

Implementation of the Social Inquiry Learning Model in Shaping Students' Islamic Character to Support SDG 4 in the Ibadah, Akhlak, and Mu'amalah Course

Taufik Churrahman

Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia



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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing the Social Inquiry Learning Model in shaping Islamic character among students at UMSIDA, particularly in the Ibadah, Akhlak, and Mu'amalah course. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of learning strategies that are relevant and impactful for Islamic character education at the tertiary level. **Method:** This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with an ethnographic research design to explore and evaluate the implementation of the Social Inquiry Learning Model in shaping Islamic character among university students. To achieve a comprehensive analysis, this study integrates two key frameworks: the CIPP evaluation model (Context, Input, Process, Product) and SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. **Results:** The test results showed a significant mean difference of -2.302 with a standard deviation of 5.096 and a t-value of -27.112 ($df = 35$, $p = 0.000$), indicating a statistically significant improvement in students' Islamic character after participating in learning activities using the Social Inquiry Model. On average, students' scores increased from 57.72 to 80.75. These activities foster critical thinking, empathy, and social responsibility, all of which are core components of Islamic character. **Novelty:** This model empowers students to become socially conscious individuals with strong moral integrity, which is essential for Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). It also prepares students with 21st-century competencies such as problem-solving, collaboration, and ethical leadership, which are crucial in the contemporary socio-cultural context.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a strategic role in shaping young generations who are not only intellectually capable but also possess strong faith, noble character, and sound social skills [1], [2], [3], [4]. In this context, the Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo (UMSIDA), as part of an Islamic higher education institution, holds the responsibility to implement a curriculum that emphasizes not only academic achievement but also the internalization of Islamic values. Courses such as *Ibadah*, *Akhlak*, and *Mu'amalah* are essential in embedding Islamic values into students' daily lives, enabling them to become excellent individuals who contribute meaningfully to society.

In the current era of Society 5.0, character education must evolve in line with rapid technological and social transformations. Educators are expected to design adaptive and transformative learning strategies that address various challenges through preventive, corrective, and developmental approaches. Moreover, character education must be continuous, integrated, and consciously implemented by all educational stakeholders [5], [6].

One promising approach to address this challenge is the Social Inquiry Learning Model, which emphasizes active student engagement in exploring values through real-life social contexts. In the framework of *Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah Studies*, this model can be adapted to foster student character development and cultivate a spirit of becoming a comprehensive Muslim (*kaaffah*) aligned with progressive Islamic values [7]. This type of learning fosters not only cognitive understanding but also deep moral and spiritual internalization through reflection and experiential activities [8].

Character is understood as the integration of personality qualities, morality, and distinguishing attributes of individuals in social life. Therefore, effective character education requires approaches that shape behavior and attitudes, not merely transmit knowledge. Students must be encouraged to apply Islamic principles in real-world interactions and decision-making processes [9].

However, the implementation of AIK (Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan) courses in higher education still faces numerous challenges. These include a lack of interactive teaching methods, insufficient understanding of course objectives, and weak integration between classroom learning and student activities or community engagement. As a result, the character formation process often remains fragmented and suboptimal in addressing contemporary societal dynamics [10].

To overcome these issues, it is crucial to develop learning models that activate students holistically. The Social Inquiry Learning Model encourages students to ask questions, investigate social phenomena, engage in critical discussions, and connect social realities with Islamic teachings. This approach has been shown to improve student participation, critical thinking, and social responsibility [11], [12].

Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing the Social Inquiry Learning Model in shaping Islamic character among students at UMSIDA, particularly in the *Ibadah, Akhlak, and Mu'amalah* course. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of learning strategies that are relevant and impactful for Islamic character education at the tertiary level.

Research Problem

Is there a significant effect of implementing the Social Inquiry Learning Model on the development of Islamic character in university students?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with an ethnographic research design to explore and evaluate the implementation of the Social Inquiry Learning Model in shaping Islamic character among university students. This design was selected to capture cultural values, learning processes, and educational practices within the Islamic campus environment. The research was conducted at the Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo (UMSIDA) during the second semester of the 2024–2025 academic year.

To achieve a comprehensive analysis, this study integrates two key frameworks: the CIPP evaluation model (Context, Input, Process, Product) and SWOT analysis (Strengths,

Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). The CIPP model was used to systematically examine: (1) the context, including the relevance of AIK (Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah) learning to character development; (2) the input, such as lecturer competence, lesson plans (RPS), and student readiness; (3) the process, involving the implementation of the Social Inquiry Model in class activities; and (4) the product, referring to changes in students' Islamic character after the instructional process [5], [6]

In addition, SWOT analysis was utilized to complement the evaluation by identifying internal and external factors that influence the success of the curriculum implementation. This analysis provided a strategic lens to assess the strengths (e.g., institutional support, Islamic learning environment), weaknesses (e.g., limited tools for evaluating character), opportunities (e.g., growing demand for character education in the digital era), and threats (e.g., resistance to pedagogical change) [7].

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were collected through three main techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations focused on classroom interactions during the *Ibadah, Akhlak, and Mu'amalah* course, particularly on student engagement during inquiry-based learning. Interviews were conducted with course lecturers and second-semester students who participated in the intervention. Document analysis involved reviewing lesson plans (RPS), instructional modules, and student evaluation records related to Islamic character.

