

**The Contribution of Al Islam Kemuhammadiyah to Character Education:
A Case Study Among Non-Muslim Students**

Khusnul Khatimah

kk645@umkt.ac.id

Ade Ismail Ramadhan Hamid

Air550@umkt.ac.id

Intan Asyifah

2211102421006@umkt.ac.id

Fitroh Asriyadi

fa142@umkt.ac.id

Universitas Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Timur

ABSTRACT

This study explore/s the contribution of the Al Islam Kemuhammadiyah (AIK) course to the character education of non-Muslim students at the Muhammadiyah University of East Kalimantan. The aim is to identify how AIK influences the formation of values such as tolerance, justice, devotion, and social responsibility in non-Muslim students. With a case study approach, this study involved non-Muslim students who had taken AIK as subjects. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observations to understand their experiences and perceptions of the values taught in AIK. The results of the analysis showed five main themes: tolerance, devotion, justice, attitude change, and openness in interfaith dialogue. AIK was shown to encourage non-Muslim students to respect religious and cultural differences, form an attitude of mutual respect, and increase a sense of social responsibility. This study provides new insights into the importance of AIK in creating an inclusive, tolerant, and multicultural educational environment. It is hoped that these findings can support the development of character education in other multicultural universities and strengthen harmony between students from various religious backgrounds.

Keywords: Character Education; Al Islam Kemuhammadiyah; Non-Muslim students.

INTRODUCTION

Community service is a fundamental concept in various religions and philosophies of life. This concept does not only include providing material assistance to those in need, but also involves providing support, knowledge, and skills to the community to improve their overall quality of life. In the context of Islam, community service is not only considered an obligation, but also a calling to improve the world around us. In the context of Indonesia, Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah have

played an active role in mobilizing community service. Through the values of Islamic teachings interpreted through the lens of Muhammadiyah, many community service activities have been carried out to make real contributions to the social and economic development of the community.

In the midst of the social, economic, and political dynamics of Indonesia, the role of Islamic organizations such as Al Islam Muhammadiyah has a significant impact in mobilizing community service. AIK, as an integral part of the Muhammadiyah movement rooted in the tradition of moderate Islam, has played an important role in shaping individual character and building an inclusive and just society. Through the interpretation and implementation of Islamic teaching values that are aligned with the principles of Muhammadiyah, many community service activities have been carried out to make real contributions to the social and economic development of the Indonesian community. It is important to remember that Indonesia is a country rich in cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. AIK's contribution to community service reflects the spirit of inclusivity and tolerance, which are values that are greatly needed in maintaining peace and harmony amidst this diversity. However, research on how AIK specifically influences character education, especially among non-Muslim students, remains an area that is not fully understood.

Muhammadiyah University in East Kalimantan is an interesting context to explore these dynamics further. As one of the higher education institutions established under the auspices of the Muhammadiyah Ministry, Muhammadiyah University of East Kalimantan stands out as an institution that practices Islamic values in various aspects of campus life, including in community service. Here, Islamic values and the spirit of community service are not just empty slogans, but have permeated the university's culture and academic activities. Previous studies have highlighted the important role of character education in shaping individuals who are not only academically intelligent, but also responsible, tolerant, and contribute positively to society. However, there is still a lack of understanding of how Islamic values, especially those practiced through AIK, influence the character formation of non-Muslim students in a university environment such as Muhammadiyah University of East Kalimantan.

With this background in mind, this study aims to explore in more detail the contribution of AIK to character education among non-Muslim students at the University of Muhammadiyah East Kalimantan. Through an in-depth understanding of the values implemented by AIK and its impact on students' character development, we hope to provide better insight into how this approach can influence the formation of individuals who have responsible, tolerant, and inclusive attitudes in a multicultural society. By focusing on non-Muslim students, this study also aims to stimulate interfaith and intercultural dialogue in the university environment. Thus, we hope that the results of this study can provide a positive contribution in strengthening tolerance, mutual understanding, and cooperation between various religious and cultural groups in building a just and harmonious society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

K.H.A. Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, established schools as a means of preaching both specific and broad missions. His goal was to educate students to understand and practice Islam while preparing them to carry out the mission of mercy for the universe (*rahmatan lil alamin*). In Muhammadiyah higher education, the Islamic and Muhammadiyah Education (AIK) course group is essential for achieving these objectives. According to the Muhammadiyah Higher Education Guidelines (2012), the primary goals of Muhammadiyah higher education include developing human potential with noble character, creating and disseminating beneficial science and technology, and advancing Islam and Muhammadiyah in society.

