

**INTEGRATED ISLAMIC SCHOOLS AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO
PRESTIGIOUS SCHOOLS OF CHOICE FOR PARENTS IN BUILDING
CHILDREN'S CHARACTER**

Sonia Agustin

Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang

agustinsonia089@gmail.com

Muhammad Zalnur

Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang

muhammadzalnur@uinib.ac.id

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the role of Integrated Islamic Schools as an alternative to prestigious schools chosen by parents in an effort to build children's character. Integrated Islamic Schools offer a holistic educational approach that integrates Islamic values with the national curriculum, thus providing a balance between knowledge and character building. The main objective of Integrated Islamic Schools is to provide education that not only focuses on academic aspects, but also on the character and moral formation of students. Through a qualitative approach, this study examines parents' views on the effectiveness of Integrated Islamic Schools in educating their children. The results show that parents choose Integrated Islamic Schools because these schools are able to fulfill their expectations of education that not only focuses on academic achievement, but also on the development of children's character. A conducive school environment, the role of competent and dedicated teachers, and diverse extracurricular programs are supporting factors in character building. Integrated Islamic schools are also considered capable of creating an Islamic learning atmosphere and supporting children's moral development. The conclusion of this study is that Integrated Islamic Schools are the right choice for parents who want high-quality education that includes academic and moral aspects, and play an important role in shaping a young generation with noble character and achievements.

Keywords: Integrated Islamic School, Education.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peran Sekolah Islam Terpadu sebagai alternatif sekolah bergengsi yang dipilih oleh orang tua dalam upaya membangun karakter anak. Sekolah Islam Terpadu menawarkan pendekatan pendidikan holistik yang mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam dengan kurikulum nasional, sehingga mampu memberikan keseimbangan antara ilmu pengetahuan dan pembentukan akhlak anak. Tujuan utama dari Sekolah Islam Terpadu adalah untuk memberikan pendidikan yang tidak hanya fokus pada aspek akademik, tetapi juga pada pembentukan karakter dan moral peserta didik. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini mengkaji pandangan orang tua terhadap efektivitas Sekolah Islam Terpadu dalam mendidik anak-anak mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa orang tua memilih Sekolah Islam Terpadu karena sekolah ini mampu memenuhi harapan mereka terhadap pendidikan yang tidak hanya berfokus pada pencapaian akademik, tetapi juga pada pengembangan karakter anak. Lingkungan sekolah yang kondusif, peran guru yang berkompeten dan berdedikasi, serta program ekstrakurikuler yang beragam menjadi faktor penunjang dalam pembentukan karakter. Sekolah Islam Terpadu juga dianggap mampu menciptakan suasana belajar yang islami dan mendukung perkembangan moral anak. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa Sekolah Islam Terpadu merupakan pilihan yang tepat bagi orang tua yang menginginkan pendidikan berkualitas tinggi yang mencakup aspek akademik dan moral, serta berperan penting dalam membentuk generasi muda yang berakhlak mulia dan berprestasi.

Kata Kunci: Sekolah Islam Terpadu, Pendidikan Karakter.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a deliberate and designed effort to create a learning environment and develop experiences, with the aim that students can effectively improve their ability to have spiritual religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and the skills needed by themselves, society, and the country. (Hanum et al., 2024). Education plays a crucial role in shaping quality and responsible students, as well as developing the ability to face various challenges in the future. Education not only provides knowledge, but also encourages, accompanies, and guides the development of human life that continues to change. In the context of Islamic Education Schools, the main goal is the development of faith.

Character education has become a widely discussed topic among Indonesian society, especially in academic circles. In the midst of current social and cultural developments, there is a tendency for Indonesian society to ignore the noble values that have been upheld in everyday behavior. Noble character values, such as honesty, politeness, togetherness, and religious knowledge, are sometimes ignored because they are considered less relevant or even contradictory to the personal goals they want to achieve (Frianda, 2023). Good character is the main capital for humans to form a safe and prosperous nation. One of the key factors that determine the progress of a nation is the character or morals of its citizens. Character education aims to teach the essence of three main aspects: intellectual, emotional and karsa/will. It supports students' social, emotional and ethical development, helping them to become individuals of high integrity and morality. Education is one of the most fundamental aspects of human life that plays an important role in shaping individual character and personality (Amazona, 2016).

