Proceedings of The 3rd International Conference on Science and Islamic Studies
ISSN: 3024-9058 (Online - Elektronik)
Volume: 3, 2025
Publisher: Program Pascasarjana, UIN Alauddin Makassar

THE IMPLICATIONS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL VALUES ON THE CHARACTER OF STUDENTS AT SULTAN MUHAMMAD SYAFIUDDIN UNIVERSITY IN SAMBAS

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ABSTRACT

The formation of student character is a strategic agenda for higher education institutions amid socio-cultural dynamics, the acceleration of information flow, and the weakening of discipline and social awareness. In this context, Islamic education is significant because it offers a framework for guidance that integrates spiritual and social dimensions. This study examines the implications of internalizing Islamic educational values on student character at Sultan Muhammad Syafiuddin University Sambas (UNISSAS) through the Character Education Program (PENDIKAR). This study aims to describe the implementation of PENDIKAR as a new student development program, explain the development of Islamic values in the aspects of worship and morals in a series of program activities, and analyze its implications for the character building of students. This study uses a qualitative field approach with a descriptive-exploratory design. Data were collected through observation of guidance activities, semi-structured interviews with program managers, supervising lecturers, and students, as well as program documentation review. Data were analyzed thematically through reduction, presentation, and conclusion-verification. The results of the study indicate that the internalization of faith, worship, and moral values through habit formation, role modeling, and peer support has implications for strengthening discipline, responsibility (trust), social awareness, and Islamic leadership that emphasizes justice, deliberation, and humility. An important finding of this study is the transfer of values from worship habits to academic and organizational discipline, as well as the expansion of the impact to the family and community environments.

Keywords: Islamic education values; Character education; Higher education

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential foundation in shaping individuals who are not only intellectually superior but also spiritually and morally strong (Noviani et al., 2025). Education based on religious values, especially Islam, offers a more profound dimension in character building, including the comprehensive development of students' cognitive, moral, and spiritual aspects (Fuady & Rizaldi,

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2024). The integration of Islamic values into higher education curricula has proven effective in shaping a strong and positive student identity, enabling them to not only understand religious teachings but also internalize them in their daily lives (Eryandi, 2023). The instillation of Islamic values, which include modesty, tolerance, honesty, responsibility, and the ability to worship, is expected to shape students' well-rounded personalities (Pamungkas, 2017). This condition encourages the need to strengthen character education that does not stop at slogans but is present in structured, sustainable programs that are integrated with campus culture.

Sultan Muhammad Syafiuddin Sambas University, commonly known as UNISSAS, as a university in a border region, responds to the challenge of character building through the implementation of a Character Education Program, commonly known as PENDIKAR, based on Islamic values. This program is designed as a mandatory activity for all new students for two semesters (one year) as stipulated in the Rector's Decree Number 067 of 2023. The program content includes strengthening religious understanding, soft skills training, and community service. With this design, PENDIKAR is positioned not merely as an orientation or temporary development activity, but as a mechanism for internalizing values that has sufficient time and space to cultivate habits and relatively permanent character traits in students.

The values developed in PENDIKAR emphasize the three main dimensions of Islamic character education, namely faith, worship, and morals. Aqidah is understood as the foundation of belief that determines life orientation and value standards; worship becomes an exercise in consistency, discipline, and self-awareness; while akhlak is the manifestation of values in real behavior, such as honesty, responsibility, mutual respect, social concern, and trustworthy leadership. PENDIKAR also emphasizes the practice of values in students' daily lives through campus activities (e.g., congregational prayers, tadarus, regular studies, communal prayers) and social activities. Thus, character education at UNISSAS not only focuses on the cognitive aspect (knowledge of values) but also on the affective and psychomotor aspects (habituation and practice).

Previous studies have also discussed the importance of character education at various levels of education, including in higher education, with a focus on curriculum relevance, the role of teachers, and program implementation to shape the character of students (Alam et al., 2025; Musyawir et al., 2024; Oviana & Rijal, 2021). In particular, the integration of Islamic values into the curriculum is considered fundamental to developing strong intellectual, moral, and spiritual capacities in students (Fadilah et al., 2025). Character building, as one of the main objectives of Islamic education, is relevant to strengthening religious values among students, given that education can significantly reduce moral degradation (Yulianti et al., 2018).

