



## Original Article

### Islamic Religious Education as Student Character Development in the Millennial Era

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#### Abstract:

The millennial phenomenon becomes very interesting when faced with the condition of Islamic education in Indonesia. On the one hand, Islamic education has a target and orientation to create perfect human beings. However, on the other hand, at the same time, Islamic education must be able to develop the skills, abilities, potential and behavior of its followers in responding to internal challenges and the challenges of the global world that has opened wide before us. "Hard impacts" will be increasingly felt and it will not be easy to reduce them, when Islamic education has to struggle and struggle with the world of the millennial era. When it comes to millennials, there are several problems that are already facing the world of Islamic education. This research aims to analyze the perspective of Islamic religious education in building student character in the current of globalization in the millennial era. The research method used is a qualitative method with a qualitative-phenomenological approach. The research subjects were Balikpapan University FKIP students who were selected using purposive sampling. The object of this research is students in the role of Islamic Religious Education in the formation of morals and character in the millennial generation era. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews and documentation. The main instrument in this research is the researcher himself. Testing the validity of the data is carried out by: extending observations, increasing persistence, triangulation. Data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The research findings show that the role of Islamic religious education for students in the millennial era is seen as the guardian of national and religious values to produce quality Muslim scholars.

**Keywords:** Islamic Religious Education, Millennials and Character

#### Introduction

*In* the millennial era, character formation is the foundation of social buildings. A nation that is moral, oriented towards social welfare, tough, competitive, is a nation that has a generation of character. A generation with character is a generation with a moral spirit, based on a spirit of faith and piety in God Almighty, creating a safe and prosperous social life as the hope that the Pancasila philosophy aspires to.



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The increasingly worrying phenomenon of moral crisis occurring in society and in the educational environment is the main reason for the importance of character education in the world of education. Criminal acts, injustice, corruption, violations of human rights, are concrete evidence that there has been a moral and exemplary crisis in our nation. Students who used to be able to build close relationships with friends while socializing, are now more interested in deviant relationships. The busy time needed to gather and do assignments with friends has now been defeated by immoral agendas. This activity has a big influence on educational institutions. Islamic religious education in higher education is mandatory education and is no less important for human life, which is directly related to all the potential they have ([Murdiono, 2010](#)). Islamic religious education is taught in universities as a form of providing a basis for developing students' personalities so that they become intellectuals who always believe in Allah SWT, have good character, think critically and act rationally. Apart from that, education is also a system that can contribute to a new paradigm ([Hidayat & Wakhidah, 2015](#)). In Khaldun's view, education is a social phenomenon that is an innate characteristic of humans because of the demands of life and the nature of the innate mind. So education is not always in formal institutions.

The rapid progress of science and technology as well as communication is increasingly accelerating the process of globalization on the face of the earth. At the same time, a new period or era has emerged after globalization, namely the millennial era. Indirectly, the emergence of the millennial era is both a challenge and a hope for everyone. On the one hand, the millennial era has given rise to a generation that lives without distance, space and time to hinder it. In one hand; space, distance and time can be transcended in a moment. If you don't have a strong filter and control over the development of the millennial era, it is not impossible that this generation will be exposed to the millennial effect, namely, based on technological sophistication, making something fun, attractive and so on. In such conditions, Nata predicts that humans will tend to act freely by putting aside spiritual, moral and religious foundations.

All information is absorbed and obtained through sophisticated technology and communication, requiring them to always be on communication devices. If you are not used to or do not use communication tools, then the person will be perceived as being far from up to date information. This is because the millennial era demands speed and ease in accessing information. Furthermore, the millennial generation in daily life activities has different characteristics and behavior from previous generations. According to Faturahman in Barni, there are seven characteristics and behaviors of the millennial generation, namely; This generation trusts interactive information more than unidirectional information, the millennial generation prefers cell phones rather than TV, the millennial generation is obliged to have social media, the millennial generation is less interested in reading conventionally, the millennial generation is more technologically literate than their parents, The millennial generation tends to be disloyal but works effectively, and the millennial generation is starting to make more cashless transactions. Islam as a religion that regulates life cannot be separated from formulating an education system. Islam has a good contribution to supporting the formation of national and homeland character. According to Fakhry Gaffar, character education has three characters, namely the process of transforming values, which are developed in personality, into behavior ([Hasyim, 2015](#)). Islamic education is recognized for its truth in the education system which is divided into three things, namely: First, Islamic education as an institution is explicitly recognized as an Islamic educational institution. Second, Islamic

education as a subject or subject at tertiary level is recognized as one of the subjects that must be taught. Third, Islamic education as a value, namely the discovery of Islamic values in the education system (Daulay, 2009). The basis of Islamic education refers to sources of truth and strength that can lead us to the things we aspire to. The things contained therein can reflect universal values and can be consumed by all mankind (Arif, 2008). The term character is generally referred to as the "identity" of an individual in a national society, although the term actually has a broader meaning than the term identity. Philosophically, Indonesian people who have national character and homeland can be interpreted as people who follow the values of Pancasila.

