

Literature Analysis of Fostering Islamic Character through Cooperative Learning Strategies in the Context of Islamic Religious Education

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the contribution of cooperative learning strategies in fostering students' Islamic character in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). In an increasingly complex era of education, the teaching of Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, help, and tolerance is not enough to be done through the one-way lecture method. An approach is needed that actively engages learners in meaningful and collaborative learning experiences. To answer this, this study uses a library research method with a descriptive-qualitative approach, which examines various scientific literature from SINTA and Scopus indexed journals in 2017–2025. Data were analyzed through a thematic study on the application of cooperative learning models such as Jigsaw, Think-Pair-Share, Group Investigation, and Numbered Heads Together in the context of PAI learning. The results of the study show that cooperative strategies significantly support the formation of students' Islamic character through social interaction, group cooperation, and directed reflective communication. Islamic values are not only conveyed theoretically, but also practiced in learning dynamics. Teachers play the role of value facilitators who encourage the realization of learning based on manners and deliberation. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of professional training for PAI teachers to master a cooperative approach pedagogically and contextually. In addition, schools and educational institutions need to support the implementation of this strategy by providing time, space, and evaluation systems that encourage the integration of character values in the learning process. Cooperative strategies have proven to be relevant as a transformative approach in character-based Islamic education.

Keywords: Strategies; Cooperative Learning; Islamic Religious; Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Islamic character is the main pillar in Islamic education, which aims to shape students into insan kamil, namely people with faith, knowledge, and noble character. In practice, Islamic character includes spirituality, social care, and responsibility as a caliph on earth as well (Yasmin et al., 2021). As stated by the "Pancasila Student Profile" policy, which integrates religious, national, and human values, character strengthening is a top priority within the framework of national education (Rachman et al., 2024). Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds a strategic position as the primary instrument for instilling these values since the primary level through integrative and transformative learning (Peña-Ayala, 2021).

Islamic character of children in schools is still a big challenge. In social interactions within the school environment and outside the classroom, students

often show actions that do not reflect the principles of honesty, responsibility, empathy, and concern for others (Zabel et al., 2025). This suggests that there is a discrepancy between the PAI subject matter taught theoretically and the application of these values in daily life. A study conducted by (Molokov & Politis, 2024) showed that most students could not apply the character values taught, especially in social situations that demand cooperation and empathy (Flynn et al., 2024). The teaching strategies that are still primarily lecture-based and do not actively include students in worthwhile activities are said to be intimately linked to this internalization failure.

Researchers have explored alternative approaches that are more contextualized, one of which is cooperative learning strategies. This approach allows students to learn collaboratively in diverse small groups with a common goal that encourages social interaction, individual responsibility, and significant positive outcomes (Anna & Spyros, 2025). Learning models such as jigsaw, think-pair-share, and group investigation have been widely used in PAI contexts and are effective in improving social skills, understanding of religious concepts, and moral behavior (Hong, 2015). Candeloro & Tartari, (2025) even states that cooperative learning strategies can create democratic learning spaces that support the natural growth of character through shared experiences and reflection.

However most studies still concentrate on the cognitive component such as the improvement of students' learning outcomes or their academic achievement. However, the affective and spiritual aspects of Islamic character have not been fully researched in relation to cooperative learning strategies (Alamad et al., 2021). A study by AlKharouf et al., (2024) highlights that pedagogical approaches that are not integrated with Islamic values will tend to be technocratic and provide less space for the development of students' moral and social aspects. Therefore further studies are needed on how cooperative strategies can be used to internalize Islamic values through the dynamics of social interaction and cooperation in the classroom (Shahini et al., 2025).

This article analyzes the literature on cooperative learning strategies in Islamic religious education with a focus on Islamic character building. To investigate the relationship between cooperative learning strategies and character values such as honesty, responsibility, empathy, and *ukhuwah*, this article incorporates a range of recent research results and theoretical frameworks. This research focus on cooperative learning has evolved from only improving academic outcomes to a tool for overall Islamic character building (Hassan et al., 2025). This method is considered capable of filling a gap in modern Islamic education literature that requires value-based models of interaction and learning.