This study explores how the systematic implementation of these values at Sultan Muhammad Syafiuddin Sambas University contributes to shaping student character in line with the objectives of Islamic education. This is crucial considering that the of Islamic religious education in higher education serves as a reinforcement and moral foundation for students, where most of the noble values are found in Islamic teachings (Sari et al., 2023, p. 206). However, the phenomenon of rampant immoral behavior among teenagers, even in Islamic higher education environments, indicates that the implementation of Islamic values-based character education has not been optimal (Bardansyah, 2017). Therefore, this study is relevant to analyze in depth the

implications of Islamic educational values on the character of students at Sultan Muhammad Syafiuddin Sambas University, with the hope of identifying more effective strategies in strengthening morality and ethics among the academic community (Eryandi, 2023).

However, studies on Islamic values-based character education in higher education still leave a research gap in two aspects. First, many studies position character education as an ideal norm or short-term program evaluation, so evidence regarding the mechanisms of sustainable internalization of values (over one semester) and how it 'translates' into academic behavior and student leadership is still limited. Second, there are still few studies that link the practice of habituating worship and morals in the campus ecosystem with the framework of moral psychology—for example, the relationship between religious training, self-discipline, and ethical action—which in the international literature is often discussed as the 'gap between moral reasoning and action' (Rest's Four-Component Model). Starting from this gap, the novelty of this research lies in mapping the process of internalization of faith-worship-moral values through the PENDIKAR program that runs for two semesters, and explaining the trajectory of its impact: from habituating worship to academic/organizational discipline, then expanding to social concern and Islamic leadership, including spillover effects to the family and surrounding community.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the PENDIKAR program at UNISSAS, examine the development of Islamic values in the aspects of worship and morals, and explore their implications for the character building of students. This objective is important to provide a complete picture of the Islamic-based character building model in higher education, as well as to map the forms of character change that emerge, both in personal and social dimensions. Specifically, this study will explore the extent to which religious character values can be internalized by students through Islamic education at UNISSAS. This is in line with efforts to achieve the desired character values, such as being devoted to God Almighty and demonstrating religious attitudes, as well as always being polite and upholding human values (Setiyaningsih, 2020).

2. METHODS

This study uses qualitative research (field research), which is research where data collection is carried out directly in the field to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of internalizing values and its implications for student character. This study will use a descriptive analytical method to dissect the phenomenon that occurs, namely by explaining, analyzing, and interpreting the data collected (Rahmah et al., 2025). The approach used is descriptive-exploratory qualitative, supported by pedagogical and psychological approaches. The descriptive-exploratory qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to obtain a complete picture of the phenomenon being studied, while also exploring aspects that have not been explored in depth (Elwardiansyah et al., 2025, p. 1302).

The research location was centered at Sultan Muhammad Syafiuddin Sambas University (UNISSAS) with a focus on the implementation of the Character Education Program (PENDIKAR). Subjects/informants were determined purposively, namely those who were directly involved and understood the design, implementation, and impact of the program. Key informants included the

Head of PUSLATBIMA, the PUSLATBIMA Coordinator/PENDIKAR Coordinator, lecturers/advisors, and students participating in PENDIKAR. The selection of these informants aimed to ensure that the data obtained truly represented the guidance process from the perspective of the program managers, implementers, and participants.

The data collection methods will include in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis to obtain rich data and triangulate information (Eryandi, 2023, p. 14). Interview techniques will be used to explore collective understanding and group dynamics, while classroom observations will assess the implementation of these values in practice and the interactions between teachers and students (Idris, 2023). Document analysis, such as syllabi, lesson plans, and student activity reports, will also be conducted to complement data from interviews and observations, in order to comprehensively strengthen the research findings (Ningrum , et al., 2022). Data validity testing will be conducted through triangulation of sources and techniques, ensuring the credibility of the research findings (Anggraini et al., 2023). The data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation will then be analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach (Maulana & Fihayati, 2025).

