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**Humans in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Its Implications
for the Development of Student Character in Elementary Education**

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the concept of human beings in the perspective of the Qur'an and its relevance to character education development in basic education. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method using a library research approach. The findings reveal that humans are monodualistic beings possessing intellect, nafs, qalb, ruh, and fitrah which must be developed in balance through Islamic education. Qur'an-based character education plays an important role in shaping students who are moral, responsible, and spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and socially balanced. Character development is carried out through teaching, role modeling, habituation, and collaboration between teachers and parents in addressing the challenges of the digital era.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas konsep manusia dalam perspektif Al-Qur'an serta relevansinya terhadap pengembangan pendidikan karakter pada pendidikan dasar. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa manusia merupakan makhluk monodualis yang memiliki potensi akal, nafs, qalb, ruh, dan fitrah yang harus dikembangkan secara seimbang melalui pendidikan Islam. Pendidikan karakter berbasis Al-Qur'an berperan penting dalam membentuk peserta didik yang berakhlak, bertanggung jawab, dan memiliki keseimbangan spiritual, intelektual, emosional, serta sosial. Pengembangan karakter dilakukan melalui pengajaran, keteladanan, pembiasaan, dan kerja sama antara guru dan orang tua dalam menghadapi tantangan era digital.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is a process aimed at shaping humans into perfect humans, individuals who are spiritually and morally perfect. This education serves as a means of transforming and instilling divine and human values within individuals. By accepting and understanding these values, humans will realize the importance and essence of Islamic education. This understanding enables every Muslim to find common ground amidst their differences. These similarities then become the foundation for unity, cooperation, and collective action in building and shaping individuals with Muslim character (Maulana & Khobir, 2025).

Humans are monodualist creatures, creatures with two unified dimensions: as individuals and as beings related to God. They possess both a soul and a body, and act as both individuals and social beings. This understanding demonstrates that humans must be viewed holistically as a single entity. Furthermore, humans are also creatures who think, feel, and act. Through their reason, humans strive to understand various realities and seek their deepest essence. However, because reality is not only tangible (visible) but also invisible, humans use their feelings through symbols to capture these invisible things. What is thought and felt must then be manifested in concrete actions. By harmonizing all aspects of the human self, a comprehensive understanding of the essence of humanity will be achieved (Syafe'i, n.d.).

Humans were created as the most noble creatures in the sight of Allah SWT, as part of the diversity of His creation. The creation of the Prophet Adam presents an interesting dialogue between Allah SWT and the angels and demons who already existed. When Allah SWT appointed Adam as caliph on earth, He said that Adam would be made a leader there. The angels then asked for further explanation regarding Adam's nature. From the understanding they gained, it was discovered that within Adam there were two basic tendencies: lust (syahwat) and emotion (ghadab). If these two tendencies are uncontrolled and meet each other, they can cause damage (Sukeriyadi et al., 2023). This can be seen in the word of Allah SWT, Surah Al-Baqarah/2:30.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّىْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِیْفَةً ۗ قَالُوْۤا اَتَجْعَلُ فِیْهَا مَنْ یُّفْسِدُ فِیْهَا وَیَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۗ قَالَ اِنِّىْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ

Translation:

(Remember) when your Lord said to the angels, "I will make a caliph) on earth." They said, "Are You going to place someone there who will cause corruption and shed blood, while we praise You and sanctify Your name?" He said, "Indeed I know what you do not know."

Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping a complete human being with a Muslim personality through the integration of spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social aspects. By understanding their true nature as monodualist beings, humans can harmonize their thoughts, feelings, and actions in daily life. Ultimately, Islamic education not only produces knowledgeable individuals but also individuals capable of living harmoniously, working collaboratively, and contributing to building a better life based on Islamic values.

The main issue in this study is the nature of humankind from the perspective of the Qur'an and how its potential can support the implementation of the caliphate's function. Therefore, this research aims to examine in depth the concept of humankind in the Qur'an and analyze the integration of human potential in fulfilling its role as servant and caliph.

