

Islamic Religious Education and Moral Education: The Foundation of Children's Character in the Age of Disruption

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the urgency of integrating Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and moral education in shaping the character of elementary school students in the disruptive era. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach using the library research method, drawing upon textbooks, legislation, and scholarly articles as primary data sources. The analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques to identify the strategic role of PAI and moral education in building a solid foundation of character amidst globalization and rapid digital technology development. The findings indicate that PAI provides a strong theological and spiritual foundation, while moral education strengthens adaptive and ethical social behavior. The integration of both has become an urgent necessity in addressing the challenges of the disruptive era, such as exposure to negative digital content, shifting value authority, and declining face-to-face social interactions. Effective implementation strategies include contextual learning, teacher role modeling, habituation of positive behavior, and active involvement of parents and communities. This study recommends the development of a systematic and sustainable character education program based on PAI and moral education to nurture a generation that is faithful, knowledgeable, virtuous, and capable of adapting to global dynamics without losing their Islamic and Indonesian identity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology and globalization over the past two decades has ushered in an era known as the era of disruption. This term refers to fundamental changes in various aspects of life triggered by technological advances, digitalization, and automation, which not only transform economic structures but also shift social and cultural interaction patterns (Schwab, 2016). In the field of education, this era presents significant challenges, particularly in the character development of the younger generation. Elementary school students today grow up in an environment saturated with instant

information, unlimited access to technology, and global cultural influences that often conflict with moral values and religious teachings (Aini & Yusuf, 2022).

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a strategic role as a bastion of values and character formation rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah. IRE not only conveys religious knowledge but also instills noble ethics, fosters an Islamic work ethic, and cultivates spiritual awareness that guides students' behavior in daily life (Maulida et al., 2023). Meanwhile, moral education strengthens the ethical-practical dimension by instilling universal values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and empathy (Rahman, 2021). The integration of these two forms of education is believed to produce holistic character development that combines spiritual strength and social skills, making it relevant in the midst of dynamic social change.

Previous research shows that the integration of PAI and moral education can increase children's awareness of values, reduce deviant behavior, and strengthen social engagement at school (Fadilah, 2020; Hidayat, 2019). However, most studies still focus on conventional approaches in the classroom and few have explored adaptive implementation strategies to address the challenges of the disruption era, such as the penetration of digital media, exposure to negative content, and the shift in value authority from teachers and parents to public figures on social media (Livingstone & Third, 2017; Wijayanti & Puspita, 2024).

This research gap is important to address, as elementary school is a critical phase in children's moral development. According to Kohlberg's theory of moral development, this period is the stage of internalizing social norms and forming initial moral principles. If value formation during this phase is not properly guided, children will be vulnerable to moral degradation triggered by unfiltered digital exposure (Husna & Kurniawan, 2023). Therefore, an educational model is needed that systematically integrates Islamic values and universal morals in a contextual and adaptive manner to the evolving times.

Based on this background, this study aims to: (1) analyze the urgency of integrating Islamic Education (PAI) and moral education in shaping the character of elementary school students in the era of disruption; (2) identify effective and relevant implementation strategies in the current context; and (3) propose an adaptive integration model to address the challenges of the digital age. This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to educators, policymakers, and parents in building a generation that is faithful, knowledgeable, noble, and resilient in facing global dynamics without losing their Islamic and Indonesian identity.

2. METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method. The selection of this method is based on the research objectives, which focus on analyzing the concepts, urgency, and strategies for integrating Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and moral education in the character development of elementary school students in the era of disruption. Through literature review, researchers can explore and synthesize various relevant scientific sources to build a strong conceptual framework.

The research data sources come from two types of literature, namely primary and secondary. Primary sources include Islamic Religious Education textbooks, moral education literature, and official national education policy documents such as Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning the Strengthening of Character Education. Meanwhile, secondary sources include accredited journal articles, conference proceedings, and relevant research reports. The selection of literature was carried out selectively by considering certain criteria, including the year of publication, which was between 2015 and 2024 to ensure the novelty of the information, except for classical literature that has theoretical significance, as well as the relevance of the topic to the focus of the study. Sources that are popular, non-scientific, or cannot be verified for validity were excluded from the study.

Data collection was conducted through systematic searches of various academic databases, such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, Garuda Kemdikbud, ResearchGate, and Scopus. The search process used keywords in Indonesian and English related to Islamic Religious Education, moral education, character

development, elementary schools, and the era of disruption. All literature found was then selected to ensure its relevance to the study focus.

Data analysis used content analysis techniques as described by Krippendorff (2018). This analysis was conducted by carefully reading each selected source, identifying main themes, and interpreting the interrelationships between themes within the framework of Islamic education theory. To ensure the validity of the findings, the researcher applied source triangulation by comparing information from various types of literature and conducting peer debriefing to test the consistency of interpretations. This approach enabled the study to produce a comprehensive, valid, and relevant narrative synthesis for the needs of character development in elementary school students in the era of disruption.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

The results of the literature review indicate that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and moral education play complementary roles in shaping the character of elementary school students. From the analysis of various literature, it was found that IRE serves as a theological and spiritual foundation that instills values of faith, worship, and morality in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Moral education, on the other hand, plays a role in strengthening the ethical-practical dimensions that shape adaptive social behavior, such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and empathy.

The literature review also shows that the challenges of the disruption era, characterized by unlimited information flows, digital media penetration, and shifting social values, have a significant impact on children's character development. Several studies have noted that uncontrolled exposure to gadgets and social media triggers imitative behavior toward digital public figures, reduces face-to-face interaction, and weakens social engagement in the school environment (Livingstone & Third, 2017; Wijayanti & Puspita, 2024).

