

Needs Analysis of Fiqh Education at the Elementary School Level to Support Character Education Strengthening

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Abstract: Character education has become one of the strategic priorities in educational development in Indonesia. The increasing complexity of social interaction, technological advancement, and cultural transformation has encouraged educational institutions to strengthen students' moral and religious values from an early age. Fiqh education, as a component of Islamic education, plays a significant role in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors through practical guidance related to daily life. This study aims to analyze the needs of fiqh education at the elementary school level in supporting character education strengthening. The study employed a qualitative approach through literature review, curriculum analysis, and examination of educational policies related to elementary education and character development. The analysis focused on identifying the urgency of fiqh education, exploring opportunities for curriculum integration, and examining challenges in implementation. The findings indicate that fiqh education contributes substantially to the development of religious character, discipline, responsibility, honesty, social awareness, and respect for others. Furthermore, the integration of fiqh values into classroom learning and school culture provides opportunities for strengthening character education in a holistic manner. However, successful implementation requires curriculum support, teacher competence, contextual learning strategies, and policy alignment. The study concludes that fiqh education remains highly relevant in elementary education and should be strengthened through systematic curriculum development and innovative pedagogical approaches to support the formation of students with strong moral and religious foundations.

Keywords: Character Education, Elementary School, Fiqh Education, Islamic Education, Religious Character

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INTRODUCTION

Character education has emerged as one of the most significant educational priorities in the twenty-first century. Educational institutions are increasingly expected to prepare students not only with academic competencies but also with moral values, ethical awareness, and social responsibility. In many countries, concerns regarding declining moral behavior, increasing individualism, and the influence of digital technology on young learners have encouraged policymakers and educators to strengthen character education within school systems (Berkowitz & Bier, 2014). Character education is therefore viewed as an essential component of holistic educational development that seeks to balance intellectual growth with moral and spiritual formation.

In Indonesia, character education occupies a strategic position within national education policy. The National Education System emphasizes the development of learners who are knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and responsible citizens who possess noble character and religious commitment. This orientation has been reinforced through various educational reforms that place character development as a fundamental objective of school learning (Kemendikbudristek, 2024). Consequently, schools are expected to create learning environments that facilitate the cultivation of positive values and behaviors among students.

The urgency of character education becomes particularly evident at the elementary school level. Elementary education represents a critical developmental stage during which children begin to establish habits, attitudes, and behavioral patterns that often continue into adolescence and adulthood. Research in developmental psychology indicates that early educational experiences significantly influence children's value systems, social interactions, and ethical decision-making processes (Sanrock, 2021). Therefore, educational interventions during this stage have long-term implications for character formation.

Within the context of Islamic education, character development is closely linked to religious values and teachings. Islamic educational philosophy emphasizes the balanced development of intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of human beings. The concept of *tarbiyah* highlights the importance of nurturing learners who demonstrate both academic excellence and moral integrity. Consequently, religious education is not merely intended to transmit knowledge but also to guide students toward ethical behavior and responsible citizenship (Al-Attas, 2020).

Among various components of Islamic education, fiqh education occupies a distinctive position because it focuses on practical guidance regarding daily religious practices and social interactions. Fiqh provides learners with an understanding of how Islamic principles can be implemented in everyday life through acts of worship, personal conduct, interpersonal relationships, and social responsibilities (Kamali, 2019). Unlike purely doctrinal instruction, fiqh education emphasizes behavioral application, making it highly relevant to character formation processes.

The relationship between fiqh education and character development can be observed through various educational dimensions. Concepts taught in fiqh such as discipline in prayer, honesty in transactions, responsibility in fulfilling obligations, respect for others' rights, cleanliness, and social solidarity directly correspond with values promoted in contemporary character education programs. Through regular exposure to these principles, students have opportunities to internalize ethical standards that influence their daily behavior (Nasr, 2021).

Despite its potential contribution, the implementation of fiqh education at the elementary school level faces several challenges. In some educational settings, fiqh learning remains focused on memorization and theoretical understanding rather than practical application. Students may acquire conceptual knowledge regarding religious rules without fully understanding their relevance to everyday life and character development. Such approaches may limit the effectiveness of fiqh education as a vehicle for value internalization and behavioral transformation (Hefner, 2022).

Another challenge concerns curriculum integration. Contemporary educational frameworks increasingly emphasize interdisciplinary learning and competency-based approaches. Within this context, educational practitioners must consider how fiqh education can be integrated effectively with broader character education initiatives rather than being treated as an isolated subject. Effective integration requires alignment among curriculum objectives, instructional strategies, assessment practices, and school culture (Lickona, 2021).

