

Transformative Education in Character Development of Students in Religious-Based Schools: Narrative Review

Author:

Megawati¹
Dwi Sulisworo²

Afiliation:

Universitas Ahmad Dahlan^{1,2}

Corresponding email

2437082004@webmail.uad.ac.id
dwisulisworo@uad.ac.id

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Abstrak:

This article aims to explore and analyze various transformative education approaches implemented in religious-based schools and their impact on character formation in students. The method used in this research is a narrative review involving the collection, synthesis, and analysis of current literature on character education, principles of transformative education, and best practices in religious-based schools. This review encompasses various sources, including scholarly journals, books, and relevant research reports, to provide a comprehensive overview of how transformative education can be integrated into the curriculum and educational practices within a religious-based environment. The study results indicate that transformative education emphasizes mastery of subject matter and prioritizes spiritual and ethical values that contribute to the development of student's character. Several key aspects of transformative education identified in this research include a focus on social interaction, reflective processes, and active student engagement in the learning process. Inclusive teaching methods, group discussions, and community-based projects are among the practices that support the holistic formation of students' character. The findings of this study also demonstrate that implementing transformative education within the context of religious education can produce more responsible, empathetic, and high-integrity individuals. Furthermore, transformative education aids students in understanding and appreciating differences, which is essential in a diverse society. Hopefully, These findings will provide educators, school administrators, and policymakers' insights into formulating effective strategies to strengthen character education in religious-based schools and create a better learning environment.

Kata kunci: Transformative Education, Character Formation, Religious-Based Schools, Narrative Review, Character Education, Spiritual Values, Student Integrity

Introduction

Transformative education plays a crucial role in shaping students' character, particularly in religious-based schools that have a strong foundation of spiritual and moral values. These schools not only focus on academic achievement but also integrate religious values into the learning process to develop individuals with noble character (Jusubaidi et al., 2024). In this context, transformative education encompasses approaches that encourage students to reflect upon, understand, and internalize these values in their daily lives (Christie et al., 2015). This study aims to explore how transformative education is implemented in religious-based schools and its impact on students' character formation. This research is expected to provide

deeper insights into effective practices for integrating religious education and character development, as well as the challenges faced by educators in this process (Poncini, 2024). Thus, the findings of this study are anticipated to contribute to the development of a more holistic and impactful education for future generations (Miseliunaite et al., 2022).

Education is the primary foundation in the character formation of individuals, and in this era of globalization, the challenge of creating a morally upright generation is increasingly urgent. Religious-based schools play a crucial role in integrating moral and spiritual values into the educational curriculum (Chesaro, 2019). Transformative education, which focuses on profound changes in students' thinking and actions, is highly relevant in this context (Chesaro, 2019). The concept of transformative education emphasizes a process of critical reflection that enables students not only to receive information but also to evaluate and internalize the values being taught, allowing them to apply these values in their daily lives (Obwana, 2024).

In the context of religious-based schools, transformative education focuses on character development based on religious teachings, such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy (Meneely, 2015). These schools strive not only to educate students academically but also to cultivate a strong moral identity through holistic educational practices. In its implementation, religious-based education often faces challenges, such as resistance to curriculum changes and limited resources (Sudarta, 2022). However, despite these obstacles, several studies indicate that a transformative approach integrated with religious values can produce students who are better prepared to face life's challenges and contribute positively to society (Nahriyah et al., 2024). Therefore, this study aims to explore in-depth how transformative education is applied in religious-based schools and its impact on students' character formation. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide broader insights into effective and relevant educational practices in the effort to create a morally upright generation (Hutabarat, 2023).

Transformative education is an important approach in shaping students' character, particularly in religious-based schools that prioritize moral and spiritual values. These schools aim not only for academic success but also to instill good morals and life skills that are beneficial for students (Alimah, 2020). Transformative education emphasizes the importance of critical reflection, inviting students to contemplate their experiences and knowledge within the context of religious teachings (Fleming, 2018). Through this approach, students not only receive information but also learn how to relate religious values to their decision-making and daily actions (Gardner, 2019).