Data analysis will be conducted qualitatively with reference to the stages outlined by Miles and Huberman, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction will involve filtering, summarizing, and categorizing raw data obtained from the field to focus on relevant aspects that support the research objectives (Cahyanto et al., 2022). Data presentation will then be carried out in the form of descriptive narratives to describe the findings systematically and coherently, followed by drawing conclusions that interpret the meaning of the data in depth (Iswahyudi & Widihastuti, 2024). Data validity will be checked through triangulation techniques, by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation, to ensure the validity of the findings (Tiara & Yarni, 2019). Through this stage, researchers can identify patterns, themes, and relationships between data to build a comprehensive understanding of the implications of Islamic educational values on student character (Faturrahmi et al., 2022).

Research ethics considerations were addressed by emphasizing the principles of informant consent, openness of research objectives, and responsible use of data. Interviews were recorded after obtaining permission, and the identities of informants were kept confidential as necessary for scientific reporting, so that the data collection process respected the rights and comfort of participants.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Character Education (PENDIKAR) at the University

The results of the study indicate that character building at UNISSAS is carried out through the Character Education Program (PENDIKAR), which emphasizes three dimensions of Islamic education: faith, worship, and morals. This program does not stop at delivering theory, but emphasizes the practice of Islamic values in students' daily lives. PENDIKAR is carried out over two semesters and combines classroom training with campus and social activities, so that the process of value education is continuous and contextual.

This holistic approach ensures that students not only understand Islamic values cognitively but also internalize them through real-life practices in various aspects of life (Esmael & Nafiah, 2019). This is in line with the efforts of other institutions to instill religious values through habitual activities (Cahyanto et al., 2022) and is part of the university's comprehensive strategy to shape the religious character of students as a whole (Wahyuningsih et al., 2022).

At the strategic level, the program's implementation relies on the approaches of habituation, role modeling, and peer influence. This pattern is important because character building requires a consistent environment, not just normative guidance. Therefore, PENDIKAR functions as a "development ecosystem" that provides activities, role models, and a social climate that supports the internalization of Islamic values on campus. The program includes the habit of praying in congregation, reciting the Qur'an, and praying together, which continuously internalizes affective and psychomotor values in students, in line with practices in other Islamic educational institutions (Muslih, 2022). The habit of giving alms is also applied to foster the character of "giving" and " " (the opposite of stealing), which is integrated through programs such as Friday almsgiving and zakat distribution (Khulasoh & Saefullah, 2025). In addition, the PENDIKAR program also encourages active student participation in internal university organizations, which has been proven to increase their confidence and responsibility in taking initiative (Aulia et al., 2024). This approach is in line with the principles of character education that emphasize the importance of direct experience to strengthen the internalization of values (Alam et al., 2025).

In practice, the program also adopts active learning to ensure that students directly experience the character-building process. Students are involved in leadership simulations, group work, and community service so that character building is not only understood but also practiced through real experiences. The head of PUSLATBIMA emphasized that students "play the role of leaders" and make decisions based on Islamic values, as well as collaborate on social projects that require real contributions. This is reinforced by the role of structured religious activities in providing direct experiences and strengthening students' religious identity, in line with findings that strengthening the religious curriculum can improve student character through role models and habituation (Burhanuddin & Khairuddin, 2022). This approach is also in line with the character-building strategy implemented at UIN Malang, which integrates pesantren/ma'had programs with the campus curriculum and uses the behavior of leaders as role models for students (Mulyono et al., 2020).

Conceptually, these findings reinforce the idea that Islamic educational values are more effective in shaping character when practiced in routines and social experiences. With a two-semester design and an active approach, PENDIKAR provides sufficient space to build "value habits" (values that become patterns of behavior), not just knowledge of values. This character education model shows that the internalization of religious values can be optimized through continuous habit-forming programs, which have a significant impact on the character development of students (Fatonah et al., 2024). This positive impact also includes the ability of students to appreciate Islamic values more deeply, while helping to reduce negative behaviors such as juvenile delinquency (Gunawan, 2023, p. 20).

