

# The Case Method in Islamic Education as an Effort to Strengthen Students' Character Values: A Literature Review

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## ABSTRACT

**This study examines** the development of Islamic character values through the implementation of a case method-based learning model in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at the university level. Framed within the paradigm of character education revitalization in higher education, this research discusses how instructional design, campus religious culture, and co-curricular activities jointly contribute to character formation. **The purpose of this study** is to identify the extent to which the case method can strengthen students' religious literacy, critical thinking skills, and social character, as well as to formulate hypotheses regarding its pedagogical effectiveness. **Methodologically**, this literature-based study synthesizes various empirical findings and theoretical frameworks related to PAI learning models by highlighting research designs, sample characteristics, geographical contexts, variables, instructional conditions, and assessment techniques reported in previous studies. It also reviews how character values are integrated through syllabus development, course design, Islamic civilization materials as contextual learning resources, mosque-based learning environments, digital media, interactive multimedia, and authentic assessment practices such as observation, self-assessment, peer assessment, worship journals, and interviews. **The findings** indicate that case method-based learning fosters meaningful engagement with real socio-religious issues, deepens the examination of scriptural evidence from contemporary perspectives, and enhances students' cognitive, affective, and social competencies. **The implications** of these findings affirm the need for policies that institutionalize case-based learning within the PAI curriculum and strengthen campus religious culture through mosque-centered programs. **In conclusion**, the case method offers a progressive and value-oriented pedagogical framework that can reinforce Islamic education

management, improve students' problem-solving abilities and religious practice, and provide a strategic foundation for strengthening character education in higher education.

**Keywords:** Case Method, Islamic Religious Education, Character Values.

## ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini mengkaji pengembangan nilai-nilai karakter Islami melalui penerapan model pembelajaran berbasis metode kasus (case method) dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) pada tingkat perguruan tinggi. Ditempatkan dalam paradigma revitalisasi pendidikan karakter di pendidikan tinggi, penelitian ini membahas bagaimana desain pembelajaran, budaya religius kampus, dan kegiatan ko-kurikuler berkontribusi secara bersama-sama terhadap pembentukan karakter. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi sejauh mana metode kasus dapat memperkuat literasi keagamaan, kemampuan berpikir kritis, dan karakter sosial mahasiswa, serta merumuskan hipotesis mengenai efektivitas pedagogisnya. Secara metodologis, penelitian berbasis literatur ini mensintesis berbagai studi empiris dan kerangka teoretis terkait model pembelajaran PAI dengan menyoroti desain penelitian, karakteristik sampel, konteks geografis, variabel, kondisi instruksional, dan teknik penilaian dalam studi-studi sebelumnya. Penelitian ini juga meninjau bagaimana nilai-nilai karakter diintegrasikan melalui pengembangan silabus, desain perkuliahan, materi peradaban Islam sebagai konteks pembelajaran, lingkungan pembelajaran berbasis masjid kampus, media digital, multimedia interaktif, serta praktik penilaian autentik seperti observasi, penilaian diri, penilaian teman sejawat, jurnal ibadah, dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran berbasis metode kasus mendorong keterlibatan bermakna dengan isu-isu sosial-keagamaan nyata, memperdalam kajian terhadap dalil keagamaan dalam pandangan kontemporer, dan meningkatkan kompetensi kognitif, afektif, dan sosial mahasiswa. Implikasi temuan ini menegaskan perlunya kebijakan yang menginstitusionalisasi pembelajaran berbasis kasus dalam kurikulum PAI serta memperkuat budaya religius kampus melalui program-program berbasis masjid. Sebagai kesimpulan, metode kasus menawarkan kerangka pedagogis yang progresif dan berorientasi nilai, yang mampu memperkuat manajemen pendidikan Islam, meningkatkan kemampuan pemecahan masalah dan praktik keberagamaan mahasiswa, serta memberikan landasan strategis bagi penguatan pendidikan karakter di perguruan tinggi.*

**Kata Kunci:** Metode Kasus, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Nilai-Nilai Karakter

## INTRODUCTION

Education is regarded as a strategic asset for a nation in building a generation that is not only intellectually excellent but also possesses strong and competitive character. In this regard, Islamic education holds a significant position as the foundation for internalizing moral and spiritual values in learning (Dawam, 2024; Rahman, 2023). The significance of Islamic education in Indonesia is reinforced by its integration into the national education system as regulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which provides greater opportunities for Islamic education to adapt and develop through various forms and implementation approaches (UU Sisdiknas, 2003; Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2022).