The integration of character education into the curriculum of religious-based schools is highly relevant for developing individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also rich in morality (Glissman, 2017). However, challenges such as a lack of resources and resistance to educational innovation often hinder effective implementation (Gardner, 2019). This research aims to explore the application of transformative education in religious-based schools and how it contributes to students' character development. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights into best practices that support character formation in students and assist educators in designing more effective and relevant programs within the context of religious education (Yan, 2022).

Literature Studies

Transformative education based on religion focuses on the development of students' character by integrating religious values into the curriculum and the learning process. According to Mezirow (Muñoz Villalobos & Eduardo Pérez Murcia, n.d.), transformative education encourages a shift in students' perspectives through critical reflection on their experiences, which encompasses not only cognitive aspects

but also moral and spiritual dimensions. In the context of religious-based schools, this education enables students to internalize religious values, strengthen their moral character, and develop social awareness (Metcalf et al., 2025). Religious-based learning strategies, such as spiritual reflection, active discussion, and the use of role models, play an important role in shaping students' character (Heliawati et al., 2020). Teachers also play a vital role as moral exemplars, teaching how to apply religious values in everyday life (Susanti & Rohimah, 2024). This approach also focuses on developing students' sense of social responsibility by linking religious teachings to social issues such as injustice and environmental degradation (Martínez-Ariño & Zrinščak, 2022). Evaluations of this education show that students excel not only academically but also demonstrate higher levels of empathy, tolerance, and justice (Ismail et al., 2023). Therefore, transformative religious education produces holistic individuals, ready to contribute positively to society, with a profound social awareness (Mathew et al., n.d.).

Transformative education based on religion also encourages students to develop critical thinking skills that align with religious teachings. Through reflective approaches, students not only learn about religious principles but are also invited to analyze their life experiences, evaluate the decisions they make, and seek solutions that align with religious values (Pasal, n.d.). This approach provides students with an opportunity to view contemporary issues from a moral and spiritual perspective, enabling them to make wiser and more responsible decisions in everyday life (*Review of Religious*, 2021). With proper guidance, students are able to understand how to practically apply religious values, thus enhancing not only their intellectual development but also their moral and spiritual dimensions (*Book of Abstracts AIESEP 2023 Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile*, 2023). The result of this approach is a generation with strong character, critical thinking ability, and a high commitment to social responsibility, making them individuals ready to contribute positively to society (*Teenage Worldviews and Religious Education: The Worldviews of Students Aged Fourteen to Eighteen in Four Schools in the Southwest of England*, n.d.).

Research Methods

The method used in this study is a narrative review approach aimed at collecting and analyzing relevant literature on transformative education and character formation in the context of religious-based schools. This process begins by establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria to select studies related to the topic, such as research discussing the theories and practices of transformative education and its impact on students' character. Use relevant keywords; data is collected through systematic searches in academic databases such as Google Scholar and JSTOR. Once the data is collected, qualitative analysis is performed to identify key themes, patterns, and relationships emerging from the reviewed studies. A synthesis of the findings is then compiled to highlight the similarities and differences among various studies and provide recommendations for future research. With this approach, the article is expected to offer in-depth insights into how transformative education can be integrated into religious-based schools to support students' character development and to open avenues for further research in this field.

Result

Philosophical Foundation of Transformative Education in the Context of Religious-Based Schools.

Transformative education in religious-based schools holds significant potential for shaping the moral and spiritual character of students. This education focuses not only on the transfer of knowledge but also on transforming ways of thinking, behavior, and fostering critical awareness (Moulin-Stožek & Metcalfe, 2019). The main principles of transformative education, such as critical theory, progressivism, and value-based learning, are applied within a more religious context in religious-based schools. Critical theory in transformative education encourages students to think critically about their social and cultural realities,

including how their religious teachings can help address issues of social justice. Meanwhile, progressivism emphasizes learning experiences relevant to real life, where students not only learn about religious teachings but also how to apply them in their daily lives. Through value-based learning, education in religious-based schools provides a strong foundation for the development of students' morality and spirituality (Balthazar, 2019).

