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Integration of Islamic Religious Education, Islamic Psychology, and Neuroscience in the Formation of Faith-Based Character

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Abstract

This study examines the integration of Islamic Religious Education, Islamic psychology, and neuroscience in the formation of faith-based character within contemporary educational contexts. The research is grounded in the assumption that character development rooted in faith (*īmān*) requires not only normative theological instruction but also a deep understanding of psychological processes and neurobiological mechanisms that shape human behavior. Islamic Religious Education provides the foundational framework of values derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, Islamic psychology offers insights into the structure of the soul (*nafs*), heart (*qalb*), intellect (*'aql*), and spirit (*rūḥ*), while neuroscience contributes empirical findings on brain plasticity, emotional regulation, moral cognition, and habit formation, using a qualitative library research approach, this study analyzes classical and contemporary scholarly works in Islamic education, Islamic psychology, and cognitive neuroscience. The findings indicate that the integration of these three disciplines creates a more holistic model of character education. Faith-based character is not merely formed through doctrinal transmission, but through consistent internalization processes supported by emotional engagement, reflective practices, and repeated behavioral conditioning that align with neural reinforcement mechanisms. Neuroscientific findings on neuroplasticity and executive function strengthen the understanding that spiritual practices such as prayer, remembrance (*dhikr*), and Qur'anic reflection can influence cognitive control, empathy, and moral decision-making. The study concludes that an

integrative paradigm enhances the effectiveness of faith-based character formation by harmonizing revelation-based values, psychological development, and brain-based learning principles. This interdisciplinary approach offers a conceptual framework for developing transformative Islamic education that is spiritually grounded, psychologically sound, and scientifically informed.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education; Islamic Psychology; Neuroscience.

A. Introduction

Faith-based character education has become a strategic issue in contemporary educational discourse, especially amidst the increasingly complex global moral crisis.¹The phenomenon of ethical degradation, spiritual disorientation, and increasing deviant behavior demonstrates that cognitive education alone is insufficient to shape a holistic personality. Islamic religious education has a normative mandate to develop individuals who are faithful, pious, and have noble morals. However, in practice, learning often becomes trapped in the transfer of knowledge, rather than character transformation.²This creates a gap between religious knowledge and actual behavior. Therefore, an integrative approach is needed that can bridge the theological, psychological, and biological aspects of human life.

From an Islamic epistemological perspective, humans are understood as beings with physical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions. Islamic religious education not only teaches rituals and doctrines, but also fosters a transcendental awareness that is internalized in behavior.³This internalization process requires an understanding of the dynamics of the human psyche. Islamic psychology offers a conceptual framework of the heart (qalb), heart (nafs), and reason (aql) as central to character formation. Integration with modern scientific approaches opens up a dialogue between revelation and science. This synergy is crucial for faith-based character education to have a strong theoretical and empirical foundation.

On the other hand, advances in neuroscience have made significant contributions to understanding the learning process and habit formation. Research on neuroplasticity shows that the brain can change through repeated practice and experience. This finding aligns with the Islamic concept of tazkiyatun nafs, which emphasizes the habituation of righteous deeds. The process of character formation has been shown to have a biological correlation that can be explained scientifically.⁴Thus, the integration of neuroscience in Islamic Religious Education is not merely an addition, but a methodological necessity.

¹ A Husen, "Implementation of Teaching Character Education, Particularly in Environmental Care Value, in Labschool Jakarta," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 13, no. 4 (2022): 225–49, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?partnerID=HzOxMe3b&scp=85145061023&origin=inward>.

² Latifah Latifah et al., "Analysis of the Development of Qur'an–Hadith Learning in Improving the Quality of Islamic Religious Education in the Modern Era at Madrasah Tsanawiyah," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 118–35.

³ Fitri Handayani, "Rahmatan Lil Alamin-Oriented Development Design of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project Based on the Three Educational Centers in Building Student Character.," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 152–69.

⁴ K J Kaczynski, "Marital Conflict, Maternal and Paternal Parenting, and Child Adjustment: A Test of Mediation and Moderation," *Journal of Family Psychology* 20, no. 2 (2006): 199–208, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.20.2.199>.