This approach is also reinforced by research showing that the integration of religious values through direct experience and habit formation can significantly improve students' positive character (Fuad, 2018). This strategy is in line with the view that the internalization of character values must be systematic, from planning to evaluation, and supported by a coherent academic culture in terms of faith, morals, and muamalah (Ilya & Wahyuni, 2025). Therefore, the sustainability of PENDIKAR in shaping the character of UNISSAS students does not only rely on curriculum materials, but also on a campus ecosystem that facilitates the consistent application of these values (Hasanah, 2013).

Development of Islamic Values in the Aspect of Worship

In terms of worship, the results of the study show that the habit of worship is the main strategy for instilling religiosity. The campus facilitates worship spaces (campus mosques) and encourages routines such as congregational prayers, Quran recitation, communal prayers, and regular studies as daily practices that instill the values of order, obedience, and sincerity. This habit formation does not only take place through instruction, but is reinforced through the example set by lecturers and the support of peers. The consistent implementation of congregational prayers and other non-academic religious activities has proven to be effective in enhancing religious character and instilling discipline and moral awareness in students (Marauleng et al., 2024). This habit formation not only shapes ritual obedience but also fosters personal discipline manifested in compliance with campus rules and ethics (Cahyanto et al., 2022). Through the repetition of these worship practices, students gradually internalize values such as patience, honesty, and self-control, which ultimately influence their actions outside the ritualistic context (Ramadhan et al., 2025). For example, religious habit-forming activities, such as congregational dhuha prayers and reading short surahs, have been shown to shape the disciplined character of students (Fadilah et al., 2025; Hijriyah & Susanti, 2024).

The apparent implication is an increase in the consistency of students' worship not only on campus but also at home. Parents of students witness changes in routines, such as the habit of waking up earlier and being more consistent in performing prayers, as well as being active in religious activities in the neighborhood. This shows the spillover effect of the internalization of values from the campus environment to the family. In addition, this worship habit formation program also significantly contributes to the development of religious moderation among students, where routine activities such as communal prayer and religious discussions reinforce the values of tolerance and social solidarity (Capriatin et al., 2025).

These findings explain the direct relationship between worship as spiritual practice and personal character building. Worship that is practiced and supervised by campus culture primarily builds time discipline, self-control, and consistency, which are then "transferred" to academic behavior and social responsibility. The habit of praying in congregation, in particular, has been proven effective in instilling the values of discipline, order, and patience, all of which are essential for the comprehensive character building of students (Azwar, 2023). Consistency in performing worship also trains students to have perseverance and mental resilience in facing academic and non-academic challenges (Bissalam et al., 2024). Furthermore, regular religious activities such as congregational prayer can increase spiritual awareness and form positive habits that lead to improved personal and collective discipline among students (Andriane & Erhamwilda, 2020).

Development of Islamic Values in the Aspect of Morality

In terms of character, the study found changes in student behavior through habituation, role modeling, and direct practice. Character is understood not only as classroom material, but also instilled in student organization activities, community service, and daily academic interactions as practical exercises in good character. Students are guided to strengthen the values of honesty, responsibility, politeness, tolerance, and caring. The implementation of these values is reinforced through social projects, where students learn to work together, develop empathy, and solve community problems, as well as through extracurricular activities that encourage moral and ethical practices in real situations (Harahap et al., 2024). This moral habit formation is also supported by the instillation of holistic religious character values, where integrity, politeness, and empathy are an integral part of the learning experience (Alam et al., 2025). The increase in tolerance and empathy, as shown by several studies, proves the effectiveness of this approach in shaping students' social character (Nuha et al., 2024).

The dimension of social character appears strong in student involvement in social activities and community service. Parents confirm an increase in awareness, for example, students are more sensitive to their surroundings, encourage their families to participate in social activities, and set an example for their younger siblings. This confirms that the internalization of moral values shapes social character that is "visible" outside the campus. This positive impact is not only limited to the family environment ( ) but also extends to the community, where students show initiative in humanitarian activities and courage in voicing social justice. This discussion underlines that the cultivation of morals is not merely a transfer of knowledge, but an active process of habit formation and internalization of values that produces individuals with character, social sensitivity, and agents of change in society (Harahap et al., 2024). This approach is in line with the view that the formation of Islamic character should be able to encourage individuals to contribute positively to society, overcome negative behavior, and become role models for others (Anwar et al., 2023).