Religious-based schools and public schools have significant differences in educational philosophy. In public schools, the focus of learning is primarily on cognitive aspects and academic achievement, whereas in religious-based schools, there is a greater emphasis on moral and spiritual education. In religious-based schools, the expected learning outcomes include the formation of morality aligned with religious teachings, such as integrity, responsibility, and virtue, while in public schools, the measurement of success is more focused on academic achievement. This allows students in religious-based schools to develop both intellectually and spiritually, creating more well-rounded individuals (Fusco, 2005).

The relationship between transformative education and the formation of moral and spiritual character is very evident in religious-based schools. Education here is not limited to cognitive teaching; it also includes the integration of religious values into every aspect of students' lives (Poncini, 2024). This education encourages students to apply values such as honesty, empathy, and justice in their daily lives, thereby shaping better character. Transformative education in this context not only addresses intellectual aspects but also develops the emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of students, creating individuals who are capable of facing the challenges of the modern world with a strong moral and spiritual foundation (Muñoz Villalobos & Eduardo Pérez Murcia, n.d.).

The philosophical foundation of transformative education in the context of religious-based schools is based on efforts to integrate spiritual and moral values with a liberating and empowering learning process. Transformative education in this environment not only focuses on the transfer of academic knowledge but also on the development of character and critical social awareness (Piercy, 2013). Grounding the educational process in religious teachings that emphasize values of humanity, compassion, and justice, education in religious-based schools aims to shape individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also sensitive to social issues and able to contribute to positive transformation in society (Kleindienst, 2024). This philosophy emphasizes that education is not merely a tool for achieving personal success, but also a means to develop a profound spiritual understanding, commitment to ethics, and social responsibility, enabling learners to become agents of change who bring goodness to others (Chowdhury, 2016).

Author	Year	Title	Religious Background	Philosophical Foundation
Tomas Lingdren	2023	A model of Transformative Religious Education Teaching and Learning Islam in Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Indonesia	Transformative religious education is increasingly recognized as a vital framework for fostering holistic development in students, particularly within the context of Islamic education. Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, one of Indonesia's leading modern pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), exemplifies an innovative approach to teaching and learning that integrates traditional Islamic values with contemporary educational practices.	The unique educational philosophy at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor is rooted in the belief that true education extends beyond mere intellectual growth; it aims to transform individuals into well-rounded members of society who embody Islamic principles.
Antonella Poncini	2024	Formation Fit for Purpose: Empowering Religious Educators Working in Catholic School	Exploring various strategies and approaches to facilitate holistic formation ultimately empowers religious educators to fulfill their roles to the fullest in Catholic schools.	The view that education is not only a process of transferring knowledge, but also a means of shaping the character, morals, and spirituality of students. In the Catholic perspective, a religious educator is not merely a teacher, but also a spiritual guide who instills the values of faith in the daily lives of students.
Anthony G. Reddi	2023	Transformative Education, Participative Black Theology and the Challenge of Making Difference	Transformative education as a means to cultivate critical awareness of injustice, while connecting it with Black theology, which focuses on liberation and community empowerment. Grounded in participatory principles,	Based on critical thinking and liberation theology, which emphasizes the importance of social transformation through inclusive and participatory education.

The philosophical foundation of transformative education in the context of religious-based schools emphasizes the importance of integrating spiritual values with the learning process, aiming to change how students understand themselves and the world around them. This philosophy is rooted in the belief that education serves not only as a transfer of knowledge but also as a process of liberation and individual transformation. Through this approach, students are encouraged to reflect on their life experiences, explore religious values, and develop a deeper moral awareness (Fleming, 2018). Combining the principles of transformative education with religious teachings, religious-based schools can create a learning environment that supports students' character development, helping them become more empathetic, critical, and socially responsible individuals (Piercy, 2013). This approach enables students not only to understand religious teachings but also to apply them in the context of their daily lives, thereby shaping them into positive agents of change in society (Meneely, 2015).