Today's education recognizes children's character as crucial and urgent. Amidst the rapid development of technology and the acceleration of development, character education faces increasingly challenging challenges. Therefore, it is imperative that education be present to analyze and guide each individual toward perfection (Mariana et al., 2025). Elementary education is the most important pillar in character formation. Children's character can be identified by several elements: the ability to recognize and appreciate cultural diversity, effective interaction, and the values of caring for and responsibility for diversity. Each of these characteristics will shape a harmonious society that upholds mutual respect (Aulia et al., 2025).

Conceptually, humans are monodual beings, possessing both physical and spiritual dimensions, and acting as both individuals and social beings. This unity of dimensions requires a balance between reason, feeling, and action. Without this balance, humans are prone to deviations in fulfilling their roles.

METHOD

This research applies a descriptive qualitative method with a focus on library research using a historical approach and analyzed conceptually. Library research is one of the activities of collecting data from various reading sources (Harahap, 2014). Data sources are obtained through literature searches for credible and trusted works or research that discuss the role and existence of humans as part of God's most perfect creation. Then, this data will be analyzed to obtain research results. Researchers strive to produce an objective synthesis of all human potential as the best human being and as a caliph on earth and the development of character education in elementary education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Basic Human Concepts

Humans are God's chosen creatures with two primary roles: as caliphs on earth and as servants of God. To fulfill these two roles, humans are endowed with various potentials. Hasan Langgulung defines these potentials as the spirit, nafs, intellect, heart, and natural disposition. Meanwhile, Zakiyah Darajat argues that basic human potential consists of the physical, spiritual, and natural dispositions, often referred to as the physical, spiritual, and spiritual aspects (Gunawan, 2024).

In Pestalozzi's view, humans are understood as beings with a moral dimension. Morality itself is defined as the result of human will, namely the manifestation of good character capable of overcoming selfish impulses. To develop morally, humans need inner sensitivity and the ability to deeply adapt. Thus, an action can be considered moral if it is carried out based on personal awareness and decision, not solely due to legal coercion or social pressure (Fajrussalam et al., 2023).

According to An-Nawawi, humans are the most amazing creatures, unique in their multidimensional nature, encompassing many aspects, open-minded, and possessing enormous potential. This potential is known as the spiritual powers within humans. Furthermore, humans are viewed as a unity consisting of material (jismah) and immaterial elements. These immaterial elements include the potential of the nafsaniah (nafs), such as the intellect, heart, and desires, as well as the potential of the spiritual (ruh) and fitrah (natural disposition). Essentially, the essence of humans lies in their immaterial aspects, namely al-'aql, al-nafs, al-qalb, al-ruh, and al-fitrah (Zahrah, 2025).

These three views affirm that humans are complex, multidimensional beings with great potential, both physically and spiritually. From an Islamic perspective (Hasan Langgulung, Zakiyah Darajat, and An-Nawawi), humans are understood as God's chosen creatures who carry two main roles: as caliphs and servants. To fulfill these roles, humans are equipped with physical and spiritual potential, including reason, heart, soul, spirit, and natural disposition, which serve as the basis for self-development. Meanwhile, Pestalozzi's view complements this by emphasizing the moral dimension, stating that this potential must be directed toward the formation of good will, so that humans are able to act based on personal awareness, not merely external pressure. Thus, these overall views demonstrate that the essence of humans lies in the integration of spiritual, rational, and moral potential.