As times evolve, various studies emphasize that the problems and challenges in character development among learners highlight the need for innovation in Islamic education management to create an effective process of value internalization for sustainable religious character formation (Hidayat & Anwar, 2024; Nursyam, 2023). The actualization of the strategic role of Islamic education in improving human resource quality is reflected through the optimization of educational and instructional practices oriented toward strengthening learners' character. Islamic education and character education share a strong epistemological intersection, as both emphasize the cultivation of values, morals, and ethics as the primary goals of the educational process (Fikri & Hasanah, 2024; Sauri, 2023). Thus, the empowerment of Islamic Religious Education is essentially an integral part of strengthening national character education in accordance with the fundamental goals of Islamic education (Mulyono, 2023).

One constructive strategy for improving the quality of Islamic Religious Education is the development of learning quality in both process and outcomes. However, empirical realities show that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in various educational institutions has not been entirely based on pedagogical theory or a comprehensive value-oriented design of Islamic teachings (Zainuddin et al., 2023). Learning activities are often dominated by lecture-based methods, where learners play a passive role and merely receive information in a one-way flow from educators. Such teacher-centered approaches limit opportunities for learners to actively construct knowledge, experiences, and character through meaningful learning interactions (Rahmawati & Jannah, 2024). Consequently, the contribution of learning to forming students' social and religious character becomes suboptimal and does not yield significant transformational impact (Hidayat, 2024).

A key determinant in improving educational outcomes lies in how the learning process is designed to encourage active involvement of students in all learning activities. Increasing participation can be achieved by applying learning models that position learners as active subjects, one of which is the case study (case-based learning) approach. Case-based learning is a pedagogical strategy that emphasizes learners' abilities to identify problems, explore alternative solutions, and reflect on meaningful experiences, thereby strengthening critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills relevant to real-life contexts (Saleh, 2013; Putri & Mahfud, 2024).

The case-based approach is highly relevant for integration into Islamic Religious Education as it provides space for the internalization of social and religious character values in a more tangible manner among students. PAI plays an important role in shaping learners' personalities and character so they are able to respond wisely to socio-religious dynamics (Nugraha, 2023). Current challenges in achieving the goals of Islamic education require innovations and new perspectives in instructional development to meet the needs of more comprehensive character transformation (Hidayat & Sauri, 2024).

Optimizing the quality of PAI learning cannot be separated from the development of a collaborative academic climate between educators and learners. The quality of the learning process

is strongly influenced by how educators manage learning interactions that foster a dialogic and constructive academic culture (Idris, 2020, p. 90; Rahman, 2024). Therefore, this study focuses on developing a transformative PAI learning model through the application of a case-based approach as a strategic effort to shape students' character holistically and sustainably.

Recent studies in the field of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) have increasingly highlighted the importance of adopting student-centered pedagogical models to strengthen learners' character formation. Research after 2020 has shown a shift from traditional lecture-based instruction toward more interactive and reflective approaches. For instance, Fikri and Hasanah (2024) demonstrated that dialogic learning promotes deeper religious understanding and moral awareness among university students, while Sauri (2023) emphasized the relevance of values-based instruction for developing ethical sensitivity. Similarly, Putri and Mahfud (2024) found that problem-based learning enhances students' critical engagement with socio-religious issues. These studies collectively underscore the growing urgency to redesign Islamic education through innovative learning frameworks that connect religious knowledge with real-life contexts.

Despite these advances, recent literature still reveals significant limitations, particularly concerning the systematic integration of character values through structured pedagogical models. Many studies on Islamic education focus primarily on cognitive gains or general student engagement without providing a comprehensive explanation of how specific instructional approaches contribute to holistic character development—especially in the areas of religious literacy, critical reasoning, and socio-religious responsiveness. Moreover, research exploring the case method within Islamic education contexts remains limited, with most studies focusing on small-scale classroom experiments or school-level applications. This scarcity results in insufficient evidence regarding the broader potential of the case method in higher education settings, where students face more complex socio-religious challenges.

