

Strategies and Models of Character Education Based on Religious Values in the Era of Globalized Education

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze strategies and develop an effective model of character education based on religious values in response to the challenges posed by globalization. While globalization positively impacts technological advancement and information accessibility, it also triggers moral crises, value disorientation, and character degradation, particularly among the younger generation. This research adopts a qualitative approach using the literature review method, examining various sources related to character education and religious values within global education. The findings indicate that effective character education strategies must integrate spiritual, moral, and cognitive dimensions into formal and non-formal curricula through contextual, participatory, and sustainable approaches. The developed character education model emphasizes inclusivity, contextual relevance, and the involvement of all stakeholders, including teachers, school principals, families, and communities. Religious values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance are the foundation for shaping students' character. This study recommends policy synergy between central and local governments, continuous teacher training, and the utilization of digital technology as a medium for teaching religious values. Through this approach, character education can foster a generation with integrity that is resilient against the negative influences of globalization.

Keywords

Character Education; Educational Model; Globalization; Religious Values; Strategy

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1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has a complex impact on individuals and society, which can be analyzed dualistically through both positive and negative lenses. On the positive side, globalization has significantly expanded individuals' access to information in real time, enabling the exchange of knowledge, culture, and technology across national borders (Marjuni, 2022). This exchange accelerates innovation and efficiency across various sectors, such as education, the economy, and communication (Darwanto et al., 2024). On the other hand, the negative consequences of globalization cannot be overlooked, particularly in terms of morality and cultural identity (Kaawoan et al., 2021). The influx of global values often clashes with deeply rooted local and religious norms, resulting in moral degradation, especially among the younger generation, who are more vulnerable to foreign cultural influences through digital media (Arar et al., 2022). Additionally, society experiences an identity crisis due to cultural homogenization, which



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blurs individual and collective identities, eroding local values such as cooperation (*gotong royong*), politeness, and spirituality rooted in local wisdom. Therefore, globalization necessitates cultural filtering and character strengthening so that society does not merely become a passive object of global change but rather an active subject that is both adaptive and selective in responding to global influences (Sutarman, 2021).

Globalization demands that individuals possess a strong foundation of character to filter and face various challenges while adapting without losing their identity. However, challenges to national integrity and character remain significant. Indonesia's Corruption Perception Index stagnated at a score of 34, ranking 115th out of 180 countries in 2024, indicating an alarming integrity crisis. Moreover, Indonesia's Digital Civility Index ranks 29th out of 32 countries, among the worst in Southeast Asia. The phenomenon of online gambling also poses a threat to national character resilience, with 4 million individuals involved throughout 2024, including 2% of perpetrators under the age of 10. Although the Merdeka Curriculum was implemented in approximately 80% of schools in 2024, student character index survey results from 2017 to 2021 show a declining trend, indicating that the curriculum's implementation has not entirely shaped student character. Therefore, character education that instills Pancasila values—such as integrity, cooperation, and global diversity—must be integrated holistically within both formal and non-formal education systems, and supported by the active involvement of families, communities, and government policies to develop an adaptive generation, possesses integrity, and is competitive on the global stage (Kemenkop, 2024).

Ideally, education in Indonesia is designed as a systematic process that focuses on cognitive development and holistically shapes students' character and identity (Carr & Mitchell, 2007). This is reflected in the national education goals as mandated in Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System (Sari et al., 2024), which asserts that education aims to develop students' potential so that they become individuals who believe in and are devoted to God Almighty—meaning they possess a strong foundation of spirituality and religious ethics as the basis for thinking and acting (Habibah et al., 2023). Furthermore, education is also oriented toward producing individuals of noble character, who uphold moral and ethical values in daily life (Hasnadi & Santi, 2021). The educational goals also encompass physical and mental health dimensions, ensuring that students grow healthy physically and mentally. Education should also instill in-depth knowledge, relevant skills, and life competencies through creative and innovative approaches. The ability to be independent and not dependent on others is another indicator of educational success, as a form of strengthening individual capacity to face life's challenges autonomously (Hendawi et al., 2024). In the social and civic realm, education aims to instill democratic values and responsibility so that students can actively participate as citizens aware of their rights and obligations and contribute to national development in a just and civilized manner (Fahmi et al., 2024).