The nature of humanity in the Qur'an is a thorough study of the understanding and interpretation of humankind, both through the text of the verses and their context, carefully and thematically. Humans are seen as the most perfect creatures created by Allah SWT, endowed with reason and the ability to think, which distinguishes them from other creatures (Sukeriyadi et al., 2023). This can be seen in the Qur'an, Surah At-Tin/95:4.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَن تَقْوِيمٍ

Translation: *Indeed, We have truly created humans in the best form.*

The word khalaqnā (We have created) is composed of the word khalaqa which means "to create" and nā as a pronoun. The word nā (We) linguistically indicates a plural form, but can also be used for one actor with the aim of glorifying, such as a king who refers to himself as "kami". In the Qur'an, Allah also often uses this form to refer to Himself. On the other hand, the use of plural pronouns also signals the involvement of other parties in the process mentioned by the verb. Thus, the word khalaqnā can be understood to mean that there is a role other than Allah in the creation of humans, namely the role of parents. The role of other than Allah is not as the ultimate creator, but only as an intermediary.

In this regard, parents play a crucial role in the child's birth process, including shaping their physical and psychological well-being. Scientists also acknowledge that heredity, along

with education, are two key factors that significantly influence a child's physical and personality development.

Some scholars understand the term "al-insān" in this verse to refer to disobedient people, but this view is rejected due to the exceptions for believers. Therefore, the term is more accurately interpreted as referring to humans in general, both believers and non-believers.

The word taqwīm comes from a root word that denotes perfection. The term ahsan taqwīm means that humans were created in the best form, both physically and psychologically, so that they can perform their functions optimally. This excellence includes reason, understanding, and upright posture.

In addition, human development is also influenced by the role of parents, both in terms of heredity and education, as emphasized in religious teachings about the importance of choosing a good partner for a quality generation (Shihab, n.d.).

In general, humans can be understood as beings who possess a unity between physical and spiritual aspects, and are endowed with the ability to think, feel, and will. These potentials enable humans to develop into moral, responsible individuals who are aware of their role in the world. Therefore, ideal human development should not only focus on the physical or intellectual aspects, but must also encompass spiritual and moral development to achieve balance in carrying out one's duties as a servant and leader on earth.

Why, then, are humans considered the best creation? The Quran contains various terms used to describe the essence of humanity and its full potential. Scholars have also provided explanations for these terms, including:

a. Reason

Reason is a gift from Allah SWT that must be preserved and developed. Etymologically, the word reason (al-'aql) means to understand, comprehend, and be able to distinguish something. In the broadest sense, reason is the human ability or potential to think and comprehend various things. From the perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith, reason holds a very important position because it is one of the main potentials that distinguishes humans from other creatures. Therefore, reason is seen as the greatest gift that Allah SWT has given to humans (Zahrah, 2025). Reason is the human ability to think. According to Al-Kindi, as quoted by Hamdani Bakran Adz Dzakiey, the human soul has three powers: the power of desire centered in the stomach, the power of courage in the chest, and the power of thought located in the head. Reason itself is divided into two: practical reason and theoretical reason. Practical reason functions to receive meanings derived from material things through the senses, thus focusing more on the physical world. Meanwhile, theoretical reason plays a role in understanding pure concepts that are not material, such as God, the spirit, and angels. Theoretical reason is metaphysical because it pays more attention to the non-physical or immaterial realm (Hasibuan, n.d.).

Reason is the greatest gift from Allah SWT, which functions as the primary human ability to think, understand, and differentiate between various things. From the perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith, reason occupies a crucial position because it is one of the potentials that distinguish humans from other creatures. Conceptually, Al-Kindi explains that the human soul has three powers: passion, courage, and reason as the center of thought. Reason is then divided into practical reason related to sensory experience and the material world, and theoretical reason that functions to understand abstract and metaphysical concepts such as God, the spirit, and angels. Thus, reason plays a role not only in the realm of physical life, but also becomes a means to understand the spiritual and immaterial dimensions, thus enabling humans to develop themselves intellectually and spiritually in a balanced manner.

b. Nafs (Soul/Self)

The nafs (self) is a power within humans created by Allah SWT. Generally, the nafs, or soul, can be understood as the inner aspect of a human being that has the potential to do both

good and evil. In its perfect state, the nafs acts as a vessel that both accommodates and motivates humans to do both good and evil. Therefore, this inner aspect requires greater attention and control (Nugraha, 2023).

