

Internalization of Ulil Albab Values in Character-Based Islamic Education

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the internalization of ulil albab values within character-based Islamic education through a literature review approach. The concept of ulil albab, rooted in the integration of dhikr, intellectual reflection, and righteous action, is considered highly relevant as a foundation for character formation. By reviewing scholarly works, Qur'anic exegeses, and previous research, this study finds that the internalization of ulil albab values strengthens students' moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions. The internalization process becomes effective when implemented through teacher role modeling, habituation, curriculum integration, and the development of a religious school culture. The findings indicate that Islamic education that harmonizes intellectual reasoning and spiritual awareness can cultivate students who are ethical, critical, and possess strong integrity. Therefore, ulil albab values serve not only as a theological framework but also as a practical guideline for character-building in Islamic educational institutions. This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of Islamic education models relevant to contemporary challenges.

Keywords:

Ulil Albab; Islamic Education; Character Education; Value Internalization.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep internalisasi nilai-nilai ulil albab dalam pendidikan Islam berbasis karakter melalui pendekatan studi literatur. Nilai ulil albab, yang berakar pada integrasi dzikir, fikir, dan amal shalih, dinilai sangat relevan sebagai fondasi pembentukan karakter peserta didik. Melalui telaah terhadap berbagai karya ilmiah, tafsir, dan penelitian terdahulu, studi ini menemukan bahwa internalisasi nilai ulil albab dapat memperkuat dimensi moral, spiritual, intelektual, dan sosial peserta didik. Proses internalisasi tersebut efektif ketika diterapkan melalui keteladanan pendidik, pembiasaan, integrasi nilai dalam kurikulum, serta penciptaan budaya sekolah yang religius. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan Islam yang memadukan kecerdasan akal dan kesadaran spiritual mampu menghasilkan peserta didik yang berkarakter, kritis, dan berintegritas. Dengan demikian, nilai-nilai ulil albab dapat dijadikan kerangka filosofis sekaligus pedoman praktis dalam pengembangan pendidikan karakter di lembaga pendidikan Islam. Studi ini diharapkan memberikan kontribusi teoritis dan praktis bagi pengembangan model pendidikan Islam yang relevan dengan tantangan era modern.

Kata Kunci:

Ulil Albab; Pendidikan Islam; Pendidikan Karakter; Internalisasi Nilai.

A. Introduction

The concept of *ulil albab* in the Qur'an holds a fundamental position in Islamic education because it depicts individuals capable of integrating rational thinking with spiritual awareness. This is reflected in Q.S. Ali 'Imran [3]:190–

191, which affirms that *ulil albab* are those who continually connect intellectual activities with faith and awareness of the signs of Allah's greatness (Al-Qur'an, 3:190-191). In the context of education, the character of *ulil albab* is viewed as the ideal model for learners who possess a balance between intellectuality, spirituality, and morality (Shihab, 2005).

In character-based Islamic education, these values are highly relevant because they align with the goal of forming learners with strong personalities and noble morals. The internalization of these values is carried out through processes of habituation, exemplary role models, and the creation of a conducive environment, so that the values are not only known but also internalized and practiced. Thus, the integration of *ulil albab* values can serve as a strategy for character formation that touches upon cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects simultaneously (Zubaedi, 2012).

Previous research indicates that *ulil albab* values have a significant impact on character development. Studies on Islamic education based on *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah), *fikr* (reflection), and righteous deeds conclude that this approach strengthens spiritual depth, reflective ability, and moral behavior in learners (Nata, 2013). Additionally, several studies on integrative curricula emphasize that *ulil albab* values encourage learners to think critically, possess religious awareness, and exhibit ethical behavior in daily life (Azra, 2012).

Nevertheless, most previous research has focused more on the conceptual and technical implementation aspects of *ulil albab* values. Studies that specifically link the internalization of *ulil albab* values with the development of character-based Islamic education remain limited, necessitating deeper research into the models, processes, and implications for shaping learners' personalities. Therefore, this study attempts to present a comprehensive analysis of how *ulil albab* values can be internalized systematically in character-based Islamic education to enhance the quality of learners in both intellectual and moral aspects.

