

## **Incorporating Character Education In ELT Through Islamic Teaching Materials**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Among the effort to provide favorable circumstances for students to study English while becoming familiar with the concepts of character values that are commonly encountered in the context of Islamic teaching materials is the incorporation of character education into English language teaching. To determine how well students are doing academically and how well they comprehend the integrated character concepts included in Islamic teaching materials, accordingly, are the goals of the current study. At one of the Islamic universities in Bogor, Indonesia, this study was undertaken in the English Education Program. This research employed a quasi-experimental method, and the instruments used were a test and an interview. According to the research findings, after conducting a four-month learning class, there is an improvement in students' achievement between pre-test and post-test in experimental groups following treatment. It indicates that Islamic materials can contribute much more to students' achievements. Furthermore, the student's understanding of integrated character values is primarily concerned with some characteristics: religion, honesty, independence, curiosity, friendliness, and responsibility. Students not only comprehended but could also implement the character qualities in actual life.*

**Keywords:** *Character Values, English Language Teaching, Islamic Teaching Materials*

## A. INTRODUCTION

The Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) stated, "He has merely been sent to complete the great spiritual characteristics." The Qur'an is regarded as the basic source of Islamic teaching; those who know and those who do not know are not equal (QS. Az-Zumar: 9). It urges individuals, scientists, and scholars to learn, look for, and consider any material based on the Qur'an as a source of inquiry (QS. Al-Ja'atsiya: 12-13), as mentioned in (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1983; Qutb, 2016; Yusuf Ali, 1992). This argument highlights the institution's importance in fostering religious education. The character development of future generations is a responsibility that all levels and institutions must undertake and carry out (Juharyanto, 2017). Lubis and Khairuna (2019) observed that the coexistence of scientific and non-science issues is one potential notion of an integrated approach and that many researchers have proved the relevance of religion (Lubis & Khairuna, 2019). Religion governs all elements of its adherents' lives as people, members of society, and members of their environment (Djamdjuri & Maeleni, 2021). Moreover, the National education goal in the essence is to build Indonesian people completely and religious education is one of the activities to build a strong mental and spiritual foundation (Mujahidin, 2017).

Integrating character education into English language teaching (ELT) is one of the most important strategies to aid one of Indonesia's educational aims. According to Thomas Lickona, the two fundamental educational aims are to inspire young people to be brilliant and to assist individuals in becoming decent (Pike et al., 2020). Since its inception, national education has been aimed not just to generate intellectual and skilled individuals, but also to develop individuals of honorable character (Sukardi, 2016). There is no question that educational institution has a key role to play in reshaping the face of our nation's future to solve the issue of moral degradation and character (Muhammad, 2017). Several schools use a comprehensive curriculum to cover religious elements and science in school. They teach science in a spiritual context and take a modernist approach to educate religious values (Nadhif, 2016; Sukardi, 2016; Syah, 2015). In addition, through a normative theological approach, the problem of integrating the religious sciences and the general sciences is essentially a call from God and humanity that must be carried out (Fakhrudin et al., 2018).

From the background of the study, the following research objectives are formulated: how academic achievements of students and how students perceive character qualities in Islamic learning materials.

## **B. LITERATUR REVIEW**

### **1. The Nature of Character**

In the 14th century, the word “character”, also used in French, became 'character,' then moved to the English language, becoming 'character' in Indonesian (Elmubarok, 2008). According to Al-Attas, the fundamental goal of education is to lead people to recognize and respect their Creator. This is demonstrated through obedience and commitment to His commands (Al-Attas, 1980) as cited in (Husaini, 2013). As Allah declared in the Qur'an, "My prayer, my sacrifice, my life, and my death are for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds" (QS. Al-An'am: 162), it is optimal for connecting with Allah whatever activity man does (Al Hilali & Khan, 1996). In other words, the basic goal of Islamic character education is to create a good being from all of its potential (Darmayenti et al., 2021; Djamdjuri et al., 2022; Kendiani, 2020; Nadhif, 2016; Sih, 2020).

