Analysis of the Integration of Islamic Education and Social Sciences in the Formation of Student Character in Higher Education

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the integration of Islamic education and social sciences in character formation for students in higher education through a literature review method. The results of the study indicate that this integration occurs in three main forms: curriculum integration, which holistically combines Islamic and social science courses; material integration through linking Islamic values to social concepts such as morality, interaction, and group dynamics; and pedagogical integration through collaborative learning models, case studies, and moral reflection. This integration has been shown to strengthen academic ethics, increase social empathy, develop critical-reflective thinking skills, and shape a moderate religious identity. This study also identified three original findings: the emergence of a synergistic effect of analytical character that combines ethics and analytical skills; the formation of a moderate identity based on social analysis; and the emergence of socio-spiritual competencies that combine social sensitivity with Islamic moral values. Thus, the integration of Islamic education and social sciences is a strategic approach to shaping student character comprehensively and relevant to the demands of the global era.

1. Introduction

Universities have a great responsibility in shaping the character of students as an intellectual generation with integrity and able to face social challenges in the modern era. In the context of education in Indonesia, character strengthening cannot be separated from Islamic values that are the moral foundation of society, especially in universities that integrate Islamic Education in their curriculum. On the other hand, social science offers a theoretical framework to understand the behavioral dynamics of individuals and society so that it can enrich the approach to character formation more comprehensively.

Education is one of the most important aspects of modern society and has an important role in the economic, social, and cultural development of a country (Ibrahim, Solekha, et al., 2023). Islamic education is in principle a system to improve the quality of human life. In the socio-historical context, human beings will not be able to escape the educational process that lasts throughout life. In responding to the development of the times, Islamic education is faced with the challenges of the globalization era which gives the impression of being very marketable, graduates of education who are ready to use and its influence on economic standards (Nata, 2014). The formation of student character is one of the main focuses in higher education because strong character plays a role in producing a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has good morals and social attitudes. Character education based on the integration of Islamic education and social sciences is increasingly important to be developed as a holistic approach in instilling spiritual, moral, and social values. Several previous studies have examined each of these areas

in character formation, but studies that integrate the two from a student perspective are still limited.

The modernization of Islamic education is often faced with the dilemma between maintaining religious traditions and meeting the demands of modern science. This challenge is increasingly complex with the entry of globalization which brings various new values and ideologies that are often contrary to Islamic values. Modern Islamic education must be able to bridge these two poles without sacrificing the essence of Islam and without closing itself off from the development of global science (Ives et al., 2024). One of the biggest challenges in this integration is the educational paradigm that still prioritizes a dualistic approach. Religious education is often considered only relevant in the spiritual sphere, while general science is seen as a secular domain. As a result, graduates of Islamic education tend to have a partial understanding of these two disciplines, so they are less able to contribute significantly in the modern world (Al-Ghazali, 2000).

Islam regulates the sciences related to the relationship with God and with the world, universality. Islam integrates the two, what is called the science of religion also contains the teachings of a good and civilized way of life in this world, and what is called general science is also very much related to the relationship with God. Therefore, the axiological unification of science and religion is very important for the welfare of mankind. However, there needs to be progress at the epistimological level, which still has some methodological weaknesses. Integration means uniting into a whole unit. Social integration, in the social sciences, is defined as a state in which different groups of different socio-cultural, ethnic, and societal systems come

together to interact and work together based on shared values and standards to improve sociocultural functioning without eliminating differences. Therefore, Islamic science must be integrated with social sciences in shaping the character of students in higher education.

The integrality of character education in Islamic universities is very important to produce students who are not only academically intelligent, but also have mature character and multicultural insights. By instilling the values of the Qur'an and Hadith contextually as well as social skills from multicultural interactions, students are prepared to become agents of change who are able to face the diversity of society and maintain social harmony (Pardede, 2022)

Various studies have shown that the integration of religious values and social science approaches is effective in strengthening students' character, such as aspects of responsibility, empathy, and social ethics. However, most of the previous research still focused on the normative implementation of Islamic Education, so there has not been much study on how the integration of the two fields is systematically applied in the learning process in higher education. In addition, there is a gap at the praxis level, where the curriculum often separates the teaching of Islamic and social sciences, so that the potential for integration of the two has not been optimally utilized.