The gap in implementing character education values in Indonesia is reflected in the increasing deviant behaviors among students, highlighting a stark contrast between the ideal vision of building a generation with integrity and the reality on the ground. A 2023 survey by the Setara Institute revealed that 5.6% of senior high school students in five major Indonesian cities were identified as actively intolerant, an increase from 2.4% in 2016, with 83.3% of respondents believing that Pancasila is not a permanent ideology and could be replaced. In the education sector, Indonesia Corruption Watch recorded 240 corruption cases between 2016 and 2021, resulting in state losses amounting to IDR 1.6 trillion, while public attitudes became increasingly permissive toward corrupt practices, including in student admission processes (Suardi et al., 2023). Additionally, juvenile delinquency—such as gang fights, alcohol abuse, and illegal street racing—remains widespread, with 323 recorded cases in South Jakarta throughout 2022. Drug abuse has also surged, with approximately 2.29 million students across 13 provincial capitals involved in drug misuse in 2018, and the number continues to rise annually (Taufik, 2020). These conditions show that the internalization of noble values such as tolerance, integrity, and empathy has not been fully effective in shaping student character, thereby necessitating

a comprehensive evaluation of the strategies used in character education implementation in Indonesia (Kemenkop, 2024).

The gap in the implementation of religious values—such as honesty, compassion, justice, responsibility, and tolerance—in national life reflects a discrepancy between the ideal norms embedded in universal moral frameworks and the sociocultural realities faced by society (Trisiana & Utami, 2022). These values essentially hold a fundamental position as ethical foundations in shaping dignified individual and collective behavior, as they are derived from the teachings of major world religions that emphasize both transcendental and humanistic dimensions in human-to-human and human-to-God relationships. In the Indonesian context, these religious values are normatively institutionalized within the Pancasila, especially the First Principle, "Belief in the One and Only God," which carries a philosophical implication that acknowledging God's existence morally obliges individuals to uphold ethics and noble values in all aspects of life. However, a gap in implementation arises when these values are not substantively internalized in public policy, bureaucratic practice, or social behavior, leading to corrupt actions, intolerance, discrimination, and social injustice (Sutarman, 2021).

The gap in the implementation of character education, particularly regarding religious values in the era of globalization, reflects a mismatch between the ideal formulation of character education strategies or models and the practical realities in the field. Several character education models have been implemented in Indonesia and other countries, such as Character Counts in the United States, Values Education in the Philippines, and the Strengthening Character Education (PPK) approach in Indonesia. However, it can be critically identified that these models often tend to be cognitively centered, emphasizing knowledge of moral and religious values too much without balancing the development of affective (feelings, attitudes, and empathy) and psychomotor (habitual and practical behavior) domains. In the era of globalization, such challenges become increasingly complex as students are exposed to global values that often contradict local or religious ones. Furthermore, character education implementation often lacks holistic integration with students' real-life contexts—such as social interactions, digital media, and contemporary ethical challenges—rendering classroom values less relevant and lacking transformative power. Therefore, symbolic or formalistic character education strategies must be re-evaluated and reconstructed into approaches that are contextual, reflective, and focused on value internalization through exemplary modeling, direct experiences, and emotional and spiritual student engagement (Sarip et al., 2023).

Previous studies on religious value-based character education strategies and models in the era of globalization demonstrate that integrating religious values into the curriculum and school culture is essential for shaping students' character. For example, a study by (Suriadi & Supriyatno, 2020). Highlighted the cultural transformation at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri Sambas* in West Kalimantan, which integrates religious values into the core competencies of every subject. This approach includes values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and social concern, aimed at character formation through everyday learning.

