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Developing reinforcement of character education by implementing religious nationalism values

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ABSTRACT

Character education teaches ethical values in society and the state. It included religious nationalism values in the educational curriculum aimed at passing down the norms that apply to the life of a society. This study aimed to analyze the reinforcement of character education by implementing religious nationalism values in the school of Nasima, Method of this research used an ethnographic qualitative design. The research instruments utilized interview, observation, and documentation formats. Data collection was conducted by interviewing the foundation's chairman, school principal, teachers, and parents of students as core informants, and triangulation was carried out by interviewing educational supervisors and the education department of Semarang city. The results of the study revealed that reinforcement of character education by implementing religious nationalism values in the school of Nasima applied role play, exemplifying, the habituation of students to strengthening their good-manner behavioral culture, honesty, discipline, and the formation of religious nationalism character. The realization of education and religious character towards strengthening the values of nationalism can be implemented through four strategies, namely an integrated learning strategy between subjects carried out by teachers in the classroom, parental engagement strategy, school collaboration with society for strengthening the values of religious nationalism and their daily positive behavior through extracurricular activities and a partnership education strategy by involving agencies. government, private sector, religious leaders, and community leaders.



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Introduction

In the midst of a situation where information and culture from around the world are readily available, local values often erode (Yusuf & Kuswandi, 2023). This condition leads to the younger generation losing a solid moral foundation to face future challenges (Alius, 2019). According to Pradana et al. (2020), character education is present in an effort to instill ethical values in societal and national life. This is included in the education curriculum aimed at passing down the prevailing norms in societal or national life to future generations and making these values the foundation of the nation's personality based on noble morals, dignity, faith, and piety to society and God.

In recent years, various cases of bullying, sexual harassment, theft, and brawling continue to be serious concerns in the nation's education system. The emergence of these cases indicates a decline in the achievement of character education (Muslich, 2022). The root of this problem lies in the lack of reinforcement of national and religious character education integrated into the curriculum, exacerbated by the erosion of local cultural values by the increasingly strong tide of globalization (Kurniawan, 2018). Therefore, serious attention and concrete steps are needed to strengthen character education, so that the next generation has strong moral awareness and national identity.

In the thoughts of Aristotle and Confucius, the purpose of a nation's character education is to maintain its civilization. They teach character education to the nation's generation in schools to guide and instill positive values and goodness to students in socializing in society, both in families, schools, and the wider community (Sanderse, 2020). Character education focuses more on practicing ethical values, religion, customs, and norms prevailing in society. This is very necessary for community development, especially educating young generations from an early age, from elementary school to university, especially in instilling values of nationalism and religiosity (Chowdhury, 2018).

Nationalism and religious values are important foundations in shaping strong and responsible individual characters in society. Nationalism encourages patriotism and loyalty to the country, while religiosity strengthens the spiritual connection of individuals with God and fellow humans (Arianto, 2023). Instilling these values from an early age in character education has a significant impact on shaping a generation with a strong national identity and solid morals (Hendratmoko et al., 2017). Musbikin (2021) shows that students exposed to learning that encourages nationalism and religiosity tend to have higher levels of empathy towards others and are better able to overcome moral challenges in everyday life.

Rozi and Hasanah (2021) found that students who receive love of the homeland and religious values education in various extracurricular activities have higher levels of self-confidence, better teamwork skills, and are better able to resolve interpersonal conflicts in a more constructive manner. These findings provide further evidence that instilling nationalist and religious values in education is an important step in shaping resilient and integral characters in the future.

Saputra et al. (2023) revealed that students involved in character education programs that emphasize the importance of national values rooted in religious principles have higher levels of social involvement in community activities, such as charity and community service. This finding confirms that the integration of nationalist and religious values in character education can help shape responsible individuals who care for others and are ready to contribute to building an inclusive and peaceful society.

Abdugafurova (2018) revealed the importance of realizing national character education, where the cultivation and strengthening of ethics, morals, and love of the homeland are nurtured from an early age. With good character development from an early age, it is hoped that parents can instill moral, ethical, cultured, patriotic, and God-fearing attitudes and behaviors in students. Yuniarto and Yudha (2021) reported character education that includes nationalism values based on religious teachings can build high self-confidence in students in facing academic and social challenges. They tend to have motivation and concern for society that foster leadership based on morality and integrity. This indicates that instilling nationalist values based on religiosity not only strengthens national identity and individual spirituality but also encourages academic achievement and more positive social involvement. Therefore, the integration of nationalist and religious values in character education is an important step in shaping empowered generations committed to the progress of the nation and religion.