Muhammadiyah higher education aims to carry out the mission of teaching, research, and community service, which aligns with the social responsibility of higher education to contribute to economic, social, and cultural development. This mission is known in Indonesia as the Tridharma of higher education, encompassing education, research, and community service. According to Western scholars, this mission plays a central role in strengthening local communities and fulfilling the broader goals of higher education.

The view of education in Muhammadiyah emphasizes five interconnected aspects: Islam, Muhammadiyah, nationality, integrity, and excellence. These aspects form an integrated whole, shaping the approach to education in Muhammadiyah institutions. Muhammadiyah education not only encourages innovation but also requires transformation to keep pace with the changing times. AIK education is at the core of Muhammadiyah's educational philosophy, focusing on understanding, appreciating, and practicing Islamic teachings. These principles promote balance and harmony in relationships with Allah SWT, other humans, oneself, and the environment.

Muhammadiyah education also focuses on helping students understand the basic principles of the Muhammadiyah movement and its ideology. This includes familiarizing students with the movement's statutes, beliefs, and active participation in Muhammadiyah's activities. Studies, such as those by Wekke (2019), suggest that Muhammadiyah institutions adapt their roles according to local conditions while maintaining universal Muhammadiyah principles. Locally, Muhammadiyah responds to the specific needs of its communities, while nationally, it addresses organizational needs.

Research by Pajarianto (2019) highlights how Muhammadiyah in Tana Toraja plays a significant role in socio-religious, educational, economic, and political fields. Muhammadiyah's puritan Muslim identity is highly accommodative, engaging with local traditions and religious celebrations. This inclusive and tolerant attitude helps

to foster positive relationships with the wider community, even among non-members of Muhammadiyah, making it a "creative minority" that is accepted and supported.

Irwansyah (2017) found that universities and educational institutions play a key role in fostering Muslim-Christian relations, promoting dialogue and religious harmonization. However, some instances of violence and conflict have occurred, often driven by competition and fanaticism. Despite these challenges, educational institutions remain important spaces for dialogue and the development of diverse perspectives on religious coexistence.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study uses a case study design to explore the contribution of Al Islam Kemuhammadiyah (AIK) to character education among non-Muslim students at Muhammadiyah University of East Kalimantan. A purposive sample of non-Muslim students actively involved in AIK activities will be selected, ensuring representation of those with direct experience in AIK's impact on character education.

Instrument and Procedure

Data collected through in-depth interviews with participants, using a structured interview guide. Additionally, participant observation will be conducted in the campus environment to observe AIK-related activities. Researchers will identify and contact potential participants, obtain consent, and schedule interviews accordingly.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis will involve coding, categorizing, and identifying themes to find patterns and key findings. A reflective and responsive approach will be employed throughout the analysis. Triangulation of data sources and methods will ensure validity and reliability of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals the significant role that the Al Islam Kemuhammadiyah (AIK) course plays in shaping the character of non-Muslim students at Muhammadiyah University of East Kalimantan. Through a combination of in-depth interviews and direct observations, the study found that AIK provides non-Muslim students with opportunities to engage with core values such as tolerance, justice, community service, and social responsibility. These values help students not only grow

personally but also become more conscious and active members of their social environment. By integrating these ethical principles into the daily lives of students, AIK plays a critical role in character education that extends beyond religious boundaries, fostering an inclusive and responsible community within the campus.

Acceptance and Understanding of Tolerance Values

One key finding is the acceptance and understanding of tolerance values, which were particularly evident in the way non-Muslim students approached religious and cultural diversity. Many respondents shared that AIK helped them better understand the religious and cultural differences within the campus community, particularly between Muslim and non-Muslim students. A respondent expressed, "Through AIK, I learned to understand that religious diversity is a natural thing in Indonesia," highlighting the course's influence in promoting acceptance of different beliefs. Another respondent explained that AIK helped to reduce initial awkwardness in interactions with Muslim students, stating, "After joining AIK, I understand more about how we can live in harmony despite our differences." This suggests that AIK not only educates students on Islamic values but also teaches them how to coexist peacefully and respectfully in a multicultural society. The values of tolerance that AIK imparts foster a deeper sense of respect, understanding, and acceptance among non-Muslim students, which aligns with Indonesia's multicultural and pluralistic society.