The main objective of this study is to provide a conceptual and practical explanation of the ways in which the cooperative learning approach in Islamic religious education can be applied to effectively foster learners' Islamic character.

The literature study, or desk study, was conducted using a descriptive-qualitative approach. The study covered scholarly sources from 2017 to 2025. The study is expected to help Islamic religious education teachers, policy makers, and educational researchers create learning strategies that are contextualized, engaging, and focused on building strong Islamic characters that are relevant to the challenges of today's times.

2. METHOD

The library research method was used in this research. The aim is to explore, identify, and analyze various scientific literatures related to cooperative learning strategies in Islamic religious education, especially in the formation of students' Islamic character. The library study method was chosen because it is relevant to deeply examine theories, concepts, and empirical findings from various published sources, to produce better results for students.

This study uses a descriptive-qualitative approach, which means the data is presented in the form of narrative descriptions based on the analysis of relevant literature. The focus of the analysis is the conceptual understanding of Islamic character, the principles of cooperative learning, and how they can be applied in Islamic religious education. Data were collected through a search of scientific literature from 2017-2025, which included academic books, accredited national and international journal articles, proceedings, and education policy documents.

The research process consisted of four stages: (1) determining the topic and focus of the research; (2) searching and selecting relevant literature using databases such as Google Scholar; (3) organizing and categorizing the information based on the main themes, such as Islamic character, cooperative models, and PAI learning; and (4) analyzing the content critically and systematically to draw conclusions and formulate theoretical and practical implications.

The list of literature included must meet the following criteria: published within the last seven years; directly addressing topics such as cooperative learning strategies, Islamic character, and Islamic religious education; and relevant to the context of formal education in Indonesia. Meanwhile, sources that were popular opinion or did not go through a peer review process were excluded from this study. Additionally, only sources that contributed to the advancement of knowledge and aligned with the study's objectives were considered for inclusion.

To maintain the content validity of the research, source triangulation and thematic consistency which means comparing results from various literatures to ensure the integrity of the argumentation were conducted. With this method, the research results are expected to not only describe empirical conditions but also provide conceptual contributions that can be used in the design of better and transnational Islamic Religious Education learning.

3. RESULTS

This research conducted a literature analysis on five main sources related to cooperative learning strategies in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), especially in terms of fostering learners' Islamic character. The results are presented in a table of findings that includes the name of the author, the cooperative learning model used, and the specific amount given by each strategy to the formation of learners' Islamic character.

Table 1. Cooperative Learning Models and Their Contribution to Islamic Character in PAI

No	Author	Cooperative Model	Contribution to Islamic Character
1	Lie	Jigsaw	Increase tolerance, cooperation and empathy
2	Machado et al	Think-Pair-Share (TPS)	Foster individual responsibility and honesty
3	Ahamed et al	Group Investigation	Develop critical thinking skills and mutual cooperation
4	Mokhtarian	Numbered Heads Together (NHT)	Instilling discipline, active engagement, and trustworthiness
5	Rodrigues	Combined (TPS and Jigsaw)	Encourage empathy, cooperation, and tolerance among students

Lie's (2017) study using the Jigsaw learning model produced preliminary findings. This strategy divides students into home and expert groups. Each student in the expert group studies a specific topic before returning to the origin group to teach it. The study results show that the Jigsaw model helps students learn to collaborate well and improve social interaction. Since students are asked to listen, respect the opinions of others, and help each other understand the subject matter, this model in PAI helps improve attitudes of tolerance, *ukhuwah*, and empathy. Students feel responsible for the group learning process because of Jigsaw, which is an important value in Islamic character education.