Innovations in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching also play a crucial role in strengthening character education (Harimawan et al., 2024). Examined the innovations in PAI teaching at SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Bantul during the Fourth Industrial Revolution era. They found that the use of technology and teaching approaches aligned with contemporary developments enhances the effectiveness of character education, indicating the importance of adapting to technological and social changes in preserving religious values in education.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, challenges in character education further intensified. Research by Taja et al. showed that a model of religious ethics-based learning in PAI fostered students' religious character even in online learning conditions. This model emphasized the importance of teachers' professional and pedagogical competencies in designing effective strategies for instilling moral and spiritual values, reaffirming that teachers play a crucial role in the success of religious value-based

character education.

The theory used in this study is Character Education Theory, which emphasizes the importance of education that shapes students' personalities with strong moral values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and respect. Lickona (1991) stated that character education systematically develops an individual's morality and ethics through continuous learning. In this context, character education becomes a vehicle to form intellectually smart and morally mature individuals.

In addition, the researcher also employs Religious Value Theory. According to Durkheim (1915), religion is society's main source of norms and morality. Religious values in character education are a solid foundation for building students' integrity and moral identity, especially in facing globalization's various temptations and challenges.

Based on the theories above, this research aims to analyze effective religious value-based character education strategies in addressing globalization's challenges and develop a character education model based on religious values suitable for the educational context in the global era.

2. METHODS

The research method employed in this study is a qualitative approach utilizing library research. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on exploring concepts, strategies, and character education models developed from theoretical frameworks and relevant literature, without directly collecting primary data. Data collection was conducted through an extensive literature review by gathering and analyzing various secondary sources such as books, scholarly journals, articles, research reports, and official documents related to character education, religious values, and the challenges of globalization in education. The data obtained were analyzed using a theoretical development approach that integrates and synthesizes various theories of character education and religious values within educational globalization to formulate a comprehensive and contextually relevant model and strategy. The validity of the data in this study was ensured through literature triangulation, whereby the sources used were cross-compared and confirmed with one another to ensure the accuracy, relevance, and consistency of the information forming the basis for model development. Additionally, a critical review was conducted to assess the reliability and credibility of the selected secondary sources. Thus, this study is expected to make a significant theoretical contribution to developing religious value-based character education in the era of globalization.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Effective Strategies for Religious Values-Based Character Education in Facing the Challenges of Globalization

Religious values-based character education strategies to confront the challenges of globalization must be designed through a comprehensive integration of spiritual, moral, and cognitive aspects within the educational curriculum. The implemented programs emphasize the formation of students' character by adopting universal religious values such as honesty, discipline, empathy, and social responsibility. These programs go beyond normative religious text instruction by promoting the internalization of these values in daily behavior, making religious character the primary foundation for navigating globalization's dynamic and diverse currents. In this context, character education programs foster adaptability while maintaining religious identity as a strong moral foundation for the younger generation (Jamaludin et al., 2022).

The activities of this strategy include various active and participatory learning methods that prioritize direct experience and critical reflection on religious values. Examples include regular religious

study sessions (pengajian), interactive discussions, and social religious practices designed to enable students to internalize the meaning of spiritual values in both social and academic life. Extracurricular activities such as community service, Islamic arts development, and leadership training based on religious values offer students opportunities to apply religious character in real-life contexts. This multidimensional approach enables character education to transcend classroom instruction and become integral to school culture, holistically shaping students' attitudes and behaviors.

Supportive educational policies are crucial in effectively implementing religious values-based character education strategies. These policies encompass strengthening internal school regulations and cross-sectoral collaboration with families and communities. They provide frameworks for developing religious values-based curricula, training competent teachers in character education, and conducting ongoing evaluations of character development outcomes. Moreover, such policies underscore the importance of collaboration between educational institutions, religious organizations, and community groups to create an educational ecosystem that nurtures spiritual values in students' lives. Through systematic and structured policies, religious values-based character education strategies can be consistently and sustainably implemented, thereby equipping students to meet the complexities of globalization with heightened moral and spiritual awareness.

