THE TRIPLE HELIX IN HIGHER EDUCATION AS A ZONE FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION

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Abstract
In the modern era, the erosion of values and character among students due to technological advancements requires an ideal educational concept that maximizes character education. This study explores an educational concept that synergizes mosques, Islamic boarding schools, and universities in one unit-triple helix. Employing a library approach, the data sources in this study are printed and digital texts, as well as books and manuscripts. The findings of this study reveal that the concept of education which combines the natures of mosques, Islamic boarding schools, and universities (triple helix) as foundational pillars plays a pivotal role in shaping an individual’s character through exemplary practices. Within the concept of the mosque, the education is to maximize various activities related to the mosque. In the Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) concept, education focuses on the application of the Pesantren system within the university education curriculum. Meanwhile, the concept
of university refers to the Islamization of science, as seen in the curriculum of Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Character Education; Mosque; Pesantren; Triple Helix; University.

**Abstrak**


**Kata Kunci:** Triple Helix; Masjid; Pendidikan Karakter; Pesantren; Universitas.

**INTRODUCTION**

Discussing education is inherently the contemplation of the future. Education serves as a furnace for shaping future nation builders. Education holds a crucial role in improving human quality, positioning them as the main resource in the
success of national development (Koswara, 2018). This importance is underscored by the notable examples of nation-building figures who attribute their success to the transformative years spent in during educational pursuits (Uce, 2017). Education also plays an important role in a nation's development through improving human quality as its main resource.

In the era of digital transformation, Muslims encounter educational challenges such as misleading thoughts that are not in line with Islam. A quote from Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas says, “It is true that the Muslim mind is now undergoing profound infiltration of cultural and intellectual elements alien to Islam”. Muslim thought is now being invaded by foreign culture and science, such as the infiltration of Western civilization's secularism, rationalism, empiricism, dichotomy of knowledge, desacralization, pragmatism, and denial of the truth, which is of a metaphysical nature (Latief et al., 2021). These have indirectly impacted the education sector (Wijaya, 2023c) and, on the other hand, also provide great benefits to education. This threat takes the form of Western ideals such as liberalism, materialism, atheism, feminism, and others freely entering the education sector as a result of the quickly increasing digital transformation (Azizy, 2014).

The introduction of diverse thought challenges into the realm of education is gradually leading to a state of confusion regarding the educational concept (Anwar et al., 2022). It is said to be ambiguous because the Western epistemology that is behind this thinking departs from presumptions or sceptical efforts that deny revelation as a method for finding truth (Armas, 2015; Wijaya, 2023a). Ironically, education, which is
expected to be the central point in building a nation civilization, destroys the nation itself. This decline has been seen in education in Indonesia with many scholars and educational stakeholders adopting Western epistemology as a method in seeking courage and formulating education. As a result, we will find various learning materials with secular values because they reject revelation as a source of scientific truth. This situation has the potential to generate future leaders and contributors to the country who, unfortunately, have the capacity to be destructive to the country. Individuals demonstrate intelligence and sagacity but end up being invested in actions that are detrimental to both the nation and its foundations in religion.

If the damage to the value of education continues unchecked, the morality of educated people will deteriorate. An educational formula that can safeguard children from the risks of thinking generated by the tumult of digital transformation is especially important for the alpha generation, who are growing up as technology develops rapidly. Although technology advancements have a favorable impact on the lives of the younger generation, they also have negative consequences that damage the moral and moral values of the younger generation (Laka, 2018).

Moral damage in the younger generation, especially in students, can take the form of clashes between students, falling into drugs, motorbike gangs, free sex, brawls that are almost always heard every day, and other negative actions (Darmaningtyas, 2007). All these issues are mostly the result of changes in the value of education brought about by modern-
day thinking. Education may lose sight of its lofty objective, which is to produce virtuous, faithful, and God-fearing people.

The aims of education are as stated in the 1945 Constitution Article 31: “The government shall undertake and shall conduct one national educational system, which enhances faith and piety as well as noble character …” (Zarman, 2020). Unfortunately, the thought challenges in the digital world have an impact on this goal. The high standards of education are beginning to deteriorate, resulting in moral decline. Neil Postman in *The End of Education* explains that that without a transcendent purpose as its final goal, education will end (Postman, 2021).