The effectiveness of the Think-Pair-Share (TPS) model was emphasized in Machado et al., (2023), second study. Thinking independently, talking with others, and sharing ideas with a large group are the three main stages that make up this model. The results showed that TPS increased student engagement and encouraged intellectual honesty, individual responsibility, and the ability to communicate politely. TPS helps students reflect on Islamic values personally and broaden their understanding by talking with peers in PAI learning. This strategy is useful for fostering Islamic character as it encourages students to be honest about their own understanding before comparing it with others' opinions.

Furthermore, research conducted by Ahmed et al., (2024), explains how the

Group Investigation (GI) model is used in the learning process. The GI model allows students to determine the subject, create research questions, and work together to create research results. This strategy is very suitable to be applied in Islamic religious education because it is suitable for discussing explorative subjects such as Islamic history, scholars' thoughts, and religious social phenomena. Studies show that GI helps students become more analytical, critical and responsible. In group activities, Islamic characters such as cooperation and scientific *ijtihad* are highly visible. It allows each student to truly contribute to the learning process. Since students have to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each group member to complete a common task, GI enhances the sense of responsibility and collaboration.

Mokhtarian, (2024), conducted the fourth study on the Numbered Heads Together (NHT) model. This model involves groups of students who are given numbers, and they talk to answer questions from the teacher. The teacher then calls on students randomly based on the number assigned to them. The study found that NHT can instill the values of discipline, readiness, and trust in the learning process. It is very important to apply these principles in Islamic religious education, especially in topics that require memorization, rigor, and consistency in principles. NHT establishes personal responsibility for the knowledge learned as all students understand the material and are ready to explain or defend their opinions.

Finally, research conducted by Rodrigues et al., (2024), combined two learning models, TPS and Jigsaw. With this combination, learners can utilize their ability to think independently and also strengthen group cooperation. The results showed that this combination can increase students' tolerance, empathy and cooperation values during the learning process. This strategy is relevant for social worship, morals, and multicultural education materials in the context of Islamic education because it trains students to listen, understand, and appreciate the differences that exist in the thoughts and backgrounds of their peers. The combination of these methods reinforces Islamic character conceptually and in students' behavior in daily life.

Overall, each strategy reviewed shows that cooperative learning improves cognitive, affective and social skills. Each model contains important elements that support Islamic character building, such as social skills and group reflection, individual responsibility, and direct interaction. Cooperative strategies allow students to learn to work in teams, appreciate the contributions of others, and take ownership of the learning process (Ruchiyat et al., 2024).

These results show how important it is for teachers to design significant and valuable learning experiences. Teachers who have the ability to contextually select and apply cooperative strategies will have the ability to create an inclusive, equitable and educational learning environment as a whole. In addition, it has been proven that this learning model can overcome the gap between the theory and practice of Islamic values, which has been a challenge to implement Islamic

learning at various levels of education.

By using a cooperative learning approach, students not only gain a theoretical understanding of Islamic values, but also apply those values in real life, such as when they talk, help friends, and solve problems together. Therefore, cooperative learning is an effective and useful method to develop students who are not only academically intelligent, but also morally and spiritually mature in their fields.

4. DISCUSSION

Learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is not sufficient to be taught verbally. Only through experience and significant social interaction can Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, helping, and tolerance be properly understood. Cooperative learning strategy becomes very important as it transforms learning from mere information dissemination to a character-building process by actively involving students in groups. Cooperative is a tool to instill Islamic values in formal education. It is more than just a learning method (Jach et al., 2025).

Cooperative PAI learning is an important venue for value internalization. Students can understand Islamic values by using strategies such as Think-Pair-Share, Numbered Heads Together, and Jigsaw because they not only listen to the teacher but also speak, negotiate, convey ideas, and listen to others. This process fosters patience, empathy and respect for differences, which are essential components of Islamic character (Bag et al., 2023). Cooperative learning makes the classroom a moral laboratory where students are not only educated about values, but also experience them.