Though revelation is the primary source of Islamic understanding, it never excludes the understanding of thought and sense (Husaini, 2013). According to prominent Islamic thinkers such as Al-Ghazali, the major goal of education is to build personalities as well as spiritual and ethical traits. According to Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Maskawih, studying the Quran and religious studies will lead to excellent behavior and character, allowing them to become good Muslims and a decent member of society. Furthermore, education is not mainly concerned with intellectual development and information collection, but rather with the formation of personality, body, mind, and character (Djamdjuri et al., 2022; Husaini, 2013).

### **2. Incorporating Character in ELT**

Various occurrences of crime and moral deviance indicate that the majority of people's character is presented in a worrying state. As a result, character concepts must be integrated into the teaching and learning of English (Cahyo et al., 2019; Halstead, 2007; Kendiani, 2020; Wijayanto, 2020). Some research revealed that English textbook tests converted to Islamic characters. In terms of achievement, excellent behavior and aptitude, friend-care (empathy), God-recognition, compassion, open-mindedness, teamwork and support, commending others, caring for animals and plants, and even telling the news (information), the characters make *ukhuwah insaniah* (Darmayenti et al., 2021; Kendiani, 2020). In addition, the selection of the right material will help the development of a student's personality. In the Qur'an, some materials can be used as a material reference in teaching (Mujahidin, 2018).

Moreover, since its foundation, national education has sought to produce people who are not only intelligent and talented but also people of noble character (Sukardi, 2016). There is no doubt that the educational system is crucial to changing the destiny of our country and addressing the problem of moral decay and character (Muhammad, 2017). Numerous schools employ an extensive curriculum to teach science and religion topics together. They use a modernist approach to instilling religious ideals while also teaching science in a spiritual framework (Nadhif, 2016; Sukardi, 2016; Syah, 2015). Become one of the most crucial tactics to support one of Indonesia's educational goals is to incorporate character education into the teaching of English (ELT), it was in line with the statement that the two main goals of education are to help adults become nice and to encourage children to be brilliant (Pike et al., 2020).

### **3. Knowledge and Character**

This study intends to promote the interconnection of knowledge and character or '*adab*' (morality or Islamic behavior) as well the previous research conducted by (Anshari & Widyantoro, 2020; Cahyo et al., 2019) since they have become one of some key concerns that are being merged with one other like two inseparable sides of a coin. Prophet Muhammad was continually seeking valuable information (QS. Taha: 114). According to Ibn Uyainah, Prophet Muhammad was continually seeking good information till the end of his life (Husaini, 2013). The aims are to provide one solution for the current generation to overcome the problem of moral decadence, which demonstrates that the execution of education has left fewer traces on the development of student character (Muhibah, 2014).

Teaching and disciplining students to develop good manners and personal qualities should result in a high moral standard (Nariman, 2017). Since Islam is a religion that instructs its followers to firmly accept teachings that have their origins in the Al-Qur'an and Al-Sunnah as well as the outcomes of Ijtihad that are not in conflict with the Qur'an and Sunnah, by focusing on having a strong Muslim character and learning how to deal with issues in their daily lives according to Islamic principles, individuals can accomplish their ultimate objective, which is wealth in the hereafter with Allah's pleasure (Baba et al., 2022; Djamdjuri et al., 2021; Faisol & Syukur, 2022).

### **4. Supported Learning Theory**

In addition, learning theories such as behaviorism and constructivism theories have various highlights, but they meet in this study on the existence of background interactions of learners who face the cognitive ending with the learners' behaviors. Behaviorism highlights the relevance of outlays in the learning theory of these performances and deals

with reactions that are followed by reward and are more likely to return in the future Winn (1990), as cited in (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). The learner is considered sensitive to environmental variables in comparison to playing a dynamic role in investigating the environment. However, the most crucial component is the prearrangement of stimuli and outcomes inside the environment.

Though behaviorists include both student and environmental variables, environmental ones are given higher weight. Contrary to behaviorist ideas, constructivists saw learning as a study of meaning (Eischens, 2003; Ertmer & Newby, 2013; Woollard, 2010). A behaviorist, on the other hand, may be concerned with the information to be learned and the influence of the environment on learning (Weegar, 2012).