To realize this generation, character education identifies five main character values that must be present in building a network of nationalist religious values that need to be developed as priorities, namely: religious, nationalist, independence, cooperation, and integrity values (Anisah, 2019; Julia et al., 2020). Of the five main character values, two values refer to the Indonesian national identity, namely nationalist and religious values. Nationalist character values are ways of thinking, behaving, and acting that demonstrate loyalty, care, and high respect for the language, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political environment of the nation, prioritizing the interests of the nation and state over self-interest and group interests. Some nationalist sub-values include respect for the nation's own culture.

To realize the ideals of national education, the role of teachers is urgently needed. Teachers are fully responsible for producing educated, faithful, moral, and God-fearing individuals (Aurellia et al., 2021). One of them is to be an example for children in passing on nationalist values oriented towards instilling virtues. However, the reality in the field has not shown conditions that match expectations, where bullying, cheating, cheating, abuse, and brawls are still found among students. Widan (2020) revealed that the lack of consistency and integrated strategies in character education is the cause of the suboptimal achievement of character

education, especially in instilling moral, ethical, religious, integrity, and mutual cooperation values as local cultural values as the nation's unifying values. Meanwhile, according to Wahyuni (2021), the purpose of character education is to create individuals with high moral awareness, the ability to think critically, act ethically, and have a strong national and religious identity. However, the reality shows that many students behave far from practicing nationalist and religious values in their daily lives.

Research by Nugroho (2023) and Karim (2021) indicates a significant decline in moral and ethical behavior among students in schools due to shortcuts and avoidance of academic responsibilities. Additionally, there has been a decrease in students' religious practices due to a lack of role models in their environment in practicing religious, ethical, moral, and nationalist values. These findings paint a clear picture of the need for intervention by teachers in schools to address this issue by providing examples of ethical and moral behavior rooted in values derived from the nation's own culture, which highly values religiosity.

Hadi (2019) and Diputera et al. (2022) also reveal similar problems related to the weakening of moral, ethical, religious, integrity, and mutual cooperation values. Their research findings indicate that an increasing number of students are involved in bullying, spreading hoaxes, and verbal and physical violence against others in their interactions when teacher role modeling is no longer overseeing their behavior. Additionally, this situation is exacerbated by a lack of religious understanding, local cultural values, and nationalism among some students.

The weakening of moral, ethical, religious, integrity, and mutual cooperation values among students poses a serious challenge that requires immediate attention and action in building strong character. Therefore, serious efforts are needed by schools to develop character education by implementing nationalist religious values. This is the novelty of this research, which offers an ethnographic study in solving character education problems that remain a major task for educators. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the role of moral education, character education, and internalization of local culture in instilling nationalist and religious values as the basic foundation for the formation of moral, ethical, and integral characters of the nation.

Method

Research Design

The research used is descriptive qualitative with a case study design. Qualitative research aims to reveal phenomena and events, facts, and condition variables observed in the field (Miles et al., 2014). We used this approach to analyze how schools carry out character and moral education to strengthen the value of religious nationalism with the central concern of phenomenology, namely, returning to meaning and experiences through fresh, complex, and detailed descriptions based on actors' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Phenomenology does focus on everyday life experiences and how to turn them into consciousness (Friesen et al., 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Research Informant

The informants of this study were the principal and vice curriculum of the Nasima Semarang school. Other internal informants were two classroom teachers and a religion teacher, while external informants were several parents of the students concerned. Data triangulation was obtained from informants from madrasah education supervisors and the Semarang city education office. To facilitate the grouping of data, all informants represented their postal codes, for school principals and chief of foundation, it was H1 and H2, for teachers were T1, T2, T3 and so on. For religion teachers RT1 and RT2, and for parents, the codes were P1, P2, P3, and so on. In the phenomenological tradition, the number of participants is not an object of debate because the main consideration is the depth of experience (Jackson et al., 2018; King et al., 2008) In this study, we involved more than ten key informants and in phenomenological research, this number has already been considered to meet the minimum threshold requirements (Broome, 2013; Giorgi & Gallegos, 2005). In collecting data, the writer tries to hold and suspend all the initial understandings required in phenomenology as bracketing. With the guidance of three other unburdened writers with prior knowledge, especially regarding character education in building the value of religious nationalism, we carried out bracketing from preparing the interview question format to interviewing participants. We recorded all interview data and transcribed it to facilitate data analysis.

