

## Character Education in the Quran: Its Urgency and Implementation

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to formulate the concept of character education (CE), describe the essence and existence of CE, and provide an overview of the urgency and implementation of CE in the Qur'an. Thus, the main study of this research is the insight of the Qur'an about CE. It focuses on the thematic interpretation in the type of qualitative research, mainly library research. Research data from commentary books were then analyzed using the science of interpretation approach with various interpretation techniques in analyzing verses about CE. The research findings show that the essence of CE refers to the personality of Rasulullah *saw.* who prioritizes good values through strategic steps, namely applying CE values informally, formally, and non-formally in the educational environment. The urgency of CE, according to the Qur'an is caused by a moral crisis and reduced public understanding of religious teachings that uphold the values of goodness and truth. The output of CE is the embodiment of a noble character which generates morals and ethics at the same time. This is illustrated in the character of a Muslim who is faithful and pious as well as *muhsin*. The implication of this research is that the existence of CE is a solution for solving problems in society, especially moral crises.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Character education (CE) is important for education in Indonesia. It will become the basis or foundation in the formation of quality national character, which does not ignore social values e.g., tolerance, togetherness, cooperation, mutual assistance, and respect. CE will produce superior individuals who have cognitive abilities and characters capable of achieving success. The values of CE, mentioned in the goals of national education according to the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 (2003) concerning the National Education System, are to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and fear God Almighty, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become citizens of a democratic and responsible country. Additionally, another literature (Gunawan & Saepulrohman, 2012) mentions that CE focuses on instilling religious values, creativity, independence, curiosity, national spirit, love of the motherland, respect for achievement, friendly/communicative, peace-loving, fondness of reading, environmental care, social care, and responsibility. Therefore, it is increasingly being realized that CE must be a priority. Further implementation can increase intellectual intelligence and a noble character.

In CE, not only are studying and exploring the concept of morality important, but the means and process are too; hence, a person can behave in a noble manner as encouraged by the Prophet. The concept of morals and processes will lead to daily behavior, so a person can differentiate between

good and right or bad and wrong, including a noble character (*akhlāq mahmūdah*) or despicable character (*akhlāq maẓmūmah*). Good and bad human character is very dependent on the value system used as a basis. If the character is associated with a moral system, it can be divided into two parts: (1) a moral system based on belief in God and life after death known as religious morality; and (2) a moral system that does not believe in God arising from secular sources, known as secular morality. Religious morality can be found in the Islamic morality system. This is because Islam wants the development of *al-Akhlāq al-Karimah* whose behavior patterns are based on and embody the values of Faith, Islam, and Ihsan.

In this regard, CE must refer to the conceptual way of the Qur'an, because theoretically, CE in the Qur'an refers to al-Ahzāb/33: 21. This verse describes the character of the Prophet as a role model. With CE, the outputs are the formation of moral knowing, moral loving, and moral doing. Moral character in general, knowledge and understanding of good and bad morals, then results in the moral character of knowing, which prioritizes good or noble morals. Furthermore, the moral character of loving is motivation so humans always have a noble character and maintain it in everyday life. Lastly, the moral character of doing is the output of CE which can be seen from a person's noble character in his daily life. The better a person's character, the more visible his good morals, having noble morality.

The human character revealed in the Qur'an is the value of religious awareness and a noble soul to be sincere in totality. This character requires a continuous process of coaching through educational activities because humans have an educational instinct, a talent that is ingrained to involve themselves in the world of education. This talent must always be honed and developed. That is why humans are called homo *educandum* (creatures that can be educated) and homo education (creature educators) (al-Attas, 2000). This nature further strengthens the reason that humans need education as humans need food, clothing, and shelter. To meet human needs, Allah *swt.* provide them with a set of potential tools in the form of *al-sam'u* (hearing device), *al-absār* (vision), and *al-fu'ād* or *al-qalb* (reasoning center),<sup>86</sup> as well as other potential tools to function as optimally as possible, for the success of their service and caliphate.

Based on this situation, it is important to explore the conceptual insights of CE from the Qur'an perspective. This study then aims to formulate the concept of CE, describe its essence and existence, and provide an overview of the urgency and implementation of CE in the Qur'an.

## 2. METHOD

This study is purely library research where the overall data were obtained from written references related to the topic. It is qualitative in nature with the type of research being analytical descriptive. The author examined the verses of the Qur'an related to CE and other relevant terms.