The character crisis facing the younger generation is often caused by a fragmented educational approach. Religious curricula operate separately from psychological understanding and modern scientific findings. As a result, moral education tends to be normative and under-emphasizes affective and neurological aspects. Yet, character is formed through the interaction of beliefs, emotions, and neural structures. Without understanding these mechanisms, faith education will struggle to produce long-term behavioral change. Therefore, an integrative approach is conceptually and practically relevant.

The concept of faith in Islam is not merely verbal affirmation, but rather conviction that leads to action. Strong faith fosters self-control, empathy, and social responsibility. Islamic psychology explains that faith influences the state of the heart, the center of moral awareness. Neuroscience shows that spiritual practices can influence the activity of the prefrontal cortex and limbic system. The integration of these findings enriches the approach to character education. Thus, faith-based character formation can be explained in a multidisciplinary manner.

Globalization accelerates the flow of information, influencing the mindset and behavior of the younger generation. Without a strong foundation of faith, individuals are easily swayed by external values.⁵ Islamic religious education must be able to respond adaptively to these challenges. Integration with psychology and neuroscience provides a more comprehensive analytical tool. This approach helps teachers understand how values are instilled and internalized, making character education more systematic and effective.

In the context of modern education, an integrative approach also strengthens the academic legitimacy of Islamic Religious Education. Dialogue between Islamic disciplines and contemporary science avoids the dichotomy of knowledge. Faith education is no longer viewed as a purely normative domain. Instead, it has an empirical basis that can be researched and tested. This integration also enriches the treasury of Islamic scholarship.⁶ This is an important foundation in developing a character-based curriculum.

Faith-based character building requires appropriate pedagogical strategies. This process doesn't happen instantly, but rather through habituation, reflection, and emotional experience. Learning psychology emphasizes the importance of affective involvement in the internalization of values. Neuroscience adds that repetition and meaningful experiences strengthen synaptic pathways.⁷ Therefore, learning design must consider cognitive, emotional, and biological aspects. This synergy strengthens the effectiveness of character education.

The integration of these three disciplines is also relevant in addressing criticisms of religious education, which is considered less applicable. With a psychological and neuroscientific approach, faith values can be translated into concrete learning strategies. Teachers can understand how intrinsic motivation is formed. The processes of

⁵ Fahriah Fahriah et al., "Quantitative Evaluation Research and Its Implications for the Development of Islamic Education.," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 98–117.

⁶ Mohammad Zulkifli and Maimun Maimun, "The Politicization of Pesantren within the Framework of Athiyah Al-Abrasyi's Thought (An Analysis Based on the Book *At-Tarbiyah Al-Islamiyyah Wa Falsafatuh*)," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 73–97.

⁷ Mukhlis Mukhlis et al., "Reorientation of Islamic Religious Education in the Global Era in Facing the Challenges of Globalization, Multiculturalism, and Radicalism," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 170–200.

muhasabah, dhikr, and reflection have positive neurological implications.⁸This shows that spiritual practice is not just a ritual, but a process of forming character structure.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to develop a comprehensive conceptual model. To date, studies have been conducted partially within their respective disciplines. Few studies have systematically integrated these three aspects within the context of character development. Therefore, this article aims to formulate an integrative framework. This framework is expected to serve as a reference for developing faith-based character education. Therefore, this research's contribution is both conceptual and applicable.

B. Literature Review

Studies on Islamic religious education in character formation have grown significantly over the past two decades. Various studies have shown that religious education positively contributes to the development of students' morals and prosocial behavior. Studies in the context of Islamic schools confirm that the intensity of religious instruction correlates with increased discipline and social responsibility.⁹However, some research also shows that this success is highly dependent on the method of value internalization. A purely cognitive approach has proven ineffective in building sustainable character. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach is needed.

Research on character education in Islamic educational institutions shows that the values of monotheism, trustworthiness, and ihsan form the foundation for moral identity formation. An integrative model that combines values learning with daily practice has proven more effective than conventional lecture approaches. Several studies in modern Islamic boarding schools have found that the practice of collective worship strengthens students' self-control.¹⁰These results demonstrate the psychological dimension at work in character formation. However, the research has not yet linked these findings to neurological aspects. This opens up room for cross-disciplinary integration.