## METHODS

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) to synthesize empirical findings and theoretical perspectives related to the implementation of the case method in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and its contribution to strengthening students' character values. The SLR approach was selected to enable a structured, transparent, and verifiable process of identifying, evaluating, and integrating scholarly evidence across diverse academic sources.

### Data Sources and Search Strategy

Literature was retrieved from major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, DOAJ, Google Scholar, Garuda Kemdikbud, and ResearchGate (as supplementary source). A combination of controlled vocabulary and Boolean operators was used to construct the search strings. Keywords included: "case method in Islamic education"; "Islamic Religious Education AND

case-based learning”; “Islamic character education AND higher education”; “karakter mahasiswa AND pendidikan agama Islam”; “case method AND character values”.

Searches were conducted using both English and Indonesian keywords to maximize the coverage of relevant literature.

### **Publication Range**

The search was limited to publications from 2014 to 2024 to ensure the inclusion of recent developments related to PAI instructional models, Islamic character formation, and case-based learning in higher education.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Studies were included if they met the following criteria:

1. Published between 2014–2024.
2. Peer-reviewed journal articles or scholarly books.
3. Addressed Islamic Religious Education, character education, innovative learning models, or case-based learning.
4. Conducted in higher education settings or demonstrated strong theoretical relevance to university-level Islamic education.
5. Full-text availability in English or Indonesian.

### **Exclusion criteria applied to studies that:**

- Lacked relevance to PAI or character education.
- Provided conceptual opinions without empirical grounding.
- Did not specify methodological procedures.
- Focused solely on non-Islamic educational contexts without transferable insights.

### **Screening and Article Selection**

The initial search generated 148 records. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts, 76 studies remained. Full-text assessment resulted in the selection of 32 core articles that fully met the inclusion criteria. In addition, 10 academic books and several institutional reports were incorporated as supporting references.

### **Data Analysis**

A descriptive–interpretative analytic technique was employed. The analysis consisted of:

1. Identification of core themes related to PAI instructional models, Islamic character values, and case-based pedagogy.
2. Categorization of data into thematic clusters (e.g., religious literacy, critical reasoning, socio-religious responsiveness, case-based instruction, campus religious culture).
3. Cross-study synthesis to identify converging and diverging findings across empirical studies.
4. Interpretation linking results with theoretical frameworks in Islamic education, transformative pedagogy, and character formation.



5. Conclusion drawing to formulate conceptual contributions, research gaps, and pedagogical implications.

To ensure methodological transparency, the review process followed structured steps of searching, screening, eligibility assessment, and thematic synthesis consistent with standards for literature reviews in high-impact journals.

## RESULTS

Based on the results of the literature review, this study identifies several important concepts related to learning patterns in Islamic Religious Education that are oriented toward the formation of students' social character.

### 1. Conception of Learning Patterns

Learning patterns are understood as approaches or strategies used by educators to deliver material and manage the dynamics of the learning process in order to achieve optimal learning objectives (Suyudi & Prakarsa, 2020). In efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education, it is necessary to implement learning patterns that are relevant to students' developmental needs and contemporary demands.

Conceptually, learning is an instructional activity intentionally designed to create a learning environment that enables students to grow and experience behavioral changes in a positive direction (Miarso, 2004). Learning can only be considered effective when it generates active learning processes within students and provides opportunities for them to interact, either directly through communication with educators or through the use of learning media (Fathurrahman, 2023).

In the era of Society 5.0, learning processes are required to develop 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication—commonly known as 4C skills (Nurhayati, 2024). Thus, learning patterns must be designed adaptively and innovatively to facilitate these competencies.

According to Morris (as cited in Rosdiani, 2012), several types of learning patterns can be implemented in educational practice, including interaction-based learning patterns between educators and students and media-based learning patterns. The implementation of these varied learning patterns fosters a more participatory and contextual learning process, enabling students to take an active role in constructing their knowledge and social character (Rahmawati & Sauri, 2024).