This gap underscores the need for a more in-depth analysis of how the integration of Islamic education and social sciences can contribute to the formation of student character. This research is important to identify the integrative approaches

that are already running, the challenges faced, and opportunities to develop learning models that are more relevant to the needs of students' character in the global era.

2. Methods

This study uses a literature study or literature review approach, which is a method that relies on the collection and analysis of written sources, such as books, journals, scientific articles, and previous research reports that are relevant to the topic of study. Literature study was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the concept, scope, purpose, and relationship between the integrity of Islamic education and social sciences. The steps in this method include the identification and selection of appropriate literature, critical analysis of various theories and findings from these sources, and the preparation of study results that are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of Islamic education and social sciences. With this approach, research can present information that is structured and based on reliable scientific references without conducting primary data collection.

3. Results and Discussion

The role of education is not only limited to knowledge transfer but also shapes students' skills and character (Ibrahim, Solekha, et al., 2023). Islamic education provides a strong moral and ethical foundation to students, by providing knowledge of Islamic principles such as compassion, justice, and honesty. Islamic education also emphasizes the value of teamwork, accountability, and discipline, students who have

quality Islamic education values usually show positive attitudes, such as a desire to learn, provide information, and provide assistance to others.

Curriculum integration is carried out by combining basic Islamic courses with social science-based courses so as to form a more holistic learning structure. Some modern Islamic study programs have begun to include sociological, anthropological, and psychological approaches in Islamic Religious Education courses and other Islamic studies. This approach allows students to understand Islamic values not only at the normative theological level, but also through the analysis of social dynamics that occur in society. This kind of integration is in line with the idea of Islamization of modern science that emphasizes the harmonization between revelation and empirical science (Atmaja & Mustopa, 2020) as well as the contemporary view that the Islamic education curriculum should be adaptive to social change (Jannah, 2022). Thus, curriculum integration helps students develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Islamic values and social reality.

The integration of lecture material is carried out by lecturers through the association of the main concepts in social sciences such as social interaction theory, group behavior, and moral dynamics with core values in Islamic teachings such as morality, justice (al-'adl), responsibility (amanah), and social concern (rahmatan lil 'alamin). This approach allows students to understand that Islamic values have strong relevance in contemporary social analysis. Previous research has shown that the association of religious materials with social theory can improve students' ability to see the connection between religious norms and social behavior (Wati, 2024). In addition, the integration of material helps to avoid the epistemological dichotomy

between the religious and social sciences that has long been criticized by Muslim thinkers (Ives et al., 2024). Thus, the integration of lecture materials provides a stronger conceptual basis in the process of forming student character.

At the pedagogical level, integration is carried out through the application of collaborative learning models, case studies, moral discussions, and reflective activities that invite students to associate social theory with Islamic values in problem solving. This model has been shown to be more effective in internalizing character values than traditional normative discourse methods (Awang-Hashim et al., 2022). The integrative pedagogical approach is also in line with the character education paradigm that emphasizes direct experience, value practice, and critical thinking in the learning process (Ramadhani et al., 2024). Through this approach, students are trained to solve real social problems by considering moral, spiritual, and rational aspects. These findings show that pedagogical integration plays an important role in shaping student character in a practical and contextual way, while strengthening the relationship between science, values, and social actions.

The integration of Islamic Education and social sciences has been proven to play a role in strengthening students' academic ethics, especially in the aspects of honesty, discipline, and responsibility. Through the study of Islamic values such as amanah and shidq, students are directed to understand that academic ethics are not only institutional demands, but also part of a Muslim's moral commitment. This is in line with the view that ethical values derived from religion have a strong influence in shaping good academic behavior (Nugraha et al., 2024). Meanwhile, from the perspective of social science, academic ethics is understood as a social norm that

governs integrity and fairness in the scientific process (Jian et al., 2020). Thus, the integration of these two perspectives provides a moral and rational foundation that strengthens students' commitment to academic behavior with integrity.

