Integration of Islamic Educational Values in the Archipelagic Culture as a Foundation of National Character Building

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the integration of Islamic educational values in the culture of the Indonesian archipelago as an effort to strengthen the character of a religious, civilized, and distinctive nation. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study combines literature review, text analysis, and historical study to examine how Islamic values—such as monotheism, morals, knowledge, and charity—are internalized in local cultural practices. The findings show that the acculturation between Islam and the culture of the archipelago has produced a moderate, tolerant, and contextual Islamic character. Various traditions such as selametan, tahlilan, and the development of Islamic boarding schools show that Islamic teachings are able to blend harmoniously without losing their religious substance. The novelty of this research lies in its analysis of the synergistic relationship between Islamic educational values and Nusantara traditions as a strategy for nation building in the era of globalization. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of preserving local culture based on Islamic values as the foundation for strengthening national identity.

Introduction

Islamic education has a strategic role in shaping the character of the younger generation in Indonesia. Based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic education not only emphasizes strengthening intellectual aspects, but also moral, spiritual, and social development (Muhaimin, 2018; Nata, 2016). This orientation aims to shape individuals who are faithful, have noble character, and possess social responsibility, thereby directly contributing to the development of a civilized, integrity-driven nation with a strong spirit of nationalism (Tilaar, 2012). Thus, Islamic education serves as the moral and ethical foundation for realizing a civilized Indonesian society.

In the context of culture, the archipelago has a wealth of traditions that have served as a medium for internalizing Islamic values for centuries. The spread of Islam in Indonesia took place through a cultural approach that accommodated local elements without deviating from the basic principles of Islamic teachings (Azra, 2013; Ricklefs, 2008). This approach resulted in a harmonious acculturation between religion and culture, evident in traditions such as selametan, tahlilan, maulid, and nyadran (Geertz, 1960). These traditions demonstrate Islam's ability to dialogue with local cultures, forming a religious social order while maintaining Indonesian identity. Culture, in this case, not only functions as an expression of local wisdom, but also as an effective means of transforming Islamic values into the social life of the community.

However, in the era of globalization and modernization, the cultural and moral values of the nation face increasingly complex challenges. The development of information technology and the penetration of global culture have led to a shift in values, especially among the younger generation (Giddens, 2002). Consumerist, individualistic, and hedonistic cultures have begun to erode the spirit of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and religiosity that form the identity of the Indonesian nation (Tilaar, 2012). This phenomenon has created a gap between the noble values taught through Islamic education and the social reality influenced by global trends. This condition emphasizes the importance of integrating Islamic education with the culture of the archipelago as a strategy to strengthen the nation's character amid the challenges of globalization.

Based on this context, this study is novel in examining the synergistic relationship between Islamic values and local culture as an approach to shaping a contextual and sustainable national character.

Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research and descriptive-interpretive analysis (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to examine in depth the conceptual, historical, and cultural relationships between Islamic education and the culture of the archipelago. The research data sources include primary literature in the form of classical and contemporary works on Islamic education, the history of Islam in the archipelago, and local Islamic-based cultural practices, while secondary sources include journal articles, scientific books, previous research results, and historical documents related to religious traditions in the archipelago. Data were collected through literature studies, document analysis, and historical studies of religious texts and local traditions such as selametan, tahlilan, maulid, and nyadran (Azra, 2013). All data were analyzed using descriptive-interpretative analysis techniques through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The validity of the data was tested through source and theory triangulation by combining the perspectives of Islamic education, cultural anthropology, and the history of Islam in the archipelago.

Results and Discussion
Concepts and Objectives of Islamic Education in Character Building

The results of the study show that Islamic education was designed from the outset as a guidance system oriented towards the formation of people who are faithful, knowledgeable, and have noble character. Education is not only understood as a process of knowledge transmission, but as the internalization of values that emphasize the relationship between humans and Allah, fellow humans, and the environment (Nata, 2016). This finding is in line

with the views of Muhaimin (2018) and al-Syaibani (1979), who emphasize that the ultimate goal of Islamic education is the formation of al-insān al-kāmil, or humans who are spiritually, intellectually, and socially complete. The normative basis is reflected in QS. Al-Baqarah: 31, QS. Al-Mujadalah: 11, and QS. Luqman: 18. These findings show that Islamic education provides a strong framework for nation character building through the integration of faith, knowledge, and morals.

Basic Values of Islamic Education as the Foundation of Character

A literature review identifies four basic values of Islamic education—tauhid, akhlak, ilmu, and amal—as pillars of character building (Al-Attas, 1984). The value of tauhid provides spiritual direction in the learning process and emphasizes the orientation of worship in every scientific activity. Akhlak is the core objective of education, as emphasized by al-Ghazali, who stated that knowledge that does not result in akhlak is considered incomplete (Al-Ghazali, 2004). The value of ilmu encourages the mastery of knowledge related to improving the quality of oneself and society, while the value of amal demands the practical implementation of faith and knowledge. These four values form a holistic character framework, integrating spiritual orientation, morality, intellectuality, and social service. In the context of this study, these four values form the conceptual basis that explains how Islamic values can be internalized through culture.

Integration of Islamic Educational Values into the Culture of the Archipelago

The results of the literature review show that the process of Islamic acculturation with the culture of the archipelago took place peacefully, adaptively, and creatively. The cultural approach taken by the ulama, especially the Wali Songo, allowed Islamic values to be accepted by the community without causing cultural clashes (Azra, 2013; Ricklefs, 2008). Traditions such as Sekaten, Grebeg Maulid, Tabot, selametan, and tahlilan became effective media for internalizing the values of monotheism, morals, and Islamic preaching in a contextual form that was easily accepted by the community. Islamic boarding schools also became a concrete example of the integration of Islamic education and local culture through the adaptation of the padepokan concept into the Islamic education system. These findings reinforce the view that the culture of the archipelago serves as a strategic medium in strengthening Islamic educational values at the community level (Geertz, 1960).

The Relevance of Integration to Strengthening National Character

The analysis of the findings shows that the integration of Islamic educational values with the culture of the archipelago contributes significantly to the formation of a religious, tolerant, and civilized national character. The value of tawhid strengthens the spiritual foundation; akhlak builds public morality; knowledge fosters intellectual capacity and critical thinking; while amal fosters social solidarity. On the other hand, the Nusantara culture, which is rooted in mutual cooperation, tolerance, and openness, enriches Islamic educational values, making them more down-to-earth and relevant to the lives of Indonesian people. This integration is an important asset in facing the challenges of globalization, modernization, and shifting moral values. Therefore, the results of the study show that Islamic education and the culture of the archipelago need to be positioned as two synergistic pillars in the strategy of national character building (Giddens, 2002).

Conclusion

Islamic education plays an important role in shaping the character of the nation through spiritual and moral values that are integrated with the culture of the archipelago. The acculturation between Islamic teachings and local culture not only creates social harmony, but also strengthens national identity as a religious and civilized nation. This integration shows that Islamic education and culture are not two separate entities, but two complementary forces in building a society with character and culture. These findings emphasize that strengthening the nation's character in the era of globalization requires an approach that combines religious values, local wisdom, and educational practices relevant to the challenges of the times. Therefore, the development of policies and learning strategies oriented

towards the integration of Islamic values and the culture of the archipelago is crucial to ensure that the younger generation has a strong identity, a moderate attitude, and the ability to adapt to global dynamics. Thus, the integration of these values is a strategic foundation in building a strong, inclusive, and sustainable national character.

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