The aspect of morals becomes a bridge between individual piety and social piety. When students are trained to interact, collaborate, and serve, moral values move from personal attitudes to concrete social actions. This is in line with the finding that students involved in student organizations show an increase in integrity, responsibility, and academic ethics (Harefa & Waruwu, 2025, p. 66). Islamic education that integrates akhlakul karimah with real-life contexts, such as through discussions of cases of academic dishonesty or tolerance, enables students to critically internalize morality and apply it in various social dynamics (Alam et al., 2025). This implementation is also in line with the holistic goals of Islamic education, where integral character development not only includes moral and emotional dimensions, but also intellectual growth that prepares individuals to contribute positively to society (Idris, 2023).

Implications of Islamic Educational Values on Student Character

In line with the focus of the research title, the findings show that Islamic educational values internalized through PENDIKAR have implications for four key characteristics of UNISSAS students:

1) Discipline and responsibility

The internalization of Islamic values has been proven to foster discipline and responsibility in both academic and organizational settings. The document's conclusion emphasizes that

student character is reflected in punctuality, task completion, and a trustworthy attitude in carrying out roles. This aspect is in line with the view that Islamic education serves as a pillar for the formation of individual morals and ethics, shaping honest, disciplined, and responsible character through the practice of religious teachings (Romlah & Rusdi, 2023). Furthermore, the consistent practice of these values reinforces the formation of a character with integrity and competence in facing various challenges (Yulianti & Sulistyowati, 2018).

2) Social awareness

Students demonstrate social sensitivity and active involvement in community activities. Data from parents describes changes in student behavior, which is more responsive to the social needs of the community and encourages family members to participate in social activities. This phenomenon indicates that the internalization of Islamic educational values not only shapes individual character but also stimulates collective awareness and active participation in building a better society (Nuha et al., 2024). This aspect is crucial in shaping responsible citizens, given that character education aims to instill moral and ethical values that are essential for personal and social life (Harahap et al., 2024).

3) Islamic Leadership

The program has implications for the growth of Islamic leadership: trustworthiness, fairness, humility, and deliberation. Students reported a change from being shy to becoming more confident in leadership, as well as understanding leaders as fair servants who fulfill their duties. Parents also witnessed students becoming "less selfish" and able to listen to others' opinions. The researchers' observations reinforced that students who were active in organizations applied the principles of syura (deliberation), 'adl (justice), and trustworthiness in leadership. Islamic education that emphasizes these values equips students with a strong moral foundation to become transformative leaders who are able to balance personal interests with the interests of the community (Faruq et al., 2025; Yazied, 2025). This is in line with the objectives of character education based on Islamic teachings, which seeks to shape individuals with integrity, professionalism, innovation, responsibility, and exemplary behavior (Muzakki et al., 2023).

4) Holistic Islamic character

The final findings summarize that PENDIKAR has succeeded in combining the dimensions of hablum minallah and hablum minannas to shape students who are faithful, disciplined, have noble character, are socially concerned, and are ready to become trustworthy leaders. This success indicates that the systematic integration of Islamic values into higher education curricula can significantly shape students' character to be strong and relevant to contemporary challenges (Marjuni, 2020). Therefore, comprehensive character development strategies, such as the integration of Islamic values into daily activities and character-based learning models, are essential for nurturing students who are globally competitive and morally grounded (Idawati et al., 2024; Suhendar et al., 2023).