This study also describes and explains the concept of the Quran regarding the conceptualization of CE which is examined using qualitative analysis through several verses of the Quran. The collection and source of data were the verses and terms of the Qur'an relating to CE. Hence, the main source is the holy verses of the Quran. Meanwhile, other sources included books that are seen as representative, especially educational books that provide information about character issues. The researcher then provided views on making comparisons, analyzing, and providing further interpretations. To find terms related to the conceptualization of the CE, references to several interpretation books were used. The researcher did not limit the references, both in Arabic and Indonesian, that were used as data sources.

Regarding the literature on the lexical and semantic meaning, the researcher used dictionaries such as Dictionary of Mu'jam Maqāyis al-Lughah Abī al-Husain Ahmad ibn Fāris ibn Zakariyā, Lisan al-'Arab Ibn Manzur; Qamus al-Jaib 'Arabī Inggilīzī Indonesia, by H. Ali al-Mascatie; Qamus al-Syawāriyah by Kamaruddin Nurdin Marjuni; and several other dictionaries and books e.g., al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Qur'ān al-Karim by Muhammad Fū'ad Abd. Al-Bāqiy coherently and systematically presents character terms in various verses of the Qur'an. Another source of data was in the form of encyclopedias to formulate conceptual CE from an al-Qur'an perspective, clues in *Al-Rāghib al-Aṣḥānī's Mufradat Alfaz al-Qur'ān* which is known as the encyclopedia of the Qur'an by

broadly setting out interpretations of verses in a nutshell, including about the good and bad character of humans: morals *mahmudah* and morals *mazmumah*.

Furthermore, the interpretation technique was textual interpretation using the texts of the Quran or the hadith of the Prophet. In practice, the use of this technique began with tracing important concepts from the vocabulary in the verse contained in phrases or clauses that are part of the verse being discussed (Hanafi, 2005). For this reason, main and auxiliary data were connected by considering the relationship between meaning and expression, functions, and interpretive motifs either using comparison (*muqāran*) or correlation.

Socio-historical interpretation was also used which was related to the *sabāb nuzūl* verse as an explanation or interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an using knowledge of history, the causes of the revelation of verses, or other elements of social life. The use of this technique refers to the fact that some verses of the Quran were revealed regarding cases that occurred either before or after the verse in question was revealed. Next, a systemic interpretation was used which included *munāsabah*, taking the meaning contained in a verse (including clauses and phrases) based on its position in the verse, between verses, or in the surah. The use of this technique refers to the fact that the Quran is a holy book that has a complete and integrated system and was compiled by God who is all-wise and all-knowing. Nonetheless, the interpretation through this technique is limited by the interpreter's intellectual abilities. Data interpretation techniques were used interchangeably in interpreting verses about CE, but the study focuses more on Maudhui's interpretation of educational issues, and the insights of the Qur'an on CE based on thematic interpretation.

### 3. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

#### 3.1. Forms of Expressing CE

Verses about CE are classified into two groups, such as *Makkiah* and *Madaniah*. Firstly, *Makkiah* verses were revealed before Prophet saw. immigrated (al Qaththan, 2003). *Makkiah* verses that contain CE include Al-Syu'arā/26: 127, Al-Qalam/68: 4, Al-Zāriyat/51: 56, Al-Najm/53: 32, Al-Insān/76: 2, and Al-Tarīq/86: 5-7. Al-Syu'arā: 127 is interpreted as Islam religion that is based on the previous people's habits. It is in line with al-Baidawi's interpretation (2000) that Prophet Muhammad SAW's character is considered al-Qur'an. Al-Zāriyat: 56, Al-Najm: 32, and Al-Insān: 2 point out the importance of CE through the purposes of human creation which are to pray and to distance themselves from sin by using their potential of sight and hearing for introspection. Those *Makkiah* verses link to each other (*munasabah* verse and surah) and contain interpretations that implicitly show CE aims to serve Allah and to achieve happiness of the afterlife. Other arguments were found, especially from the hadiths of the Prophet saw. regarding the importance of CE for everyone to find their identity. The verses and hadiths contain an interpretation of the essence of CE which focuses on human nature implemented in the form of noble morals.