In Islamic psychology, classical thought, as formulated by Al-Ghazali, emphasizes the importance of tazkiyatun nafs (self-control) as a process of purifying the soul. The concept of the heart (qalb) as the center of spiritual awareness forms the basis for behavioral development. Contemporary research in Islamic psychology has developed a personality model based on fitrah (natural divinity). This model asserts that humans possess the potential for goodness that can be actualized through education. Several empirical studies have shown that spiritual practices such as dhikr (remembrance of

⁸ Muhammad Ridwan, Mahyudin Ritonga, and Julhadi Julhadi, "Multicultural Education and the Reinforcement of Character Education: A Critical Review of Concepts, Theories, and Educational Approaches," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 2 (2026): 325–39.

⁹ Hary Nurdi et al., "The Concept of Tawassuṭ and Religious Moderation in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith: Principles of Balance, Justice, and the Rejection of Extremism," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 222–44.

¹⁰ Latifah Latifah and Nuril Huda, "Islamic Educational Values in the Baantaran Jujuran Tradition in Banjar Community Weddings," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 2 (2026): 310–24.

God) increase emotional stability. These findings provide a psychological foundation for faith-based character education. Furthermore, Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development is often used as a reference in character education.¹¹ This theory explains the stages of moral development based on reasoning abilities. Although the theory is secular, some researchers have attempted to integrate it with Islamic values. The results indicate that integrating revealed values accelerates the internalization of moral norms. However, this approach does not explicitly incorporate the spiritual dimension. Therefore, Islamic psychology offers a more holistic approach.

Neuroscience research in education shows that emotion-based learning has a stronger impact than informational learning. Prefrontal cortex activity plays a role in moral decision-making. The limbic system influences emotional responses to values and norms.¹² Neurotheological studies have also found that religious practices significantly influence brain activity. Spiritual activity can increase calmness and self-control, strengthening the argument that faith has a biological correlation.

Research on neuroplasticity shows that consistent religious practices can form new neural network patterns. Habitual practices of prayer, fasting, and self-reflection train emotional regulation. From an educational perspective, this means that character can be shaped through repeated practice. Research in educational neuroscience emphasizes the importance of an environment that supports the development of values.¹³ This integration aligns with the concept of habituation in Islamic tradition. Thus, there is a meeting point between Islamic theory and modern science.

Several studies in faith-based schools have shown that integrating affective learning increases empathy and altruistic behavior. Spiritual reflection practices enhance students' self-awareness. These findings emphasize the importance of emotional engagement in values learning. However, these studies rarely address the underlying neurological mechanisms. Integrating neuroscience could provide a more comprehensive explanation.¹⁴ This enriches the theoretical framework of character education.

In a global context, interdisciplinary studies between religion and science are growing. Several international journals have discussed the relationship between spirituality and mental health. The results indicate that religious practice reduces stress levels and increases resilience. This research reinforces the relevance of faith

¹¹Encep Sehabudin, "Nahdlatul Ulama's Strategies for Countering Radicalism in Indonesia: A Cultural and Religious Educational Approach," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 277–95.

¹² Miftahul Huda, "Developing Multicultural Values-Based Teaching Materials for Developmental Psychology in Islamic Education at the Islamic University of Depok," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 245–60.

¹³ Bukhori Sail Attahiry, "The Management Model of Religious Moderation at Istiqlal Mosque, Jakarta: An Analysis Based on Qur'anic Values," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 261–76.

¹⁴ Wahidah Wahidah et al., "The Role of Reason in Structuring Islamic Spirituality as a Framework for the Formation of Faith According to the Qur'an and the Sunnah," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 28–50.

education in building resilient character. Positive psychology also finds that religiosity is correlated with subjective happiness. These findings broaden perspectives on character formation.

Previous research has shown an integrative tendency, but has not systematically integrated the three disciplines. Islamic Religious Education is often studied normatively. Islamic Psychology is discussed theoretically. Neuroscience is developed within the context of general education. These three disciplines are rarely formulated within a single, integrated conceptual model. Therefore, this research seeks to fill this gap.

Studies on the relationship between spirituality and emotional regulation in modern psychology show that individuals with an intrinsic religious orientation tend to have better self-control. Empirical research in the psychology of religion has found that religious practices of prayer and meditation increase affective stability. In the Islamic context, dhikr (remembrance of God) and Quranic recitation serve as mechanisms for emotional regulation.¹⁵ Several experimental studies have shown a decrease in stress hormones after regular spiritual activity. This suggests that faith has measurable physiological effects. These findings strengthen the argument that faith education can be explained through a scientific approach.