According to Quraish Shihab (1988:285), the word nafs in the Qur'an has several meanings. One of them indicates the whole human self, as stated in Surah Al-Ma'idah [5]: 32. In addition, nafs also refers to the inner side of humans that has the potential to do good or bad, as explained in Surah Ar-Ra'd [13]: 11. Meanwhile, in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 286 it is explained that in the nafs there is a tendency for goodness that is more dominant than the potential for badness (Hasibuan, n.d.).

Although the nafs is understood as a human inner potential that can lead to both good and evil, this view does not fully place the nafs as the primary source of goodness. From another perspective, the nafs is often viewed as a tendency that tends toward negative impulses such as lust and worldly desires that must be strictly controlled. Therefore, the nafs is not always considered to be predominantly good, but rather is more often positioned as an aspect of the human self that has the potential to lead astray if not guided by reason, faith, and the guidance of revelation.

c. Qolb (heart)

Linguistically, the word qalbu means heart, core, or the essence of something. The word qalb is also often interpreted as reason, strength, spirit, and purity. According to Quraish Shihab, the qalb can be understood as a potential within humans that functions to acquire knowledge and various other abilities. In the Quran, the term qalb can also be interpreted as a person's attitude or character that influences how they interact with others (Zahrah, 2025).

According to Hamdani Bakran Adz Dzakiey, the heart is the seat of various feelings and values, such as compassion, knowledge, faith, fear, and obedience to God. It also serves as a receptacle for divine guidance through inspiration or intuition, a place where the secrets of truth are revealed, and the center of human emotions such as love, happiness, sadness, fear, and anger (Hasibuan, n.d.).

The heart is a human's inner potential, encompassing not only the physical heart but also the center of consciousness, feelings, and spirituality. The heart serves as a means of acquiring knowledge, shaping character, and determining how humans interact with their environment. Furthermore, the heart houses various values such as faith, knowledge, compassion, and emotions, while also serving as a receptacle for divine guidance through inspiration and intuition. Thus, the heart can be understood as the inner control center that influences the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of a human being.

d. Ruh

According to Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, the spirit is the center of intellectual ability that has various names according to its function, such as spirit, soul, heart, and reason. Referring to Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, the spirit plays an active role in various situations: it is called reason when thinking, soul when controlling the body, heart when experiencing intuition, and spirit when in the abstract dimension (Hasibuan, n.d.).

In Islamic educational psychology, the spirit is the main aspect that needs to be developed in the educational process. Education based on Islamic values does not only focus on increasing intellectual intelligence, but also on cultivating and purifying the spirit so that it returns to its natural state. The development of students' spirits is directed at forming an awareness of true servitude (ubudiyah) to Allah (Zahrah, 2025). This is in line with the purpose of human creation as explained in the QS. Adz-Dzariyat/ 51:56.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

Translation: *I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me.*

The spirit is a core dimension of human nature, encompassing intellectual, spiritual, and inner awareness, which plays a role in various functions such as thinking, self-regulation, and intuition. From an Islamic perspective, the spirit is a primary aspect that must be developed through an educational process that emphasizes not only intellectual intelligence but also spiritual purification and strengthening. This development of the spirit is aimed at returning humans to their natural state and fostering a true sense of submission to God.

Humans as Caliphs

Caliph is a mandate bestowed by Allah SWT upon humans to manage and lead the universe He has created for the prosperity of life. With the potential bestowed by Allah, humans are expected to maintain the balance of nature so that it remains sustainable and can be passed on properly to future generations (Hasibuan, n.d.).

Before Allah SWT, humans are seen as His representatives on earth, an honor bestowed upon them. By their creation, humans were endowed with the ability to act and choose, allowing them to determine their own path in life. These choices can elevate humanity to greater dignity, or, conversely, lead them astray. This uniqueness makes humans a creature with a higher status and dignity than other creatures (Sukeriyadi et al., 2023).