Secondly, *Madaniah* verses were revealed after the Prophet saw. immigrated (al Qaththan, 2003; Hasan & Nawawi, 2008). Mufasir agrees that what is included in the *Madaniah* category are all the verses contained in al-Baqarah/2, Āli Imrān/3, al-Nisā/4; al-Māidah/5, al-Anfāl/8, al-Taubah/9, al-Rad/13, al-Haj/22, al-Nur. Al-Mujādalah/58: 11, associated with Āli Imrān/3: 102, contains an explicit interpretation that education aims to elevate one's rank in the sight of Allah, and people in this category are those who have the character of piety. Moreover, it is concluded that the first effort to educate students, after *aqidah*, is the issue of morals: manners in interacting with fellow humans. Then from the related hadith, it is shown that every Muslim is obliged to seek knowledge by going through an educational process and learning from experts to reach the ultimate goal of education: becoming a Muslim with a noble character who can bring happiness in this world and in the afterlife.

#### 3.2. CE Procession in the Quran

There are three processions of CE: informal, formal, and non-formal. To start, At-Tahrim/66: 6 underlies the process of implementing informal CE in the household environment which is the first place where children receive moral education messages from parents and other family members. It

starts when the babies are born by reciting the call to prayer (*adzan*) and *iqamat* to their ears (Uluwan, 2003). It will have a positive influence on the baby's spirituality because it contains divine values. The mother's breast milk also has an impact on children's physical and spiritual health, especially on the formation of children's character, particularly noble morals (Mazhariri, 2001). The mother's function is as a source of security (*aminah*). Meanwhile, fathers are expected to have *abdullah* characteristics that provide content to the fertile soil of the child's soul which has been prepared to continue to be cultivated (al-Adhim, 2008). The process of developing children's character is even more effective if they learn to worship at an early age. At the age of seven, they should be required to pray continuously. When they abandon prayer, they should be given physical punishment e.g., beatings. Another finding suggests (al-Sijistāni, 2003) separating beds between children and their parents and siblings of the opposite sex because this includes building moral character to maintain their nature. The efforts to maintain divine qualities in children are to have strategic steps by educating them based on exemplary methods, customs, advice, attention, and punishment (Uluwan, 2003).

Secondly, formal CE is based on Al-Balad/90: 10 which emphasizes good characters and avoids bad characters. Shihab (2004) explained that a person's character is always characterized by evil, such as conflicts between students. However, they are more inclined towards goodness. This tendency is proven by the similarity of basic moral and ethical concepts, called *ma'ruf*, which should be developed through education at schools. The importance of formal CE is to maintain what has been achieved in informal education. Nawawi (2003) asserted that schools as formal educational institutions have the following functions and duties:

- a. preparing children to become members of society who have knowledge, skills and expertise that can be used to earn a living for themselves;
- b. preparing children to become members of society who can solve life's problems, either individually, collectively, or as a nation;
- c. laying the foundations of social relations, so that children can realize themselves (self-realization) together in a society protected by Allah;
- d. helping children become Muslims, believers and *muttaqin*.

Thus, it can be inferred that children's spiritual and religious changes at school are influenced by teachers. Consequently, teachers should emphasize three main principles in efforts to improve the religious spirituality of their students. First, every teacher, especially religious teachers, must plan materials, methods, and tools that enable them to direct students' attention to CE lessons. Second, teachers must provide students with an understanding of the CE materials which are linked to everyday life. Third, every teacher must have expertise in the field of religion and possess characteristics that are in line with religious teachings, e.g., praiseworthy and trustworthy. Al-Ghazali also believes that the deeds, behavior, morals and personality of teachers are more important than their knowledge (Zainuddin et al., 2001).

Another issue that needs to be considered in formal education is to teach morals/character in all fields of study so students can maintain educational values. The two most important reasons CE in formal institutions are because (1) the spiritual moral values will eventually fade if they are not continuously taught throughout the educational system, and (2) the values can help avoid the negative impacts of globalization. The formal preparation of the curriculum for CE institutions refers to the various principles leading to the formation of noble morals. However, three aspects are formulated. First, all educators must possess a character that functions as a role model for students, pure and clean from all *maẓmūmah* or despicable traits and always adorning themselves with all *maẓmūdah* or praiseworthy traits. Second, every subject should always be oriented towards character development and integrated with character values. Third, CE or other subjects with a moral perspective should be integrated to the education curriculum.