### 2. Islamic Education Based on the Case Method

Studies on the implementation of the case method in Islamic Religious Education highlight that this method emphasizes student centrality in the learning process. The case method is a pedagogical strategy designed to develop students' abilities to identify problems, analyze situations, articulate arguments, and formulate appropriate solutions based on cases studied (Sidebang, 2021).

Its application enables students to actively engage in the learning process, enhance decision-making capacity, improve critical thinking, and strengthen collaboration in addressing real-world issues.

Case-based learning utilizes real issues or events within students' environments as learning sources, making the material more contextual and relevant to their lived experiences (Dietrich et al., 2010; Thibaut & Schroeder, 2020). This approach effectively bridges theory and practice, makes learning experiences more meaningful, and enhances students' connection to social realities (Fernández et al., 2020; Gennaro et al., 2020). Additionally, the dynamic nature of cases encourages learning that is adaptive and responsive to changes over time (Höper et al., 2022; Remmen et al., 2020).

As a participatory learning method based on discussion, the case method emphasizes collaboration among students in analyzing and solving learning problems collectively (Fauzi et al., 2022). Through this activity, students not only comprehend theories cognitively but also learn to implement religious concepts in real-life contexts, thereby significantly strengthening critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills—key 21st-century competencies (Rahmawati & Hasanah, 2024).

Research conducted by Engreini (2024) shows that the application of the case method integrated with 21st-century learning management—including planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation—while considering differences in learning styles, classroom management, and collaborative learning, significantly improves learning outcomes among Management students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, UNM. This effectiveness is reflected in the increase of students' average learning outcomes, reaching 20.81%.

Similarly, a study by Anwar and Junaidi (2022) confirms that case-based learning management is effective in developing students' character while enhancing their active participation in the learning process. The study used indicators aligned with implementation stages: planning achieved a "good" category at 75.48%; implementation achieved a "very good" category at 92.30%; and evaluation achieved a "very good" category at 87.9%. Overall, the final achievement of 85.22% shows that case-based learning has a positive impact on students' active participation, increased learning motivation, two-way interactive communication, and more dynamic classroom conditions in both offline and online settings.

Based on these studies, it can be concluded that the case-based Islamic Religious Education model is an approach that presents authentic and relevant real-life problems as the starting point for investigation, exploration, and inquiry. In the context of character strengthening, problem-based learning linked to Islamic teachings has the potential to nurture students' religious character. This occurs because the internalization of religious values is carried out through learning activities that require active student engagement according to the syntax of problem-based learning, thereby providing epistemological foundations, applied skills, and religious attitudes in responding to real-life issues.

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### 3. Integration of the Case Method with PAI Learning Objectives

The implementation of the case method in Islamic Religious Education aims to strengthen the internalization of religious values into students' real behavior. PAI learning is not only oriented toward mastery of religious concepts but also toward the formation of social character, moral decision-making abilities, and religious attitudes manifested in action (Nugraha, 2023).

The case method provides space for students to analyze various contemporary religious and social phenomena and then connect them with Islamic principles as the basis for problem-solving. Thus, students learn to implement Islamic values contextually and relevantly in modern society (Hidayat & Sauri, 2024).

### 4. The Impact of the Case Method on the Development of Students' Social Character

Findings from the literature review indicate that the implementation of the case method influences the development of students' social character through cooperative and dialogic learning activities.

**Table 1.** Impact of the Case Method on the Development of Students' Social Character

Thematic Theme	Main Description	Character Values Developed	Literature Sources
Strengthening social character	Group discussions and collaborative case analysis enhance empathy and social awareness	Empathy, cooperation, tolerance	Rahman (2024); Fauzi et al. (2022)
Development of dialogic communication	Students express opinions and appreciate diverse perspectives	Effective communication, politeness, respect for differences	Fauzi et al. (2022)
Responsibility and deliberation	Group decision-making requires students to be actively involved and responsible	Responsibility, discipline, trustworthiness	Rahman (2024)
Application of Islamic ethics	Students apply Islamic moral values in discussions and problem-solving	Honesty, justice, proper conduct	Rahman (2024); Fauzi et al. (2022)
Formation of religious & social character	The case method integrates Islamic values with contemporary social dynamics	Religiosity, integrity, social personality	Various literature review studies