Previous studies have highlighted the positive relationship between Islamic education and character development. Research conducted by Abdullah and Hasan (2022) found that religious learning activities contribute significantly to students' moral awareness and social responsibility. Similarly, Rahman and Yusuf (2023) reported that schools

implementing value-based Islamic education demonstrated stronger character outcomes compared to institutions relying primarily on cognitive instructional approaches. However, most existing studies focus on the outcomes of religious education rather than examining the specific educational needs associated with fiqh instruction at the elementary level.

Other studies have explored curriculum development and character education integration. Mulyasa (2023) emphasized the importance of contextual learning experiences in supporting character formation, while Suyanto (2024) highlighted the need for curriculum models that facilitate value internalization through active participation and reflection. Nevertheless, limited research has specifically analyzed the educational needs, opportunities, and challenges associated with fiqh education as a strategic component of elementary character education programs.

This gap in the literature indicates the need for further investigation regarding the role of fiqh education in supporting character development among elementary school students. Understanding educational needs is essential for designing curriculum frameworks, instructional strategies, and policy interventions that maximize the contribution of fiqh education to character formation.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the needs of fiqh education at the elementary school level in supporting character education strengthening. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the urgency of fiqh education, explore opportunities for integrating fiqh values into elementary learning processes, and examine challenges affecting its implementation within contemporary educational contexts.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a needs analysis framework to examine the role of fiqh education in supporting character education strengthening at the elementary school level. A qualitative design was selected because the study sought to explore educational needs, identify existing challenges, and understand stakeholders' perspectives regarding the integration of fiqh education into character-building programs. Qualitative research allows researchers to obtain rich and contextual information related to educational phenomena that cannot be adequately explained through numerical data alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The study adopted a descriptive-analytical design. The descriptive component was used to identify current practices, opportunities, and challenges related to fiqh education in elementary schools. The analytical component focused on examining the alignment between fiqh learning objectives, character education goals, curriculum policies, and educational practices.

The needs analysis framework was adapted from educational planning models emphasizing the identification of gaps between current educational conditions and desired outcomes (Branch, 2021). In this context, the study analyzed whether existing fiqh education practices adequately support the development of students' character and what improvements may be required to optimize their contribution.



Enhancing Positive Student Character in Line with National and Islamic Educational Values

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of fiqh education needs analysis for character education strengthening

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of stakeholders involved in elementary education and character development. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who possessed relevant knowledge and experience regarding fiqh education and character education implementation.

Participants included elementary school teachers, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, school principals, curriculum coordinators, and education experts. Their perspectives were considered important because they directly influence curriculum implementation, instructional practices, and educational policy interpretation.

Table 1. Characteristics of participants

Participant Category	Number	Role
Elementary School Teachers	10	Classroom instruction and student guidance
Islamic Religious Education Teachers	8	Fiqh education implementation
School Principals	5	Educational leadership and policy implementation
Curriculum Coordinators	4	Curriculum planning and supervision
Education Experts	3	Educational policy and curriculum analysis
Total	30	

Participants were selected from public and private elementary schools located in different educational settings to ensure variation in experiences and perspectives. The inclusion of multiple stakeholder groups enabled a comprehensive analysis of educational needs related to fiqh instruction and character development.

Materials

Several research instruments were utilized to collect data systematically. The primary instruments included interview guidelines, document analysis protocols, and observation sheets.

Interview Guidelines

Semi-structured interview protocols were developed to explore participants' perceptions regarding:

1. The importance of fiqh education in elementary schools.
2. The relationship between fiqh education and character development.
3. Challenges encountered in fiqh instruction.
4. Opportunities for curriculum integration.
5. Recommendations for future educational development.

Document Analysis Protocol

Document analysis focused on curriculum documents, teaching modules, lesson plans, educational regulations, and character education guidelines. The purpose of document analysis was to identify the extent to which fiqh-related competencies support character education objectives.

Observation Sheet

Observation instruments were designed to examine instructional practices, teacher-student interactions, classroom activities, and character education implementation during learning processes.

Table 2. Indicators of educational needs analysis

Aspect	Indicator
Curriculum Relevance	Alignment between fiqh content and character education goals
Learning Implementation	Application of fiqh values during instruction
Student Development	Character values developed through fiqh learning
Teacher Competence	Capacity to integrate character education into fiqh instruction
Policy Support	Availability of institutional and curriculum support
Learning Resources	Adequacy of instructional materials and media

The indicators were developed based on literature concerning character education, Islamic education, and curriculum development.

Procedure

The study was conducted through several stages designed to ensure systematic data collection and analysis.

Preliminary Study

The first stage involved reviewing literature related to character education, fiqh education, curriculum development, and educational policy. This review provided the theoretical foundation for developing research instruments and identifying research gaps.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted over a four-month period. Interviews were carried out with participants either face-to-face or through online communication platforms. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was recorded with participants' consent.