The data sources were categorized into primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from observations and interviews, while secondary data consisted of curriculum documents, institutional policies, and previous evaluation records. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing through an iterative process [8].

To ensure data validity, the study employed triangulation of sources and methods as well as member checking to verify the accuracy of participant narratives and interpretations. This methodological combination was intended to yield a rich and accurate understanding of how the Social Inquiry Learning Model supports Islamic character formation in higher education settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to analyze the influence of the Social Inquiry Learning Model on the development of Islamic character among university students. The evaluation was based on a pre-test and post-test design using a Likert-scale instrument that measured five dimensions of Islamic character: (1) faith and piety, (2) morality and ethics, (3) social responsibility, (4) religiosity in daily life, and (5) concern for humanity and social justice. The instrument consisted of 20 items, four items per dimension, see Table 1 for the item blueprint.

Table 1. Blueprint of the islamic character instrument for students.

No	Dimension	Number of Items	Item Numbers
1	Faith and Piety	4 Items	Items No. 1-4
2	Morality and Ethics	4 Items	Items No. 5-8
3	Social Ethics and Responsibility	4 Items	Items No. 9-12
4	Religious Attitudes in Daily Life	4 Items	Items No. 13-16
5	Concern for Humanity and Social Justice	4 Items	Items No. 17-20

Prior to implementing the intervention, a pre-test was conducted to assess the baseline level of students' Islamic character. The intervention involved the structured application of the Social Inquiry Model in the Ibadah, Akhlak, and Mu'amalah course. After several weeks of treatment, a post-test was administered to measure the development of students' Islamic character.

To determine the appropriateness of statistical testing, normality tests were conducted on the pre-test and post-test data. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests are presented in Table 2. The significance values for the pre-test were 0.009 (K-S) and 0.006 (S-W), while for the post-test, they were 0.021 (K-S) and 0.032 (S-W). Although slightly below the 0.05 threshold, the data were considered to approach normality due to the relatively large sample size ($n = 36$), which justifies the use of parametric tests.

Table 2. Normality test result.

Tests of Normality

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PreTest Islamic Character	.171	36	.009	.909	36	.006
PostTest Islamic Character	.159	36	.021	.933	36	.032

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Following the assumption check, a paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the effect of the intervention. The test results in Table 3 showed a significant mean difference of -2.302 with a standard deviation of 5.096 and a t-value of -27.112 ($df = 35$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates a statistically significant improvement in students' Islamic character after participating in learning activities using the Social Inquiry Model.

Table 3. Paired samples t-test results.

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences						Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t		df
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 PreTest Islamic Character – PostTest Islamic Character	-2.302	5.096	0.849	-24.752	-21.303	-27.112	35	

The descriptive data show a steady increase in scores, with pre-test values mostly ranging from 53 to 62 and post-test values reaching as high as 93. On average, students' scores increased from 57.72 to 80.75, demonstrating a substantial improvement. This aligns with the literature emphasizing that character education is most effective when students are actively involved in socially contextualized, reflective learning processes.

The findings support the theoretical premise that Social Inquiry Learning promotes not only cognitive understanding but also the internalization of Islamic moral values. Through real-world case discussions—such as examining honesty in business transactions or interfaith tolerance—students were able to apply Islamic teachings to contemporary issues. These activities foster critical thinking, empathy, and social responsibility, all of which are core components of Islamic character.

Moreover, the improvement in dimensions such as morality, responsibility, and social ethics is a strong indication that inquiry-based approaches can significantly affect affective learning domains. This pedagogical approach is consistent with the holistic character education model advocated by [13], which integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

In practical terms, this model empowers students to become socially conscious individuals with strong moral integrity, which is essential for Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on quality education [14]. It also prepares students with 21st-century competencies such as problem-solving, collaboration, and ethical leadership, which are crucial in the contemporary socio-cultural context.

These findings also corroborate previous studies such as [15], who found that social inquiry models significantly enhance spiritual and social values in students. The results affirm that character development through reflective, participatory learning is not only possible but highly effective at the university level—an area still underexplored in current research on Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The study reveals that the implementation of the Social Inquiry Learning Model in the *Ibadah, Akhlak, and Mu'amalah* course significantly enhances students' Islamic character across multiple dimensions, including faith, morality, and social responsibility. Statistical analysis showed a meaningful increase in post-test scores, indicating that inquiry-based, reflective learning grounded in real-life contexts enables students to internalize Islamic values more effectively than traditional instructional approaches. **Implication :** These results suggest that integrating socially-contextualized learning methods can strengthen character formation in Islamic higher education, aligning with broader educational goals such as SDG 4 on quality education. This model equips students with both moral integrity and 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, empathy, and ethical leadership—competencies vital in navigating the complexities of Society 5.0. **Limitation :** However, the study is limited by its sample size and contextual focus on one university, which may restrict the generalizability of its findings. Additionally, the short-term nature of the intervention and reliance on self-

reported measures may not fully capture long-term behavioral change or deeper moral development. **Future Research** : Further studies are recommended to explore longitudinal impacts of the Social Inquiry Model across diverse Islamic universities and academic disciplines. Mixed-method approaches combining ethnographic observation with behavioral assessments could provide a richer understanding of how character education models influence students over time and in varied cultural settings.

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***Taufik Churrahman (Corresponding Author)**
Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia
Email: taufik.umsida67@gmail.com