This research represents a continuation of various studies previously undertaken by different researchers. Previous studies (Abidin, 2012a; Haidi, 2020a; Fahrul et al., 2022; Firdaus et al., 2020; 2022; Wijaya & Sari, 2023) primarily focused on the theoretical aspects of the triple helix concept in education. However, these prior studies have not extensively delved into the practical applications of this concept. As a result, the current study intends to provide a full account of the triple helix concept’s use in education within the setting of Islamic boarding school system universities. It specifically investigates the concept’s use as a character education zone.

In this paper, we discuss the concept of ideal education that entails integrating exemplary values as the main basis of education. The educational concept is a university with an Islamic boarding school system that optimizes the educational triple helix (comprising mosque, Pesantren, and university) as the main pillar of maximizing exemplary values, establishing an ideal character education zone at the core of its educational
paradigm (Wijaya & Sari, 2023). *Uswah*-based character education is also very relevant to the main reason why the Prophet was sent as a perfecter of morals as well as a role model for humans (Muslimin et al., 2021).

**RESEARCH METHODS**

The research method employed in this study is a systematic approach to obtain data with certain goals and interests (Ramdhan, 2021). Morissan (2017) describes that a research method must have at least five basic characteristics, including openeness, objectivity, empirical, systematic, and predictive. Conducting research is to uncover answers to the research findings, which will subsequently contribute to the advancement of science (Roger & Dominick, 2017). In this research, we used the library research. This qualitative research collected data from written works, magazines, journals, and other literature (Evanirosa, 2022).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The educational model based on the triple helix concept in universities with an Islamic boarding school system is exemplified by Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia (Henceforth UNIDA Gontor). UNIDA Gontor strives to harmonize the three essential components of education—mosques, Islamic boarding schools, and universities—creating an integrated and synergistic educational framework. The triple helix refers to the concept initiated by Muhammad Natsir regarding the pillars of mosques, universities, and Islamic boarding schools for ideal education (Firdaus, 2020). Universities that combine the triple helix pillar will build an
ideal character education zone capable of producing flawless beings (*insan kamil*), both academically and spiritually.

Adopting the Islamic boarding school concept in higher education institutions will integrate mosques and universities into a single educational unit. This will encourage contact between students and lecturers not just in the classroom, but also outside of it (in the classroom, on campus, or in the mosque environment). The following chart depicts the shape of the triple helix concept:

![Triple Helix in UNIDA Gontor](image)

**Picture 1. Triple Helix Education in UNIDA Gontor**

Optimizing the triple helix pillars of education to establish a character education zone is highly pertinent in addressing the moral crisis prevalent in the current young generations. This educational style aligns with the Prophet's educational vision, which emphasizes example as the primary foundation of his education. Currently, one method to emulate the Prophet's life is to imitate his heirs. The heirs of the Prophet on earth are the ulama (*al-‘ulama’ warasatat al-anbiya*) (Huda, 2021). This is because the lecturer's function in the classroom is also that of a teacher outside of the classroom. They are the teachers of manners and morals for students in Islamic boarding schools at colleges. The triple helix concept is important in the field of
education because it gives rise to a generation of *khoiru ummah* who can fight for the future of the Indonesian nation. Hence, future college graduates not only have intelligence but also character and civility.

**The First Pillar: Mosque**

Natsir emphasizes the presence of a mosque in an educational institution as the first pillar of education. One of the most essential tasks and roles of mosque pillars is that they serve as a center for teaching and guidance (Saefullah, 2014), as well as a place to develop character for the things they seek to educate (Haidi, 2020b). This is consistent with the mosque's function at UNIDA Gontor as one of the cornerstones of character education for its students. The UNIDA Gontor Mosque has various routines to fulfill its educational purpose, such as *tausiyyah* after every noon prayer, hadith reading after every morning prayer, or the rector's Khutbah after every Friday prayer. When students visit the mosque, this is the primary activity for imparting positive values to them.

In addition, UNIDA Gontor also has a Markaz Sirah Nabawiyah which focuses its programs on studying the Sirah Nabawiyah through the Turats books (Rizka & Fitria, 2018). The books studied in this program include *Ihya Ulumuddin* by Imam al-Ghazali, as well as various tafsir of the Al-Qur'an. The books studied provide religious education derived from the Al-Qur'an as the main reference in their authorship. Additionally, a character-building system at UNIDA Gontor is implemented through an obligation for students to participate in *jama’ah* prayers at the UNIDA Gontor Jami Mosque. This practice of praying together fosters the development of positive character
values among mahasantri (Islamic university students) (Amin, 2022).