Education essentially aims to prepare individuals to be able to face the challenges of life in all its aspects, without losing focus on their true purpose, namely as caliphs in this world (Suhendri et al., 2021). Islamic education faces severe challenges in the context of globalization, which requires it to adapt to modernity and globalization. Therefore, Islamic education must be able to develop fundamental transformational steps and seek innovation in learning approaches. However, in fact, the problems surrounding moral character that occur today are far more numerous and complex than in the past. This issue is a common concern because students are currently facing an alarming character crisis. This crisis is characterized by an increase in promiscuity, rampant cases of child and youth violence, crimes against friends, teenage theft, cheating habits, as well as drug abuse, pornography, rape, robbery, and vandalism (Nizar, 2020).

Innovation in educational institutions is a must in the modern era that is full of challenges and changes. Integrated Islamic Schools, as educational institutions that combine Islamic religious values with general knowledge, play an important role in shaping future generations who are noble, broad-minded, and ready to face the dynamics of the world. The goal of Integrated Islamic Schools is to create a holistic learning environment, where the spiritual, intellectual, and emotional development of learners can proceed in a balanced and harmonious manner (Rojii et al., 2019).

In the current era of globalization and modernization, the demand for quality and comprehensive education is also getting higher. Parents not only want their children to excel in academics, but also have good character, noble character, and strong moral values. One of the education alternatives that is now increasingly in demand by parents is the Integrated Islamic School (SIT). With the presence of Integrated Islamic Schools with a concept that combines general education with Islamic religious education in an integrated and balanced manner, it has become one of the prestigious school choices for some parents. Through a holistic approach, SIT seeks to balance between science and religious values, so that students can develop optimally in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. SIT does not only focus on academic achievement, but also pays great attention to fostering students' morals and character, with the aim of creating a generation that is both knowledgeable and noble.

Improving the image of Integrated Islamic Schools in the eyes of the community is one of the sociological factors that encourage middle class Muslim parents to choose this school for their children. By sending their children to Integrated Islamic Schools, they indirectly feel connected to the urban Muslim middle class community. They believe that they are financially capable of providing the best education for their children in this school. One of the reasons why urban Muslim parents choose Integrated Islamic Schools is their doubt about the ability of madrasah and pesantren to respond to the challenges of the times. The community expects educational institutions that can provide adequate provisions to face the times. Integrated Islamic schools emerge as an alternative to Islamic education in urban areas that is different from previous Islamic boarding schools, madrasas and public schools, responding to the aspirations of the community for more modern and relevant educational institutions. (Sariah et al., 2023).

Parents' interest in Integrated Islamic Schools as an alternative to prestigious schools is not without reason. Many parents see that the integration of general education with religious education can provide a strong foundation for their children in facing the challenges of modern

life. In addition, a conducive school environment and Islamic values applied in daily life at school are determining factors that make Integrated Islamic Schools increasingly popular.

According to (Sariah et al., 2023) in the title of his article Integrated Islamic School (IT); as an alternative to prestigious schools to shape character. He stated that Integrated Islamic Schools have grown rapidly with a full day and boarding school system. Integrated Islamic Schools also grew as a response to increasing public dissatisfaction with the national education system which has so far been considered insufficient to meet current needs, especially related to advances in science and technology, students are not only good at academics but also have a solemn attitude, behave well, be responsible, and have good ethics. According to him, this integrated Islamic school is highly recommended to shape students' character.

Therefore, this article will discuss why Integrated Islamic Schools are becoming an increasingly popular alternative choice among parents in an effort to build children's character, as well as how the educational approach at Integrated Islamic Schools can provide long-term benefits for children's development.

METHODS

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive research is research that seeks to describe a symptom, event, and authenticity that is happening at this time. In other words, descriptive research takes a problem or focuses on actual problems (Chalil & Barus, 2014). While qualitative research is aimed at understanding a social phenomenon from the perspective of participants. Informants were selected using purposive sampling technique. After selecting informants, data collection techniques were carried out by means of interviews, observation, and documentation. While the data analysis technique used is the Miles and Huberman technique, namely collecting data, after the data is collected, then the analysis is carried out, then reducing the data and concluding the research. Furthermore, the results of data analysis are presented in the form of narrative descriptions. (Dr. J.R. Raco, M.E., 2010)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Character Education

More and more parents are now choosing Integrated Islamic Schools as a place for their children to study. The best choice for parents is Integrated Islamic Schools because in addition to gaining a deep understanding of religion, they can also develop strong characters in their children. Parents are starting to send their children to Integrated Islamic Schools to get a good religious education while developing noble morals. The purpose of strengthening character education is to form a golden generation of Indonesia that has the soul of Pancasila and has a strong character to face the dynamics of the future. There are several applications of character education that can be done, namely:

- a. Implementation of character education in subjects

The implementation of character education is carried out through subjects in the direct learning process in the classroom, accompanied by the instillation of Islamic values in students formed by all components in the school environment. Thus, students will have a strong Islamic foundation, especially in the aspects of Aqidah, Morals, and the Al-Quran. The values of character education have been integrated into the subjects, especially in the management of

religious values, discipline, and responsibility. The subjects taught include Islamic Religious Education (Al-Quran, Al-Islam, Fiqh), Civic Education, Indonesian, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, SBK, Physical Education, English, Arabic, and Computers. In addition, activities such as Mentoring/Cheerful Morning, Scouts, Optional Extracurricular, and Study Guidance (USBN preparation) are also included. In every learning, the material presented always contains values and morals. In the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), the expected character values are instilled in students and explained for each material presented. In addition, the arrangement and integration in local content subjects are also provided, such as Arabic, implying and instilling religious character education values in these subjects (Sari et al., 2021). This integration aims to strengthen Islamic values and character in students.

b. Self-Development (Habits)

Self-development is an independent subject that must be supervised by teachers. The goal is to provide opportunities for students to develop and express themselves according to the needs, talents, and interests of each student according to school conditions. Self-development activities for character formation are carried out through several methods, namely:

- 1) Programmed Activities; This activity is carried out regularly outside of local subjects or content and is in the form of extracurricular activities. Each student is required to choose at least one of the following activities (Zainiya Anisa, 2022): Martial Arts, Painting or calligraphy, Scouting (scouts), Mentoring, Dance f. Football, Nasyid, Tahfidz, Hadrah, Handicraft (handicraft)
- 2) Spontaneous Activities This activity can be done anytime and anywhere without being limited by space. The goal is to provide direct education at that time, especially in terms of discipline and manners. The types of activities include:
 - a) Getting used to greeting,
 - b) Getting used to carrying out worship on time and in congregation,
 - c) Getting used to throwing garbage in its place,
 - d) Ant operations (picking up garbage) spontaneously,
 - e) Getting used to reprimanding/overcoming differences of opinion or quarrels,
 - f) Getting used to saving energy,
 - g) Getting used to the culture of queuing,
 - h) Getting used to maintaining environmental sustainability (Angioni et al., 2021).
- 3) Exemplary Activities, according to (Widiati et al., 2015) this activity can be done anytime and anywhere, prioritizing giving examples from teachers, principals, and other education managers to students. The goal is to provide examples/leadership about good behavioral habits. The types of activities include:
 - a) Giving examples of dressing neatly/simple,
 - b) Giving examples of arriving on time,
 - c) Giving examples of going home on time/according to the homecoming schedule,
 - d) Giving examples of simple living,
 - e) Giving examples of speaking politely and courteously,
 - f) Giving examples of honest behavior,
 - g) Giving examples of praising good work results.
- 4) Supporting Activities These activities are planned at the class, group, or school level with the aim of providing additional insight to students for their development in community

life. The types of activities include: Seminar, Workshop, Outbound, Swimming, Health socialization, Hajj rituals, Family day.

The strategy used is through character or personality formation and motivation. After the planning stage, the Character Education Strengthening (PPK) team carries out the management stage by determining and determining the character values to be developed. The values instilled in learning include religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation, and integrity. Therefore, the school strongly supports the success of the implementation of character education strengthening through conditioning, namely by completing and providing adequate facilities and infrastructure. The development of character-forming values requires adequate facilities to create a conducive environment for the instillation of these values.

Various efforts have been made by a principal to improve the quality of the school to become an educational institution that has character and achievement. This makes the Integrated Islamic School the main choice for parents and the community in educating their children. In addition, the school has also succeeded in building effective and harmonious partnerships with various parties, which are mutually supportive and beneficial (Suriansyah & ., 2015).

Based on the results of interviews with parents, it is known that the principal routinely, at least twice, holds formal and informal meetings. In these meetings, the principal conveys his vision, fosters a sense of mutual need and common interests, and creatively inspires parental support for the vision and mission of a superior and character-based school. In addition, the principal also communicates various problems faced by the school and gathers support from the community to meet the needs of the school. Based on the results of the study, it was found that Integrated Islamic Schools are currently becoming the main choice for parents who prioritize the development of their children's character. Parents are now increasingly choosing Integrated Islamic Schools as a place for their children to gain knowledge. The best choice for parents is Integrated Islamic Schools because in addition to gaining a deep understanding of religion, they can also develop strong character in their children. Parents are starting to send their children to Integrated Islamic Schools in order to get a good religious education while developing noble morals. The reasons parents choose Integrated Islamic Schools as an alternative to prestigious schools for children's character education are:

1. Integrated Islamic Schools offer education that not only focuses on academics, but also integrates Islamic values into their curriculum. This helps build children's character by strengthening moral, ethical, and spiritual values in their daily lives.
2. This school promotes a holistic learning approach that accommodates students' spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical development in a balanced manner. Thus, they are not only equipped with academic knowledge, but also with the life skills needed to face the complex challenges of modern society.
3. Integrated Islamic Schools are considered effective in shaping children's character with strong values, such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and cooperation. This helps them become individuals with high moral and ethical integrity in various life situations.
4. Compared to other schools, Integrated Islamic Schools are often considered more responsive to the demands of the modern era without sacrificing traditional and Islamic values. They integrate the latest technology and learning methodologies to prepare students for a complex and rapidly changing future.