The word "character" can be interpreted from the Latin "karakter", "kharassein", and "kharax" which means "tools for making", "to engrave", and "pointed stake". This word was widely used again in French "caractere" in the 14th century and then entered English as "character". The term character comes from the Greek, "charasein" which means to carve to form a pattern. Noble morals are not automatically possessed by every human being from birth, but require a long process through education and the upbringing of parents or the surrounding environment. The role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping the character of students in this millennial era is through Islamic Religious Education courses (Ningsih, 2019) and Islamic Spiritual UKM. Apart from that, the success of character education is greatly influenced by the leadership of the school principal (Syarifah, 2019). The specific objectives of Islamic Religious Education courses in higher education are: 1) Achieving faith and devotion in students and achieving the ability to use Islamic religious teachings as a basis for behavior, determining whether an action is correct or not, and developing the scientific discipline being pursued. 2) Forming students who are devout, namely obedient to Allah SWT in carrying out their worship by emphasizing the development of Muslim personalities. 3) Produce students who will later become knowledgeable religious people, and not scientists in the field of religion. 4) Form a positive attitude and discipline as well as love for religion in various lives that are expected to be pious and tolerant people.

Some of the challenges of Islamic students in the millennial era or this era of globalization, if related to the predicate of Muslim intellectuals attached to them, can be internal challenges for Muslims (Nasir, 2012), such as low levels of education, fanaticism of schools and sects, the existence of divisions among Muslims in some circles, lack the Muslim community's understanding of the teachings of the Islamic religion, and so on. To find a solution, several previous studies have been conducted on the influence of Islamic education in shaping the character of students in the millennial era. This research will analyze educational perspectives in building student character in the current of globalization in the millennial era.

## Methods

In writing this research, the method used is a qualitative method with a descriptive qualitative approach, where this descriptive approach will explain the data obtained and then describe it in written and narrative form in a naturalistic or natural way so that it is easier for readers to understand. A qualitative approach can be used to understand and analyze research data. This approach involves text analysis, concepts, and interpretation. Through a qualitative approach, we can gain a sharp understanding of the role of Islamic religious education in building the character of generation Z. This kind of research can help formulate relevant educational strategies and interventions to increase understanding of religion among the younger generation.

In this research, the method used is a qualitative method with a qualitative-phenomenological approach. The subjects of this research were several university students in Indonesia. This research was conducted online. Determining research subjects using purposive sampling. The objects of this research are students who depend on gadgets in their daily lives and students in the role of Islamic Religious Education in forming the morals and character of the millennial generation. Data collection technique used are observation, interviews and documentation. The main instrument in this research is the researcher himself. Testing the validity of the data is carried out by: extending observations, increasing persistence, triangulation,. Data analysis uses Miles and Huberman's interactive model through four stages, which include: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

## Results

In the millennial era, character formation is a foundation of social building, this is driven by the phenomenon of moral crisis occurring in society and in the educational environment which is increasingly worrying and is the main reason for the importance of character education in the world of education. Islam as a religion that regulates life cannot be separated from formulating the education system. Islam also has a good contribution in supporting the formation of national and homeland character. Education is also a conscious and planned effort carried out by teachers or lecturers to achieve learning process activities in the classroom and outside the classroom. Character education is not enough just to go through a process of memorizing material or answering questions.

### a. The role of Islamic religious education in higher education.

Education is a significant agent of change in character formation and Islamic religious education is part of this process, but in reality Islamic religious education is only material in schools or only teaching material without any application in everyday life. So the function of Islamic religious education is to shape morals (religious education does not work well). System Learning Islamic Religious Education in Higher Education is an organized combination that includes human elements, materials, facilities, equipment and procedures that interact to achieve a goal (Solihin, 2020). The elements in the learning system include students, lecturers, and people who support the implementation of learning. Material elements in the learning system include classrooms, computers, projectors, and so on.

