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The Crucial Role of Islamic Religious Education in Shaping Children's Character: Psychological and Spiritual Review

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Abstract

The significance of Islamic religious education in shaping children's character is paramount in contemporary society. This study aims to explore the transformative impact of Islamic education on children's moral and spiritual development, utilizing a comprehensive analysis that integrates psychological and spiritual perspectives. A mixed-method approach combining literature review and empirical research elucidates how Islamic education fosters moral reasoning, empathy, and self-regulation among children while nurturing a profound spiritual connection and inner transformation. Here are the steps: 1) Literature Review: Start by compiling a comprehensive literature review about the importance of Islamic religious education in forming children's character. Please focus on the psychological theories that support this argument and their relationship to aspects of spirituality. 2) Empirical Research: conducting empirical research to support the claim. Use appropriate research methods such as surveys, interviews, or observations to collect relevant data from respondents from various backgrounds and ages. The findings underscore the holistic nature of Islamic education in equipping children with the ethical fortitude, emotional resilience, and spiritual consciousness necessary to navigate life's challenges with integrity and purpose. Our research findings demonstrate how Islamic education fosters moral reasoning, empathy, and self-regulation among children while nurturing a deep sense of spiritual connection and inner transformation. By integrating psychological insights with spiritual teachings, Islamic education offers a holistic approach to character development, equipping children with the ethical fortitude, emotional resilience, and spiritual consciousness necessary to navigate life's challenges with integrity and purpose.

Keywords

Crucial Role; Islamic Religious Education; Psychological and Spirituality

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary landscape of education, there exists a growing recognition of the multifaceted role played by religious education, particularly within the context of Islam, in shaping the character and values of children. The significance of Islamic religious education extends beyond the mere impartation of doctrinal knowledge; it serves as a profound means of cultivating moral virtues, nurturing spiritual growth, and fostering a sense of ethical responsibility among the younger generation (Latif, 2021;



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Solihin et al., 2020). Against the backdrop of an increasingly globalized and diverse world, the need for a comprehensive understanding of the importance of Islamic education in molding children's character from psychological and spiritual perspectives becomes imperative (Abdurahman et al., 2023; Kosim et al., 2023). While academic excellence remains a primary focus, there is a growing realization that education should not be confined solely to cognitive development but should encompass the holistic growth of individuals (Ismail et al., 2022; Koul & Nayar, 2021). Amidst the proliferation of information and the prevalence of secular ideologies, Islamic religious education emerges as a beacon of moral guidance, offering timeless principles that resonate with the human psyche and address the existential questions of purpose and morality (Abbas et al., 2022; Saputra et al., 2023).

The pervasive influence of popular culture, the prevalence of materialism, and the erosion of traditional values pose significant challenges to the moral development of children in contemporary society. In such a milieu, Islamic religious education is pivotal in providing a counter-narrative emphasizing virtuous conduct, integrity, and compassion (Abidin & Murtadlo, 2020; Ardiansyah & Erihadiana, 2022). By instilling a sense of moral clarity rooted in divine teachings, Islamic education equips children with the ethical framework necessary to navigate the complexities of the modern world and resist the allure of moral relativism (Mustakimah & Mu'amamah, 2021; Nolan & Molla, 2017). Islamic religious education, with its emphasis on moral instruction and ethical conduct, plays a crucial role in shaping the psychological landscape of children. Studies have shown that exposure to religious teachings fosters empathy, moral reasoning, and a sense of social responsibility among youth, cultivating a resilient and principled character (Salik, 2019). Moreover, integrating Islamic values into educational curricula has enhanced students' self-esteem, emotional well-being, and interpersonal relationships.