According to Husein Al-Kaff, humans were basically created by Allah as caliphs, but this status is still a potential that must be developed to be realized in reality. To become a true caliph, there are several criteria that need to be met, namely: having knowledge (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 31), having faith and doing good deeds (QS. An-Nur [24]: 55), being able to make the right decisions and not following lusts (QS. Shad [38]: 26), and carrying out *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*. The Prophet Muhammad also emphasized that people who carry out *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* are included as caliphs of Allah on earth, caliphs of His book, and caliphs of His Messenger (Hasibuan, n.d.).

The role of caliph is a mandate and honor bestowed upon humanity by Allah SWT as His representative on earth, responsible for managing and maintaining the balance of nature. This position remains a potential that must be realized through self-development, such as knowledge, faith, good deeds, self-control, and enjoining good and forbidding evil. By fulfilling these responsibilities, humanity can elevate its status and properly fulfill its duties as caliph on earth.

Developing Student Character Education in Elementary Education

Contemporary education today demands more than just a learning process focused on transferring knowledge to students. It also fosters character development. Instilling in students a deeper understanding of human potential will lead them to a complex understanding, enabling them to effectively and easily address issues and problems in education, including human rights, social issues, and challenges within the educational world itself (Aulia et al., 2025).

As technology advances, innovation moves so rapidly that teachers often lack the time to consider unintended consequences. Consequently, character development issues such as cyberbullying and sexting emerge spontaneously, requiring teachers to play a role and develop methods for teaching students how to navigate ethics in this rapidly evolving digital age. Therefore, teachers must understand the potential impacts, which can lead to harm and violations of each student's personal ethical principles, loss of affection, and irresponsible behavior (Triyanto, 2020).

Balance is also a challenge in today's education. Teachers need to explain how students can wisely manage their time between social media and learning activities. Social media today poses a significant risk of changing students' character in undesirable ways, such as losing discipline and spending time playing online games or similar activities. Safety and security are also important aspects; teachers need to be aware that online activities can endanger themselves and others. Teachers need to ensure that personal privacy remains protected and

secure, and they need to explain to students how to protect and respect the privacy of others and identify any sites inappropriate for minors (Purba et al., 2024).

While the development of digital technology offers many conveniences in education, it also presents serious challenges to the development of students' character. The decline in ethics, low respect for teachers and parents, social media addiction, and even bullying indicate a moral crisis among the younger generation. This situation demonstrates that education has not fully integrated spiritual and moral values into the learning process.

Character education remains the most fundamental issue to this day in shaping student character. With a Qur'an-based concept, teaching in elementary education is always linked to developing students with good morals, manners, and the ability to interact with others. There are seven things teachers must do to develop student character in elementary education: the first, of course, is teaching. Contextual understanding is crucial to instill in students. Therefore, the first step is teaching. Then, providing an example, it is a fact that students will imitate the habits of their teachers. Furthermore, determining priorities is crucial in developing character education in elementary education. This allows for the process and evaluation of activities. The fourth step is priority practice, which is evidence of how priorities are implemented in educational institutions. Next, reflection is conducted. And last but not least, the most important is practicing the character values in the Qur'an. Sheikh Abdurrahman An-Nawawi stated that the Quran provides two guidelines: the first, guidance in the form of rules, commands, and prohibitions based on Islamic law. The second, guidance, guides human thought to achieve something valuable, ultimately benefiting oneself and others. Finally, and no less important, actualizing the values and attitudes of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in daily life (Jaelani & Karyawati, 2022).

Throughout a teacher's journey, even after implementing the steps outlined above, the role of parents in character development is vital. Children or students who receive positive reinforcement from school and home will develop better and more stable attitudes and behaviors (Nasor et al., 2025). Therefore, the role of teachers and parents in building collaboration to develop character and optimize the potential of each individual is crucial and urgent, given that the two are inseparable, like two sides of a coin that complement each other. The methods and steps generally include teaching, role modeling, and providing examples of behavior in accordance with the guidance of the Quran and Sunnah.