Instruments and Data Collection

The research instrument was the researcher himself used semi-structured interview forms, observation sheets, and document analysis. For data collection, we developed semi-structured interview questions from the initial theme of this research, namely strengthening the value of religious nationalism and the application of character education in schools. We developed all the questions according to the research theme and validated them with experts and colleagues. All interviews begin with the same question: how do teachers implement character education in instilling the values of religious and moral nationalism. The interview steps are like a close conversation between two professionals. However, the interviewer tries not to take a leading position but to be

a listener who gently directs the respondent to the theme. Researchers also use probing questions to verify their interpretation of the answers (Britten, 1995; Dilley, 2004).

The emergence of new ideas while having conversations with respondents made us follow the following schedule for the interview. We say data is saturated if no new themes emerge. To strengthen the validity of the findings, we use triangulated evaluators, the intersubjective verification of which we derive from disparate information (Denzin, 2020). We used descriptive categorical analysis with a low interference level to ensure data reliability and get data as concrete as possible (Rose & Johnson, 2020). The conduct of the study involved two data collectors to ensure a balance of analysis and interpretation. We used document analysis to collect secondary data on the implementation of character education based on religious nationalism values in schools. Teachers and parents assess the development of students' understanding of the nationalism and religious values taught and their practice.

Procedure and Data Analysis

We conducted research by collecting qualitative data using semi-structured interview instruments and documentation. We developed a semi-structured interview script to answer the research objective to find out school policies in implementing character education based on religious nationalism values and inculcating national moral values through integrated character education. After completing the interview scripts, we met with the respondents to conduct face-to-face interviews by first asking them if they were willing to be involved in the research and signing their informed consent, which allowed us to record audio during the interview. We gave them a consent form to protect their rights as participants in this research. They are free to choose to participate in this study or refuse it. Including here, they have the right not to answer our questions or stop being a participant at any time. All participants agreed that their statements were to be our data in the final report after re-examining. They also asked us not to write down their real names. Therefore, we disguised their names in this publication by coding to ensure their confidentiality. The interview process took approximately 50 minutes for each participant, and interviews with parents of students went directly to their respective homes. We recorded all participant interviews using smartphones and copied them to facilitate data processing.

To maintain the data validity, we did a member-check by sending a transcript of the interview results to each participant to be reread and corrected if errors did. Then they sent it back to us, and we made a revised transcript of the interviews as raw data for this study. After completing the transcription process of all the records with the participants, we grouped them by code and interpreted the information until we reached a definite categorization (Majid et al., 2017). The data classification process uses thematic analysis; strengthening the value of religious nationalism and moral education in schools. All data analysis uses a qualitative approach, classifying, interpreting, verifying, and drawing conclusions.

Results and Discussions

Application of Values in Character Education

There are 18 points of character education values, namely: The description of the 18 values that form the national character in question are as follows: (1) Religious, are obedient attitudes and behavior in carrying out the teachings of the religion they adhere to, being tolerant of implementing worship of other religions, and living in harmony with adherents of other religions; (2) Honest, is behavior that is based on efforts to make himself a person who can always be trusted in words, actions, and work; (3) Tolerance, is attitudes and actions that respect differences in religion, ethnicity, ethnicity, opinions, attitudes, and actions of other people who differ from themselves; (4) Discipline is an action that shows orderly behavior and obeys various provisions and regulations; (5) Hard work, is behavior that shows genuine efforts in overcoming various barriers to learning and tasks, and complete the task and possible; (6) Creative, is thinking and producing new ways or results from something already owned; (7) Independent is an attitude and behavior that is difficult to depend on others in completing tasks; (8) Democratic, is a way of thinking, behaving, and acting that evaluates the rights and obligations of himself and others equally; (9) Curiosity is an attitude and action that always tries to find out more deeply and widely from something that is learned, seen, and heard; (10) National spirit is a way of thinking, acting, and having insight that places the interests of the nation and state above the interests of themselves and their groups; (11) Love for the homeland is a way of thinking, acting, and acting that shows loyalty, care, and high appreciation for the language, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political environment of the nation; (12) Appreciating achievements, are attitudes and actions that encourage him to produce something useful for society, and recognize and respect the success of others; (13) Friendly/communicative is an action that shows a sense of pleasure in talking, associating, and cooperating with other people; (14) Peace-loving is an attitude, word, and action that causes others to feel happy and secure in their presence; (15) Love to read is the habit of taking time to read various readings that give virtue to him; (16) Caring for the environment is an attitude and action that always tries to prevent damage to the surrounding natural environment, and develop efforts to repair