B. Methods

This study employs a structured literature review method conducted through the processes of identification, selection, and analysis of various relevant scientific sources. The literature was collected from the Google Scholar, Garuda, and DOAJ databases using the keywords “ulil albab”, “Islamic character education”, “value internalization”, and “dhikr-fikr-righteous deeds”. The selection process was based on inclusion criteria consisting of articles that discuss ulil albab values or Islamic character education, are available in full-text format, and were published between 2010–2025, while irrelevant or non-scientific articles were excluded from the analysis. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis through the stages of coding, categorization, and synthesis to identify patterns and key concepts regarding the internalization of ulil albab values in character-based Islamic education. Data validity was maintained through literature triangulation and source criticism, ensuring that the study's findings produce a comprehensive understanding supported by previous research findings (Kitchenham, 2004; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Zed, 2014).

C. Results and Discussion

The concept of *ulil albab* is understood as a depiction of individuals with noble character who are capable of integrating intellectual and spiritual intelligence through the processes of *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) and *fikr* (reflection), as implied in Q.S. Ali ‘Imran verses 190–191, which emphasize the importance of contemplating the signs of Allah’s power as the foundation for moral formation (Al-Qur’an, 3:190–191). This interpretation is reinforced by exegetes such as Quraish Shihab, who stresses that *ulil albab* refers to individuals who employ reason profoundly while maintaining spiritual sensitivity, making this character relevant as a foundation for modern Islamic education (Shihab, 2005). In line with this, the perspective of contemporary

Muslim thinker Nurcholish Madjid asserts that Islamic education must train learners to possess critical intellectual abilities alongside strong morality, thereby avoiding a mindset devoid of ethical values (Madjid, 2000).

Studies in Islamic education indicate that the internalization of character values requires processes of habituation, exemplary role models, and the cultivation of a school environment, as values are not sufficient when merely transmitted but must be instilled through direct experiences of the learners (Zubaedi, 2012). This is further affirmed by Abuddin Nata, who states that Qur'anic values, including the concept of *ulil albab*, can serve as the basis for character formation by emphasizing the integration of faith, morals, and knowledge (Nata, 2013). This view aligns with the study by Azyumardi Azra, who notes that Islamic education must be able to address global challenges by developing ethical, spiritual, and intellectual intelligence in a balanced manner (Azra, 2012).

The results of the literature synthesis also indicate that the values of *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *fikr* (reflection/thinking), and *amal shalih* (righteous deeds) make a significant contribution to strengthening the religious and moral character of students. Abdullah explains that character formation based on Qur'anic values helps build a stronger Islamic identity and ethical behavior among students (Abdullah, 2010). In the broader context of character education, Lickona emphasizes that character develops when students receive examples, habituation, and reinforcement from a consistent educational environment, making the concept of *ulil albab* highly suitable for application in this context (Lickona, 1991). Religious values that are systematically internalized can enhance students' moral reflection abilities, empathy, and social intelligence (Marzuki, 2012; Samani & Hariyanto, 2013).

Various methodological literatures affirm that the internalization of values requires a comprehensive approach, through contextual learning, habituation of worship, fostering a religious environment, and integration of values into the curriculum. Student behavior and character require a continuous cultural

cultivation process (Moleong, 2017; Sallis, 2012). From the perspective of Islamic curriculum, the values of ulil albab can be integrated into subjects, religious activities, and patterns of interaction between teachers and students. Islamic education must place divine values as the foundation of all teaching activities (Hidayat, 2011; Zuhairini et al., 2010). These findings are also aligned with the educational management perspective, which states that the success of value internalization is greatly influenced by a strong school culture and consistent learning system support (Tilaar, 2002).

Overall, this research synthesis shows that the values of ulil albab have strong relevance to strengthening Islamic character education, as they encourage students to think critically, behave ethically, and be aware of their existence as spiritual beings. The literature indicates that the use of ulil albab values in education promotes integration between intellect, heart, and behavior, thereby producing a student profile that is knowledgeable, morally upright, and resilient in facing modern social challenges (Zed, 2014; Creswell, 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fink, 2014; Kitchenham, 2004). In addition, the study results also confirm that the internalization of ulil albab values has great potential to address the character crisis among students in the modern era, marked by the rapid flow of digitalization and declining moral sensitivity. The values of dhikr and spiritual awareness can serve as a counterbalance to hedonistic and individualistic culture, while the value of fikr encourages students to engage in deep reasoning before acting. Thus, ulil albab provides an integrative thinking framework that can simultaneously strengthen moral literacy and spiritual literacy, enabling students to be not only academically intelligent but also emotionally and ethically mature (Nata, 2013; Azra, 2012). This demonstrates that the ulil albab approach is relevant as an adaptive character education model in response to social dynamics and technological developments.