Integrating religious values into the formal curriculum is a critical aspect of cultivating students who are not only intellectually capable but also spiritually and morally grounded. In the national education context, religious values are embedded through local content, and religious education is explicitly incorporated into the curriculum across all levels, from elementary to upper secondary education. The 2013 Curriculum, for instance, emphasizes the development of spiritual and social attitudes as part of the core competencies students must achieve. This approach teaches religious content textually and emphasizes internalizing values such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and respect for differences. Thus, formal education is the primary medium for embedding religious values into everyday learning (Kirani et al., 2024).

Beyond formal education, religious values are also significantly integrated into non-formal education, which tends to be more flexible and contextual. Non-formal education includes religious extracurricular activities, short-term Islamic boarding school programs (*pesantren kilat*), and community-based religious initiatives innovatively designed to strengthen students' character in response to globalization dynamics. Examples include the Character Education Strengthening Program launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (*Kemendikbudristek*) through the National Literacy Movement and religious extracurriculars such as Qur'an memorization (*tahfiz Al-Qur'an*) and training in religious values adapted to modern challenges. These programs support the development of religious character and foster collective awareness of the importance of upholding noble values amid globalization's pluralistic values and cultures.

The integration of religious values in both formal and non-formal curricula is reinforced by government policies emphasizing the importance of character education as a strategic effort to develop an excellent generation with strong moral and spiritual values (Husna & Thohir, 2020). A concrete example is the Religious Values-Based Character Education Program, initiated to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile (Nugroho, 2016). This program ensures that religious values are not merely taught theoretically but are also applied through various character development activities involving collaboration among schools, families, and communities (Effendi & Sahertian, 2022). The government has also developed contextual religious values-based learning modules that address global challenges, such as fostering tolerance and interfaith empathy. With these policies and programs, the integration of religious values in education becomes an effective strategy for enhancing students' moral resilience in the face of highly dynamic and complex globalization (Masturin, 2024).

Teachers play a fundamental role in implementing religious values-based character education strategies, serving as the frontline agents in shaping students' character. Teachers are academic

instructors, role models, and facilitators for instilling strong moral and religious values. In the context of globalization, which demands rapid adaptation to social, economic, and technological changes, teachers must be able to integrate religious values into the learning process contextually and reflectively. This approach ensures that students excel cognitively while maintaining a strong character foundation. A concrete example is the government's policy through the Merdeka Curriculum implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, which emphasized the importance of strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile—particularly the religious attitude—thus encouraging teachers to adopt holistic learning methods that instill values such as tolerance, honesty, and responsibility. Through thematic and integrative learning approaches, teachers are expected to address the challenges of globalization while equipping students with adaptive capabilities that do not compromise their religious identity (Sumiharsono et al., 2023).

Furthermore, school principals hold a strategic role as educational leaders who organize, supervise, and motivate the entire academic community to implement religious values-based character education consistently and systematically (Alabdulhadi & Alkandari, 2024). Principals are responsible for fostering a conducive school climate through internal policies and effective resource management to support academic and character development learning. National policy, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 20 of 2018 on Character Education Strengthening, underscores the principal's role in building a school culture that upholds religious values as a pillar of national character formation. Principals must also act as mediators in fostering synergy among teachers, parents, and the surrounding community, ensuring that religious values are practiced in classrooms and broader social settings. For instance, principals who actively initiate religious extracurricular activities and moral value discussion forums can significantly reinforce students' religious character development in a sustainable manner (Fanani et al., 2020).

As an educational ecosystem, the school environment is a critical external factor influencing the successful implementation of religious values-based character education strategies in the globalization era. A supportive school environment strengthens the internalization of religious values through positive social interactions among students, teachers, and staff. In policy terms, the government has initiated various programs to enhance the role of the school environment, such as the "*Sekolah Penggerak*" (Driving Schools) program, which promotes character education innovation and community involvement in student development (Hidayah, 2021). However, the pinnacle of religious values-based character education in Indonesia can be observed during the leadership of Anies Baswedan as Minister of Education and Culture through the "Character Education Strengthening" (PPK) program. This initiative emphasized classroom instruction of religious values and their integration into all school activities through a comprehensive participatory and contextual approach. As a result, character education became more than just theoretical instruction—it evolved into a lived daily practice. Consequently, this program is a best-practice model for addressing globalization challenges while preserving national identity by cultivating authentic and sustainable religious character (Setyowati et al., 2024).