the natural damage that has already occurred; (17) Social care is an attitude and action that always wants to give help to other people and people in need; (18) Responsibility is the attitude and behavior of a person to carry out his duties and obligations, which he should do, towards himself, society, the environment (nature, social and culture), the state and God Almighty.

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I apply a collaborative learning strategy for teachers and parents. I explained the Minangkabau expression contains eighteen-character values: 1) religious 2) honesty, 3) tolerance, 4) discipline, 5) hard work, 6) creativity, 7) independent, 8) democracy, 9) curiosity, 10) the spirit of the nation, 11) love the country, 12) appreciate achievement, 13) sociable and communicative, 14) love of peace, 15) likes to read, 16) cares about the environment, 17) social care, and 18) responsibility. The goal is for children to inherit the positive values that are useful for them to continue their life in the future [Respondents T1 and T2]

Character education has become a concern of various countries to prepare a quality generation, not only for the benefit of individual citizens but also for citizens as a whole. We can interpret character education as our deliberate efforts from all dimensions of school life to help shape character optimally (Hartono et al. 2018). Character education requires the right special method so that we can achieve educational goals. Among the appropriate learning, methods are the exemplary method, the habituation method, and the praise and punishment method.

The Foundation of Character Education of Nationalism Religious

The core foundation that becomes the starting point for Nasima School character education is the view, knowledge, and understanding of Indonesian cultural diversity. The opinion of Nasima residents showed that cultural diversity or diversity based on the motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* is what gave birth to Indonesian Nationalism. expressed by the head of the school management agency who emphasized that:

“..... These Indonesian children must understand that Indonesia is made up of Sabang to Merauke, then has an ethnic culture, and thousands of islands but in the context of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*. Indonesia is a country that has the basics, Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the most important thing is that Indonesia is a unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia, which has a single diversity, it must be instilled in children so that they grow the spirit of nationalism” [Respondents H2]

This diversity of Indonesian culture is called multiculturalism. Indonesia's multiculturalism is a cultural wealth and extraordinary uniqueness because Indonesia has diverse ethnicities and cultures. From this view and knowledge of Indonesia's cultural diversity, the principal interprets nationalism as follows:

“.....Nasima wants to contribute that the ideal concept of education to be implemented in Indonesia is the concept of religious-nationalist education, which means that Indonesian children need to be nurtured with a sense of nationalism... What is the true sense of nationalism?... namely understanding, appreciating and applying the values of knowledge and behavior that are important about Indonesian itself” [Respondents H1]

This statement explains that Nationalism is an attitude of understanding, appreciating, and applying important knowledge and behavior about Indonesian. Meanwhile, the parents' essays emphasized:

“..... **Nationalism** is a love for water like our beloved country, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, which consists of various ethnic groups, languages, thousands of islands, and so on. This is a strong foundation for students, educators, and education staff, I am happy to send my children here so that they can preserve the values of their culture and nation to foster a high sense of nationalism” [Respondents P3]

From these explanations, it can be interpreted that Nationalism in the view of the Nasima residents is a love of the land by understanding, living, and applying the values of knowledge and behavior that are important about Indonesian. So a Nationalist is those who love the land by understanding, appreciating, and applying the values of knowledge and behavior that are important to Indonesian.

The next cornerstone is religious diversity. As explained in the document, Nasima's residents are of the view that in the history of the archipelago's journey to becoming Indonesia today, the existence of religion has become

a strong symbol that the Indonesian people are religious. Residents of Nasima understand that "religious" is an attitude that shows someone sticking to religious teachings.