Within the concept of character education based on the Quran, several aspects need to be developed. The Ministry of National Education has formulated several character traits that students should cultivate and practice: honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, peace, environmental and social care, gratitude, self-confidence, and responsibility (Zannah, 2020).

Starting from the character values that need to be actualized in each student, teachers need to take concrete steps that truly lead to this. One way to do this is by starting to create a plan. Planning is, of course, the most important thing before starting anything. Then, it's implemented. Some things a teacher can do before starting a plan include carefully examining and preparing effective methods and approaches to develop student character, starting with role models, sincerity, honesty, and love.

Furthermore, we recognize that teachers must set a good example, as role modeling is a long-term educational process. Furthermore, teachers need to inspire students. Teachers must be able to inspire students to keep trying and progressing, even if they fail. Teachers must constantly provide inspiration to unlock their potential. Furthermore, they must be motivators for each student, just as they provide inspiration and motivation, students are expected to be capable and possess a strong work ethic and extraordinary enthusiasm. Furthermore, teachers must act as dynamic agents, acting as locomotives that truly push the character education train toward intelligence, wisdom, and perfect maturity. Furthermore, as evaluators, teachers are lifelong learners. Therefore, their task is to constantly evaluate their activities with students (Solihin et al., 2023).

Departing from the initial discussion on the challenges facing the world of education in developing student character education, recognizing that humans possess the potential for reason, a teacher's most relevant and developmental approach is fostering critical thinking in students. Students are constantly guided to maximize their intellectual potential in thinking and analyzing. Furthermore, the potential of the heart, or qalb, is a vehicle for developing empathy and morals in students. A teacher needs to teach and learn with students with love, fostering empathy and good morals. Furthermore, the nafs (self) is correlated with self-control and the spirit (ruh) to foster spirituality in students. If this concept can be implemented in the development of character education in elementary education, it is possible to create individuals who understand their role on earth as caliphs.

CONCLUSION

Islamic education is the process of shaping humans into perfect humans, individuals who possess spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social balance. Islamic education serves not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a medium for instilling divine and human values in individual lives. From the perspective of the Quran, humans are understood as monodual beings with physical and spiritual dimensions, and are endowed with various potentials such as reason, nafs (self), heart, spirit, and natural disposition (fitrah), which must be developed in a balanced manner so that humans can fulfill their roles as servants of God and caliphs on earth.

The concept of humanity in the Quran demonstrates that humans are the best creation, endowed with the ability to think, feel, and act. The intellect serves to develop critical thinking and understanding of reality, the heart plays a role in developing empathy and morals, the nafs (nafs) is related to self-control over negative impulses, and the spirit is the center of spirituality and a sense of devotion to God. All of these potentials must be guided through education so that humans can achieve a balance between worldly and hereafter life and avoid moral and social deviations.

Furthermore, humans, as caliphs, are entrusted with the responsibility to safeguard, manage, and prosper the earth based on divine values. This mandate requires humans to possess knowledge, faith, morals, the ability to make sound decisions, and moral awareness in social life. Therefore, Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess moral, spiritual, and social responsibility in carrying out the duties of the caliphate.

In the context of basic education, developing character education is crucial amidst the challenges of the digital era, which has given rise to various moral crises such as declining ethics, social media addiction, cyberbullying, and a weak sense of responsibility. Quran-based character education is a solution for developing students with noble character, discipline, honesty, tolerance, social awareness, and responsibility. This character development is carried out through teaching, role modeling, habituation, reflection, and collaboration between teachers and parents in creating an educational environment that supports children's moral and spiritual growth.

Thus, integrating the concept of humanity in the Quran with character education in primary education is a strategic step in developing a generation that not only excels academically but also possesses strong spiritual, moral, and social awareness. Through the balanced development of the potential of the intellect, heart, soul, and spirit, Islamic education is expected to produce individuals who understand their true nature, are capable of carrying out their duties as caliphs on earth, and are able to face the challenges of modern life while adhering to the values of the Quran and Sunnah.

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