### C. METHOD

#### 1. *Research Design*

To get the result of students' achievements, a quasy-experimental design is used; the non-equivalent control group design was arranged (Mills & Gay, 2018). Two groups, an experimental group, and a control group are involved. The experimental group received treatment by using Islamic materials, while the control group got conventional treatment where the students were asked to read a certain text in the same genre and then answer the questions. The control group is needed for comparison purposes as Gay stated that the control group is needed for comparison purposes to prove if the new treatment is more effective than others (Mills & Gay, 2019). The design can be represented as follow:

<b>E 1:</b>	<b>O1</b>	<b>X1</b>	<b>O2</b>
<b>E 2:</b>	<b>O1</b>	<b>X1</b>	<b>O2</b>
<b>C :</b>	<b>O1</b>	<b>X2</b>	<b>O2</b>

*Figure 1 Research Design*

E 1 is an Experiment Class A, E 2 is an Experiment Class B, and C is a Control Class. O1 is for Pre-test, and O2 is for a Post-test. X 1 is a treatment for an experimental group by using Islamic Materials and X2 is a treatment for the control group by using non-Islamic Materials. The pre-test was administered to find the students' prior knowledge while the post-test was used to find out the students' achievement after receiving treatment. The design involved two groups that had been given a pre-test (O1), exposed to a treatment (X), and post-test (O2). The success of treatment is determined by comparing the pretest and posttest

scores of the two groups. To identify the student's understanding of the characters, it is needed to explore the students' responses to a set of interview questions. In addition, there are two variables in this research, one variable belongs to the independent variables, and one variable belongs to the dependent variable. The independent variable is Islamic materials (Y), and the dependent variable is Students' achievement (X).

## **2. *Population and Sample***

The population of the research is the college students of the English Language Education program in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, at one Islamic university in Bogor, Indonesia. The sample was taken from three classes of a Reading course consisting of 30 students for each class. Two classes were conducted as experiment groups, and one class was a control group each of which consist of 30 students. The instruments that were used in collecting data were tests, open-ended questions, and a questionnaire. The test was used as a pretest and posttest. The pretest was given to the students before the treatment and the posttest was given after treatment to check the students' reading achievement. Meanwhile, the interview was used for the validity of the student's responses to the open-ended questions and questionnaire.

## **3. *Procedure***

The procedures of collecting the data that were applied in this research: 1) The researchers selected and adopted Islamic teaching materials from authentic materials. 2) The characters were identified from each material. The elaboration and description of each material connected with some characters were needed. 3) Pre-test then addressed to the students. A pre-test was given before the treatment was conducted to know the prior knowledge of students. 4) Treated the students with Islamic teaching materials by using the communicative language teaching strategy. 4) After each of the treatments the students were given some open-ended questions to get their understanding of the moral/ character value. 5) Post-test was applied after the treatment had been completed to find out the effect of the treatment on the student's achievement. The same test materials as the pre-test were given. 6) Interview was addressed to the students to acquire the consistency of the student's responses.

## **4. *Techniques of Data Analysis***

The techniques of data analysis are: identifying, analyzing, scoring pre-test and post-test. The mean score of the students was classified into seven levels of classification as cited in (Sugiono, 2008). Then, the experiment classes and control classes were analyzed using

inferential SPSS version 20.0. and finally, the interview was addressed to several students to be analyzed.

## **D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter concerns the results of the study and the interpretation of the findings. The results obtained in this chapter consist of the data analysis obtained using the instruments (tests and questionnaire) to see the achievement after being taught in two experimental groups with Islamic materials and non-Islamic materials in another control group (Mills & Gay, 2019). The discussion addresses the description and interpretation of the research findings.

### **1. The Students' Achievements**

#### **a. Grades of the Experimental Groups and Control Group**

There are 30 students in Experimental Group A. The data shows that from the grade points of the students' pretest, the sum of the total grade points of the students is 1585 and the grade point average is 52.83. Whereas after the treatment the total grade points of the students in the posttest are 2627 and the grade point average is 87.57. It means that the student's grade point average increases from 52.83 before the treatment to 87.57 after the treatment. This improvement proved that Islamic materials increase students' grades as supported by behaviorism which is the improvements get when the emphasis is given to environmental factors (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). Meanwhile, in Experimental Group B there are 30 students also, the data shows that from the grade points of the students' pretest, the sum of the total grade points of the students is 1399 and the grade point average is 46.63. After the treatment, the total grade point of the students in the post-test is 2337 and the grade point average is 77.90. It means that the student grade point average increases from 46.63 before the treatment to 77.90 after the treatment. This result is also in line with behaviorism which underlines the importance of effort in the learning concept of performances (Eischens, 2003; Ertmer & Newby, 2013; Woollard, 2010).