For the perfection of CE, non-formal education is further required. Verses related to this is Al-Shams/91: 7-8. Referring to this verse, humans should strive to become the perfect human beings that education aspires to remain steadfast in goodness and as much as possible avoid all forms of evil, and adorn themselves with goodness. The formation of good character refers to verses from the Quran,

including Al-Ankabut/29: 45. In connection with this verse, al-Nawawi (2012) explained that the essence of goodness in Islam is through prayer education to shape the character of *mukmin* (believer). The term believer or in Arabic *al-mu'min* is taken from the word *iman*, the root word *amina-ya'manu-imānan* which originally consisted of the letters *alif*, *mīm*, and *nūn*, meaning "justification", "serenity", and heart". It means that people who believe in the truth will have a safe, peaceful, and calm heart. A noble character can be promoted through prayer education. The prayer education that has been given informally and formally in schools must be maintained informally in the community. It is important to note that prayer is considered the main pillar in the formation of Muslim characters because it is the hardest form of worship. Prayer will form the character of a believer from an early age.

Furthermore, mosques, foundations, and *ta'lim* assembly have become facilities for non-formal education. According to Muhaimin (2003), the implications of the mosque as an Islamic educational institution include 1) educating children to continue worshipping Allah Swt., 2) finding a love for science and social solidarity, as well as making them aware of their rights and obligations as individuals, social and citizens, and 3) providing a sense of peace, strength, and prosperity of human spiritual potential through education in patience, courage, reflection, optimism, and research. Moreover, foundations as religious institutions have the task of providing CE to instill noble morals. Foundation managers have a responsibility to bring society to the maturity of noble morals. Furthermore, Huda (2004) defines *ta'lim* assembly as a non-formal Islamic educational institution that has its own curriculum; is held periodically and regularly; is attended by a relatively large congregation; aims to foster and develop polite and harmonious relationships between humans and Allah Almighty, between humans and each other and between humans and environment to foster a society with character. The *ta'lim* assembly is considered a CE medium that plays a central role in fostering and improving morals for Muslims. Therefore, the implementation of CE in non-formal education can be conducted through habituation or exercises, approaching oneself to Allah Swt. through worship, both obligatory and sunnah, doing *dhikr* individually or in the congregation, doing good deeds in various forms, filling oneself with good deeds, and adorning oneself with all easy morals.

### 3.3. CE Methods in the Quran

The verse that underlies the CE method in the Quran refers to al-Maidah/5: 35. The implication of the verse provides the best possible method for the implementation of education in the formation of morals. It also involves a lot of educational scientific insights that are based on the Qur'an and hadith. The method used by Allah Swt. and His prophet is an alternative method by considering on the student's intellectual capability, which differs from one another. Furthermore, from al-Baqarah/2: 286, it can be inferred that the difference in the human ability to complete tasks and responsibilities requires educators to be more attentive to human characters. Therefore, CE methods are always connected with the education system, goals, materials, facilities and infrastructure, and methods of assessment which are also related to the need for character development as part of Islamic morals. The following are 10 methods for promoting CE.

Firstly, the analytical and synthetic thinking method is mentioned in al-Gāsiyah/88: 17-21. According to al-Isfahāni (2007), apart from the term *afalā yanzhurūn*, other terms are also found in the Qur'an encouraging humans to use their minds, e.g., *afalā ta'qilūn* (don't you use reasoning?); *afalā tubsirūn* (do you not see?); *afalā tatafakkarūn* (don't you use reasoning?); etc. Analytical thinking means solving problems to identify the truth and further justify it. Meanwhile, synthetic thinking means solving the truth with various conjectures from several aspects so that it forms a harmonious unity. These two methods of thinking start with a temporary guess (hypothesis) which then gives birth to an accurate answer.

Secondly, the guidance and counseling method is supported by Yūnus/10: 57. Prophet Muhammad saw. has given an example of how he had become a role model based on religious teachings. Even though the Prophet saw. was successful in guiding his people, his daily life remained

simple. This situation indicates that guidance and counseling methods are very important in the CE process. Thirdly, the basis for implementing the *targhib* and *tarib* methods is Fussilat/41: 46. This method is identical to the motivation method. Thus, it is related to providing motivation accompanied by threats like punishment for mistakes. Fourthly, the basis for implementing practical and situational methods to develop character is mentioned in the al-Ankabut/29: 45. The practical method encourages people to practice knowledge and actualize their faith and piety in daily life as contained in the commands for prayer and fasting.