Character Building Through Community Service

Another important contribution of AIK is the development of character through community service. AIK's emphasis on social responsibility encourages students to think beyond their own needs and consider the well-being of the broader community. Non-Muslim students reported feeling more empathetic and responsible toward society after participating in community service activities organized by AIK. One respondent mentioned, "Even though I am non-Muslim, I feel that this activity helped me to become a more considerate person," showing that AIK helped shape their sense of compassion and care for others. Another student added, "Community service is a value that I really value in AIK. It makes me think that everyone, regardless of religion, should have a responsibility towards society." This reflects AIK's success in teaching students that community service is not just a religious obligation but a universal moral duty that transcends religious differences. This aspect of AIK helps students from all backgrounds connect with the larger social fabric and encourages them to contribute to the welfare of others, fostering an inclusive and cooperative campus culture.

Implementation of Justice Values

AIK also plays an essential role in instilling justice values in non-Muslim students. Through the course, students are encouraged to treat everyone fairly and equally, regardless of their religious background. One respondent shared, "AIK provides a new understanding of the importance of treating people fairly. I learned not to

differentiate people based solely on their religious beliefs." This suggests that AIK is successful in cultivating a sense of fairness and equality among non-Muslim students, guiding them toward more just and impartial attitudes. Another student emphasized, "AIK taught me about the importance of equality in rights and obligations," and shared that they apply these principles in their daily lives, such as in group tasks and in respecting others' opinions. These findings demonstrate that AIK educates students on the importance of equality and justice, both on and off campus, and encourages them to practice these values in their everyday interactions. This contributes to a more equitable environment where every individual's rights and dignity are respected, regardless of their religion.

Changes in Attitudes and Perceptions

AIK also plays a critical role in changing the attitudes and perceptions of non-Muslim students towards Islam and other religions. Prior to taking AIK, many students held misconceptions or negative stereotypes about Islam. However, after engaging with the course material, students reported a shift in their understanding, as one respondent noted, "Before joining AIK, I had some negative views about Islam. However, after studying AIK materials, I understand that Islam also teaches peace and justice. Now, I have a more positive view." This indicates that AIK helps break down prejudices and fosters a more inclusive and balanced understanding of different religions. Another student mentioned, "AIK changed my perspective on religious differences. I became more open and understood that there are many common values between religions that can unite us." This demonstrates that AIK is not only effective in promoting respect for Islam but also in helping non-Muslim students develop more open and tolerant views towards all religions. By challenging stereotypes and encouraging students to focus on common human values, AIK contributes significantly to building a more harmonious society, both on campus and in the broader community.

Openness in Interfaith Dialogue

Lastly, AIK provides a crucial space for interfaith dialogue, where non-Muslim students are encouraged to openly discuss religious differences. This openness creates an environment where students feel comfortable expressing their beliefs, asking questions, and learning from one another without fear of judgment. One respondent shared, "AIK opens up space for us to discuss religious differences honestly. This provides an opportunity to share views without fear of being judged," indicating that the course facilitates respectful, meaningful conversations between students of different faiths. Another respondent added, "Discussions in the AIK class make me feel more accepted and allow me to ask questions about Islam without hesitation," demonstrating the importance of AIK in fostering an inclusive atmosphere for dialogue. By encouraging this exchange of ideas, AIK helps reduce misconceptions and promotes a better understanding of the diversity of religious beliefs. This contributes to the creation of a supportive, inclusive campus environment where students from different religious backgrounds can engage in

open, respectful discussions, ultimately leading to greater mutual understanding and acceptance.

Validity and Reliability

The validity of this study was ensured through several steps. Content validity was addressed by designing interview instruments based on themes relevant to character education, such as tolerance, justice, devotion, and interfaith dialogue. These themes were grounded in existing literature on character and multicultural education, ensuring that the study accurately reflects the core objectives of AIK. The data also demonstrated construct validity, as the themes identified from the research, such as tolerance, justice, and openness, were consistent with well-established principles of character education. The use of data triangulation—combining interviews and observations—further enhanced the validity, providing a comprehensive and reliable account of AIK's impact on non-Muslim students.