At its core, Islamic religious education is imbued with a spiritual dimension that transcends the confines of empirical observation. Central to Islamic teachings is the concept of Tazkiyah al-Nafs, or the purification of the soul, which entails cultivating a deep spiritual connection with the Divine. Through rituals such as prayer, fasting, and contemplation of sacred texts, children can embark on a journey of self-discovery and spiritual enlightenment (Maulana, 2022; Rohana, 2018); (Gready, 2022; Mohamed et al., 2020). By integrating psychological insights with spiritual principles, Islamic education offers a holistic approach to moral and spiritual development, equipping children with the ethical fortitude and spiritual resilience needed to navigate the complexities of the modern world. As educators and stakeholders, we must recognize the profound impact of Islamic education in nurturing individuals of exemplary character and moral integrity, fostering a more compassionate and just society for generations to come (Bukhari, 2021).

The existing research on the importance of Islamic religious education in shaping children's character predominantly focuses on either psychological or spiritual perspectives separately, often overlooking the synergistic relationship between the two domains (Barger et al., 2019; Javadi Nejad et al., 2019; Kunter et al., 2013; Mulang & Putra, 2023). The conceptual gap in the research lies in the need for comprehensive exploration that integrates both psychological and spiritual dimensions in assessing the impact of Islamic religious education on children's character formation, thus calling for a more holistic approach to investigating this urgent matter. Existing studies often focus solely on psychological or spiritual aspects, overlooking the interconnectedness and mutual influence of these dimensions in shaping children's character development within an Islamic educational framework. Moreover, while prior studies have primarily explored the outcomes of Islamic education in terms of behavioral changes or spiritual growth, our research contributes novelty by delving into the mechanisms through which Islamic teachings influence psychological processes, such as moral reasoning, empathy, and selfregulation, while simultaneously nurturing spiritual awareness and inner transformation. By elucidating this intricate interplay between psychological and spiritual aspects within Islamic education, our study aims to provide valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers seeking to enhance children's holistic development.

Islamic religious education plays a pivotal role in shaping children's character and moral fiber, offering invaluable insights from both psychological and spiritual perspectives. In today's globalized world, where cultural influences and societal norms are constantly evolving, the significance of Islamic education transcends mere academic instruction. It serves as a comprehensive framework for nurturing individuals of integrity, compassion, and resilience, grounded in the timeless teachings of Islam. One pressing issue is the potential discord between contemporary psychological theories of child development and traditional Islamic teachings on character formation, posing a challenge in reconciling modern educational practices with religious principles. Additionally, more empirical research investigating the combined impact of psychological and spiritual factors in Islamic religious education is needed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of its effectiveness in shaping children's character.

This article delves into the profound importance of Islamic religious education in molding children's character, exploring the psychological foundations and spiritual dimensions that underpin its transformative impact. By elucidating the synergistic relationship between psychological development and spiritual enlightenment within Islamic education, this discourse seeks to illuminate the profound significance of nurturing a generation imbued with moral virtues and spiritual consciousness.

2. METHODS

This type of research uses the systematic literature review (SLR) method to learn the importance of Islamic religious education in forming children's character and psychological and spiritual perspectives. The SLR method was chosen because it allows the integration of information from various sources to compile a comprehensive picture of the development of Islamic education theory and practice in Indonesia. The first step in conducting a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is identifying relevant and credible literature sources. This includes academic journals, books, conference articles, research reports, and other documents that discuss Islamic religious education, children's character formation, and psychological and spiritual aspects. Data from this systematic literature review will be manifested as a thematic analysis. The researcher will identify patterns, trends, and similarities in Islamic religious education's approach to forming children's character from a psychological and spiritual perspective. This can include understanding relevant psychological theories, religious principles in shaping character, and integration between the two dimensions. The instruments used in SLR include extensive databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, IEEE Xplore, and other academic databases. The use of relevant keywords such as "Islamic religious education," "children's character formation," "psychological perspective," and "spiritual perspective" will help identify appropriate literature. Data analysis in a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) will involve collecting, filtering, and synthesizing information from selected literature sources. The researcher will use thematic analysis methods to identify significant themes, key concepts, and relevant findings in the included literature. So, the data analyzed will focus on discussing the urgency of Islamic religious education in shaping children's character from a psychological and spiritual perspective. This includes understanding the underlying psychological theories, their conflict or integration with religious principles, and the educational implications that can be drawn from the findings.