Meanwhile, the situational method is a method of providing an atmosphere that is conditioned according to place and time. The existence of Islam is believed to be *sālih li kulli zamān wa makān*, the universalism of its teachings is not bound by particular time and place. Moreover, the group and instructional method is called the mutual education method as mentioned in Ali Imran/3: 159. The essence of deliberation is as a solution to all problems. It is an activity that involves many people to make a decision on resolving a problem.

Next, the story and example methods are supported by Yūsuf/12: 111. It can also be called the imitation method, a method of education and teaching in which educators provide good role models. In the Qur'an, the exemplary method is projected with the word *uswah*, a good example. Additionally, the discussion method is mentioned in al-Nahl/16: 43. According to al-Nahlawiy (n.d.), the most important form of dialogue is *khitābī* (call to Allah), and *ta'abbudi* (servitude to Allah). Clarity regarding aspects of dialogue is intended so that each form of question and answer can develop students' effectiveness, reasoning, and divine behavior. Apart from that, an educator can use dialogue to complement teaching methods in other subjects that require discussion activities. Next, repentance and *amsāl* method is discussed in al-Nisa/4: 110. It is called forgiveness, a way of providing parables to awaken the soul from frustration to freshness and optimism in one's learning, by providing an opportunity to repent for past mistakes/mistakes.

Last but not least, the habituation method is a method used in CE, e.g., the continuity of good deeds as mentioned in the QS. al-Kahf/18: 110. This method will in turn strengthen character development when conducted continuously.

### 3.4. CE Function

The main function of CE is morals formation which refers to al-Qalam/68: 4 which uses the Arabic term *khuluq*, meaning character, morality, and good manners (Zakariyah, 2012). It is connected with other terms such as the command to do good (*ihsan*) and virtue (*al-birr*), keeping promises (*al-wafa*), patience, honesty, fear of Allah SWT; giving charity in the way of Allah; doing justice; and forgiving. Another verse that is the basis for forming morals as part of the character of the Qur'an perspective is found in al-Qasas: 77. Al-Andalūsi (2005) asserts that the essence of the verse is "do good as Allah has done good to you" which is why *tarbiyah al-khalqiyah* is needed, which includes the formation and development of knowledge emphasizing aspects of character while also includes *al-tabiyah al-tahzibiyah*: the cultivation of the soul for the perfection of knowledge.

*Khulqiyah* education forms moral characters. From the perspective of Sufism, morals are *al-takhalluq bi akhlāqillāh* (divine morality). Meanwhile, from the perspective of Islamic education, morals are the implications of the relationship between attitudes and behavior manifested in characters. Thus, CE whose urgency is to cultivate noble morals offers spiritual liberation and encourages people to know themselves and to know their God better so as to obtain His guidance. Therefore, the formation of morals based on strengthening faith is urgent in CE. The character of a believer is a person who confirms and sincerely believes that there is no god but Allah, practices his teachings, and then rewards are poured out upon them (Shihab, 2009).

On this basis, it is not by chance that since the beginning, Islam has placed CE as the main agenda to improve the chaotic condition of society. Education's concern for CE in overcoming the problem of moral crisis and science can also be referred to in the first verse, *iqra'* or al-Alaq: 1-5. In this verse, there are at least five main components in CE: teachers (Allah Swt.), students (Prophet saw.), facilities and infrastructure (*kalam*), curriculum (something they do not know), and teaching methods (*iqra*)

which does not only mean reading, but also studying, observing, analyzing, and concluding. Based on this understanding, the Qur'an as the main source of Islamic education is not outdated. In fact, its concept of character-oriented education is worth maintaining and developing. Likewise, the hadiths of the Prophet *saw.* as further explanations of the verses of the Qur'an should be used as a reference in efforts to actualize noble morals as indicators for the implementation of CE. Therefore, morals strive to achieve human beings to have morals and be ethical as seen from the perspective of Islamic education.

