachings of the Qur'an. The main function of the *Sunnah* is as an additional source of law that explains and strengthens the laws contained in the Qur'an. Most Islamic law is based on the Qur'an, but the *Sunnah* provides additional information and specific examples of its application. Therefore, the actions and words of the Prophet are used as inspiration in the daily lives of Muslims. There are divine messages (divine messages) not found in the Qur'an, and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet provides additional explanations and rules regarding these messages. In addition, some topics require further explanation, and the *Sunnah* becomes a reference source for a more detailed understanding.

The third is Ijtihad (thinking and reasoning). The importance of *ijtihad* in the context of Islamic education is significant. *Ijtihad* allows Islamic education to adapt to changes in the times and the development of science and technology without losing its roots in religious values. *Ijtihad* allows Islamic education to follow the dynamics of the times. By conducting *ijtihad*, Islamic education can design appropriate and effective teaching methods to deal with these changes. *Ijtihad* allows Islamic education to understand and apply religious teachings in a way that is relevant to the current context. *Ijtihad* is a tool that allows for continuous evaluation and adaptation of Islamic education in accordance with the development of the times (A'yun et al., 2022); (R. et al., 2021). Thus, Islamic education can remain important and effective and contribute to forming a generation that is faithful, has a noble character, and can actively participate in modern society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that based on the research of Islamic Religious Education and Morals, a conclusion can be drawn about the Islamic character in elementary schools: (a) the Islamic religion. Education has a moderate Islamic model. Students are invited to study Islamic teachings on responding politely to many things; (b) students are taught Islamic education about morals towards others in a broader relationship than aqidah, the Qur'an, the history of Islamic culture and morals towards Allah SWT, themselves and nature; (c) teachers are positioned as individuals with a broad understanding of the basic teachings of the Qur'an and Islam they teach. Educators also understand students' potential, develop learning resources and create a conducive learning environment. Educators with this qualification must have the ability to maintain original beliefs, creativity, and broad insight and utilize local culture and natural resources.

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