"Religion is that we as citizens have a religion, so religious values are also implemented in educational activities at Nasima school." [Respondents H2]

Departing from this understanding of nationalism and religion, the concept of Religious Nationalism refers to the understanding that nationalism which is shown by a sense of love for the homeland is also in harmony and based on religious values.

"This religious-nationalist concept for me is that we as Muslims, but still uphold the love for the Indonesian homeland, then the values that exist in Islam I also acculturate with the values that exist in the love of our homeland. ." [Respondents RT2]

This question also received the same response from the parents of students who stated:

I am happy to send my children here, at least they know the multicultural Indonesian culture so that they feel they have and respect each other which shapes the students' religious nationalism personality." [Respondents P2]

This view was also confirmed by the parents of students who say Furthermore:

"So according to the founder, he aspires to create [guide] the Indonesian Generation, a new generation who has a strong sense of love for the homeland for the nation and homeland but at the same time, he has a solid faith and then behaves religiously under *the Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah sharia*." [Respondents P1]

From the statements of the respondents, it can be concluded that Religious Nationalists are a spirit to show loyalty and love for the homeland by not abandoning religious orders and beliefs. In realizing character education based on the values of religious and moral nationalism at Nasima School, the school builds the concept of school culture.

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Realization of Character Education towards Strengthening Religious Nationalism

Implementing the values of nationalism in schools can be done through the realization of character education by teachers to students in the younger generation. The realization of this education is of special concern to the government, this is because the government plays an important role in providing understanding and motivation to all people to instill and maintain the spirit of nationalism values and love for the homeland the nation, and the country. Instilling the values of nationalism through the interrelation of character education is not as easy as turning the palm, where the process of the character education of nationalism must be carried out continuously by continuing to increase the spirit of nationalism which includes eight elements of character strengthening, namely strengthening the character of culture, religion, language, ethnicity, customs, race, social and others. For this reason, in today's character education in Indonesia, strengthening the values of nationalism and love for the homeland is carried out through the cultivation of national values more intensively to maintain the unity of the Republic of Indonesia. In its implementation, the planting of national character values strengthened by religious values at the Semarang National School also involves the participation of parents, as revealed from interviews with religious teachers, as follows:

I strongly support the strategy of involving parents in children's learning activities. Besides enjoying, also knowledge, For this reason, I require learning to understand the local character of west java and the Islamic region to cultivate them in our students to develop their nationalism-religious character [Respondent RT2].

Instilling these national values in the interaction of character education includes strengthening students' understanding of the nation's cultural values, religious values, normative values that apply in Indonesian society, social and legal values which are the basis for the founding of the Republic of Indonesia. Indonesia (Abdullah et al., 2019). The cultivation of these values in character education gives birth to a young generation that is intelligent, intellectual, capable, tolerant, respects and appreciates differences, is creative, loves the homeland, has faith, and fears God Almighty by strengthening religious values as the foundation. student mind. As revealed in an interview with teacher Nasima Semarang,

As a classroom teacher, I evaluate the students' learning activities and behavior development. The evaluation that I do usually asks the child directly whether they are praying on time, performing the morning prayer every morning. I also build their responsibility for the assigned task, diligence and independence in doing their homework, disciplined and persistence in completing the task. This evaluation also assesses students' communicative abilities and stimulates their curiosity and develops their religious nationalism character [Respondent T6].

The forms of nationalism values that are instilled in character learning, especially in learning citizenship education, Islamic religious education, social studies education, cultural education, and other subjects are integrated into strengthening students' national character through strengthening students' attitudes in respecting the services of heroes, appreciating and using products in the country, respecting the beauty and culture of Indonesia, memorizing the national anthems, and maintaining the unity of the Republic of Indonesia by respecting all the differences that exist in the diversity of Indonesia. In realizing character education based on the values of religious and moral nationalism at Nasima School, the school builds the concept of school culture as listed in the following table 1.