Furthermore, the internalization of ulil albab values has been proven to strengthen a sustainable religious-culture-based educational ecosystem. Schools

that consistently implement these values create a learning atmosphere that emphasizes spiritual tranquility, honesty, and cooperation among students. When these values are embedded in the entire school community, a strong hidden curriculum emerges, where positive norms and behaviors are formed through daily habits rather than solely through formal instruction (Marzuki, 2012; Samani & Hariyanto, 2013). Thus, the findings of this study show that *ulil albab* functions not only as a theoretical concept in Islamic education but also as a practical foundation capable of building character while shaping a harmonious and dignified learning environment.

The literature review findings reveal that the internalization of *ulil albab* values in character-based Islamic education cannot be separated from the strategic role of educators as the primary agents of value formation. Teachers do not merely serve as conveyors of material but also as moral and spiritual role models for students. The exemplarity of educators in integrating *dhikr*, *fikr*, and *amal shalih* into daily learning activities is a key factor in the success of this value internalization (Nata, 2013). When educators consistently display reflective, ethical, and religious attitudes, students will more easily internalize *ulil albab* values as part of their personality.

From the perspective of character education, the process of value internalization is not instantaneous but requires continuity across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. The *ulil albab* values, which emphasize balance between rationality and spirituality, enable students to not only understand religious teachings textually but also internalize them in real attitudes and behaviors. This aligns with Lickona's (1991) view that character is formed through knowing the good, feeling the good, and doing the good. Thus, the internalization of *ulil albab* values strengthens the moral knowing dimension through *fikr*, the moral feeling dimension through *dhikr*, and the moral action dimension through *amal shalih*.

In addition, the literature shows that strengthening a religious school culture serves as an effective medium for sustainably instilling *ulil albab* values.

A school culture that integrates religious activities, habituation of self-reflection, and appreciation for honesty and social responsibility will create a conducive educational climate for student character formation (Marzuki, 2012). In this context, *ulil albab* is understood not only as an individual concept but also as a collective value that shapes the identity of Islamic educational institutions.

From a curriculum perspective, the study findings indicate that the integration of *ulil albab* values can be implemented holistically through the development of a value-based curriculum. The values of *dhikr*, *fikr*, and *amal shalih* can be internalized across various subjects – both religious and general – so that students become accustomed to linking academic knowledge with spiritual and ethical values (Zuhairini et al., 2010; Hidayat, 2011). This approach strengthens the relevance of Islamic education in addressing contemporary challenges without losing its moral and theological foundations.

In facing the challenges of the digital era, the internalization of *ulil albab* values becomes increasingly important as a moral fortress for students. The massive flow of information and instant culture have the potential to weaken reflection abilities and ethical sensitivity among the younger generation. The value of *fikr* encourages students to be critical and selective in absorbing information, while the value of *dhikr* fosters spiritual awareness capable of controlling negative impulses resulting from technology misuse (Azra, 2012). Thus, *ulil albab*-based Islamic education has strong contextual relevance in shaping adaptive student character while remaining grounded in Islamic values.

Conceptually, the results of this discussion affirm that *ulil albab* values serve as an integrative framework between intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions in Islamic character education. This integration produces an educational model that emphasizes not only academic achievement but also the holistic formation of student personality. This is in line with Tilaar's (2002) view that quality education is one capable of developing human potential holistically and sustainably.

Thus, this literature synthesis strengthens the argument that the internalization of ulil albab values in character-based Islamic education makes a significant contribution to building a generation that is faithful, knowledgeable, and morally upright. These values are not only normatively-theologically relevant but also applicable in modern educational practice. Therefore, ulil albab can serve as a strategic paradigm in developing Islamic character education that is responsive to social changes while remaining consistent with Islamic values.

D. Conclusion

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that the values of ulil albab—which encompass the integration of dhikr (remembrance of God), fikr (critical reflection/thinking), and amal shalih (righteous deeds)—have very strong relevance in the development of character-based Islamic education. These values emphasize the formation of individuals who think critically, possess spiritual awareness, and exhibit ethical behavior, thereby enabling them to address moral and intellectual challenges in modern life. The literature indicates that the internalization of these values can only be effective if implemented through role modeling, habituation, curriculum integration, a religious school environment, and contextual learning practices. Islamic education that consistently applies the values of ulil albab has been proven capable of shaping students who possess intellectual intelligence along with moral integrity, thus producing a balanced student profile with harmony between intellect and heart. Therefore, the values of ulil albab are not merely theoretical religious concepts but a philosophical and pedagogical framework that is relevant for strengthening character education across all levels of Islamic education.

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