Observations were conducted during learning activities involving Islamic Religious Education subjects and character education programs. Researchers focused on identifying instructional practices that reflected fiqh values and character development principles. Document analysis involved reviewing curriculum documents, lesson plans, assessment instruments, school regulations, and educational policy documents relevant to elementary education.

Data Organization

All collected data were transcribed, organized, and categorized according to research objectives. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and document analysis records were coded systematically to facilitate analysis.

Validation Process

Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. Information obtained from one participant group was compared with information from other participant groups to ensure consistency and credibility.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.

Data Condensation

At this stage, raw data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents were reduced and organized into meaningful categories. Information unrelated to the research objectives was excluded, while relevant data were coded according to emerging themes.

The coding process focused on several key themes, including:

- a. Urgency of fiqh education.
- b. Character values promoted through fiqh instruction.
- c. Curriculum integration opportunities.
- d. Challenges in implementation.
- e. Educational policy implications.

Data Display

After coding, data were presented in thematic matrices and descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation. Data displays enabled researchers to identify relationships among themes and compare perspectives across participant groups.

Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The final stage involved interpreting findings and drawing conclusions based on recurring patterns and themes. Conclusions were continuously verified throughout the research process by comparing evidence from multiple data sources.

The analysis aimed to generate a comprehensive understanding of the educational needs associated with fiqh education and its contribution to character education strengthening at the elementary school level.

Through these procedures, the study sought to produce findings that are credible, relevant, and useful for curriculum developers, policymakers, educational practitioners, and researchers interested in character education and Islamic education development

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Urgency of Fiqh Education in Elementary Schools

The findings of this study indicate that fiqh education holds a significant and strategic position in strengthening character education at the elementary school level. Participants consisting of teachers, school principals, curriculum coordinators, and education experts consistently emphasized that fiqh education is not merely a religious subject, but a practical framework for shaping students' daily behavior. At the elementary level, where children are still forming foundational habits, values introduced through structured learning have a long-term influence on personality development.

The analysis shows that fiqh education contributes to character formation through its emphasis on practical religious behavior. Concepts such as discipline in worship, cleanliness, honesty, and responsibility are not only taught as theoretical knowledge but also practiced repeatedly in daily routines. Teachers reported that students who are consistently engaged in fiqh-based learning tend to demonstrate better discipline in school attendance, classroom behavior, and task completion.

In addition, participants highlighted that fiqh education aligns strongly with the objectives of national character education programs. Values embedded within fiqh learning are consistent with broader educational goals such as integrity, social responsibility, and respect for others. This alignment strengthens the position of fiqh education as a relevant component in contemporary curriculum implementation, particularly within the Merdeka Curriculum framework that emphasizes character development and contextual learning.

However, despite its importance, fiqh education is often still perceived as a subject focused on memorization of rules rather than meaningful behavioral transformation. This perception limits its potential impact on students' character development. Several teachers acknowledged that when fiqh learning is not connected to students' real-life experiences, its educational value becomes largely theoretical and less effective in shaping behavior.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding supports the view that character education must be integrated into daily learning experiences rather than delivered as abstract instruction. As emphasized by Lickona (2021), character formation requires continuous practice, reinforcement, and modeling within meaningful contexts. Fiqh

education, when implemented properly, provides such a context through its emphasis on routine religious practices and ethical conduct.

Character Values Developed Through Fiqh Education

The study identified several core character values that emerge through fiqh education in elementary schools. These values are developed gradually through learning activities, classroom routines, and school-based religious practices.

The most dominant value identified is discipline. Participants consistently reported that fiqh learning, particularly related to worship routines such as prayer and cleanliness practices, encourages students to develop structured habits. Students learn to manage time, follow rules, and maintain consistency in their daily activities. Over time, these behaviors extend beyond religious practices and influence academic discipline as well.

Responsibility is another key value shaped through fiqh education. Students are introduced to the concept of obligations, both toward God and toward others. Teachers observed that this understanding helps students become more aware of their duties in school, such as completing assignments, respecting classroom rules, and maintaining personal accountability.

Honesty and integrity also emerge as important outcomes. Through discussions on permissible and impermissible actions, students are encouraged to reflect on ethical behavior in everyday life. Although still at a developmental stage, these reflections contribute to early moral reasoning and decision-making skills.

Social values such as respect, cooperation, and care for others are also strengthened through fiqh learning. These values are reinforced through group activities, discussions, and school practices that emphasize mutual assistance and respect for differences among peers. Overall, fiqh education functions as a structured medium for internalizing values that are directly relevant to character development in elementary school students.