Table 1. Concept of Character Education Based on Religious Nationalism and Moral Culture in The School of Nasima

Core values	Behavior Guidelines	Habituation in Daily Behavior	School Target
Nationalism	Singing nationality song, mandatory song, Nusantara area song, and Nasima school's hymn	The ceremony, apple, singing song national and anthem mandatory, song area archipelago, building love motherland culture.	The creation of culture Love the Motherland
Religious	Greetings, worship and prayers in daily activities and religious practice <i>mujahadah</i> , read qur'an, etc.	Greetings, <i>Mujahadah</i> , <i>Asmaul husan</i> , <i>tadarus</i> , memorization letter short, obligatory prayer, prayer, Sunnah prayers, and practicing the religious behaviors.	Religious Cultural Behavior
Polite Communicate	Good Manner Communication	Low profile in the communication, like to smile, regards, prefer to have deliberation, and good-manner in the daily conversation.	Awakening polite behavioral culture.
Strong Integrity	Application of rules/behavior guidelines, worship, procedures goods handling findings, solution problem procedures, and responsibility	speak honest, good-manner regards, daily worship and prayer	Cultivate honest behavior among school residents
Abundant Prosperity	<i>Infuq</i> , <i>alms</i> , <i>zakat</i>	Alms, share lunch, eat together	Culture is formed through Entrepreneurship among school residents
Active Cooperate	Application of rules/guidelines behavior, maintenance activity together, procedures handling goods findings, procedures solution problem, responsibility violation behavior	Styling and cleaning space, tidy line up, discipline	Building a Culture of Cooperation between schools, parents, and the community
Best Confident	Application of rules / guidelines behavior, judgment	Marching, pledge, arrangement and cleaning environment	Implementation of quality culture-based education
Empathy	Procedure communication, procedures solution problem	Outpouring of feelings, alms/sharing, arrangement and cleaning environment	Building Culture Caring between school members and the community
Responsibility	Picket for cleaning the classroom	Be honest in speaking, discipline, respect flag, sing-song nationality, structuring, and cleaning environment	Awakening discipline culture

School of Nasima developed a learning model based on religious nationalism values by developing an integrated curriculum, namely the webbed model for basic education and the threaded model for secondary education.