Scientific integration also improves students' empathy skills and sensitivity to social problems. Social sciences provide an analytical framework that allows students to critically understand social phenomena, while Islamic values such as concern and solidarity encourage them to engage in solving such problems. This alignment between social analysis and moral values creates an inclusive, caring, and tolerant character. Research shows that education that integrates religious values with social analysis can increase students' empathy, caring attitudes, and social awareness (Hidayati et al., 2024). Therefore, the integration of Islamic Education and social sciences plays a significant role in fostering a strong humanitarian orientation in students.

Scientific integration encourages students to be reflective and critical in looking at various social phenomena. Through a coherent approach between scientific analysis and moral values, students are invited to not only understand social facts, but also assess their ethical implications. This attitude is important in higher education because it trains students to think deeply, not passively accept information, and dare to question unjust social structures. Ramadhani et al. (2024) states that moral reflection is a core component of character education, because it allows students to assess actions based on values and knowledge. Similar findings are also confirmed by Wati (2024), who states that epistemological integration in Islamic studies produces students who are more critical and responsive to social

issues. Thus, the integration of Islamic Education and social sciences is effective in forming a reflective and critical character.

The integration of social sciences also plays a role in shaping a more moderate and contextual religious identity of students. By studying social dynamics and societal diversity, students understand that Islamic values can be applied flexibly according to the social context without losing the essence of its teachings. This prevents them from having a rigid or exclusive religious mindset. This integrative perspective is in line with the ideas of moderate Islam and wasathiyyah that emphasize a balance between text and context (Sa'idah et al., 2024). In addition, the study of Ives et al. (2024) shows that socio-cultural understanding in Islamic education is able to reduce dogmatic tendencies and foster adaptive religious attitudes. Thus, the integration of social sciences contributes greatly to the formation of a moderate, open, and tolerant religious identity of students.

One of the important factors that supports the successful integration of Islamic Education and social sciences in higher education is the availability of lecturers who have dual competences, namely mastering Islamic studies while understanding the theoretical framework of social sciences. Lecturers with multidisciplinary abilities are able to bridge the difference in epistemological paradigms between religious and social sciences, so that integration can occur more naturally in the learning process. This is in line with the findings of Wati (2024) who emphasized that scientific integration is highly dependent on the capacity of educators to understand and operationalize the science interconnection approach.

Without these dual competencies, integration will only be normative and do not touch the scientific substance.

Another supporting factor is the commitment of higher education institutions in developing and implementing an integration-based curriculum. This commitment can be seen through institutional policies, the provision of integrative curriculum documents, and support for the development of study centers that combine Islamic and social science perspectives. Jannah (2022) emphasized that scientific integration can only run if educational institutions have a clear epistemological vision and are translated in a systematic curriculum structure. With strong institutional support, the integration process becomes more targeted and sustainable.

An academic environment that is open to cross-disciplinary collaboration is also an important supporting factor. Scientific dialogue between lecturers, students, and researchers from various fields of science creates a fertile epistemological space for scientific integration. Such an environment allows for the exchange of ideas, criticism, and the development of new paradigms that unite Islamic values and modern social theory. According to Sa'idah et al. (2024), cross-disciplinary discourse plays a major role in strengthening the concept of wasathiyyah or moderation in higher education, which ultimately encourages more constructive integration of science. With a dialogical academic culture, integration not only becomes a curriculum project, but also becomes a daily academic practice.

One of the main obstacles to integration is the still strong dichotomous paradigm that separates religious science as a "normative science" and social science as an "empirical science". This paradigm makes it difficult for some lecturers and

students to accept an integrative approach because it is considered to blur the epistemological boundaries of the two fields. Ives et al. (2024) calls this dichotomy a legacy of Western colonialism and modernization that has an impact on the fragmentation of knowledge in Islamic education. As long as this dichotomy has not been resolved, integration will always face epistemological resistance.