Transformative education, in the context of religious-based schools, focuses on profound changes within individuals through learning experiences that foster critical and reflective awareness (Baumgartner, 2019). The philosophical foundation of transformative education prioritizes the development of students' potential, not only based on academic knowledge but also on strengthening moral and spiritual values in alignment with religious principles. This approach emphasizes the importance of education as a means to transform society toward a better direction, integrating religious values that lead to collective well-being (EDUCATION, n.d.). Religious-based schools provide an ideal context for transformative education, as religious values serve as a guide in shaping students' character and ethics. Educators in religious schools need to pay attention to how education not only transmits knowledge but also transforms students' ways of thinking, broadens their perspectives on life, and equips them with skills to contribute positively to society. Therefore, transformative education in this context encompasses the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of students (Meneely, 2015).

Religious-Based Learning Strategies for Character Formation in Transformative Education

The religious-based learning approach in transformative education plays a crucial role in shaping students' character. One way to achieve this is by integrating religious values into the curriculum (Meneely, 2015). Values such as honesty, justice, respect, and responsibility are taught not only in religious studies but also in other subjects, such as history and language, which can be connected to moral lessons (Neusner, 2023). Through this values-based curriculum, learning is not limited to academic mastery; it also involves the moral and spiritual development of students. Additionally, spiritual activities such as prayer, meditation, or regular worship become an important part of the learning process. These activities provide opportunities for students to reflect, deepen their relationship with their religious teachings, and strengthen their moral and spiritual awareness (Katılmış, 2017).

Moreover, religious education within a transformative approach can trigger significant changes in students' behavior and morality. By delving into religious teachings, students are encouraged to relate the moral principles of their faith to their everyday lives. This approach not only teaches what is right or wrong according to religious doctrines but also explains why such actions are important in their social and personal contexts (Jusubaidi et al., 2024). This religious education facilitates a process of introspection, inviting students to reflect on their behavior while promoting positive attitude and behavioral changes. Active and reflective learning also forms an integral part of this approach. In active learning, students engage in discussions and problem-solving that involve religious values, while reflective learning allows them to contemplate their actions and how they align with the teachings they have learned (Kleindienst, 2024).

Another effective method is the use of role models. Teachers or religious figures in religious-based schools often serve as role models for students. Students are taught to emulate the good behavior exemplified by their teachers or religious figures, both in the school context and in their daily lives (Martínez-Ariño & Teinturier, 2019). These role models reinforce the moral values taught and provide a tangible example of how to practice religious teachings in everyday actions. Through this approach, religious education not only imparts doctrine but also transforms students into individuals who are not only academically capable but also possess strong character, moral integrity, and readiness to face the challenges of the world with a solid spiritual foundation (Othoo & Aseu, 2022).

Author	Year	Title	Religious Background	Character Focused
Alexander Handra Dwi Akmara	2020	Fostering Religious Education for Transformation in Indonesia: Dialogue with Transformative Learning Theory	Religious education is expected to contribute to the formation of a more inclusive character, one that is capable of fostering positive change within society, while also strengthening the individual's spiritual identity in the context of a pluralistic religious environment.	Highlighting several traits that need to be developed through religious education, these traits include tolerance, critical thinking, empathy, social engagement, and spiritual identity.
Anthony G. Reddie	2018	Transformative Pedagogy, Black Theology and Participative forms of Praxis	Education integrated with the principles of Black theology can produce individuals who not only understand their religious teachings but are also committed to justice and empowerment within society.	The focused traits include critical awareness, empowerment, solidarity, empathy, and value-based leadership.
Muslimah Hikmah Wening	2020	strategies for developing religious culture to shape the character of students	The development of a religious culture in schools is an important step in shaping students' character. One key strategy is to integrate religious education into the curriculum, which includes lessons on ethics and morals based on religious teachings.	The traits focused on in the journal include honesty, discipline, empathy, social concern, tolerance, gratitude, and independence.