However, there are still differences in terms of characteristics. Character includes a person's identity which qualifies personality (Linda & Eyre, 2005). Morals include a person's good and bad actions (Bakri, 2000) and the values in a person's personal life (Majid et al., 2013). Meanwhile, ethics is a person's daily behavior so ethics is an integral part of morals. In other words, character includes issues regarding the importance of moral and ethical education. It can be inferred that character gives birth to *akhlak*, and *akhlak* gives birth to morals and ethics. To have a noble character, CE is needed. Ibnu Aśīr in his book *al-Nihāyah* as written by Sudarsono (2003) states that character as the equivalent of morals is *khuluq* which is the correct description of the human mind: the soul and its characteristics. Good deeds are called *akhlak mahmudah* or noble morals, and bad deeds are called disgraceful morals. Mahmudah morals are a noble or praiseworthy character, such as *al-Amanah* (honest), *al-A'ifah* (pleasant), *al-Afwu* (forgiving), *al-Khusyu* (persistent and humble), *al-Ghufran* (loving give forgiveness), *al-Hilmu* (refraining from committing immoral acts), *al-Ihsan* (loving to do good), *al-Itatah* (maintaining personal purity), *al-Muru'ah* (highly virtuous), *al-Rahmah* (compassionate), *al-Shabru* (patient), etc. By worshiping, humans are guided to praiseworthy character and possess noble morals as mentioned in many verses in the Qur'an (Kaśīr, n.d.)

If CE is actualized, the ideals of Islamic teachings which emphasize the formation of morals will become a mission for the welfare and happiness of human life in the world and in the afterlife. Ramayulis (2004) states that the purpose of CE covers all aspects of human behavior for the needs of present and future life, where humans not only need faith and noble morals based on religious teachings but also science and technology as tools to obtain prosperity.

Moreover, Langgulang (2007) stated that bad habits can become good and commendable if Islamic education is prioritized for the happiness of the world, to avoid everything that disrupts and harms human life like persecution, injustice, disasters, torture, riots, tyranny, blackmail, and all dangerous diseases. This type of happiness is given to humans who believe and do good deeds, while the happiness of the afterlife applies in the form of avoiding torment, either in the grave or in the afterlife before and after undergoing trial to enter heaven or hell. Likewise, Shihab (2002) states that Islamic education aims to promote moral character so that people, either individually or in groups, can fulfill their responsibility as servants and caliphs to build the world based on the concepts established by Allah Swt. In essence, the purpose of CE is to achieve self-identity by striving to actualize commendable characters to form a virtuous believer's personality to achieve happiness in the world and the afterlife. This is the aim of CE which, if viewed from the perspective of Sufism, prioritizes the formation of morals to lead to *ma'rifatullah*.

### 3.5. CE Objectives

The aims of CE are to produce humans with Muslim, believer, *muttaqin*, *muqsitin* and *muhsin* characters. Muslim character is stated in Ali-Imran: 102 concerning strengthening Muslim characters. The first character is the monotheism of Allah Swt. as a dimension of faith and carrying out the pillars of Islam and obligations (e.g., prayer, zakat, and fasting as dimensions of sharia). Second, the Muslim character is implementing the pillars of faith which are also a dimension of worship. Third, the Muslim character is to do *ihsan* to Allah Swt., and consequently worship Him; hence, this is a dimension of morals towards Him. Three more characteristics were added so there are six in total: (1) depth of faith; (2) the power of sharia, namely worship; (3) moral greatness; (4) breadth of knowledge, or having life skills; (5) the strength of the relationship; (6) social wisdom and environmental wisdom. These indicators are in line with the hadith narrated by al-Bukhāri (2002). It can be inferred that a

Muslim's faith is a spiritual potential which at its initial stage is still in the form of knowledge about Allah Swt., which then, if it is increased through sharpening the soul to reach Him, *hablun minallāh*, then he arrives at the Muslim characters if accompanied by *hablun minannās* as mentioned in Ali Imran: 112.

The character of the believer is also explained in al-Mukminūn: 1-11, that there are seven characteristics of the *muhsin's* character through this verse: (1) being *khusyu'* in prayer; (2) being away from all despicable words; (3) and other disgraceful behavior; (4) paying zakat; (5) guarding the genitals; (6) maintaining the mandate; (7) maintaining prayers in the sense of praying on time and never skipping them. Shihab (2006) emphasizes that a person's Muslim perfection is marked by faith and *Ihsan* (good character), and this is reflected in the verses above. On the other hand, the character of a believer is innate and constitutes human spiritual potential. As innate, the foundation of faith is not just belief in Allah, but faith as an effort to liberate humans from the shackles of shirk. That is why, Syaltūt (2000) equates the meaning of faith with *aqidah*, namely believing sincerely in God, which grows from a deep soul and is the basis of religion that every person must go through in actualizing his good character. This concept also emphasizes that the essence of *aqidah* is identical to faith, and Islamic teachings emphasize that faith is an indicator of the character of a believer for Muslims.