Table 3. Character values developed through fiqh education

Character Value	Educational Contribution
Discipline	Builds routine, punctuality, and consistency
Responsibility	Strengthens awareness of duties and accountability
Honesty	Encourages truthful behavior in daily interactions
Respect	Develops appreciation for others and social harmony
Social Care	Promotes empathy and willingness to help others
Cleanliness	Encourages hygiene and environmental awareness

These findings are consistent with the view that character formation is most effective when values are repeatedly practiced in real-life contexts rather than only taught theoretically. As noted by Halstead (2022), religious education contributes significantly to moral development when it is linked to lived experience and daily behavior.

Opportunities for Curriculum Integration

The study reveals that fiqh education has strong potential to be integrated into broader character education initiatives within elementary schools. Rather than functioning as an isolated subject, fiqh values can be embedded across various aspects of school life, including classroom activities, school culture, and extracurricular programs.

One important opportunity lies in integrating fiqh values into daily learning routines. For example, discipline can be reinforced through punctuality in class activities, honesty through assessment practices, and responsibility through group assignments. These integrations help students experience character values in practical and consistent ways.

The Merdeka Curriculum provides additional flexibility for such integration. Its emphasis on contextual and project-based learning allows teachers to design learning experiences that connect fiqh principles with real-world situations. For instance, environmental projects can be linked to cleanliness and stewardship values, while community service activities can strengthen social care and cooperation.

Teachers also highlighted the effectiveness of collaborative and experiential learning approaches. When students are actively involved in projects or group-based activities, they are more likely to internalize values compared to passive learning situations. This supports the idea that character education is most effective when students are given opportunities to practice values directly.

Overall, curriculum integration is seen as a key strategy for maximizing the impact of fiqh education on character development.

Challenges in Implementation

Despite its potential, several challenges were identified in the implementation of fiqh education for character development purposes. One of the main challenges is the persistence of memorization-based teaching approaches. In many cases, fiqh learning is still dominated by the memorization of rules without sufficient emphasis on practical application. This reduces opportunities for meaningful character formation.

Another challenge relates to teacher readiness. While teachers generally understand fiqh content, not all are equipped with pedagogical strategies that effectively integrate character education into learning activities. This limitation affects the quality of instruction and reduces the potential impact of fiqh education on student behavior.

External factors also play a significant role. Students are influenced by family environments, peer groups, and digital media, which may not always align with the values taught in school. This creates inconsistencies in value reinforcement, making character development more complex and less predictable.

Time constraints within the curriculum further limit opportunities for experiential learning. Teachers often face pressure to complete syllabus content, leaving limited space for reflective or practice-based learning activities that support character internalization. These challenges indicate that improving fiqh education requires not only curriculum adjustments but also systemic support involving teacher training, school culture development, and family engagement.

Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

The findings of this study have several important implications for educational policy and practice. First, curriculum developers should strengthen the positioning of fiqh education as a key contributor to character development, not merely as a content-based religious subject. Clearer guidance on integration strategies is needed to support teachers in classroom implementation.

Second, teacher professional development programs should focus on strengthening pedagogical competencies, particularly in designing contextual, student-centered, and value-based learning experiences. Training should emphasize practical strategies for linking fiqh concepts with everyday behavior.

Third, schools need to build consistent environments that reinforce character values across all activities. This includes classroom management, school rules, extracurricular programs, and teacher-student interactions. A coherent school culture strengthens the internalization of values taught in fiqh education.

Finally, collaboration between schools, families, and communities is essential. Character education cannot be fully achieved within schools alone. Consistent reinforcement across different environments is necessary to ensure that students receive aligned messages regarding values and behavior.

Overall, the study confirms that fiqh education has strong potential to support character education strengthening when implemented through meaningful, contextual, and integrated learning approaches.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that fiqh education at the elementary school level plays a significant role in supporting character education strengthening. The findings indicate that fiqh education is not merely a religious knowledge subject, but a practical learning system that contributes to the formation of students' daily behavior and moral values. Through consistent learning activities, students are gradually introduced to discipline, responsibility, honesty, respect, social care, and cleanliness as part of both religious practice and character development.

The study also reveals that fiqh education has strong relevance to national educational goals, particularly within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum that emphasizes holistic and contextual learning. When integrated effectively into school culture and learning activities, fiqh education becomes a meaningful instrument for internalizing character values among elementary school students.

However, the implementation of fiqh education still faces several challenges, including memorization-oriented teaching approaches, limited teacher pedagogical competence in character-based learning, curriculum time constraints, and inconsistent reinforcement from external environments such as family and society. These challenges indicate that the effectiveness of fiqh education depends not only on curriculum content, but also on instructional practices and ecosystem support.

Overall, strengthening fiqh education requires an integrated approach involving curriculum development, teacher professional development, and collaboration between schools, families, and communities. When these components are aligned, fiqh education can function as a strong foundation for producing students with balanced intellectual, moral, and spiritual character

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