The limitations of teaching materials that explicitly combine Islamic values with social science theories are also a significant obstacle. Many Islamic textbooks are still normatively oriented, while social science books tend to be secular and do not accommodate religious perspectives. This condition makes it difficult for lecturers to find learning resources that support integration. Research by Hidayati et al. (2024) shows that the lack of integrative modules has a direct impact on the low implementation of integration in the classroom. Therefore, the development of integrative teaching materials is an urgent need.

Not all lecturers, despite understanding integration conceptually, are able to apply it in learning strategies. Many lecturers still use conventional lecture methods, so that character values and social analysis are not effectively internalized. Ramadhani et al. (2024) emphasizes that character education requires a reflective and dialogical pedagogical approach, not just the delivery of material. This unevenness of pedagogical understanding is a structural obstacle in the integration process.

The last obstacle is the lack of an evaluation model that comprehensively measures aspects of student character. Evaluations that focus too much on cognitive knowledge cause character aspects to not get attention in assessments. In fact, scientific integration aims to produce students who are not only intelligent but also

have character. Awang-Hashim et al. (2022) emphasized that without proper evaluation instruments, integration will not be able to show its real impact. This makes integrative implementation often unscalable and difficult to evaluate.

The results of the study show that the integration of Islamic Education and social sciences in learning plays a significant role in the formation of student character, both at the moral, social, and epistemological levels. This integration takes place through three main forms: curriculum integration, material integration, and pedagogical integration. At the curriculum level, the merger of Islamic and social science courses creates a holistic learning structure, so that students are able to understand Islamic values in the framework of contemporary social analysis. At the material level, the association of social concepts such as interaction, morality, and group dynamics with Islamic values such as trust, justice, and morality helps students see the direct relevance of Islamic teachings in social life. Meanwhile, at the pedagogical level, the use of collaborative methods, case studies, and moral reflection increases character internalization more effectively than traditional normative approaches. In terms of its role in character building, scientific integration has been proven to strengthen students' academic ethics, increase empathy and social sensitivity, form reflective and critical thinking skills, and develop moderate and inclusive religious identity. These findings show that scientific integration not only results in intellectual competence, but also comprehensive character building.

This study found that the integration between Islamic education and social sciences produces a double effect that has not been discussed much in previous studies. First, the integration gives birth to a synergistic effect in the form of the

formation of an analytical character based on Islamic moral values. The combination of social analysis frameworks and Islamic ethical values forms a student mindset that is not only critical and rational, but also values-oriented. This pattern reflects a more mature academic character than the findings of previous research that generally separate the moral and analytical dimensions. Second, this study reveals the formation of a moderate identity model based on social analysis, where students' moderate attitudes are born from a deep understanding of social structures, history, and community dynamics. This moderation is contextual-critical, not just normative. Third, the integration forms social-spiritual competence, namely the ability to combine social sensitivity with Islamic spiritual orientation in solving social problems ethically and empathically.

4. Conclusion

The integration of Islamic education and social sciences is a comprehensive approach that is effective in shaping the character of students in higher education. This integration is realized through the combination of Islamic and social science curricula, the association of Islamic value materials with social concepts, and the application of collaborative, reflective, and contextual pedagogy. These three forms of integration have been proven to strengthen academic ethics, increase empathy and social concern, foster critical-reflective thinking skills, and form a moderate religious identity that is adaptive to social realities. This research also confirms the existence of three original contributions, namely the emergence of a synergistic effect of analytical character that combines Islamic ethics with social analysis, the

formation of a moderate identity based on a more contextual socio-cultural understanding, and the development of social-spiritual competencies that integrate social sensitivity with Islamic moral values. Thus, the integration of Islamic Education and social sciences not only results in an increase in intellectual competence, but also has a significant impact on the formation of students' character as a whole and relevant to the demands of the global era.

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