Religious-based learning strategies for character formation in transformative education emphasize the importance of integrating spiritual and moral values into the educational process. This approach not only focuses on cognitive aspects but also on the affective and spiritual development of students, enabling them to understand and apply religious teachings in their daily lives (Jia, 2021). For example, through interactive and reflective learning methods, students are invited to explore values such as honesty, tolerance, and empathy, which are highly relevant in their social contexts (Fowler, 2000; Palmer, 1998). By creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment, religious-based education can help students build a strong moral identity and enhance the social skills necessary for positively interacting with others (Noddings, 2007; Tisak, 2012). Furthermore, this strategy can integrate spiritual experiences, such as meditation and reflection, to support the mental and emotional well-being of students, allowing them to become responsible agents of change in society (Dirkx, 1998; Taylor, 2007). Thus, transformative education based on religion not only shapes students' character but also equips them with essential skills and values to face life's challenges (Convictions, n.d.)

Religious-based learning strategies play a pivotal role in character formation within transformative education. These strategies emphasize the integration of moral, spiritual, and ethical development alongside academic learning, aiming to shape students into responsible, compassionate, and reflective individuals

(Dodlek, 2024). The foundation of religious education is rooted in values that promote not only academic achievement but also the internal transformation of students' character. These values guide students in making ethical decisions and developing a strong sense of social responsibility, both of which are critical in the context of transformative education.

In transformative education, religious-based learning strategies foster an environment where students are encouraged to reflect on their beliefs, challenge their assumptions, and grow in empathy toward others. Such an approach leads to a more holistic development, preparing students not just for academic success but also for meaningful contributions to society (Piercy, 2013). It aligns with the goals of transformative education by nurturing critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and a deeper understanding of self and others. By drawing on religious teachings, educators can create a space where character formation goes beyond theoretical knowledge, embedding values that inspire positive societal change (Muñoz Villalobos & Eduardo Pérez Murcia, n.d.).

The success of religious-based learning strategies in character formation depends on their ability to be both relevant and adaptive to the diverse needs of students. They should be inclusive, flexible, and aligned with the values of the community, ensuring that they resonate with students' lived experiences (Othoo & Aseu, 2022). This ensures that the transformative process is not only intellectual but also deeply personal and spiritual, fostering a generation of individuals capable of driving social change (Convictions, n.d.).

Evaluating the Impact of Transformative Education in Religious-Based Schools on Character Formation

The transformative education approach in religious-based schools significantly contributes to the character formation of students by integrating moral and spiritual values into every aspect of education (Kleindienst, 2024). This approach not only focuses on cognitive development but also on behavioral change and the formation of students' character based on religious teachings. For example, a case study conducted in several religious-based schools in Indonesia demonstrates that the integration of religious values into the curriculum has helped students develop better character, particularly in terms of discipline, responsibility, and empathy. In these schools, activities such as congregational prayers, reading sacred texts, and participation in religious-based social activities have become part of the daily routine, which not only strengthens students' faith but also shapes their moral attitudes (Moulin-Stožek & Metcalfe, 2019).

Other empirical studies have shown that religious-based education can help students understand the importance of ethical values when facing social issues such as injustice or violence (Martínez-Ariño & Teinturier, 2019). For instance, in religious-based schools that teach social justice values through religious teachings, students tend to be more sensitive to issues of injustice and have a desire to participate in social activities aimed at addressing these problems. In several Islamic schools, the application of values such as honesty and respect through religious lectures and class discussions related to ethics has demonstrated positive changes in student behavior, leading them to appreciate the rights of others and become more active in religious-based social activities (Saepudin, 2021).

However, despite these positive outcomes, challenges in implementing religious-based education remain. One of the greatest challenges is the existence of differing interpretations of religious teachings, which can affect how these values are conveyed and received by students (Noddings, 2009). For example, in some cases, educators who are less trained or lack understanding of the transformative approach may struggle to present religious values in a way that encourages critical thinking and reflection. Additionally, there are

challenges in ensuring that religious-based learning is not dogmatic but instead opens up space for critical discussions about religious values in the context of real-life situations(Choy, 2012).

