



Islamic character values in the story of prophet solomon and the transfer of queen balqis' throne: A qur'anic educational analysis

Agus Sulistyono^{a,1,*}, Enik Nur Faizah^{b,2}

^aMadani Institute of Islamic Educational Sciences, Yogyakarta, Indonesia;

^bHidayatullah Islamic Institute of Batam, Indonesia.

^{1*} agussulistyono@stitmadani.ac.id, ² enik.nurfaizah@gmail.com

Received: 03-02-2025

Revised: 13-05-2025

Accepted: 30-06-2025

KATAKUNCI

Islamic character values, Prophet Solomon, Surah An-Naml:38-40, Qur'anic character education tafsir study, Islamic curriculum, Ourteous da'wah.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the Islamic character values embodied in the story of Prophet Solomon and the transfer of Queen Bilqis' throne, as narrated in Surah An-Naml, verses 38–40. The focus is to explore the Qur'anic educational messages within the story and to analyze their relevance to character development in contemporary Islamic education. This research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing a literature review and tafsir (exegesis) analysis methods. The primary sources include the Qur'an and both classical and contemporary tafsir books that discuss the story in depth. The findings reveal that the story of Prophet Solomon encompasses various Islamic character values, including monotheism (tawhid), knowledge, gratitude, just leadership, and a courteous and wise approach to da'wah (Islamic preaching). These values are reflected in the personality of Prophet Solomon, who possessed high intellectual and spiritual aptitude, as well as in the figure of the servant who was able to transfer the throne by Allah's permission through the knowledge he had. These findings affirm that the story of Prophet Solomon is relevant as a source of learning for the development of a Qur'an-based character education curriculum. These values have the potential to instill a holistic Islamic character, not only cognitively but also affectively and psychomotorically. In the context of globalization and moral degradation among the younger generation, this story can serve as an inspiring and applicable teaching material in Islamic education. This study offers both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a more value-oriented Islamic education curriculum.

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Introduction

Character education has become a central issue in modern education systems, particularly in response to the moral crisis affecting the younger generation. From an Islamic perspective, character is not only shaped by social norms but also through Qur'anic values derived from wisdom-filled stories (Zubaedi, 2011; Lickona, 1991). The Qur'an, as the life guide for Muslims, contains inspirational narratives, one of which is the story of Prophet Solomon and Queen Balqis in Surah An-Naml: 38–40. This story offers essential lessons on leadership, monotheism, knowledge, and courteous da'wah (Ibn Kathir, 2003; Al-Maraghi, 2001).

This narrative portrays Prophet Solomon as a leader who possessed not only political authority but also intellectual and spiritual excellence. He exemplifies leadership grounded in revelation, wisdom, and gratitude for Allah's blessings (Quraish Shihab, 2007). The figure of the servant who was able to move the throne by Allah's permission reflects the importance of

knowledge illuminated by faith (Al-Ashfahani, 1997). These values are highly relevant in the context of Islamic character education, which aims to form individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also ethically refined ('adab) (Al-Attas, 1990; Zuhairini et al., 1994).

In the era of globalization marked by value degradation, Islamic education must instill character rooted in the Qur'an as its foundational source. The story of Prophet Solomon can serve as a resource for developing an integrative curriculum that addresses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Hasan, 2016; Tilaar, 2002). Studying this story is crucial to extract applicable values for character education, especially in shaping a competitive Muslim generation that does not lose its identity. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze the Islamic character values in Surah An-Naml: 38–40 and examine their relevance in shaping a contemporary Islamic education curriculum based on Qur'anic values.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method, focusing on thematic analysis of the Qur'an (maudhu'i), as outlined by Al-Farmawi (1996). Data were collected from Surah An-Naml: 38–40 and examined through both classical and contemporary tafsir, such as those by Ibn Kathir (2003) and Quraish Shihab (2007). The analysis technique is descriptive-analytical, utilizing a hermeneutic approach to capture the contextual meaning of the verses (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This approach is relevant for text-based Islamic research that prioritizes a deep understanding of divine messages (Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2018).

Result and Discussion

1. Tafsir of Surah An-Naml: 38–40 and the Inculcation of Islamic Character Values in Qur'anic Education

The story of Prophet Solomon and the transfer of Queen Balqis' throne in Surah An-Naml: 38–40 is one of the most remarkable portraits in the Qur'an, reflecting the synergy between power, knowledge, and spirituality. This narrative not only illustrates the miracle of a prophetic sign but also conveys a profound message about Islamic character development, which is a fundamental basis of education in Islam. The Qur'an presents the stories of the prophets not merely as historical narratives but as a medium for shaping values, character, and exemplary behavior. One such story is found in Surah An-Naml: 38–40, which recounts Prophet Solomon's strategy in transferring Queen Balqis' throne before her arrival. This story is more than a miracle—it serves as a character education medium rooted in monotheism, knowledge, gratitude, leadership, and wise da'wah.