Additionally, it has been found that most elementary schools in Indonesia still implement PAI and moral education separately, both in curriculum planning and teaching practices. This results in a suboptimal character-building process, as religious and moral values are not integrated into a comprehensive strategy. Conversely, research applying an integrated model of both has shown positive results on student behavior, for example, through thematic learning based on the exemplary stories of the Prophet combined with social activities at school (Fadilah, 2020).

The following is a summary of the main literature findings that form the basis of this research:

Table 1. Summary of Literature Findings

No	Author & Year	Research Focus	Key Findings
1	Rahman (2021)	The role of PAI in character building in the digital age	PAI is effective in shaping character when integrated with universal moral values.
2	Fadilah (2020)	Integration of PAI and moral education in thematic learning	Enhancing empathy and cooperative behavior among elementary school students.
3	Hidayat (2019)	Religious practices in elementary schools	Improving self-control and social awareness through religious routines.
4	Livingstone & Third (2017)	The impact of digital media on child development	Uncontrolled digital exposure significantly affects children's values and behavior.

No	Author & Year	Research Focus	Key Findings
5	Wijayanti & Puspita (2024)	The challenge of character education in the era of disruption	Authority shifts from teachers/parents to digital public figures.
6	Maulida et al. (2023)	PAI as a bastion of values in elementary schools	PAI instills spiritual values and morals as the basis for character building.

These findings reinforce the argument that the integration of PAI and moral education is an urgent need in elementary schools, especially in response to the challenges of the era of disruption. The data collected provides a basis for discussion on effective implementation strategies that are relevant to the current educational context.

3.2 Discussion

The results of the literature review indicate that the integration of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and moral education has a very strong relevance in shaping the character of elementary school students, especially amid the challenges of the disruption era. IRE provides a spiritual foundation rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, while moral education strengthens universal ethical-practical skills. The combination of the two produces a holistic character education model, in which aspects of belief, knowledge, and moral behavior support each other.

This finding is in line with Al-Abrasyi's (1993) opinion, which emphasizes that Islamic education aims to shape individuals who are wholehearted in their faith, knowledgeable, and of noble character. In the current context, this goal has become increasingly relevant given the increasingly complex moral challenges faced by the younger generation. Rahman's (2021) study reinforces that religion-based character education is more effective when combined with universal moral values, as it can be widely accepted and internalized in various social interactions.

In the context of the era of disruption, the existence of PAI and moral education serves as a kind of "counterbalance" to the negative influence of digital media. Livingstone & Third (2017) and Wijayanti & Puspita (2024) show that uncontrolled exposure to digital content has shifted the authority of values from teachers and parents to digital public figures. This has an impact on the formation of imitative behavior that is not always in line with religious and local cultural norms. Therefore, education in schools must be able to adapt to this digital reality through a contextual and participatory approach.

Contextual learning strategies that link teaching materials to real life have proven effective in improving understanding and practice of values. For example, teaching the concept of trustworthiness in Islamic Education can be directly linked to the habit of taking care of shared property or completing group tasks on time. This aligns with Fadilah's (2020) research, which found that integrating Islamic Education with social project activities can enhance empathy and a helping attitude among students.

Additionally, teacher role modeling is a key factor that cannot be overlooked. Muslich (2018) emphasizes that teacher role modeling has a stronger influence than verbal instructions in instilling moral values. Children tend to mimic behaviors they observe directly, so teachers' consistency in their actions serves as an effective learning medium.

The involvement of parents and the community is also an important component in character-building strategies. Hidayat (2019) shows that religious habits supported by the home environment can strengthen students' self-control. Activities such as praying together, weekly donations, and studying values through inspirational stories can serve as a bridge between learning at school and nurturing at home.

However, the implementation of PAI and moral education integration is not without challenges. The heavy curriculum load often makes character education an afterthought rather than a primary

focus. Limited digital literacy among teachers and parents also hinders supervision of children's media consumption. Therefore, a flexible and integrative curriculum design is needed, where character education becomes the core of cross-subject learning.

Thus, this discussion emphasizes that the integration of PAI and moral education is not only relevant but absolutely necessary in the context of basic education in the era of disruption. An educational model that combines religious values and universal morals, supported by contextual learning, teacher role modeling, and family involvement, has the potential to shape a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also morally and spiritually resilient.

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the integration of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and moral education is a solid foundation for character development in elementary school students, especially amid the challenges of the disruption era marked by the rapid flow of information, the penetration of digital media, and shifts in social values. IR provides a theological and spiritual foundation rooted in the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, while moral education reinforces practical ethical skills that enable students to behave adaptively and ethically in social life. The study results indicate that the integration of these two fields not only strengthens the internalization of values but also serves as a preventive strategy against the negative influences of digital media. Contextual learning, teacher role modeling, the cultivation of positive behaviors, and the active involvement of parents and the community have proven effective in optimizing character development. However, challenges such as an overloaded curriculum, low digital literacy, and the weakening of traditional value authority require systematic solutions through flexible and integrative curriculum design. Based on these findings, this study recommends several practical steps: first, schools need to design a curriculum that places character education at the core of cross-subject learning; second, teachers must strengthen their role as role models of values through consistent attitudes and behavior; third, parents and the community must actively participate in character development through supervision and habit formation at home; fourth, digital literacy among educators and parents must be enhanced to address the challenges of digital media. With a well-planned strategy and a solid educational ecosystem, the integration of PAI and moral education can shape a generation that is faithful, knowledgeable, virtuous, and capable of adapting to global dynamics without losing their Islamic and Indonesian identity.

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