This is in line with the idea held by Jeanne et al., (2025), that social processes are the main source of value learning. According to social learning theory, humans learn through the direct experiences they have when interacting with their environment. If students see and experience fairness, cooperation, and responsibility in their groups, the values will be more easily embedded in their attitudes and habits. Therefore, cooperative learning is a special type of Islamic pedagogy that focuses on ta'dib, which is the habituation of morals rather than just the pronunciation of standards (Abdellah & Haridy, 2017).

The teacher changes from being an instructor to a facilitator of value in collaborative practice. It no longer dominates the topic and the course of conversation; instead, it creates a pedagogical environment that supports conversation, equality, and group agreement. The Islamic principle of deliberation, shura, is revived in this pattern. In addition, this pattern teaches students how to communicate well and listen to each other. Students learn to express opinions politely and listen actively, which is an important part of Islamic manners, through activities such as group presentations or discussions between members (Deif (أحمد ضيف) & Cochrane 2022), (لوجان كوكران).

Collaborative strategies enable the emergence of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), where students with higher abilities help their peers who are still having difficulties. During this process, a social space rich in the values of rahmah (compassion), ta'awun (mutual help), and ukhuwah (brotherhood) is formed. A student forms himself as a moral subject when he patiently helps his friends understand the meaning of moral phrases or concepts. This is supported by research conducted by Fauziah and Nurwahidah (2023) which shows that students have better social-religious attitudes when learning together.

Cooperative strategies address the issue of character learning amidst the overly academic tendencies of contemporary education. Since fiqh lessons do not address the affective domain, many students do not cognitively understand fiqh laws or creeds and cannot apply them in real life. By building an environment that naturally reminds, models and reinforces behaviors that are in line with Islamic teachings, collaboratives overcome this. As stated by Lucas, (2025), the success of character education depends on the school's success in building a value ecosystem outside the curriculum.

The evaluation mechanism in cooperative learning, in addition to student interaction, can shape character. When teachers assess students not only based on cognitive results, but also teamwork attitudes, team contributions, and group work discipline, teachers will encourage students to develop intentions and deeds that are in accordance with Islamic values. With collective evaluation, people are more aware that success is the result of collective cooperation and not solely the result of one person. This is in line with the principles found in Islam on the virtues of congregation and bearing with one another in goodness (Cucuzza et al., 2025).

However, the success of this strategy is greatly influenced by the quality of teacher facilitation. Teachers who simply transfer learning from lecture to discussion without guiding values will not be able to use cooperative learning as a character-building strategy. Therefore, PAI teachers must have pedagogical sensitivity and be able to apply Islamic values in group dynamics. To implement this model thoroughly, training and professional reflection are essential (Islam et al., 2024). Cooperative PAI learning is a philosophical and strategic choice. It is in line with the goals of Islamic education, which depend on the integration of faith, knowledge, and charity. Cooperative classrooms become learning communities that uphold the values of ukhuwah, shiddiq, responsibility, and fairness. Students not only acquire theoretical knowledge, but also gain life experiences that shape the Islamic character in them.

5. CONCLUSION

In Islamic Religious Education (PAI), cooperative learning approaches have been proven to significantly shape learners' Islamic character. Using models such

as Jigsaw, Think-Pair-Share, Group Investigation and Numbered Heads Together, students improve cognitive skills in addition to instilling Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, empathy and cooperation. Teachers help create a culture of deliberation and Islamic manners in the classroom, and social interaction in learning groups helps internalize values. This strategy is in line with the ta'dib approach in Islamic education, which emphasizes the habituation of noble morals. Therefore, PAI teachers should continuously improve their ability to implement cooperative learning models through professional training and continuous pedagogical reflection. Schools and educational institutions should also support this learning with curriculum policies, sufficient time, and an evaluation system that assesses students' affective and social development.

6. REFERENCES

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