The literature on transformative education, the importance of learning that not only focuses on the development of intellectual understanding but also on the ability to reflect on oneself and act according to those values is emphasized. A study conducted by Paulo Freire on transformative education highlights that education must engage students in a critical process to change their social realities, which aligns with the approach of religious-based education that invites students to not only understand religious teachings but also apply them in their social lives. With an approach rooted in religious values, students can be encouraged to become individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also possess strong character in terms of morality, justice, and compassion for others (Othoo & Aseu, 2022).

Author	Year	Title	Religious Background	The Impact Felt by Students
Bram de Muynck Bram Kunz	2023	Revitalizing the Mission: The Challenge for Christian Education to Discover Contextual Vocation and Ethos	The religious background focuses on the challenges faced by Christian education in the modern era.	The impact experienced by students related to the revitalization of the Christian education mission includes character development, emotional and spiritual engagement, vocational awareness, and a supportive community.
David C. Dollahite	2019	Positive Youth Religious and Spiritual Development: What We Have Learned from Religious Families	The religious background addressed focuses on the positive religious and spiritual development among adolescents.	The impacts include improved emotional well-being, identity development, social engagement, and the development of moral and ethical values.
colin meneely	2020	Transformative learning and Christian spirituality: Towards a model for pedagogical and theological clarity?	The religious background highlights the relationship between transformational learning and Christian spirituality in the context of church-based adult education.	Spiritual and character development, deeper engagement, enhanced sense of community, and problem-solving skills
Susan S. Case	2017	Educating for Character and Moral Clarity: Religion as a Transformative Vehicle for Inclusion	Emphasizing the important role of religious education in shaping the moral character of students.	The enhancement of listening and communication skills, which enables them to be more open to different viewpoints.

Evaluating the impact of transformative education in religious-based schools on student character formation is crucial in the context of holistic individual development. Transformative education focuses on developing students' critical and spiritual awareness, enabling them to explore moral and ethical values within the framework of religious teachings (Mezirow, 1991; Taylor, 2007). Through reflection and dialogue, students not only understand their religious teachings but also apply them in their daily lives, contributing to the formation of a strong character that is responsive to social challenges. Research shows that religious-based educational environments can reinforce positive attitudes such as empathy, tolerance, and honesty, all of which are essential components of good character (Noddings, 2007; Dirkx, 1998). Furthermore, this impact evaluation is important for understanding how the teaching and learning strategies implemented can enhance student engagement and shape their moral identity (Fowler, 2000; Palmer, 1998). Thus, transformative education in religious-based schools not only equips students with knowledge but also develops their character into better and more responsible individuals in society(Chowdhury, 2016).

Evaluating the impact of transformative education in religious-based schools on character formation reveals that such education plays a significant role in shaping students' moral and ethical development (Baumgartner, 2019). Transformative education in this context goes beyond the mere transmission of

knowledge, as it fosters a deeper connection between academic learning and spiritual growth, guiding students toward becoming conscientious and responsible individuals. By integrating religious values with educational practices, religious-based schools provide a unique environment that nurtures character formation, promoting values such as empathy, integrity, social responsibility, and respect for others.(Gardner, 2019)

The impact of transformative education in these schools is evident in the development of students' critical thinking and reflective practices, which help them navigate complex moral dilemmas and societal challenges. Students in religious-based schools tend to show a greater awareness of their role in society, demonstrating ethical behavior and a commitment to service (Piercy, 2013). As transformative education encourages self-examination and encourages students to challenge preconceived notions, it fosters an environment where personal growth and spiritual maturity are prioritized (Christie et al., 2015). The evaluation of these impacts underscores the importance of incorporating both academic and religious elements in the educational process, ensuring that character formation is achieved alongside intellectual development (Balthazar, 2019).

Ultimately, the effectiveness of transformative education in religious-based schools hinges on its ability to create an environment where character development is an ongoing and dynamic process, one that involves not just the acquisition of knowledge, but the cultivation of virtues that guide students toward becoming active contributors to a more just and compassionate society (Muñoz Villalobos & Eduardo Pérez Murcia, n.d.)