Then, *muttaqin* character is revealed in Al-Baqarah: 2 and Ali Imran: 133-135. It can be inferred from these verses that at least eight indicators of piety can be concluded: (1) leading to God's forgiveness; (2) sacrificing his wealth regardless of circumstances so as to be diligent in studying and working hard; (3) controlling his anger; (5) forgiving other people's mistakes; (5) not abusing yourself; (6) doing good deeds to others; (7) asking forgiveness for every wrongdoing; (8) not repeating the mistakes or sins. *Muttaqin* character is a form of character that is integral, and truly complete, as stated in Al-Hujurat: 13. Shihab (2006) interprets the term *al-muttaqin* in various verses based on three levels of avoidance. First, avoid disbelief by believing in Allah Swt. Second, try to carry out Allah's commands. Third, and the highest, is to avoid all activities that take your mind away from Allah Swt. In line with these, al-Marāgi (2002) interprets the term *al-muttaqin* as people who are noble in spirit, sensitive to the guidance of Allah Swt. and willing to accept the light of truth, in addition to being in line with the pleasure of Allah Swt., according to their knowledge and ability to *ijtihad*. An important characteristic of the *muttaqin* character is instilling a *mukhlisīn* attitude, a character that is always sincere, and/or pure of heart in doing good deeds. The indicators can be seen in carrying out worship and religious orders, purifying one's obedience to Allah Swt., doing good deeds and helping others (Al-A'rāf: 29; Al-Mukmin: 14; al-An'ām: 139, al-Mā'idah: 2). Likewise, the *muttaqin* character must also be accompanied by the *al-mutaṭahhirīn* character, a form of character that is holy, both externally and internally, e.g., never neglecting ablution, bathing and defecating following the Shari'a, and dressing cleanly (Al-Mudassir: 4). Then, internally, it means cleansing oneself of all forms of immorality and sin (al-Ahzāb: 33). The character of *al-mutaṭahhirīn* in the final context, in essence, is a form of character that does not commit acts that violate sharia regulations.

Furthermore, the *al-sābirīn* character is an important part of the *muttaqin* character, a character that always restrains himself from all problems, does not worry, and is always faithful in fulfilling religious orders without complaint. Hence, the character of *al-sābirīn*, is self-restraint or steadfast in facing something difficult, heavy, and worrying. The indicators include patience in accepting disaster, patience in adversity and suffering, also patience in war, including patience in fighting against lust, in facing slander, and in waiting for the promises of Allah Swt. (Luqman: 17; Al-Baqarah: 177; Tāha: 130; Al-Baqarah: 153). The character of *al-sābirīn* has a very big influence on the soul, so it can strengthen a person's character. Muhaimin (2013) offered the importance of education with the concepts of monotheism *ulūhiyah*, *rubūbiyah*, *mulkiyah*, and *rahmāniyah* as the basis of his education. The formalization of morals that Islamic education aspires to is *akhlāq al-mahmūdah*, and such morals are one of the constructs (explanatory framework) that can maintain the *naḥsāni* nature as the character of human beings. This is understood from Ibn Rusyd's and al-Walid's statement (1972) that a perfect human (*insan kamil*) is a human who behaves appropriately, and who has adequate knowledge.

Proper behavior is Islamic morality (*akhlāq al-mahmūdah*) which brings happiness and avoids the misery of the afterlife.