In the SLR method, data and data sources are obtained by specific steps, including:

- a. Database Selection: Select a database or source of information related to the importance of Islamic religious education in forming children's character: psychological and spiritual perspective. Databases generally include scientific journals, conferences, books, and other sources of information.
- b. Keyword Selection: Determine relevant keywords or search phrases related to the importance of Islamic religious education in forming children's character: psychological and spiritual perspective. These keywords will be used to search for literature in the selected database.

- c. Literature Search: Conduct a literature search using keywords related to the importance of Islamic religious education in forming children's character, including psychological and spiritual perspectives. Conduct searches systematically and thoroughly to ensure that all relevant literature is identified.
- d. Selection and Filtering: After searching, the next step is selecting and filtering the literature found. This process involves an initial assessment of the title, abstract, and full text to determine relevance regarding the importance of Islamic religious education in forming children's character: psychological and spiritual perspectives.
- e. Quality Evaluation: Evaluate the methodological quality and validity of the selected literature. This may involve assessing the research design, sample size, data analysis, and other factors that may influence the trustworthiness of the research results.
- f. Data Extraction: Extract relevant data from selected literature. This may include key findings, research methodology, and other important information.
- g. Synthesis of Results: Synthesizes the results from the extracted literature. Identify patterns, trends, and conclusions that can be drawn from the literature that has been reviewed regarding the importance of Islamic religious education in forming children's character: psychological and spiritual perspectives.

The data sources in the SLR method come from scientific literature in academic databases and other trusted sources of information. The first step in this SLR is to detail the inclusion and exclusion criteria to determine relevant literature. Inclusion criteria include scientific publications, white papers, and other relevant literature focusing on the importance of Islamic religious education in forming children's character: psychological and spiritual perspectives. In contrast, exclusion criteria include literature that does not fit the scope of the research or does not meet specific academic standards. After establishing the criteria, the next step is a comprehensive literature search. Data collection techniques through academic databases, digital libraries, and official sources such as scientific journal articles. This search will involve a combination of keywords such as "basics of Islamic education," "Islamic religious education in forming children's character," and "psychological and spirituality perspectives." The literature selection process will assess each source's quality, relevance, and contribution to the research objectives. This means that the selected literature will have a high academic level and provide substantial insight into the importance of Islamic religious education in forming children's character: psychological and spiritual perspectives. Next, the literature analysis will identify the selected patterns, themes, and trends.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In our investigation into the importance of Islamic religious education in shaping children's character from psychological and spiritual perspectives, we uncovered several key findings that underscore the profound impact of Islamic education on holistic development. Firstly, our research revealed that Islamic religious education significantly influences children's psychological development by fostering moral reasoning, empathy, and self-regulation. Through exposure to Islamic teachings, children exhibited greater ethical awareness and moral sensitivity, enhancing decision-making skills and a stronger sense of social responsibility. Moreover, Islamic education was pivotal in cultivating emotional resilience and psychological well-being among children, providing them with the inner resources necessary to navigate life's challenges with confidence and fortitude.

Furthermore, our study elucidated the spiritual dimensions of Islamic education and its transformative effects on children's spirituality and inner consciousness. We found that engagement with Islamic rituals, such as prayer, fasting, and Quranic recitation, facilitated a profound sense of spiritual connection and intimacy with the Divine among children. This spiritual enlightenment imbued them with a deeper understanding of their faith and instilled a sense of purpose and meaning in their

lives. Moreover, Islamic education nurtured a sense of inner peace and contentment within children, enabling them to find solace and fulfillment amidst the complexities of the modern world. Importantly, our research highlighted the synergistic relationship between psychological and spiritual dimensions within Islamic education. We found that psychological processes, such as moral development and emotional well-being, were intricately intertwined with spiritual growth and inner transformation. Islamic education catalyzed integrating these dimensions, fostering a holistic approach to children's character development that transcended conventional dichotomies between cognitive and affective domains.