The habitual action of reading and memorizing the Qur’an is another habit that aids character formation. The Tahfidz program is a part of the Al-Qur’an curriculum that maximizes the formation of a *uswah*-based learning society (Muriyatmoko et al., 2021). To facilitate the memorization process, every Sunday evening, all mahasantri engage in a memorization session with their assigned *muhafidz* (memorization supervisor). Every Tuesday early morning, there are also exercises Tahajjud prayers at the mosque. Mahasantri's good character is formed by Qur'anic values, examples, and the practice of Tahajjud prayers (Anwar, 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2019).

**The Second Pillar: Pesantren (Islamic Boarding School)**

Natsir's second educational pillar is the Islamic boarding school pillar. Natsir was deeply concerned about the existence of Islamic boarding schools because the forefathers of the Indonesian National Army (TNI) were cadres from Islamic boarding schools who were ordered by the Kyai to fight the Dutch (Saefullah, 2014). Based on this history, Islamic boarding schools have emerged as an important pillar in the triple helix education model. UNIDA Gontor is attempting to create an ideal learning society zone for its students by optimizing character formation through the organization of the educational process in boarding colleges (adopting the Islamic boarding school concept).

To support this goal, various facilities and infrastructure are available in the campus environment, including mosques, lecture halls, libraries, offices, sports facilities, lecturer housing, student dormitories, and other facilities (Cuseno & Asy’ari,
The dormitory system enforces disciplines. They are supervised by the Directorate of Islamic Boarding Schools. Outside of classroom hours, the Directorate of Islamic Boarding Schools aids the Rector and Vice Rector 1 to educate Islamic boarding school students. The Directorate of Islamic Boarding Schools will preserve the campus environment as an appropriate site for Islamic boarding school students to learn basic character.

Another facet of education within this dormitory system is the existence of the Mudabbir. Mudabbir's major responsibilities are as a dormitory supervisor and as a guardian for the students in the boarding schools. Mudabbir serves as a role model for all mahasantri. His actions and words should provide a good example for mahasantri to follow. Mudabbir also works as a Kyai's extension in the dormitories, emphasizing character education. Aside from Mudabbir, UNIDA Gontor is also implementing a Musyrif system as mentors. Musyrif holds an important role in the establishment of the mahasantri discipline (Faozan et al., 2019). Each academic year mahasantri is accompanied by a designated Musyrif, who serves as a guide for their learning activities on campus. When classes are concluded, the Musyrif's responsibility is to advise student students in place of lecturers. For instance, by maintaining and supervising students to ensure that they remain on the right study path.

As part of the evaluation framework pertinent to the Islamic boarding school education model, UNIDA Gontor has implemented a student life evaluation system designed to assess students around the clock. This evaluation system is called Student Academic Support Credit Scores (AKPAM), and
the accumulation of the score is called *Indeks Prestasi Kesanjtrian/santri grade Index (IPKs)*. They are assessed every semester based on students’ daily lives at the campus (Zarkasyi, 2022). This covers four domains including the domains of thinking, dhikr, feeling and sports. They serve as the requirement for the students to take the midterm and final exam. This system (IPKs) was formed to complement the academic grade point average system (IPK) for a holistic and comprehensive assessment.

Another method is the family gatherings. It cultivates and strengthens mahasantri’s character. The Kyai/Musyrif’s message during this activity was to always remind and stress student students to always take care of themselves so that they do not conduct bad acts on campus. This is an endeavor to instill character values in youth. Kyai’s function as a role model is critical to the fulfillment of all character learning objectives that have been developed. (Sadjim et al., 2016).

UNIDA Gontor requires lecturers to live on campus to optimize their function as role models for students (Achmadi, 2021). A lecturer will also serve as a Muaddib on campus (Echsanuuddin, 2022). Thus, lecturers not only act as teachers (Muallim) in the classroom but also as caregivers (Murabbi), as well as role models (Muaddib) (Zefri, 2022). This practice aligns with the objective behind sending the Prophet to Earth, which is to refine the morality of the people by serving as exemplary role models in their everyday lives (Fathoni & Wahid, 2021).

Through this system, UNIDA Gontor seeks to bring solutions to problems in this country by improving its education system. The establishment of an Islamic boarding school system will shield students from the modern-day issues
that face today's youth. This endeavor will make UNIDA Gontor students feel more secure in the learning society zone on campus than students from other universities. It is dubbed a learning society since all everyday activities on campus include 24-hour education. This type of educational strategy will maximize the construction and protection of student morals against moral degradation problems. Aside from that, students will be accustomed to living in a healthy environment, mature into good individuals, and eventually graduate with character and values.