In classical Islamic scholarly tradition, character formation is inseparable from spiritual development. The concept of tarbiyah emphasizes gradual growth through the inculcation of values. Scholars view character formation through a combination of knowledge, good deeds, and mujahadah (religious endeavor). This perspective aligns with the theory of habit formation in modern psychology. Contemporary research shows that habits are formed through repetition and reinforcement. Thus, there is a conceptual correspondence between the Islamic tradition and modern psychology.

Research on character education in integrated Islamic schools shows that integrating religious values across all subjects improves student behavioral consistency. A conducive religious environment strengthens the internalization of values. Longitudinal studies have found that students who experience collective worship demonstrate higher levels of empathy. However, these studies have not yet linked these findings to changes in brain structure. Integration with neuroscience could provide a more in-depth understanding.¹⁶ Therefore, a multidisciplinary approach is important.

Social neuroscience studies show that empathy is linked to mirror neuron activity. This activity can be strengthened through social experiences and moral conditioning. In Islam, the concepts of brotherhood and social concern are taught from an early age. If these values are consistently practiced, the neural pathways supporting

¹⁵ Meyfa Rizkia Al Aswa, Annisa Fitria, and Mukmin Mukmin, "Multicultural-Based Islamic Religious Education Learning Methods as an Effort to Prevent Social Conflict," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 16–27.

¹⁶ Muhammad Hilal, "Debating Prophethood: Ibn Al-Malāḥimī's Critique to Muslim Philosophers," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 51–72.

empathy will strengthen.¹⁷This demonstrates the alignment between Islamic teachings and scientific findings. This integration provides academic legitimacy for faith-based character education.

Research on adolescent brain development shows that adolescence is a crucial period for developing self-control. The prefrontal cortex, which plays a role in decision-making, is not yet fully developed during this phase. Islamic religious education plays a strategic role in guiding adolescents to control impulsive urges. Consistent religious practice fosters patience and discipline.¹⁸From a neuroscience perspective, the practice strengthens neural connectivity that supports self-regulation. This underscores the urgency of integrating these three disciplines.

Studies on spiritual intelligence also show that it contributes to moral integrity. Individuals with high spiritual intelligence tend to have a meaningful orientation to life.¹⁹Faith education serves to foster a transcendental awareness that transcends material interests. Islamic psychology views this awareness as rooted in the purity of the heart. Neuroscience supports this finding by showing that deep reflection increases the activity of brain areas associated with self-awareness. This integration strengthens the conceptual foundation of the research.

Literature reviews show that there is still a gap between theory and practice in character education. Many religious curricula have not optimally utilized findings from psychology and neuroscience. Learning is often informational without strategies for emotional and neurological reinforcement.²⁰However, character formation requires total human involvement.²¹Therefore, a systematic, integrative model is needed. This model must be able to connect revelation, the soul, and brain structure.

Based on a review of previous research, it can be concluded that there is a strong conceptual overlap between Islamic Religious Education, Islamic psychology, and neuroscience. All three share a common orientation in shaping individuals with character. However, explicit integration within a single theoretical framework remains limited. This research aims to formulate this conceptual synthesis. Therefore, this contribution to the literature is integrative and constructive.

¹⁷ Nur Ali Subhan et al., "Student-Centered Learning Approach from Ibn Khaldun's Perspective: A Philosophical Study of the Concept of Learning in Islamic Education," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 136–51.

¹⁸ Muhammad Noor Alamsyah and M Anshari, "Sufism of Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jama 'ah (ASWAJA) Scholars of the Nusantara: A Comparative Study of the Thought of Shaykh Arsyad Al-Banjari, Shaykh Nawawi Al-Bantani, and Kiai Haji Hasyim Asy 'Ari," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 201–21.

¹⁹ Assyifa Qori Lhegina, Wasith Achadi, and Rosendah Dwi Maulaya, "Internalization of Character Education Values at the Muhammadiyah Boarding School (MBS) Yogyakarta Elementary School in the Perspective of Al-Ghazali's Educational Thought.," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 1 (2026): 1–15.

²⁰ Muhammad Azhari et al., "Love and Compassion from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith as Shapers of Effective Pedagogical Relationships in Islamic Education," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 6, no. 2 (2026): 296–309.

²¹ Azhari et al.