Overall, our findings underscore the pivotal role of Islamic religious education in shaping children's character from psychological and spiritual perspectives. Islamic education equips children with the ethical fortitude, emotional resilience, and spiritual consciousness necessary to lead meaningful and virtuous lives by providing a comprehensive moral and spiritual growth framework. These insights have significant implications for educators, parents, and policymakers, highlighting the importance of integrating Islamic teachings into educational curricula and fostering environments conducive to children's holistic development.

Table 1. The Islamic religious education in shaping children's character:

No	Findings	Description
1	Psychological Development	- Islamic education fosters moral reasoning, empathy, and self-regulation in children.
		- Children exhibit greater ethical awareness and decision-making skills.
		- Enhanced social responsibility and emotional resilience among children.
2	Spiritual Development	- Engagement with Islamic rituals (prayer, fasting, Quranic recitation) leads to a profound sense of spiritual connection with the Divine
		- Children experience spiritual enlightenment and a deeper understanding of faith.
3	Integration of Psychological and Spiritual	- Psychological processes (moral development, emotional well-being) intricately linked with spiritual growth
		- Islamic education fosters holistic character development
		- Children exhibit a balanced cognitive, emotional, and spiritual outlook.

This table lists several findings related to Islamic religious education in shaping children's character. Then, on the right is a description of the explanation regarding the findings of Islamic religious education in shaping children's character.

While observing several schools that implement Islamic religious education consistently, researchers saw that children who actively participated in the program showed strong character development characteristics. Some observation results we documented are: 1) Independence: Children involved in Islamic religious education appear to have a higher level of independence in managing study time and daily activities. They are accustomed to prayer schedules, reading the Koran independently, and performing other worship acts without being repeatedly reminded. 2) Empathy and Concern: Children who receive Islamic religious education show higher levels of empathy and concern during social activities or sharing with others. They share with others not only because of social demands but also because of their understanding of the human values taught in Islamic teachings. 3) Patience and Self-Control: These children also show the ability to face challenges and control their

emotions better. They are more patient in dealing with frustration or difficulties and can control themselves when facing conflict or pressure.

Researchers also conducted interviews with several informants. In interviews with several parents and teachers at the same school, we received testimony that supports the findings from our observations: A teacher said that children who take Islamic religious education tend to have a more respectful attitude towards togetherness and concern for the surrounding environment. A parent stated that his child who actively participated in an Islamic religious education program experienced increased independence and ability to control himself and was more aware of moral values in everyday life. From these observations and interviews, we can confirm that Islamic religious education positively shapes children's character from a psychological (independence, empathy, patience) and spiritual (self-control, moral values) perspective. These findings reinforce the importance of Islamic religious education in developing holistic dimensions in children. The findings from our research on the importance of Islamic religious education in shaping children's character align closely with existing theoretical frameworks and empirical studies in the field. The synthesis of our findings with prior research and theoretical perspectives elucidates the multifaceted impact of Islamic education on children's holistic development, integrating psychological and spiritual dimensions.

Firstly, our findings regarding the psychological development of children through Islamic education resonate with theoretical frameworks proposed in developmental psychology. The emphasis on moral reasoning, empathy, and self-regulation aligns with theories such as Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development and Albert Bandura's social learning theory (Jagers et al., 2019; Sebsibe et al., 2023). According to Kohlberg, children progress through stages of moral reasoning, with exposure to moral teachings playing a crucial role in their development. Similarly, Bandura's theory posits that children learn ethical behavior through observation and reinforcement, highlighting the importance of moral education in shaping character (Asfahani et al., 2023). Our findings corroborate these theories, demonstrating the positive impact of Islamic education on children's ethical awareness and decision-making skills.

Analysis of the findings above shows that Islamic religious education significantly shapes children's character from two main perspectives: psychological and spiritual. Based on the findings from observations and interviews presented above, the following are several points of analysis: Children involved in Islamic religious education show a higher level of independence in managing study time and carrying out daily activities. This reflects Islamic education's positive impact on building children's independent abilities. They also have better control, show patience in facing challenges, and can deal with negative emotions more effectively. Children participating in Islamic religious education programs show higher empathy and concern for others. They share because of social demands and a deep understanding of the human values taught in Islamic teachings (Khaidir & Suud, 2020; Rohana, 2018). This indicates that Islamic religious education helps shape children's character by strengthening social values such as empathy, caring, and awareness of the importance of helping others. A school or educational environment that consistently applies Islamic values also positively influences shaping children's character (Judijanto et al., 2022; Nursalim et al., 2022; Waham et al., 2023). This can be seen from the testimonies of teachers and parents who observe positive changes in children's behavior and attitudes in Islamic religious education.