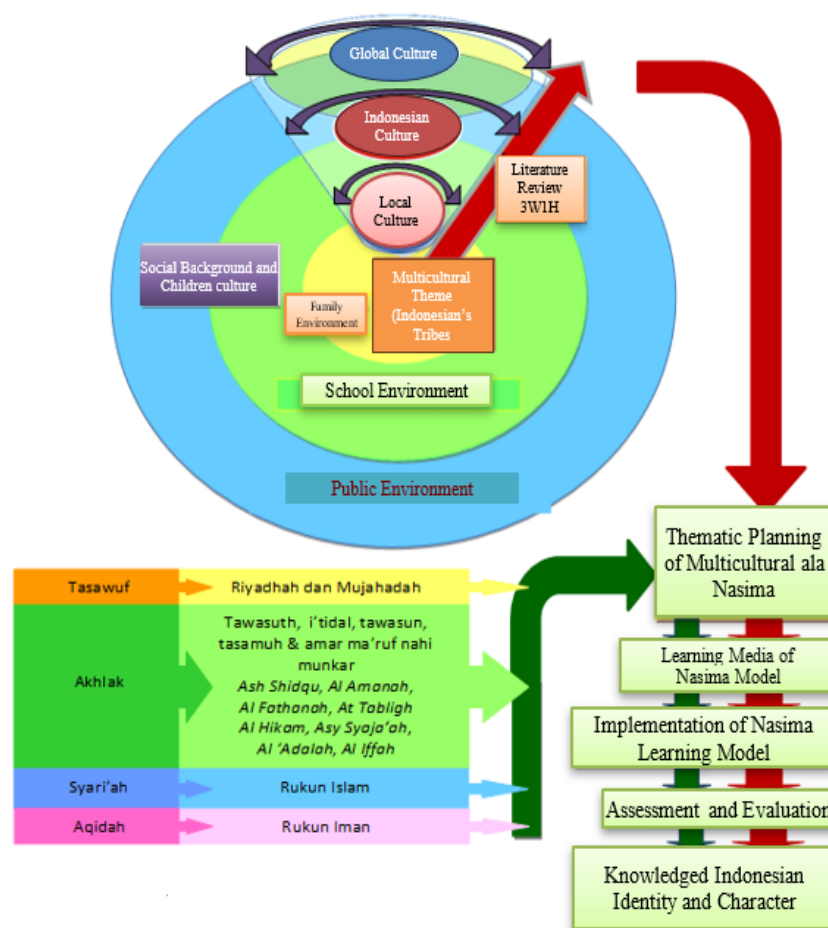


Figure 1. School of Nasima's Learning Model

The Nationalism School of Nasima departs from the Indonesian multicultural culture concept. The Nationalism and Indonesian cultural values in learning involved the three central of education, namely schools, families, and communities. The concept of Religion is described as referring to the understanding of *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* which adheres to the Qur'an, Hadith, Ijma', and Qiyas as sources of law. This combination of concepts is then derived in planning for character education based on nationalism and moral values in a multicultural culture.

The character education implemented at Nasima School is based on religious nationalism values. This strategy has proven to have positive impacts, such as fostering critical thinking, openness to others' opinions, creativity, discipline, honesty, patriotism, devotion to religious practices, and more. These impacts occur because students internalize these values in their daily lives at school (Herdianto et al., 2022). The success of student learning is not solely assessed based on cognitive and psychomotor abilities but also considers other aspects, such as the affective domain. Evaluating only one aspect would render teaching less meaningful comprehensively (Muhlisin et al., 2021). These three aspects are supportive elements of learning achievement, aligning with the essence of education itself, which involves guiding, teaching, and setting examples for instilling religious and national values.

This research aligns with the assertion that religious and national values play a crucial role in shaping a nation's identity and strengthening unity in a country (Adha et al., 2021). According to Norrahman (2023), nationalism instills love, pride, and loyalty to the homeland, while religious values promote love for others, unity, and mutual assistance. Lase et al. (2022) suggest that intelligent character education involves integrating nationalism and religious values as an integral part of character education taught in schools, aiming to cultivate a generation that loves and respects cultural heritage and serves the country.

Character education serves as the primary means of instilling nationalism values in schools (Effendi, 2020). According to (Buan, 2021), through character education, students gain an understanding of the importance of religious values as moral foundations, nationalism as pride in one's nation, independence as the ability to act

independently and proactively, cooperation as the key to achieving common goals, and integrity as the primary foundation for living in society.

This research demonstrates that Nasima School implements a more holistic and structured approach to shaping students' characters, with a strong emphasis on religious values, nationalism, independence, cooperation, and integrity. Furthermore, students involved in character education programs at Nasima School tend to have higher levels of moral awareness, stronger patriotism, better adaptation to environmental changes, and higher levels of cooperation and integrity in their daily lives.

This research correlates with Fuadi and Suyatno (2020), revealing that instilling religious nationalism values is the obligation of every educational institution to build national character in students as the nation's young successors. Character education at Nasima is oriented toward strengthening students' nationalist values, from elementary to tertiary education levels. Additionally, strengthening nationalist spirit can be achieved through community education based on instilling religious values, which are the beliefs of the community, by fostering patriotic character through religious education and national defense activities, scouting, theater, road safety education, and national and religious celebration activities.

Approaches to instilling character values based on local culture in each region may vary according to the local cultural context, as mandated in the "*Merdeka Belajar*" curriculum (Afif, 2022; Ariani et al., 2022). Nasima School, as an educational institution integrating religious, nationalist, independent, cooperative, and integrity values, considers the uniqueness of local culture in character education approaches. In Nasima School, instilling local cultural values is done by considering these values as part of the traditions and cultural identities of the local community. For example, in communities predominantly Islamic, Nasima School emphasizes the importance of Islamic values in shaping students' characters.

Unlike Watson's research (2018), character education approaches in America do not always consider local cultural values due to the highly pluralistic society. According to Efendi and Lien (2021), character education in foreign schools does not focus much on the cultural and nationalist contexts but often emphasizes universal values applicable globally (Am & Nugrahani, 2019), such as tolerance, cooperation, and integrity, without considering the strong moral foundations provided by local culture and religion for students, due to the country's secularist ideology (Anam et al., 2019).

These differences indicate that Nasima School has an advantage in considering and integrating local cultural values, including values based on religion, nationalism, independence, cooperation, and integrity, in character education. This reflects the importance of cultural context in shaping students' characters. Thus, this research emphasizes that an approach that considers and respects local cultural values can significantly contribute to shaping high-quality characters rooted in the traditions and values held by the local community.