Discussion

The philosophical foundation, strategies for religious-based learning, and the evaluation of the impact of transformative education in the context of religious schools. The transformative education approach applied aims not only to transfer academic knowledge but also to shape students' moral and spiritual character. Transformative education in religious schools integrates critical theory, progressivism, and values-based learning within a religious framework. This allows students to think critically, apply religious values in everyday life, and develop social awareness (Muñoz Villalobos & Eduardo Pérez Murcia, n.d.). Education shapes not only intellectual aspects but also emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of students, enabling them to face the challenges of the times with a strong moral foundation (CCFEx, 2023). Strategies for religious-based learning, such as integrating values into the curriculum, spiritual reflection, and the use of role models, play an important role in shaping students' character. This process not only educates students about what is right and wrong, but also why these values are relevant in the context of their social lives (Hidayatulloh et al., 2024). Additionally, reflective activities and active discussions allow students to internalize religious values, strengthen moral awareness, and form a strong social identity (Anwar, 2023).

Impact evaluations show that religious-based transformative education significantly influences character formation in students, including increased empathy, tolerance, and justice (Meneely, 2015). However, challenges such as differences in the interpretation of religious teachings and the capacity of educators to convey these values remain obstacles that need to be addressed (El-Koumy, 2019). Nonetheless, this education successfully creates students who are not only academically excellent but also possess strong moral character and high social awareness (Mansur & Sholeh, 2024). Transformative education in religious schools demonstrates that this approach can integrate academic knowledge with the reinforcement of spiritual and moral values, creating holistic individuals ready to contribute positively to society (*Review of Religious*, 2021) Religious-based transformative education also plays a role in strengthening students' sense of social responsibility through learning that emphasizes values of justice, empathy, and sustainability. In

this learning process, students are encouraged to understand the impact of their actions on society and the surrounding environment. For example, activities linking religious teachings with social issues such as poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation have been shown to increase students' awareness of the need to actively address these issues (Cardona, 2021); Moulin-Stožek & Metcalfe, 2019). This approach emphasizes that education is not only a tool for individual success but also a means to create positive social transformation (Santosa & Jura, 2023).

The role of teachers in transformative education is also an important factor that affects the success of character formation in students. Teachers not only act as educators but also as moral role models, demonstrating how religious values can be applied in everyday life (Sari, 2021). An empathetic relationship between teachers and students creates a learning environment that supports spiritual exploration and moral development. This aligns with (Noddings, 2007) view that nurturing and emotional care are at the core of effective character education. With proper guidance, students not only understand religious values but also internalize them in their daily behavior (Piercy, 2013). This approach supports the development of critical thinking skills that align with religious teachings, enabling students to evaluate contemporary issues from a moral and spiritual perspective. The reflective approach in this education teaches students to analyze their own experiences, evaluate the decisions made, and seek solutions that align with religious values (Meneely, 2015). Thus, students not only learn about religious principles but also how to apply them practically in life, creating individuals who are critical thinkers, responsible, and contribute to society. Religious-based transformative education makes a significant contribution to the holistic development of students, where intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects are integrated to create a generation that is not only competent but also deeply aware of social issues. Evaluations of this approach show that integrating religious values into the curriculum and learning practices can be an effective model for building students' character, preparing them to face the challenges of the modern world with strong morality (Kleindienst, 2024).

Conclusion

Transformative education in religious-based schools plays a pivotal role in the character formation of students. By integrating moral and spiritual values into the educational process, these institutions foster not only cognitive development but also emotional and ethical growth. Through reflective practices and critical engagement with religious teachings, students learn to navigate complex social issues, develop empathy, and cultivate a strong sense of responsibility toward their communities.

The narrative review underscores the importance of creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment that encourages dialogue and introspection. Such an environment empowers students to internalize ethical values, enabling them to act with integrity and compassion in their daily lives. Additionally, the incorporation of religious practices and community involvement further reinforces these values, allowing students to apply their learning in meaningful ways.

In conclusion, transformative education within religious-based schools not only enriches academic knowledge but also shapes students into morally and socially responsible individuals. This holistic approach equips them with the skills and values necessary to become positive agents of change in society, thereby fulfilling the broader goals of education in fostering a just and equitable world.

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