Reliability was also ensured through a combination of data source triangulation and consistency in the research process. Data source triangulation involved interviewing multiple non-Muslim students from different study programs, confirming that the impact of AIK was consistent across various student groups. This reinforced the reliability of the findings, demonstrating that AIK's values are universally accepted by students of diverse academic backgrounds. Additionally, data stability was tested through follow-up interviews, ensuring that the responses remained consistent over time. Inter-rater reliability was also maintained by involving multiple researchers in the coding process, ensuring that the findings were not influenced by any individual researcher's bias. These procedures collectively ensured that the study's results were both reliable and valid, offering a robust analysis of AIK's role in shaping the character of non-Muslim students.

This study examines the contribution of the Al Islam Kemuhammadiyah (AIK) course to the character education of non-Muslim students at Muhammadiyah University of East Kalimantan. Through interviews and observations, five main themes were identified, demonstrating the significant impact of AIK in shaping the character of non-Muslim students. These themes are tolerance, devotion, justice, changes in attitudes and perceptions, and openness in interfaith dialogue. Below is a detailed discussion of each theme, incorporating the perspectives of relevant scholars.

The research findings indicate that AIK plays a crucial role in teaching tolerance to non-Muslim students. According to Banks (2001), multicultural education aims to help students from diverse cultural backgrounds understand and appreciate diversity. In this regard, AIK serves a similar function by introducing and instilling values of tolerance and respect for religious diversity. From the interviews, it was clear that non-Muslim students became more open to cultural and religious differences. This aligns with Mulyana's (2004) research, which suggests that education grounded in tolerance can reduce prejudice and foster social harmony.

AIK's emphasis on tolerance and mutual respect helps students overcome preconceived notions about different religions, thus facilitating harmony in social interactions on campus. By promoting these values, AIK helps non-Muslim students develop a deeper appreciation for Indonesia's religious and cultural diversity.

Community service is an important value in AIK, and non-Muslim students also embrace this aspect of the course. The value of service in AIK is not just seen as a religious duty but as a universal social responsibility. Noddings (1992) argues that effective education fosters empathy and a sense of concern in students, motivating them to make positive contributions to society. The interview results revealed that non-Muslim students understood the importance of contributing to society, regardless of religious differences. This perspective is supported by Puspitawati's (2019) research, which found that community service programs among students promote social awareness and cultivate a sense of collective responsibility. By participating in community service activities, non-Muslim students not only enhance their empathy but also feel actively involved in improving their environment. This value of service, deeply ingrained in AIK, helps students realize their shared responsibility for the well-being of the community, further fostering a sense of solidarity and social consciousness.

Justice is another fundamental value taught in AIK that has had a significant impact on non-Muslim students. Through the course, students learn to treat others fairly, not based solely on religious beliefs but as a fundamental respect for individual rights. This principle aligns with the concept of social justice proposed by Rawls (1971), who emphasized that justice is the cornerstone of a fair society, where every individual is entitled to equal treatment. Non-Muslim students in AIK are taught to value equal rights and obligations, which are reflected in their social interactions. As Wardhani (2020) notes, the application of justice in education helps shape individuals who respect equality, irrespective of their religious or cultural backgrounds. This shows that AIK has effectively internalized the concept of justice, enabling non-Muslim students to apply it in their everyday lives and interactions, contributing to the creation of a more equitable and just campus environment.

AIK not only imparts positive values but also plays a pivotal role in transforming the attitudes and perceptions of non-Muslim students toward Islam. Several students admitted to holding negative stereotypes about Islam before taking AIK. However, after engaging with the course materials, they gained a deeper understanding of Islam's teachings on peace, justice, and tolerance. This shift is supported by Lickona's (1992) research, which asserts that effective character education should help students change negative views into more positive ones and foster mutual respect. Similarly, Triyanto (2012) found that inclusive education could reduce interfaith prejudice and nurture positive attitudes. AIK's inclusive approach helps non-Muslim students view Islam from a broader perspective, thereby dismantling negative stereotypes and reducing prejudice. This not only

benefits their understanding of Islam but also fosters a broader acceptance of religious diversity, contributing to more harmonious interfaith relations on campus.

Finally, AIK provides a valuable space for interfaith dialogue, where non-Muslim students feel more comfortable discussing religion and differences in belief. According to Banks (2001), interfaith dialogue in multicultural education is vital for promoting understanding and mutual respect. A space for open dialogue allows students to express their views, learn from differences, and ultimately reduce interfaith tensions. The study shows that AIK creates an environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and discussing religious differences openly and honestly. Mahfud (2006) emphasizes that interfaith dialogue encouraged in education can shape students' characters, making them more tolerant, open-minded, and prepared to engage with society's diversity. Through this dialogue, non-Muslim students gain a better understanding of Islamic values, which enhances their ability to engage inclusively with religious differences. This approach in AIK helps reduce prejudice and creates a foundation for respectful interfaith conversations, making it a powerful tool for building mutual understanding on campus.