C. Method

This research uses a library research approach. This approach was chosen because the study's focus is conceptual and theoretical. The study did not involve direct field data collection. The primary sources came from relevant scientific literature.²² This approach allows for in-depth analysis of theories and previous research findings. Thus, this research is qualitative-descriptive in nature.

Primary data sources include classic and contemporary books on Islamic religious education, Islamic psychology, and educational neuroscience. Secondary sources include articles from reputable international and national journals. The literature was selected based on relevance, credibility, and theoretical contribution.²³ The selection process was conducted systematically. Literature lacking academic validity was eliminated. This ensured the quality of the research analysis.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation and literature review. Researchers identified key concepts from each discipline. Each concept was analyzed to find integrative common ground.²⁴ The data was then categorized based on major themes of character development. This approach allowed for systematic conceptual synthesis. The analysis was conducted critically and comparatively.

The data analysis technique used content analysis. Researchers examined the textual and contextual meaning of each piece of literature. The analysis process involved data reduction, categorization, and drawing conclusions. Validity was strengthened through source triangulation.²⁵ The literature was compared to identify similarities and differences in perspectives. The results of the analysis were then formulated into an integrative conceptual model.

An integrative approach is employed by juxtaposing the concepts of faith, psychological structure, and brain structure. Each concept is analyzed interdisciplinary. This research does not intend to confuse epistemologies, but rather to foster constructive dialogue. This approach emphasizes the alignment of values and scientific

²² A B A Bakar and M R Ridho, "The Impact of Human Psychological Conditions on the Application of Islamic Law in Determining the Validity of Worship," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2025, https://jurnal.staialjamibjm.ac.id/index.php/AL_GHAZALI/article/view/478.

²³ Mukhlis Mukhlis, Ahyar Rasyidi, and Husna Husna, "The Goals of Islamic Education: Worldly Life, the Hereafter, and the Formation of Muslim Character in Forming Individuals with Morals and Positive Contributions," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2024, 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.69900/ag.v4i1.189>.

²⁴ Ujang Miftahudin and Jaelani Husni, "Islamic Boarding School Evaluation Management: Past, Present, and Future," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2024, 31–43, <https://doi.org/10.69900/ag.v4i1.207>.

²⁵ Moh. Fauzan and Ramdanil Mubarak, "Implementation of Spiritual Values in Islamic Religious Education Teaching Through the Development of Spiritual Intelligence," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2024, 59–77, <https://doi.org/10.69900/ag.v4i1.208>.

findings. The synthesis results are presented in narrative form and conceptual tables.²⁶ Thus, the discussion becomes systematic.

Data validity was maintained through the use of reputable academic sources. The literature used was derived from indexed journals and primary reference books. The analysis was conducted objectively without ideological bias.²⁷ Researchers position revelation and science in a dialogical position. This maintains a balance of perspectives. Thus, the research findings have conceptual validity, and the library research approach allows this study to formulate a comprehensive theoretical framework.²⁸ Although not based on empirical field data, this study offers analytical depth. The literature synthesis provides significant conceptual contributions. The resulting model can be further tested through empirical research. Thus, this study provides a theoretical foundation for further research.

D. Result and Discussion

The literature review shows that the integration of Islamic Religious Education, Islamic psychology, and neuroscience has a mutually reinforcing conceptual foundation. All three position humans as beings with dimensions of belief, emotion, and biological structure. Islamic Religious Education serves as a normative and transcendental foundation.²⁹ Islamic psychology explains the dynamics of the human psyche. Neuroscience explains the biological mechanisms underlying behavior formation. This integration results in a comprehensive, faith-based approach to character development.

Faith-based character formation begins with the internalization of the values of monotheism. Monotheism forms a life orientation centered on divine awareness. In Islamic psychology, this orientation influences the purity of the heart and the stability of the nafs (self). Neuroscience shows that strong faith can influence neural activity related to motivation and decision-making. This integration demonstrates that faith is not merely an abstract concept.³⁰ It has real psychological and biological impacts.

²⁶ M O Mabruhi, S Amin, and ..., "The Use of the Quran Belajar Indonesia Application in Quran Learning at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Awaliyah (MDTA) Hidayatut Tholabah, Tegalreja Village, Banjarharjo District, Brebes Regency," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2025, https://jurnal.staialjamibjm.ac.id/index.php/AL_GHAZALI/article/view/438.