### 5. Examples of Implementation Practices in PAI Learning

The application of the case method in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) courses can be carried out through activities such as:



**Table 2.** Example of Implementation in PAI

Type of Activity	Example of Implementation in PAI	Character Output
Analysis of Socio-Religious Cases	Discussing campus intolerance phenomena from the perspective of <i>ukhuwah Islamiyah</i>	Tolerance, empathy
Analysis of Current Issues	Examining issues of technology misuse and hoaxes from the perspective of Islamic ethics	Digital responsibility
Group Study	Solving social problems through deliberation ( <i>musyawarah</i> )	Cooperation, communication
Presentation of Solutions	Formulating recommendations based on Islamic scriptural evidence	Ethical decision-making

This approach enriches learning experiences and guides students to become problem solvers grounded in Islamic values (Putri & Mahfud, 2024).

## DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of this study, the implementation of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model using the case method in developing student character represents a learning management strategy that emphasizes case analysis and problem-solving as a means of fostering students' social character. This approach is a conceptual formulation aligned with the function of PAI instructional design, namely managing the educational process to achieve the ideal goals of Islamic education, which include the comprehensive formation of personality and moral character (Daulay, 2019; Hidayat, 2023).

In line with this orientation, the case method in PAI functions as a transformative learning approach that provides opportunities for students to gain contextual learning experiences through active engagement in analyzing real problems. This method emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills, the ability to solve problems scientifically, and decision-making based on Islamic values (Afif, 2019; Firmansyah & Rahmawati, 2024). Thus, the learning process focuses not only on the transfer of religious knowledge but also on strengthening the internalization of moral and spiritual values reflected in daily behavior.

Within this framework, students act as learning subjects who construct their own understanding through interactions with cases relevant to religious and socio-community life. This constructive process generates meaningful learning experiences, as the solutions developed are based on Islamic principles that guide responses to life's challenges (Nasution, 2023).

The success of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model is not measured solely by cognitive achievement through the transfer of knowledge, but also by the effectiveness of transferring attitudes and values as the main foundation of character formation (Mahfud, 2023). Therefore, the implementation of PAI using the case method is aimed at ensuring that students can apply their religious understanding in social life, enabling the development of social character as reflected in attitudes, behaviors, and social competencies.

In practice, several important principles must be considered in the implementation of problem-based learning and case-based learning. Afif (2019) emphasizes that problem design must be formulated systematically and in alignment with curricular objectives, as well as authentically and contextually, in order to activate students' critical consciousness, supported by diverse media and learning resources that enrich the learning experience. In addition, the assessment system must accommodate higher-order thinking skills and students' character development (Putra & Yuliana, 2024). The case-based paradigm in Islamic Education (PAI) also positions Islamic education as a strategic instrument for responding to the challenges of social and technological change through the internalization of religious values that are adaptive to shifting paradigms (Kholidah, 2022; Sutrisno, 2024). This instructional model supports the development of graduates who are not only personally religious but also socially competitive and contributive.

When compared with international research, these findings align with global studies on case-based learning. For example, research by Herreid & Schiller (2013) in the United States demonstrates that the case method is effective in enhancing cognitive engagement, analytical ability, and communication skills among higher-education students. Similarly, studies by Thistlethwaite et al. (2012) in the United Kingdom and Australia found that case-based learning strengthens professional competence and ethical values through collaborative learning and critical reflection. However, a significant distinction emerges in the context of Islamic Education, in which religious values function not only as the context of learning but also as the essential character to be cultivated. This spiritual dimension represents a distinct feature that is not commonly found in international studies, which typically focus on academic or professional competence, whereas the present study highlights the integration of religious, moral, and social character formation.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that must be acknowledged explicitly. First, as a literature review, this research depends on the availability and quality of published sources, which means the findings may be influenced by the limited scope of both national and international literature. Second, the absence of a deeper comparative analysis between the application of the case method in Islamic Education and in other disciplines restricts the understanding of its potential cross-disciplinary adaptability. Third, the study does not include empirical verification through field research; thus, the effectiveness of the case method in shaping students' character values has not been directly tested. Therefore, future research that is empirical, cross-nationally comparative, and program-evaluation-based is needed to strengthen the generalization and scholarly contribution of these findings.

