

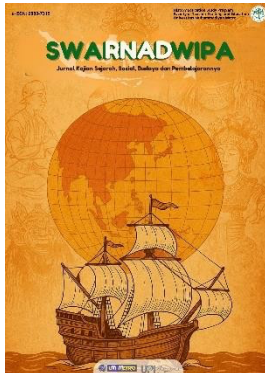
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Character Values in Ahmad Fuadi's Novel *Buya Hamka* as a Source for Learning History

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the character values contained in the novel "Buya Hamka" by Ahmad Fuadi and explore how these values can be used as a source of history learning. This novel not only presents the life story of Buya Hamka, a great figure in Indonesia's history, but also contains various character values that are relevant for the formation of students' personalities. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, this study identifies and categorizes character values such as exemplary, integrity, courage, and social awareness that are reflected in Buya Hamka's life journey. The results of the study show that this novel has great potential to be used as a source of history learning that is not only informative, but also inspiring in shaping students' characters. The use of this novel in the learning process can enrich students' understanding of history while instilling important moral values in daily life.

Keywords: character values, buya hamka, history learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Education serves as the foundation of a nation's collective mindset and shapes the character, lifestyle, and attitudes of its people. The progress of a country is inseparable from the quality of education received by its citizens, as an educated society plays a central role in directing national development and sustaining long-term growth (Juniarti, 2021). Education is deeply connected to daily life, functioning not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a process of forming individuals who are capable of contributing positively to society. This idea aligns with the Indonesian Constitution (UUD 1945), which emphasizes that the ultimate goal of national education is to "educate the life of the nation." In the same spirit, the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 highlights the mission of education as developing learners' skills, character, and civilization so that they become knowledgeable, creative, responsible, and morally grounded individuals (Anisa, 2019).

The Ministry of National Education (2010) defines character as the moral qualities, virtues, and personal traits formed through the internalization of good values that guide a person's perspectives, behavior, and actions. Thus, character education is seen as an intentional and systematic effort to instill national values in learners so that they develop a strong identity and are able to demonstrate religious commitment, nationalism, productivity, and creativity in their daily lives (Fadilah, 2021). The success of character education requires not only the involvement of teachers and families but also the broader

participation of communities and government institutions, as collaborative support strengthens the moral and cultural development of learners (Purnomo, 2014).

In today's era of rapid technological advancement, selecting appropriate learning media has become increasingly urgent. Digital tools such as mobile learning platforms play a critical role in enhancing learning effectiveness, including in history education, by making instructional materials more accessible, engaging, and relevant to students' lives (Meihan, 2020). Character formation itself is closely related to the moral maturity and personal strengths that individuals possess (Meihan, 2023). Literature, particularly historical novels, offers rich opportunities for developing these values. Novels present imaginative narratives constructed through setting, plot, characters, point of view, and expressive language, enabling learners to explore moral lessons and historical knowledge simultaneously.

Historical novels contain values that can be meaningfully integrated into classroom learning to revive character virtues that may have weakened in school and university environments. These works reinforce national identity while cultivating empathy, critical thinking, and moral reflection. Yet, historical novels are increasingly rare in modern literature despite their potential to strengthen historical understanding and cultural character. Therefore, incorporating character values from such novels into learning is especially important. The novel *Belia Hamka* was chosen for this study because of its relevance, popularity, and the depth of its historical narrative. The book presents the life journey of Buya Hamka, an influential Indonesian scholar, writer, and national figure. Through vivid storytelling—such as his experiences in Makkah, his near-death encounter during the Dutch military aggression, and his role in leading the funeral prayer for President Soekarno—the novel offers meaningful insights into character, resilience, and the nation's historical landscape, making it a valuable resource for character and history education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design aimed at describing the character values embedded in the novel *Buya Hamka* as a meaningful source for history education. Qualitative research is descriptive in nature and relies on inductive analysis to uncover the meanings, reasoning, and contextual interpretations surrounding a particular phenomenon (Rukin, 2019). This approach prioritizes the depth of inquiry and the interpretive process rather than numerical measurements or final outcomes, making it well-suited for studies that explore values, experiences, and socio-cultural contexts.

As a method that focuses on holistic understanding, qualitative research seeks to explore the behaviors, perceptions, and lived experiences of individuals within natural settings. Data are typically collected in the form of textual narratives, documentation, interviews, field notes, and visual materials, allowing the researcher to construct a rich and detailed naturalistic account of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Such an approach provides comprehensive insight, especially when dealing with themes related to culture, identity, and moral values portrayed in literary works.

The qualitative method is highly appropriate for this study because the biographical novel *Buya Hamka* by Ahmad Fuadi presents a wealth of moral teachings, historical reflections, and socio-cultural dynamics that require deep interpretation. The life story of Buya Hamka, a prominent Indonesian scholar, reflects complex historical experiences and intellectual struggles that are best understood through interpretive analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Through qualitative inquiry, the researcher can examine character development, historical context, and educational values presented in the narrative more comprehensively.