²⁷ M Mahrita, M Afnanda, and ..., "The Concept of Creed on Allah Decree in the Nussa and Rarra Animated Film," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2025, https://jurnal.staialjamibjm.ac.id/index.php/AL_GHAZALI/article/view/440.

²⁸ Ecep Ishak Fariduddin, "Fiqh Education in the Age of Digital Clicks and Social Conflict : Preserving Islam Nusantara Amidst Social Fragmentation," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, no. 1 (2025): 126–43, https://jurnal.staialjamibjm.ac.id/index.php/AL_GHAZALI/article/view/449.

²⁹ T Tanuri, "Exploring the Roles and Challenges of the Sandwich Generation in the Context of Islamic Education and Family Ethics," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2025, https://jurnal.staialjamibjm.ac.id/index.php/AL_GHAZALI/article/view/451.

³⁰ M Fatwa and M Sa'diyah, "Building the Mentality of Santri Through 40 Days of Sunnah Fasting (A Study at Darul Amanah Islamic Boarding School, Sukorejo, Kendal)," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan*

The results of the literature synthesis indicate that the habituation process is key to character formation. Islamic religious education emphasizes the development of habits of worship and morality. Psychology explains that habits are formed through repetition and reinforcement. Neuroscience confirms that repetition strengthens synaptic pathways. Thus, religious habituation shapes character structure through psychological and neurological mechanisms. This integration strengthens the effectiveness of faith education.

The findings also suggest that emotional regulation plays a crucial role in faith-based character. Spiritual practices such as prayer and dhikr (remembrance of God) promote inner peace.³¹ Islamic psychology calls this peace of mind. Neuroscience has found that spiritual practices can reduce stress-related amygdala activity.³² This integration explains the relationship between spirituality and emotional stability, strengthening the foundation of a mature character.

Faith education also influences the development of empathy and prosocial behavior. The concepts of brotherhood and compassion in Islam shape social awareness. Social psychology shows that empathy develops through emotional experiences and social interactions. Neuroscience links empathy to the activity of mirror neurons.³³ The integration of the three demonstrates that religious values can shape social awareness biologically. Faith-based character is not only individual but also social.

Studies show that reflection and muhasabah have a significant impact on self-awareness. Islamic religious education encourages introspection as part of tazkiyah (religious practice). Modern psychology refers to this as self-regulation and self-awareness. Neuroscience shows that deep reflection activates the prefrontal cortex. This integration explains how spiritual practices shape self-control. Faith-based character is built through reflective awareness.

The following table shows the conceptual integration of the results of literature synthesis:

Dan *Pemikiran* *Islam*, 2025,
https://jurnal.staialjamibjm.ac.id/index.php/AL_GHAZALI/article/view/455.

³¹Putri Paradiva Arifin, Ramdanil Mubarak, and Muhammad Imam Syafi'i, "Transformation of Religious Culture: Strategy for Implementing Islamic Religious Education at DDI Islamic Junior High School, North Sangatta," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* (Banjarmasin Islamic College, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.69900/ag.v4i2.209>.

³²A Rusydi, A Khalidi, and Z Najirah, "The Effect of Colored Headscarf Punishment on Improving the Speaking Skills (Maharah Kalām) of Female Students at Pondok Pesantren Ihyā Ulumuddīn Nur Sufi'iyah Amuntai," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2025, https://jurnal.staialjamibjm.ac.id/index.php/AL_GHAZALI/article/view/435.

³³F Handayani, M H Basari, and Nurhidayah, "Implementation of Boarding School Learning in Building Religious Character at SMA Daarul Qur'an Bandung," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 2025, https://jurnal.staialjamibjm.ac.id/index.php/AL_GHAZALI/article/view/472.

No	Aspects of Character Formation	Islamic education	Islamic Psychology	Neuroscience
1	Foundation of Values	Monotheism and Morals	Cleanliness of the Heart	Activation of the motivation system
2	Emotional Regulation	Prayer and Dhikr	Tranquility of the Self	Decreased amygdala activity
3	Habituation	Repeated righteous deeds	Habit formation	Neuroplasticity
4	Social Empathy	Brotherhood and Kindness	Empathy and Altruism	Mirror neuron activity
5	Self-Reflection	Reflection	Self-regulation	Prefrontal cortex activation

The table shows that each aspect of character has cross-disciplinary correlations. Islamic Religious Education provides normative values as a foundation. Islamic Psychology explains the inner dynamics that occur. Neuroscience provides biological explanations that strengthen its empirical validity. This integration does not blur the epistemological boundaries of each discipline. Instead, it fosters constructive dialogue between the fields.