5. Integrated Islamic Schools are often the choice of middle to upper class parents who are looking for an education that provides added value in the formation of their children's character. This choice is often driven by the belief that investing in holistic and value-based education will provide positive long-term results for their children's future.

In the modern era full of complexity and information bombardment, education is the main pillar in forming a young generation that is tough, has good morals, and is ready to face various challenges of the future. Currently, public awareness of the importance of education is increasing, this can be seen in the public's desire to choose and determine a good school for their children, they try to send their children to school as high as possible and choose the right education for their children. So the tendency of parents in choosing an educational institution for their children is not without strong reasons, but is based on the desire that their children will have sufficient provisions in living this life. Therefore, parents here function as implementers, directors and providers of wisdom regarding the educational steps that will be taken by their children. Now there are so many parents who are motivated to send their children to Integrated Islamic Schools. Parents who want to instill Islamic religious values from an early age to their children, parents are motivated to choose Integrated Islamic Schools as the right educational vehicle for their children. This is because the Integrated Islamic School as one of the education that instills general education, and also strengthens education in the field of religion, therefore it is only natural that the Integrated Islamic School is an educational institution chosen by parents to send their children to school.

One of the motivations for parents to send their children to an integrated Islamic school is social status. The social status of the family will affect the development of children, if we think logically if the family's economy is sufficient then the child's material environment will also be wider. With good social status, supporting facilities for children's learning needs are also easy to obtain. based on the results of interviews with several parents, many stated that they did not agree with the statement that parents of students chose the Integrated Islamic School because they wanted to get recognition from the community. According to several respondents, sending children to the Integrated Islamic School is not only because of financial ability. However, they consider the costs incurred in accordance with the knowledge gained by their children, with the hope that their children will later obtain good religious provisions and have good morals and morals. In addition, adequate facilities and infrastructure can also help children's learning activities at school.

The advantages of Integrated Islamic Schools in Building Children's Character are: first; Instilling Islamic Values, Integrated Islamic Schools instill Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and tolerance in students. These values are expected to be a guideline for students' lives and characters in facing various situations. Second; Moral and Spiritual Development, Integrated Islamic Schools develop students' morals and spirituality through various religious activities and character building. This is also expected to foster a sense of love and fear of Allah SWT in students. Third; Discipline Development, Integrated Islamic Schools implement firm and directed discipline to help students learn to be responsible and obey the rules. This discipline is expected to be a provision for students in community life. Fourth; Development of Social Skills, Integrated Islamic Schools provide various extracurricular activities that encourage students to interact and cooperate with others. This is expected to help students develop good social and communication skills. Fifth; Development of Independence,

Integrated Islamic Schools provide opportunities for students to learn independently and be responsible for themselves. This is expected to help students become resilient individuals and ready to face various challenges.

CONCLUSION

Integrated Islamic schools are a significant alternative for parents in choosing education for their children, especially in the context of character building. By integrating Islamic values into the national curriculum, these schools not only offer comprehensive academic education, but also focus on developing moral, ethical, and spiritual values. This makes Integrated Islamic Schools an ideal environment for forming a young generation with high integrity, strong spiritual intelligence, and readiness to face the complexities of the modern world.

The advantages of this study are Comprehensive Character Formation where this study highlights five main characteristics of Strengthening Character Education, namely: religious, nationalist, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation and how each of these characters is described into various unique traits that are important for child development. This study emphasizes the importance of religious education and moral formation in child development, showing that Integrated Islamic Schools are able to provide both effectively. This study also evaluates in depth how the role of Integrated Islamic Schools in forming children's character, helps fill the gap in understanding in society about the role and benefits of Integrated Islamic Schools in character education. Then this study also shows the support of the community and government for Integrated Islamic Schools, which strengthens the position of Integrated Islamic Schools as a highly valued choice by parents who care about their children's character education. and this study also underlines that the long-term goal of Integrated Islamic Schools in forming a golden generation of Indonesia with the soul of Pancasila and a strong character, which is important to face the dynamics of the future.

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