The character of *Muqṣitīn* is revealed in surah Ali Imrān: 18 that justice is giving something to each person according to the rights; treating equally between everyone equally without discrimination; and upholding a balance between rights and obligations. The *muqṣitīn* character is a character who always acts fairly. The basic meaning of *muqṣitīn* is straight which comes from the word *al-qistu* meaning *istiqāmah* and *mustaqīm* (Zakaria, 1972). Lāri (2004) asserts that *muqṣitīn* behavior is not committing injustice, paying attention to the rights of other people, and not committing an act that is contrary to wisdom and benefit. This kind of behavior is also an indicator of *muqṣitīn* character. Some of the examples include fairness and honesty in the scales, especially for traders (al-An'ām: 152), correct in upholding justice, and being honest in carrying out and completing the mandate (al-Nisā: 58, 78, 135). Furthermore, if *al-qistu* is equated with *istiqāmah*, the *muqṣitīn* character is firm in one's faith.

Meanwhile, *muhsin* character is revealed in al-A'rāf/7: 156. It means someone who knows something with the best knowledge and is related to CE. Doing something must be based on science. Hence, interacting well with God, humans, and animals must also be based on knowledge. Moreover, in al-Nisā/4: 125, in relation to *ahsan* and *muhsan* as elements of human character, tafsir scholars emphasize that the existence of CE should be oriented towards the formation of morals as an effort to anticipate various negative impacts that can threaten human life. In this way, the existence of character development starts from the individual, because essentially character is indeed individual, although it can apply in non-individual contexts. Therefore, character development starts from an individual movement, which is then projected to spread to other individuals, then after the number of individuals who are character-enlightened becomes large, it will naturally influence the society.

To conclude, the character of Muslims, believers, *muttakin*, and *muhsin*, if embedded in humans, will give them the strength to achieve greatness and glory (*ahsani taqwīm*). Thus, it is necessary to instill the power of positive human potential, in the form of *aqlus salīm* (sound mind), *qalbun salīm* (healthy heart), *qalbun munīb* (returned, clean, pure heart from sin) and *nasul mutmainnah* (calm soul), all of which are human resources that have extraordinary power as positive energy.

### 3.6. Indicators of Achievement in Implementing CE

In implementing CE, there are two achievement indicators. The first one is peace of soul. Through the CE, as intended in al-Nāzi'āt/79: 40-41, the soul or *al-nafs* will become peaceful because those who are educated with CE always have faith and purity, e.g., feel afraid (*khauf*) of their God and always refrain from despicable actions, and do good. Even though the Qur'an emphasizes that *al-nafs* has the potential for good and bad (positive and negative), it also shows that in essence, the positive potential of humans is stronger than the negative potential, because the word *Kasabat* in Al-Baqarah/2: 286 refers to good efforts so that they get reward and be calm in their souls because of good CE (Shihab, 2006). This is the importance of CE that can sharpen their soul to be good or *tazkiyat al-nafs* (Hadhiri, 2003). However, if the soul is not calm, it makes the physic weak.

The second indicator is to get the blessing of life. It is believed that the results of CE will bring blessings in life because good character will bring a good life too. This is what is found in many verses, e.g., al-Nur/24: 61 and al-Mu'min/40: 64. This blessing also contains the essence of enjoyment, happiness, addition, growth, goodness, and benefits as mentioned in al-A'rāf/7: 32. In al-Sya'rawi's view (1992), there are two types of blessings. First, worldly material blessings are blessings that can be enjoyed by Muslims who practice good deeds in general. Second, the blessing of the soul (*al-nafs*) which has a religious spiritual dimension: blessings only enjoyed by believers.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The essence of CE according to the Qur'an is found in various verse clauses that use the terms *khuluq*, *al-birr*, *al-khair*, *qaulan kariman*, *qawlan layyin*, and *qawlan ma'rūfan*. The term *khuluq* in the verses of the Qur'an is interpreted as a noble nature and attitude that is embedded in the soul from

which good character emerges which is usually referred to as noble morals. The existence of CE emphasizes the search for identity to qualify personality to form morals and ethics. The urgency of CE is the realization of noble morals and the formation of a commendable identity within the framework of the true personality of Muslim humans, believers, *muttaqin*, *muqsitin*, and *muhsin* whose actualization is in applying the values of CE informally, formally, and non-formally in the educational environment. Implementing CE will generate noble morals, and the output is to produce *uswah al-hasanah* in a person. It is recommended that religious leaders, community leaders, and educators be involved in acting as stakeholders in providing enlightenment about the urgency of implementing CE. Specifically for educational institutions, it is recommended that CE become a mandatory subject or material in informal, formal, and non-formal education environments. Moreover, future studies regarding the issue of the implementation of CE through diverse lenses are suggested.

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