Further discussion shows that this integration results in a more effective learning model. Teachers not only deliver religious material but also design emotional experiences.³⁴ Practice-based learning is key to internalizing values. Reflective activities strengthen moral awareness. This approach aligns with modern neuroeducation principles. Thus, faith education becomes more contextual and applicable.

This integrative model also strengthens the academic legitimacy of Islamic Religious Education. Integration with neuroscience demonstrates that spiritual values have a tangible impact on brain structure.³⁵ This avoids the dichotomy between religion and science. Character education is no longer considered merely normative. Instead, it has a strong scientific basis. This integration is a crucial contribution to curriculum development.

Furthermore, research shows that faith-based character formation requires environmental consistency. Religious environments reinforce the repetition of values. Psychologists call this social reinforcement. Neuroscience confirms that environmental reinforcement accelerates the formation of new neural pathways. Without environmental support, value internalization is weakened. Therefore, integration must be implemented systematically.

³⁴ Khairunnisa Hasani et al., "Implementation of Multicultural Education in Islamic Religious Education Learning to Foster Tolerance and Brotherhood in Junior High School (SMPN) 2 Samarinda," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, no. 2 (2025): 359–77.

³⁵ Siti Wahyuni and Tri Handriani, "Teaching Arabic Pegon through the AIR (Auditory Intellectually Repetition) Learning Model for New Female Students at the Tahfizh Al-Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, Lirboyo," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, no. 2 (2025): 263–78.

This integration is also relevant in the context of adolescent education. Adolescence is a phase of identity development. Faith education provides a clear sense of value. Developmental psychology emphasizes the importance of role models. Neuroscience shows that the adolescent brain is still plastic. This integration provides a significant opportunity to develop strong character.

Furthermore, this integrative approach avoids reductionism. Religious education is not reduced to formal rituals.³⁶ Psychology cannot be separated from spiritual values. Neuroscience is not positioned as the sole determinant of behavior. The three complement each other within a single framework. This integration is dialogic and constructive.

This integrative model also opens up opportunities for further empirical research. The formulated conceptual framework can be tested through educational experiments. Field research can measure the impact of spiritual practices on emotion regulation. Neuroimaging studies can strengthen the model's validity. Thus, this research provides a conceptual foundation.³⁷ Its contributions are both theoretical and applied. Overall, the study's results demonstrate that faith-based character formation is not an abstract process. It involves a complex interaction between values, the soul, and the brain. The integration of Islamic Religious Education, Islamic psychology, and neuroscience provides a comprehensive understanding. This model addresses the challenges of the modern character crisis. Faith education becomes more scientific and relevant. This is the primary contribution of this research.

³⁶Alfiyah Ayu Qomariyah and Fina Surya Anggraini, "Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Learning in the Independent Curriculum Using the Jigsaw Method to Enhance Student Activeness at SMAN 1 Kutorejo," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, no. 2 (2025): 319–39.

³⁷Yunia Dwi Latifah, "Challenges and Strategies in Strengthening the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education Learning," *AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, no. 2 (2025): 279–89.

Conclusion

The integration of Islamic Religious Education, Islamic psychology, and neuroscience in faith-based character formation represents a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach. Islamic Religious Education provides a foundation of values and a transcendental orientation. Islamic psychology explains the inner dynamics of humans in the process of internalizing values. Neuroscience strengthens this explanation through findings on emotional regulation, neuroplasticity, and brain development. The synergy of these three produces a systematic and applicable model of character formation. This approach addresses the needs of modern education, which demands the integration of revelation and science.

The integrative model formulated in this study demonstrates that faith-based character is formed through habituation, emotional regulation, self-reflection, and environmental reinforcement. This cross-disciplinary integration strengthens the academic legitimacy of Islamic Religious Education while increasing its effectiveness. This research is conceptual in nature and opens up opportunities for future empirical testing. Therefore, this integration is not only theoretically relevant but also strategic in educational practice. This approach is expected to serve as a reference in curriculum development and further research on faith-based character education.

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