Meanwhile, there are thirty students in the control group. The data shows that from the grade points of the students' pretest, the sum of the total grade point of the students is 1381 and the grade point average is 46.03. After the treatment, the total grade point of the students in the posttest is 1879 and the grade point average is 62.63. It means that the student's grade point average increases slightly from 46.03 before the treatment to 62.63 after the treatment.

**b. The mean score and standard deviation of the students**

The tabulation of the data analysis for the student's achievement can be seen in the table below. It shows that the total number for each group in experimental group A is 30 and group B is 30 students and the control group is 30 students.

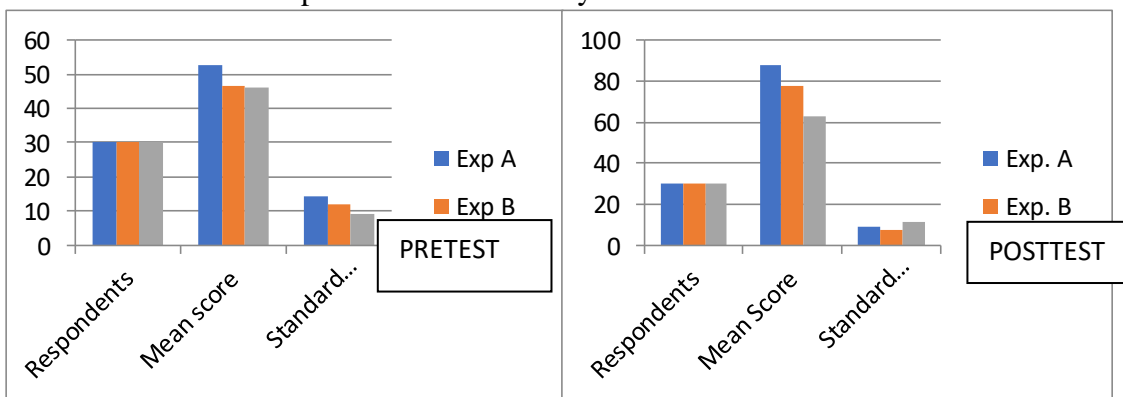
The next Tabel 1 shows that the mean score for the post-test is 87.57 for experimental group A, 77.90 for experimental group B, and 62.63 for the control group. It means that there is a significant improvement in the students' achievements of the experimental group's A and B after giving the treatments. It is in line with the focus of constructivism which stated that the roles of meaning for students are important (Ertmer & Newby, 2013; Pritchard & Woollard, 2010).

*Table 1. The Students' Achievement Results in Pretest and Posttest*

	Pretest			Posttest		
	Exp. A	Exp. B	Control	Exp. A	Exp. B	Control
<b>Respondent</b>	30	30	30	30	30	30
<b>Mean</b>	52.83	46.63	46.03	87.57	77.90	62.63
<b>SD</b>	14.508	12.133	9.182	8.958	7.194	11.766

From the improvement of the student's achievement, we may infer those Islamic materials give meaningful experience for the students as they had already understood the content (Anshari & Widyantoro, 2020; Cahyo et al., 2019; Djamdjuri et al., 2021). On the contrary, there is no significant improvement in the student's achievements in the control group.

It is represented more clearly in the chart below:



*Figure 2 The Students' Achievement in Pretest and Posttest*



The data from Table 1 and Figure 2 show that the mean score of the pre-test from the experimental group A and the control group are approximately in the same score level. They are 52.83 for experimental group A, 46.63 for experimental group B, and 46.03 for the control group before giving the treatment. After giving the treatment, the post-test score for both groups shows a difference score of the mean score. The mean score and standard deviation show differences in the pre-test and post-test of the three groups. This proves that teaching and disciplining students with the best manners and personal characteristics can in particular bring about high moral standards and good achievements (Juharyanto, 2017).