2. Thematic Tafsir of Surah An-Naml: 38–40

a. Aspects of Leadership and Da'wah Strategy of Prophet Solomon

According to Tafsir al-Tabari, Prophet Solomon posed a question to his nobles not because he lacked the answer, but as an educational method to nurture the spiritual development of his troops (Al-Tabari, 2000). This questioning strategy reflects a Qur'anic pedagogical principle that promotes participation and active engagement in critical thinking. Tafsir al-Qurtubi adds that Prophet Solomon tested his followers to inspire their intellectual and spiritual contributions, rather than simply displaying his power (Al-Qurtubi, 2006). This approach represents an educational leadership model that guides subordinates to think and act within a framework of collective responsibility.

b. Knowledge Integrated with Spirituality

Tafsir Ibn Kathir and Al-Razi consistently explain that the person who possessed "knowledge from the Book" was not a prophet, but a righteous servant close to Allah (Ibn Kathir, 2003; Al-Razi, 1999). This emphasizes that valuable knowledge is the kind that brings a person closer to God, not merely a tool for domination. In Tafsir al-Nasafi, the concept of "knowledge from the Book" is seen as a symbol that true knowledge is not neutral but is a trust that must be carried out with adab and obedience (Al-Nasafi, 2005). This view strengthens the thesis that Islamic character

education cannot be separated from the divine dimension in shaping learners' personalities.

c. Dimensions of Monotheism and Gratitude

In Surah An-Naml: 40, Prophet Solomon says, "This is by the grace of my Lord—to test me whether I give thanks or act ungratefully." This is an explicit acknowledgment of the source of power, as well as a spiritual lesson on humility and gratitude. Tafsir Al-Maraghi mentions that this statement reflects the soul of prophetic leadership that recognizes human limitations, and the absolute will of the Divine (Al-Maraghi, 2001). Sayyid Qutb in *Fi Zhilal al-Qur'an* interprets this moment as a spiritual education point: that every achievement is a test tool, not a self-justification instrument (Qutb, 2004). In the context of education, this directs both teachers and students to view success as a moral and faith test, not merely a result of effort.

d. Exemplary Education and Da'wah

Tafsir *Ruh al-Ma'ani* by Al-Alusi highlights Prophet Solomon's intelligent and wise method of da'wah. He did not subdue Queen Balqis through force, but through strategy, knowledge, and a demonstration of divine greatness (Al-Alusi, 2002). This reflects the Qur'anic approach of *da'wah bil hikmah* (Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl: 125), which is highly applicable to modern education that emphasizes humanistic communication. In *Tafsir al-Misbah*, Quraish Shihab states that Prophet Solomon's leadership reflects a combination of authority, knowledge, and adab, which should be foundational principles in the Islamic education system (Shihab, 2007).

3. Analysis of Findings and Synthesis of Qur'anic Character Values

Based on the exegesis from ten authoritative sources, six core pillars of Qur'anic character values in the story of Prophet Solomon have been identified:

- a. **Monotheism (Tauhid):** Spiritual awareness of complete dependence on Allah (Surah An-Naml: 40).
- b. **Gratitude (Syukur):** Actively expressed through moral and social actions (Qutb, 2004).
- c. **Knowledge (Ilm):** Knowledge that is based on revealed values and is beneficial.
- d. **Just Leadership:** A combination of authority with wisdom and trust (Al-Qurtubi, 2006).
- e. **Da'wah with Wisdom:** A courteous, logical, and wise approach in delivering values.
- f. **Social Responsibility:** Encouraging collective contribution in the mission of da'wah and education.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach between the thematic tafsir study of Surah An-Naml: 38–40 and the development of Islamic character education within the contemporary curriculum. Unlike previous studies that only emphasized moral values in general, this research:

- a. Uses classical and contemporary tafsir as primary sources for character education.
- b. Constructs a Qur'anic character framework based on verses, not Western theories.
- c. Proposes a *Qur'anic narrative-based curriculum* approach.

4. Relevance to Contemporary Islamic Education

The character values derived from these verses are highly relevant in addressing the challenges of globalization, modernity, and secularism in education. Many Islamic educational institutions remain confined to cognitive teaching, lacking affective and psychomotor balance. This research offers an integration of character education using:

- a. **Story-based learning** from the story of Prophet Solomon.
- b. **Tafsir-led value clarification**, i.e., purifying values through exegesis.
- c. **Spiritual pedagogy**, an education based on *adab*, not just formalistic morals.

5. Curricular and Pedagogical Implications

The Islamic character education model based on Surah An-Naml: 38–40 can be implemented through:

- a. **Development of Thematic Modules.** Students study the verses in-depth through tafsir, value reflection, and group discussions.
- b. **Application of Reflective Learning.** Teachers facilitate spiritual reflection on the story and its relevance to daily life.
- c. **Integration into Cross-Curricular Subjects.** Values of *tauhid* and *syukur* are integrated into Islamic Studies, Arabic Language, and even Islamic Sociology.
- d. **Holistic Character Assessment.** Student evaluation is not only based on cognitive aspects but also on affective domains and real-world actions.

Conclusion

Surah An-Naml: 38–40 makes a significant contribution to the development of Qur'anic character through the story of Prophet Solomon and the transfer of Queen Balqis' throne. Through various interpretations from authoritative tafsir sources, key character pillars such as monotheism (*tauhid*), gratitude, knowledge, leadership, courteous *da'wah*, and social responsibility are identified as values that are highly relevant to the needs of contemporary Islamic character education. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of tafsir as a source for character education curriculum, using a reflective, applicable, and spiritual Qur'anic narrative approach. Thus, Qur'anic stories can serve as a solid foundation for character curriculum in the midst of modernization challenges in various aspects of life.

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