The main objective of learning Islamic religious education in higher education is the formation of personality in students which is reflected in their behavior and thought patterns in everyday life, so learning Islamic religious education is not only the full responsibility of course lecturers in shaping student character in the millennial era. ,but it requires support from the entire campus community, society and more importantly parents, universities must be able to coordinate and communicate Islamic religious education learning patterns to several parties who have been mentioned as a series of communities that support and protect each other for the formation of students with morals and have noble character ([Ainah, Nur, 2013](#)).

### b. The Process of Forming Religious Character in Students in the Millennial Era

In the Indonesian context, the millennial era is a challenge of the times that must be solved, with the majority of the population being Muslim, so the emergence of this era indirectly has its own impact on the continuity of the Islamic education

process. The emergence of borderless space due to the development and progress of information technology is erasing existing barriers. There are no more boundaries between countries, between nations and between classes. This phenomenon and dynamic has entered even small spaces. An important process of globalization is giving birth to the gadget generation, a term often used to mark the birth of the millennial generation.

According to (Mukhlas, 2020), the role of Islamic Religious Education in character building in students in the millennial era can be carried out actively through the Islamic Spirituality UKM (Student Activity Unit) and Islamic Religious Education courses which are given on average in the 1st or 2nd semester. 2. The role of UKM (Student Activity Units) on campus is as a tool in forming student character which can counter all potential negative things done by some students. The following is the implementation of religious character formation through UKM (Student Activity Unit) Islamic Spirituality Students, namely:

1. Moral Knowing. In this case, students or management members in the organization will have deeper knowledge about Islam than previously obtained. This stage is the foundation or key to gaining new knowledge that students may not have obtained before.
2. Character is formed. The character that is formed from participating in Islamic Spirituality UKM (Student Activity Unit) in higher education is: a) Islam. Islam is interpreted as a religious character in the form of norms or regulations that are in accordance with Islamic law which has been determined in the Al-Quran and serve as guidelines for the formation of religious character. This religious character is wisdom from the continuation of the faith that students believe in. This can strengthen students' self-determination. b) Sincere. Students can develop a sincere character because they come to the forum without any form of coercion from anyone but themselves. This is a form of sincerity which shows that the process of seeking knowledge is solely due to Allah SWT. This can be seen from every time the forum is held, there are no punishments or burdensome things done to students. c) Taqwa. Taqwa is an action that avoids all prohibitions of Allah SWT and carries out all forms of His commands. The character of piety will be formed in students by taking part in studies and studying Islamic sciences to gain the pleasure of Allah SWT. This is obtained by studying material that was previously unknown to students so that after knowing it it will have an impact on their characteristics so that they are more devoted to Allah SWT. d) Moral Acting. Students or management members are trained to carry out actions or actions that are in accordance with what they have previously learned and the actions they take can be accounted for answer. So that the process of knowledge and action has a balanced proportion. However, if this is not done, then the knowledge that has been obtained will be in vain.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Higher Education has different values from other subjects. Apart from humanism and religious values, it is also a basis for thinking and behaving in everyday life. Islamic Religious Education is a continuation of the teaching received by students starting from Elementary, Middle and High School levels. Apart from that, seeing changes in students' mindsets and the development of science, various efforts are needed to optimize Islamic and Science Disciplines (IDI) books. It is also necessary to develop PAI through a science approach pursued by each

student's study program by looking at sub-topics through scientific disciplines. specifically as an enrichment of Islamic Religious Education in Higher Education.

### Conclusion

The orientation of Islamic religious education is that this education indirectly requires us to carry out a national education process that is consistent and integralistic towards achieving the final goal. The formation of complete Indonesian humans of superior quality who develop and grow based on a balanced pattern of life between the outer and the inner, between the physical and the spiritual or between mental, spiritual and material physical life. In Islamic language, forming a human being who can homeostatically develop himself in a pattern of life whose treasures of fiddun and treasures of the afterlife are protected from the torment of hellfire, simultaneously cannot be separated between the two elements. Character education is not enough just to go through a process of memorizing material or answering exam questions, but the most important thing is habituation. The habit of doing good and avoiding evil. Character is not formed instantly, but requires sincerity, proportional seriousness and habituation through repetition until it becomes a habit. Islamic religious education has an important role in forming the character of students in the millennial era, which in essence is being able to form pious people, namely people who are obedient and devoted to Allah SWT, in carrying out their worship by emphasizing the development of the Muslim personality, namely the development of akhlaqul karimah. Apart from that, Islamic religious education also has an impact on understanding worldly and everyday affairs.

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