### **c. The T-test of Experimental and Control Groups**

The result of the t-test was calculated using inferential statistics through SPSS program version 20.0, the data shows that the probability value or significance (2-tailed) from both experimental groups is smaller than  $\alpha$ , ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). It means that  $H_1$  is accepted and  $H_0$  is rejected. It means that there is a significant difference before treatment in the pretest and after treatment in the posttest. In other words, there is an improvement in the students' achievements between the pretest and posttest in experimental groups after the treatment. In addition, from the calculation of the t-count and t-table of both the Experimental groups and control group, with the t-table value in  $DF = N-2 = 28$ , it is gained t-count  $>$  t-table ( $9.235 > 1.70113$ ) for experimental group A and control group, and ( $6.063 > 1.70113$ ) for experimental group B and control group. Because the t-count  $>$  t table for both groups, it means there is a significant difference between the results of both experimental groups and the control group, or in the other words  $H_1$  is accepted and  $H_0$  is rejected. So, there is a significant difference in the achievements of the students using Islamic teaching materials before and after the treatment. So, Islamic materials can give a significantly greater contribution to the student's achievements. It is in line with national education which has not only been planned to develop intelligent and qualified human beings but also to have honorable character (Juharyanto, 2017).

## **2. Students' Comprehension of Character values**

To obtain students' comprehension of the character or moral value of each work, the researcher posed a series of questions in the style of an interview to which the students had to react. The students were given 18 different character values, as mentioned in Pusat Kurikulum (2010) as cited in (Djamdjuri et al., 2022) namely: Religion, honesty, tolerance, self-discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, patriotism,

nationalism, respect for others, friendliness, peacemaking, love of reading, environmental sensitivity, social awareness, and responsibility are the characteristics of the characters. To gain the students' responses, 10 participants were selected to be given an interview.

The first query was about what character qualities they gained from learning English through Islamic sources. The students mentioned the character values they learned in response to this question. All respondents noted the religious nature of Islam, six respondents mentioned honesty, four respondents mentioned tolerance, three respondents noted self-discipline, four respondents noticed hard work, four respondents stated creativity, eight respondents noticed independence, one respondent noted democracy, ten respondents noticed curiosity, two respondents noted patriotism, two respondents remarked nationalism, two respondents noted curiosity, and two respondents noted curiosity.

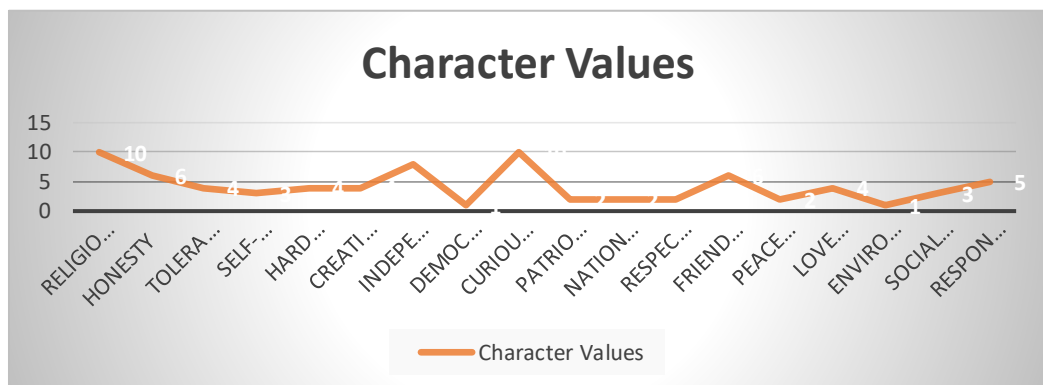


Figure 3 Character values that the students get from learning English through Islamic materials

The respondents' identification of the character values is shown in Figure 3 which reveals that the primary characters most often cited by participants were religion and curiosity, followed by independence, honesty, kindness, and responsibility. This finding demonstrates how religion controls all elements of a person's life as an individual, as a member of society, and in their surroundings (Darmayenti et al., 2021; Nadhif, 2016; Sukardi, 2016).