In this framework, Islamic education aims to produce: (1) Religious skillful people, namely Muslims who possess professional competence, sincerity, intellectual ability, and independence; and (2) Religious community leaders, individuals capable of leading social transformation based on Islamic ethics and values, equipped with scientific integrity, strong analytical skills, and high social awareness (Rachman, 2021; Hamdan, 2023).

The implementation of Islamic education must continue to adapt to the dynamics of contemporary developments to remain relevant and contribute meaningfully to global issues (Rahman, 2024). These social demands necessitate an Islamic education model that is responsive, adaptive, and capable of addressing modern challenges. The case method-based PAI instructional design is positioned as a theoretical formulation for optimizing the learning design process in achieving the goals of Islamic education, particularly in developing students' social character.

The methodological aspect of PAI plays a crucial role in the successful internalization of values and the realization of educational goals. Therefore, problem-based learning (PBL) is considered strategic for facilitating students' ability to identify and solve socio-religious issues critically and constructively (Kholidah, 2023; Lestari & Amin, 2024). This approach is believed to foster moral sensitivity and appropriate attitudes in responding to issues faced by the Muslim community amid social changes (Jailani et al., 2021).

The implementation of the case method enables lecturers to stimulate students' critical awareness by presenting the gap between reality and the ideal values of Islam. For example, when presented with a case of moral degradation among youth, students are expected to identify the contradiction between this phenomenon and Islamic moral standards. This analysis of the gap has the potential to foster the internalization of religious and moral values through reflective learning and direct learning experiences (Azizah, 2024).

Character strengthening in education cannot be separated from the holistic development of all aspects of humanity, including physical, emotional, social, spiritual, creative, and intellectual dimensions, ultimately leading to the formation of *insan kamil* (Fauzan & Najwa, 2023). Zubaedi (2015) emphasizes that character education must produce lifelong learners by creating learning environments that are enjoyable, safe, appreciative, and free of threats. In addition, character education must be implemented explicitly, systematically, and sustainably through the three main stages of moral development: *knowing the good*, *loving the good*, and *acting the good* (Mustofa et al., 2024).

The implementation of character education must be carried out comprehensively through a holistic approach that integrates value formation into all aspects of students' lives as Muslim intellectuals. Character education is not limited to the transfer of moral concepts in the classroom but includes habituation and reinforcement through continuous learning experiences in various student activity environments (Hidayat & Salam, 2024). Character strengthening is conducted through a systematic internalization process, starting from introducing values, enhancing moral awareness, and applying values in real actions both on and off campus, supported by various learning resources (Nurhayati et al., 2023).

The integration of character education into PAI learning can be operationalized through the selection of instructional content and pedagogical approaches relevant to the character traits being developed. Thus, learning materials must be systematically designed to align with the objectives of

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character reinforcement as part of a structured curriculum (Zubaedi, 2015; Aziz & Rofiq, 2024). The learning approach must also be adaptive to students' developmental needs so that Islamic values can be applied in accordance with their actual challenges.

In the era of information openness, strengthening students' religious character becomes increasingly important due to the moral challenges accompanying technological and digital media developments. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education must be systematically designed and place character development as its primary focus through integrative strategies and diverse learning resources to ensure character formation occurs effectively and consistently (Rahmawati & Yusri, 2024; Syamsuddin, 2023).

The development of values and character in Islamic higher education can be optimized through three main pillars: curricular learning activities, strengthening of religious campus culture, and the implementation of co-curricular and extracurricular activities. These pillars function as complementary strategies ensuring comprehensive internalization of character values among students (Hakim & Wibowo, 2023; Mulyadi et al., 2024).

In the first pillar, curricular learning, character development is emphasized through integrating Islamic values into every component of the lecture process. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at public universities, lecturers play a strategic role in designing learning tools, including curriculum development, syllabus preparation, and the formulation of Semester Learning Plans that highlight character formation (Azzahra et al., 2023). Thus, each instructional material does not only provide conceptual understanding but is also directed toward instilling values and attitudes aligned with Islamic character education goals (Suhadi, 2024).