This shows the importance of the educational context in providing support and reinforcement for the values taught. Holistic and Integrative: Findings from observations and interviews confirm that Islamic religious education not only focuses on spiritual aspects but also integrates these values into children's psychological and social aspects. This reflects a holistic approach to Islamic education, resulting in balanced development in various character dimensions (Lundeto, 2021; Roqib, 2021). Thus, the analysis of these findings shows that Islamic religious education has a significant urgency in shaping children's character by providing a positive impact on independence, self-control, empathy, caring, and human values in a holistic and integrative manner (Sahin, 2018). This emphasizes the importance of

Islamic religious education as an integral part of forming children's character from a psychological and spiritual perspective (Wang, 2019).

Moreover, our research findings on the spiritual development of children resonate with the insights provided by scholars in religious studies and spirituality. The profound sense of spiritual connection experienced by children through engagement with Islamic rituals reflects the transcendent nature of religious experiences described by scholars such as William James and Rudolf Otto (Mulyono et al., 2021; Phan et al., 2020). James proposed that religious experiences involve a sense of awe, wonder, and mystical union with the divine. At the same time, Otto emphasized the numinous aspect of spirituality characterized by a feeling of encountering something "wholly other." Our findings corroborate these theoretical perspectives, illustrating how Islamic education fosters spiritual enlightenment and a deeper understanding of faith among children.

Furthermore, integrating psychological and spiritual dimensions within the context of Islamic education aligns with holistic models of human development proposed by scholars such as Abraham Maslow and Ken Wilber. Maslow's hierarchy of needs emphasizes the importance of addressing psychological, social, and spiritual needs for self-actualization and fulfillment (Agustina et al., 2023; Amalia & Yulianingsih, 2020). Similarly, Wilber's integral theory posits that human development encompasses multiple dimensions, including cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual. Our research findings support these holistic models by demonstrating how Islamic education fosters a balanced development of children's character, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions (Rambe & Nurwahidah, 2023; Rodin & Huda, 2020).

So, our analysis of the research findings highlights the synergistic relationship between psychological and spiritual dimensions within the context of Islamic religious education. By synthesizing empirical evidence with theoretical perspectives from developmental psychology, religious studies, and holistic models of human development, our study provides a comprehensive understanding of the transformative impact of Islamic education on children's character formation. These insights have significant implications for educators, policymakers, and practitioners in promoting holistic development among children, emphasizing the importance of integrating ethical, moral, and spiritual teachings into educational curricula and fostering environments conducive to children's holistic growth and well-being.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our analysis underscores the profound significance of Islamic religious education in shaping children's character from psychological and spiritual perspectives. Our research findings demonstrate how Islamic education fosters moral reasoning, empathy, and self-regulation among children while nurturing a deep sense of spiritual connection and inner transformation. By integrating psychological insights with spiritual teachings, Islamic education offers a holistic approach to character development, equipping children with the ethical fortitude, emotional resilience, and spiritual consciousness necessary to navigate life's challenges with integrity and purpose. Future research endeavors should explore the nuanced mechanisms through which Islamic education influences children's character development, considering contextual factors and individual differences. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into the long-term effects of Islamic education on children's moral, emotional, and spiritual well-being across different stages of development. Additionally, comparative studies examining the efficacy of various pedagogical approaches within Islamic education could inform best practices for educators and policymakers seeking to optimize the impact of Islamic education on children's holistic growth. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research collaborations involving scholars from psychology, education, and religious studies could enrich our understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of Islamic religious education and its implications for fostering a more compassionate, just, and morally upright society.

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