Does your everyday life reflect your character values in any way, asked the second inquiry. Describe them and provide some examples of your actions that reflected the character values! The statements from three out of ten responders to question number two were chosen by the researchers to be reported in this publication. According to the first respondent, the character had certain repercussions on his or her life that were obvious. One of the characters is religious: "I read the Quran every day in the morning and at night," and another is honest and straightforward: "I try not to tell lies." Another is tolerant: "I strive to respect others' opinions," and yet another is creative: "I try to make calming as entertaining

as possible." (15) love of reading: "I read more English and different cultures," (9) curiosity: "I want to learn more and more about everything" and (18) responsibility: "I strive to accomplish my task on time."

The second responder said: "Yes, there is, some of the characters are," adding: "There are also some impacts of the characters into his/her life": (1) Religion: "I am better knowledgeable about Islam. We must fast, observe Taraweeh, pay zakat, and recite Ied al-Fitr during Ramadan, for instance. (9) Curiosity: "I can learn more about Islam and the universe," (13), Friendliness: "I can make friends with everyone," (18) Responsibility: "I shall clean my house."

The third responder said, "Character has an impact on my life." Some of the traits of these individuals include (1) Religiosity: "I pray on time, I read the Quran twice a day, and I always study every night," (4) Discipline: "I collect my assignment on time," (6) Creativity: "I search for a different way to explain the materials," (9) Curiosity: "I search the meaning from the dictionary," (15) Love of reading: "I read all the documentation that would be discussed," and (18) Responsibility: "I do my assignment well, I do team work well".

In response to question number 3, what moral principles can you immediately apply to your daily life? mention them as frequently as you can. "Religiosity, hard work, inventiveness, independence, curiosity, and love of reading," the first reply said. Religiosity, curiosity, kindness, and responsibility were listed by the second responder. Religiosity, discipline, inventiveness, curiosity, love of reading, and responsibility were listed by the third responder. Religiosity, honesty, tolerance, inventiveness, curiosity, friendliness, love of reading, and responsibility, according to the fourth responder. "Religiosity, honesty, hard effort, independence, curiosity, respect for others, kindness, and environmental concern," said the fifth responder. According to the data, 5 people mentioned their religion and their curiosity, 3 people mentioned their friendliness, love of reading, and responsibility, 2 people mentioned their honesty, hard work, creativity, and independence, and 1 person mentioned their tolerance, discipline, respect for others, and environmental sensitivity. Five traits stand out from the two higher categories: religion, curiosity, sociability, love of reading, and responsibility.

All of the students expressed pleasant feelings in their comments as well. Prophet Muhammad, according to Ibn Uyainah, inquired for useful knowledge all the way up to the end of his life (Husaini, 2013). The preceding argument said that education is not primarily focused on intellectual growth and the acquisition of information, but rather on the creation

of personality, body, mind, and character (concerning the use of Islamic materials in English language teaching) (Darmayenti et al., 2021; Kendiani, 2020; Nadhif, 2016).

According to the student's responses, it can be inferred that using Islamic resources as teaching aids in English language teaching has some good effects on the students. It is also maintained that character values must be included in the instruction of English (Darmayenti et al., 2021; Djamdjuri et al., 2022; Kendiani, 2020; Sih, 2020). According to this study, the five characteristics that students tend to choose are responsibility, honesty, friendliness, curiosity, and religion. All students also comprehend the character values that are present in the text.

## E. CONCLUSION

Inferential statistics were used to calculate the pre-test and post-test results for the experimental group of students. The results show that there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores. In other words, the student's academic progress has improved. We may infer from this study that Islamic educational resources can significantly boost students' achievement in learning English.

In the meanwhile, the responses given by students to the interview suggest that the use of Islamic resources as teaching materials in English language teaching is having some good effects on the students. When employing Islamic teaching materials, students mostly learn about five characteristics: religion, honesty, curiosity, friendliness, and responsibility. All students also grasped the character values in the passages. They asserted that not only could they comprehend the character, but they could also directly apply it to their own lives.

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