Jeynes (2019) and Saeful et al. (2019) highlights the difference in instilling local cultural values in Indonesian schools compared to character education in foreign schools, reporting that almost all schools in Indonesia implement character education through an approach rooted in the ethical and moral exemplarism derived from local cultural values based on religion, nationalism, independence, cooperation, and integrity, while schools abroad tend to focus on instilling global values in shaping students' characters.

This research shows that character education based on religious, local cultural, and national values at Nasima School can instill higher levels of pride in cultural and national identity, strong independence, better teamwork, and higher integrity in facing moral situations among students. The success of character education at Nasima School in fostering the nationalist values based on religious values cannot be separated from the role of teachers, especially civics teachers, in setting examples through practicing attitudes and behaviors that reflect nationalist values. Turner (2020) mentions that among the nationalist values are fostering love for the homeland, honoring the contributions of heroes, actively learning for the nation's progress, loving domestic products, respecting teachers in school, honesty in actions and work, respecting differences, and not validating others' opinions.

The integration and character education models implemented at Nasima School involve integrating moral learning, cultural values, and national ideology to shape a nationalist spirit based on Pancasila. In Nasima School, teachers implement four strategies in character education: 1) moral and character education strategy conducted by teachers in the classroom through subject integration, 2) extracurricular strategy, 3) partnership education by involving government law enforcement agencies and community leaders, and 4) religious education. Zebua (2020) states that instilling patriotic values in character education can be achieved through subject integration in schools.

Nasima School's strategies in instilling religious and nationalist values are built through various extracurricular activities such as student council activities, scouting, Red Cross Youth, cultural arts, and more. According to Ariani (2019), extracurricular activities in instilling nationalist values are conducted through

partnership programs involving government agencies and community figures such as the military, police, attorney general's office, judiciary, professional associations, religious leaders, and community figures. Through this strategy, Nasima School has successfully implemented character education that builds high religious nationalist values. One of the developed activities is psychological guidance for students through games, outbound activities, training, competitions, field trips, jamborees, and other activities that can evoke nationalism and love for the country.

The success of implementing character education activities in building nationalistic values and spirit among the nation's children at Nasima School is also supported by facilities such as patriotic song cassettes, tape recorders, national development, and more. Consistent with Atika et al. (2019) revealed that exemplarity in character education to strengthen nationalist values and love for the homeland can be achieved through: 1) strengthening character education through school culture, 2) fostering polite culture as a way to build family and national values for teachers and students in schools, 3) commemorating every national event at school as a form of appreciation and respect for the heroes' contributions to foster patriotism and love for the homeland.

In implementing the strategy of religious nationalist character education at Nasima School, teachers are expected to demonstrate seven exemplary attitudes to shape the nation's character, including: 1) pride in being Indonesian, 2) love for the homeland and nation, 3) willingness to sacrifice for the nation's interests, 4) acceptance of differences and Indonesia's pluralism, 5) pride in Indonesia's cultural diversity, 6) always respecting the heroes' contributions, 7) prioritizing the common interest over personal interest, and 8) respecting religious belief differences among citizens.

Conclusions

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the linking of nationalist values in character education at the Nasima Semarang school uses constructivist psychological concepts that are focused on maintaining and passing on the values of individual freedom through the development of cognitive structures of moral reasoning and affective structures instilling moral values, religious and nationalism. In attitudes and behavior of daily life. In character education, strengthening students' reasoning and critical thinking in studying moral issues more broadly, including strengthening the values of nationalism, religion, and moral education. They carried them through three strategies, including integrated learning strategies, collaborative school, and parent and community learning strategies. Principals and teachers should carry out collaborative teaching strategies on an ongoing basis. Teachers do not only engage the role of parents, but also involve the community role in guiding, directing, educating, and instilling the eighteen-character values in students. Through strong cooperation and commitment between teachers and parents. The practice and comprehension of religious nationalism values comprehensively form good morals inside students. The limitations in this study are the difficulty of access in carrying out direct observations to teachers which requires researchers to carry out strict health protocols and the limitations of ethnographic observations on the implementation of students' behavior in implementing the religious nationalism character in their daily life.

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