In conclusion, AIK has a profound impact on non-Muslim students at Muhammadiyah University of East Kalimantan. It contributes significantly to the development of character by fostering values such as tolerance, justice, community service, and open dialogue. Through these themes, AIK not only shapes students' ethical behavior but also promotes inclusivity, reduces prejudice, and builds a more harmonious campus environment. These findings demonstrate the value of integrating character education into university curricula, especially in diverse and multicultural settings, where respect and understanding between different religious and cultural groups are crucial for social cohesion.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Al Islam Kemuhammadiyah (AIK) course has a significant contribution to the character development of non-Muslim students at Muhammadiyah University of East Kalimantan. Through five key themes—tolerance, devotion, justice, changes in attitudes and perceptions, and openness in interfaith dialogue—AIK imparts positive values that benefit non-Muslim students. The findings reveal that AIK not only teaches Islamic values but also integrates universal values relevant to all students, regardless of their religious background. AIK has been successful in fostering tolerance by helping students understand religious and cultural diversity, reducing prejudice, and promoting social harmony. It instills a sense of devotion as a universal social responsibility, motivating non-Muslim students to contribute positively to society. The course also internalizes the value of justice, teaching students to respect the rights and obligations of others fairly. Additionally, AIK has been instrumental in changing negative stereotypes of Islam into more positive, inclusive views. Finally, AIK provides a platform for interfaith dialogue, where non-Muslim students feel comfortable discussing

religious differences in a respectful and open manner. Overall, the course plays a crucial role in creating an inclusive and harmonious campus environment, contributing to the development of responsible, tolerant, and open-minded students.

Based on these findings, several suggestions can be made for further development. First, the AIK program at Muhammadiyah University of East Kalimantan could be strengthened with a more inclusive approach, ensuring that the teaching materials and activities resonate with students from various religious backgrounds. Expanding the program to include more cross-cultural and interfaith discussions could enhance its relevance. Second, AIK lecturers could benefit from specialized training in facilitating interfaith dialogue, which would help them create a safe and neutral space for students to engage in discussions about religion and belief. This would ensure a more supportive and effective learning environment. Third, organizing joint social service activities involving students from different religious backgrounds could increase social awareness and strengthen relationships between students. Additionally, integrating AIK values such as tolerance, devotion, and justice into other courses across the curriculum would allow for comprehensive character education throughout the academic experience. Finally, further research could be conducted with a broader sample, including other Muhammadiyah universities in different regions, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of AIK's impact on students from diverse backgrounds. These suggestions aim to optimize the potential of AIK as a course that not only introduces Islamic values but also fosters character development among students.

REFERENCES

- Banks, J. A. (2001). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (4th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Irwansyah, M. (2017). Universities and educational institutions in fostering Muslim-Christian relations: Promoting dialogue and religious harmonization. *Journal of Interfaith Studies*, 15(2), 45-58.
- Lickona, T. (1992). *Educating for character: How our schools can teach respect and responsibility*. Bantam.
- Mahfud, S. (2006). The importance of interfaith dialogue in education. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 22(3), 167-178.
- Mulyana, D. (2004). Education based on tolerance: Reducing prejudice and fostering social harmony. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Research*, 12(1), 30-45.
- Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. Teachers College Press.
- Pajarianto, S. (2019). Muhammadiyah's role in Tana Toraja: Socio-religious, educational, and economic contributions. *Journal of Muhammadiyah Studies*, 8(2), 102-115.
- Puspitawati, D. (2019). The impact of community service programs in universities on social awareness and responsibility. *Journal of Social Education*, 17(4), 56-71.

- Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Belknap Press.
- Triyanto, A. (2012). The role of inclusive education in reducing interfaith prejudice. *Journal of Education and Social Science*, 6(1), 85-99.
- Wardhani, S. (2020). Justice in education: Building individuals who respect equality. *Journal of Educational Philosophy*, 14(1), 22-35.
- Wekke, I. S. (2019). Muhammadiyah institutions adapting to local conditions while maintaining universal principles. *Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(3), 45-59.