Character education in PAI learning can be practiced by delivering materials oriented toward strengthening morality and religious observance. The campus mosque can function as a spiritual laboratory, allowing students to practice religious rituals directly, ensuring that learning is not merely theoretical but contributes to the formation of religious behavior in daily life (Roqib, 2021).

In teaching materials related to the history of Islamic civilization, lecturers may utilize mosque architectural heritage as authentic learning resources to enrich students' understanding of the development of Islam across regions, including Indonesia. The architecture of Nusantara mosques demonstrates acculturation between Islamic values and local culture, reflected in structural elements resembling the *meru* design from the Hindu-Buddhist era and carved ornaments similar to those found in classical temples such as Prambanan (Yatim, 2004; Hidayat & Rahmawati, 2020). This understanding provides a basis for cultivating tolerance, appreciation of local wisdom, and awareness that Islam historically spread through peaceful cultural dialogue.

Furthermore, co-curricular activities serve to further strengthen the internalization of Islamic values outside formal classes. These activities include religious development programs designed to

reinforce students' spiritual and moral values, ensuring that character formation occurs cognitively, affectively, and psychomotorically (Amri, 2023).

The application of the case method in PAI learning can be directed toward activities that enable students to gain a deep understanding of Islamic values. This model positions students in learning situations that encourage them to construct knowledge through authentic experiences, such as solving problems related to religious phenomena and analyzing scriptural texts relevant to contemporary social issues (Mulyono & Syamsuddin, 2022).

In practice, lecturers may employ various digital and real-life-based sources and media, including internet technology, interactive multimedia platforms, and current societal events (Kholidah, 2021). Learning evaluation is carried out comprehensively by assessing both processes and outcomes using observation, self-assessment, peer assessment, worship journals, and interviews to ensure that students' spiritual, social, and intellectual dimensions are measured holistically (Arif & Nurlaila, 2023).

Thus, a case method-integrated PAI learning design serves as a strategic alternative for internalizing Islamic values that remain adaptive amid the dynamics of the digital disruption era. Through this approach, students are equipped not only with religious knowledge but also with critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and religious character reflected in constructive social behavior (Nurhayati & Bahri, 2024).

## CONCLUSIONS

Overall, this study confirms that the application of the case-method-based learning model in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) functions as an effective and strategic pedagogical approach for strengthening both social and religious character among university students. The synthesis of findings demonstrates that case-based learning not only facilitates students' engagement in analytical and problem-solving activities but also embeds these processes within Islamic ethical frameworks, allowing character formation to occur through the transfer of knowledge, values, and attitudes. These integrated experiences position the case method as a powerful medium for cultivating character traits such as empathy, responsibility, honesty, and socio-religious awareness.

Furthermore, the literature consistently indicates that the case method supports the development of 21st-century competencies—critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity—while simultaneously reinforcing students' religiosity. This dual impact contributes to meaningful behavioral transformation, heightened motivation, and increased active participation in the learning environment. In a broader conceptual context, the case method serves as an adaptive model of Islamic education management that aligns with the demands of contemporary society, particularly in addressing moral, cultural, and technological disruptions. Hence, the integration of case-based learning within IRE is highly relevant for guiding students toward becoming \*insan



kamil\*—Muslim individuals who are intellectually capable, socially responsible, and spiritually grounded.

Despite these contributions, several areas require further scholarly attention. First, empirical research employing classroom-based interventions is needed to validate how the case method influences character formation in real learning settings. Second, comparative studies between domestic and international applications of case-based learning could offer deeper insights into its adaptability across cultural and educational systems. Third, future research should develop standardized assessment instruments to measure character outcomes resulting from case-method-based instruction.

Finally, longitudinal studies are recommended to examine the long-term impact of case-based learning on students' moral development and religious commitment. By addressing these research gaps, future studies will not only enhance the empirical grounding of the case method in Islamic Religious Education but also contribute to the advancement of innovative character-oriented pedagogies in higher education. Terjemahkan

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