A Character Education Model Based on Religious Values Aligned with the Context of Education in the Era of Globalization

The era of globalization is marked by the rapid and massive development of information and communication technology, particularly in digitalization, which allows the instantaneous flow of information across geographical boundaries. This digital transformation fundamentally alters the educational landscape, introducing more flexible ways of learning and accessing knowledge. However, it also brings about new challenges, such as distractions, the spread of unverified information, and the dominance of foreign cultures that often contradict local and religious values. Additionally, this era is characterized by increasing pluralism and societal heterogeneity, reflecting diversity in ethnicity, religion, and culture. Ideally, this pluralism should serve as a force for strengthening social cohesion. In reality, however, it often triggers social disintegration and identity crises, particularly among the

younger generation, who are forming their identity amidst a context full of value contradictions (Lee et al., 2021).

In the context of education, these phenomena necessitate a rethinking of how the educational system can accommodate global dynamics without losing its cultural roots and the religious values that serve as the nation's moral foundation (Nasir & Rijal, 2021). One implication is the urgent need to develop a robust, adaptive, and contextual character education model capable of addressing the pressures of globalization while maintaining the integrity of religious values (Suriadi & Supriyatno, 2020).

marked by the erosion of local and religious values due to the pervasive exposure to global pop culture and the strengthening of secularism (Hussin et al., 2024). This exposure weakens religious values in daily practices and potentially replaces traditional norms with consumptive and individualistic values. On the other hand, religious information disseminated through various digital media is often distorted, leading to the emergence of extremism and radicalism that damage the image of religion itself and cause societal division (Elbanna, 2025).

The gap between values taught in educational institutions and families and students' realities on social media and their surrounding environments also presents a serious problem. Students frequently encounter inconsistencies between theoretical teachings and practical experiences (Tolchah & Mu'ammara, 2019). Therefore, character education must adapt through more relevant, innovative, and contextual methods and approaches. This may include the smart use of technology, the integration of value education across various subjects, and the development of an inclusive and participatory educational ecosystem (Taja et al., 2021).

An ideal character education model based on religious values must be designed as a synthesis of noble religious teachings and the realities of contemporary socio-cultural life, while remaining responsive to the dynamics of globalization (Anshori & Sahara, 2020). This model should position religious values not merely as content but as a normative foundation that integrates all aspects of learning to develop a holistic and harmonious character (Huda et al., 2024).

The principle of inclusivity is fundamental, given Indonesia's status as a pluralistic nation with diverse religions and beliefs. Thus, religious character education must accommodate this pluralism without discrimination (Roqib, 2021). The contextual principle demands that the model be relevant to Indonesia's socio-cultural conditions and technological advancements, ensuring the approaches are tailored to local needs and the digital era rather than being generic. The holistic principle entails the simultaneous involvement of cognitive (understanding values), affective (internalization and attitudes), and psychomotor (practices and behaviors) domains (Truna et al., 2022). The participatory principle emphasizes the involvement of all educational stakeholders—from students, teachers, and parents to the broader community—to create a synergistic learning ecosystem. Lastly, the sustainable principle underscores that character education is a continuous process requiring consistent evaluation and refinement to produce lasting outcomes.

The integration of religious and character values into the curriculum must extend beyond religious education subjects and be embedded in general subjects such as Bahasa Indonesia, Civics (PPKn), and Social Sciences (Zein et al., 2020). This ensures that values become an intrinsic part of the learning process. Teaching materials and modules must be developed to align with globalization and the digital age by incorporating content such as digital ethics and pluralism. Teachers act as role models and competent facilitators, academically and embodying religious values, to motivate students through real-life examples. Therefore, teacher training and professional development must be prioritized to strengthen their capacity (Ismail, 2016).