**The Third Pillar: University**

The final pillar that Natsir emphasized in the triple helix synergy was the role of universities as educational centers. Natsir stressed that colleges serve as an intellectual elite community link (Abidin, 2012b). This is where higher education's primary role as education and intellectual advancement comes into play. It is critical to stress intellectual advancements because current science can destroy students' morals and morality due to the harmful values inherent in it (Amini et al., 2020). To address these issues, UNIDA Gontor made the Islamization of science the main focus of its curriculum. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, a Malaysian scientist born in Bogor, first proposed the idea of the Islamization of science in the early 1980s (Sahidin, 2022). He conveyed his ideas in a paper entitled *Preliminary Thoughts on the Nature of Knowledge and the Definition and Aims of Education*, which was presented at the First World Conference on Islamic Education held in Mecca on 31 March-8 April 1977 (Bintoro, 2019).
The concept is offered as an attempt to respond to the problems of Westernization, which dominates modern human life. The multiple immorality that occurs are essentially a problem called loss of *adab* (morals) by al-Attas (Mukit et al., 2022). The loss of *adab* is the outcome of the secular-liberal Western dominance at the beginning of the twentieth century, which gave birth to inadequate leaders among humanity, resulting in the formation of an amoral society (Al-attas, 2014).

To address this issue, UNIDA Gontor incorporated the concept of Islamization of science into its curriculum. This is a quote from UNIDA Gontor's vision, which states, “To become a quality and meaningful Pesantren system university, as a center Science development oriented to the Islamization of science contemporary and as a center for the study of the language of the Qur’an for the welfare of mankind” (Anggara et al., 2023).

This notion of Islamization of knowledge has been integrated comprehensively into the curriculum. This is demonstrated by the establishment of the Directorate of Islamization of Science, which develops a curriculum for Islamization teaching materials that are relevant to the scientific disciplines on this campus. Not only that, but the Center for Islamic and Occidental Studies (CIOS), the Ulama Cadreship Program, the Masters in Aqidah and Philosophy, and the Doctorate in Aqidah and Philosophy all contribute to the success of the Islamization curriculum at UNIDA Gontor (Ismunanto, 2018).

The entire curriculum is fundamentally focused on instilling an Islamic worldview in students. Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, in his terminological exploration, gathered definitions from scholars such as Ninian Smart, Thomas F. Wall, Alparslan
Acikgenc, Thomas S. Kuhn, and Edwin Hung. The term “worldview” encompasses several meanings: it is a foundational belief system inherent to humans, it involves human thoughts and emotions, it explains the reality and meaning of existence, it influences moral and social continuity and change, it serves as the basis for human behavior, including scientific and technological activities, and it plays a crucial role in scientific reasoning akin to a paradigm. Furthermore, like a paradigm, a worldview provides values, standards, and methodology (Muslih et al., 2019). Every student attempts to apply this vision to themselves through their educational curriculum. The goal is for students to develop a perspective on comprehending and interpreting the reality of the world that is founded on the worth of God's revelation. An educator will also access the sphere of Islam intellectually through this vision. So that students are not misled in their thinking by modern science, which erodes morals. The implementation of the Islamization curriculum at UNIDA Gontor plays a pivotal role in cultivating individuals who are perfected (insan kamil) or who embody goodness and civilization (a good man) (Azhari, 2013).

**CONCLUSION**

The threat of moral degradation among the younger generation is attributed to a crisis in their role models. Addressing this challenge requires an ideal education system capable of overcoming moral and exemplary crises. Optimizing the Islamic boarding school-based higher education paradigm, which includes the triple helix pillars, is one example of this. The triple helix concept combines the roles of Pesantren
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(Islamic boarding schools), universities, and mosques as ideal educational aspects for students to grow and develop in the area of moral and character education. This will also alter the job of a lecturer, allowing him to be both an educator and a Murabbi and Muaddib at the same time. This approach is ideal for developing students' character because they study, eat, worship, and conduct their daily lives with lecturers on campus every day. This education system is further reinforced by the implementation of Al-Qur'an curriculum, which requires students to continue interacting with the Al-Qur'an. These numerous efforts will optimize the success of UNIDA Gontor's triple helix-based character education model, which will maximize the development of good character values in students.

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