Table 1. Research Findings

Dimension of Findings	Indicators of Observed Changes	Example Findings
Strengthening Worship	Consistency in prayer, recitation of the Qur'an, attending religious studies	Parents' testimonies about the habit of performing the dawn prayer and waking up early; students' testimonies about the habit of daily recitation and understanding the meaning of prayer
Character Development	Politeness, responsibility, social awareness	Students report being more caring, visiting sick friends as a habit; social character is built through interaction and service
Discipline & Responsibility	Punctuality, not delaying tasks, trustworthiness in organizations	Students view tasks as a "trust" like prayer, which cannot be delayed
Islamic Leadership	Fairness, trustworthiness, consultation, humility	Transformation from shy to confident leadership; parents confirm the change
Wide-ranging impact	Values carried home and into the community	Parents observe children becoming more active in mosque activities, even joining committees; students maintain religious practices at home

Source: Processed data (2025)

Overall, the implications of Islamic educational values on student character emerge due to three mutually reinforcing factors: (a) the habit of worship that instills discipline and self-control; (b) moral training through academic, organizational, and community service interactions; and (c) active learning that provides direct moral experiences in teamwork and leadership. This habit formation supports the idea that character building must include a holistic balance between physical, spiritual, social, economic, and aesthetic dimensions (Fuady & Rizaldi, 2024). The internalization of these values not only supports the formation of strong individual character, but also ensures that students are prepared to face the complexities of modern life with a strong moral foundation (Eryandi, 2023). Furthermore, the synergy between vision, mission, curriculum, policy, facilities, and evaluation in Islamic higher education institutions fundamentally plays a role in instilling these character values at every level of education (Oviana & Rijal, 2021).

Critical Notes and Implications

Although the findings indicate a positive impact, there are several critical caveats. First, because the research is qualitative, descriptive-exploratory, the evidence obtained is strong enough to explain the process and meaning of the experience, but not enough to conclude a causal relationship that PENDIKAR 'causes' character change; there is the possibility of other factors contributing, such as students' religious backgrounds, family influence, or campus organizational culture. Second, some indicators of change still rely on self-reports and parental testimony, which are susceptible to social-desirability bias; therefore, the findings are best read as indications of strengthening habits and value orientations, not as definitive measures of character. Third, the program of habituating worship has the potential to foster administrative ritual compliance if the evaluation only assesses attendance/discipline. To maintain the depth of internalization, space for critical reflection (muhasabah), ethical dialogue, and practice-based assessments (e.g., case studies of academic honesty, organizational conflict, or social service) are needed. Fourth, the impact of the “transfer of values” from religious services to academic

disciplines is interesting, but needs further investigation: whether it persists after the program is completed, and in what contexts it weakens (e.g., when the academic load increases or when students join external organizations). In line with the international literature on character education and service-learning, character strengthening tends to be more stable when the program runs for a long time, provides real-life experiences, and is accompanied by structured reflection. Therefore, PENDIKAR can be improved through (a) more systematic monitoring instruments; (b) peer mentoring; and (c) integration of community service that focuses on empathy, responsibility, and service leadership.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that Islamic educational values internalized through the Character Education Program (PENDIKAR) at Sultan Muhammad Syafiuddin Sambas University (UNISSAS) have a real impact on the character formation of students. The internalization of values based on the dimensions of faith, worship, and morals not only strengthens individual piety, but also brings about visible behavioral changes in academic, organizational, and social life. The most prominent implication is seen in the increase in student discipline and responsibility, which has developed from obedience to rules into religious awareness, for example, the interpretation of tasks as a mandate that must be fulfilled as worship. In addition, the strengthening of morals through social habits and experiences shapes students' concern for others, broadens their participation in community activities, and develops Islamic leadership characterized by trustworthiness, fairness, deliberation, and humility. The impact of internalizing these values also extends beyond campus, as demonstrated by the carryover of worship habits and positive social behavior into family and community environments. Therefore, Islamic values-based character education in higher education will be more effective if it is implemented as a sustainable development ecosystem through habit formation, role modeling, and peer support, so that religious values do not remain mere knowledge but become a living character in students' daily practices.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the leadership of UNISSAS, PUSLATBIMA along with the PENDIKAR coordinator, the supervising lecturers, the PENDIKAR student participants, and the parents/guardians of the informants for their support and contribution of data during the research. May this research be beneficial for strengthening Islamic values-based character education in higher education.

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