Active and participatory learning methods such as discussions, problem-based projects, and community service enable students to apply values in real life. Using digital technology is also crucial

to making learning more engaging and relevant. The role of families and communities is equally important, with strategies that involve parents in character education and establish collaborations with religious institutions to reinforce values beyond the school environment. A conducive school culture should be cultivated through rules that support religious values, religious extracurricular activities, and rituals that strengthen students' spiritual identity. Successful examples can be drawn from modern pesantren-based or religious schools that effectively integrate religious values into their systems (Idawati et al., 2023).

Indicators of the success of religious value-based character education should include students' actual behavior in school and social environments, their internalization of values, and the impact on their academic and socio-emotional achievements. Evaluation methods can involve qualitative approaches, such as observation and interviews, and quantitative tools, such as questionnaires and attitude tests, to provide a comprehensive picture. Feedback from all stakeholders must form the basis of continuous model development in response to evolving times and students' needs.

Implementation of this model must be adapted to the educational level. At the early childhood education (PAUD) level, character education based on religious values should be conducted through a play-based approach that instills moral and spiritual values from an early age. Value integration should be carried out at the primary and secondary education levels through integrated learning and extracurricular activities, emphasizing daily values. The model can be implemented in higher education through competency-based curricula, value-oriented research, and community service activities that deeply integrate knowledge and religiosity.

Implementation challenges include cultural resistance due to differing interpretations of religious values, the lack of competent educators, and mismatches between national policies and local conditions. Nevertheless, there are great opportunities through growing government support for integrating character education into national policy, increasing public awareness of the importance of religious values, and emerging community and religious organization initiatives supporting character education programs (Nursalim et al., 2023).

A recommended policy is the synergy between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs to formulate curricula and teacher competency standards that inclusively accommodate religious values. Local governments and relevant institutions should be empowered to implement and monitor character education programs in alignment with local needs.

In terms of practical implementation, the government under the leadership of Prabowo Subianto has demonstrated a strong commitment to strengthening character based on religious values by launching the "National Character Education Strengthening" program. This program emphasizes the integration of religious values into both formal and non-formal curricula. It prioritizes massive teacher training on inclusive and contextual internalizing religious values and the development of technology-based teaching materials. Additionally, partnerships with religious organizations and local customary institutions are facilitated to strengthen the roles of families and communities in character education. Prabowo underscores the importance of cross-sector synergy and equitable access to character education across regions, especially in highly pluralistic areas, to prevent social disintegration and to build a strong national identity in the era of globalization. This proves that a religious value-based character education model is theoretical and practically implemented through comprehensive strategies and programs.

4. CONCLUSION

To optimize character education strategies based on religious values in addressing the challenges of globalization, a comprehensive integration of spiritual, moral, and cognitive aspects within the curriculum and active, contextual learning is essential. Systematic policy support, the involvement of

teachers and school principals as role models and educational leaders, and creating a conducive school environment are key to successfully internalizing religious values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance. Moreover, synergistic collaboration between schools, families, and communities is crucial in making character education a living culture that remains adaptive to global changes, thereby enabling younger generations to grow with strong moral and spiritual foundations without losing their identity in navigating the dynamics of globalization.

Based on this exposition, it is recommended that the model of character education based on religious values be designed inclusively, contextually, and holistically by integrating religious values into all aspects of the curriculum and learning process, wisely utilizing digital technology, and involving all stakeholders such as teachers, families, communities, and religious institutions. Character education must be adaptive to the challenges of globalization and pluralism, prioritizing participatory and sustainable approaches, and supported by synergistic policies between central and local governments. Continuous teacher training and developing relevant teaching materials are essential to fostering a strong and harmonious character capable of preserving national identity in the digital era without compromising the religious values that form the foundation of morality.

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