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Moreover, qualitative research enables the incorporation of diverse data sources such as documents, visual materials, interviews, and field observations that enrich the analysis. This diversity of data enhances the credibility of the findings and supports a deeper interpretation of the implicit and explicit values illustrated in Buya Hamka's life journey (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Thus, the qualitative approach not only aligns methodologically with the objectives of the study but also provides the analytical depth needed to interpret character values within the novel as a valuable resource for history learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ahmad Fuadi's novel *Buya Hamka* serves as the primary object of analysis in this study, focusing on its rich portrayal of religious values encompassing faith, worship, spiritual awareness, knowledge, and righteous conduct. These values reflect the deep relationship between humans and their Creator through internalized religious teachings, which later manifest in one's attitudes and daily behavior. Fuadi structures the narrative around five key periods in Hamka's life, each marked by significant moral challenges and difficult personal decisions. Through these stages, the novel illustrates how Hamka's spiritual integrity guides him in navigating moments of hardship, conflict, and social responsibility.

The novel highlights themes of struggle, devotion, and moral perseverance by tracing Hamka's journey from childhood—born into an esteemed religious family—to adulthood as a respected scholar, writer, and national figure. Set against the turbulent backdrop of the Japanese occupation and Indonesia's revolutionary struggle, the narrative employs a mixed-chronological structure that moves between Hamka's imprisonment during Sukarno's administration, his childhood memories, and his later life after release. Fuadi enriches the narrative with a wide range of characters, including Haji Rasul, Siti Raham, Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, Bung Hatta, and Hamka's close family, all of whom support the protagonist's moral and intellectual development. In contrast, antagonistic figures such as political interrogators, colonial forces, PKI affiliates, and Japanese soldiers underscore the adversity he faced. The settings—Padang Panjang, Java, and Mecca—provide emotional depth and cultural context, capturing moments of fear during occupation, joy during pilgrimage, and sorrow at the loss of loved ones.

Fuadi delivers the story through a third-person perspective using accessible language and precise diction, making the novel not only historically informative but also morally instructive. The messages conveyed include perseverance in adversity, sincerity in worship, kindness toward others, and the moral virtue of forgiveness. Hamka's religious discipline, unwavering faith, and noble character exemplify how a literary work can serve as a meaningful source of ethical reflection rather than mere entertainment. The portrayal of Hamka's devotion and resilience demonstrates how biographical narratives can be used to cultivate moral awareness, spiritual insight, and character education, particularly in guiding young readers to navigate the complexities of modern life.

Character Values in the Novel *Buya Hamka*

The novel *Buya Hamka* by Ahmad Fuadi presents a rich portrayal of character values that align with the fundamental principles of character education. According to the Indonesian Dictionary, character education is a systematic effort to instill values that reflect national culture, encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, and covering one's relationship with God, oneself, society, and the nation (Afandi, 2011). Within this framework, the character of Hamka becomes an exemplary model of how moral

and religious values can be internalized and demonstrated consistently in daily life. The narrative illustrates Hamka's life journey—from childhood in a devout scholarly family to adulthood as an influential religious leader—showing how each stage of his life shaped his conviction, ethical decision-making, and spiritual resilience.

One of the key values reflected in Hamka's character is religiosity. From a young age, Hamka was trained to maintain a close relationship with God through disciplined worship and spiritual reflection. His upbringing under the guidance of his father, Haji Rasul, strengthened his devotion, allowing him to uphold religious practices even under difficult circumstances. Such values correspond to the role of religious character in moral education, where consistent spiritual habits can foster emotional maturity and moral awareness among students (Kurniawan, 2017). In educational settings, this value may be integrated through classroom routines such as prayer, reflective activities, or collective religious practices to cultivate spiritual sensitivity from an early age.

Hamka is also depicted as an avid reader, a habit that broadens his knowledge and shapes his critical thinking. His passion for literature supports the idea that reading contributes significantly to intellectual and emotional development, enabling learners to interpret complex ideas and historical experiences more deeply. As Wulandari and Kristiawan (2017) emphasize, literacy habits are essential for fostering analytical skills and lifelong learning. Teachers can adopt this value by encouraging students to read historical texts, analyze pictures or primary sources, and engage in interpretative tasks that sharpen their comprehension and reasoning skills.

Other prominent values in the novel include curiosity, perseverance, patriotism, tolerance, amiability, and responsibility. Hamka's persistent desire to seek knowledge aligns with the importance of curiosity in stimulating active learning and motivation. His hard work reflects the character-building process described in character education theories, where discipline and effort contribute to personal achievement (Djumali, 2014). The novel also presents strong examples of patriotism, as Hamka's dedication to his nation is shown through his intellectual and moral struggle during times of political turmoil. Likewise, his tolerance toward people of diverse backgrounds resonates with modern multicultural education, promoting respect and peaceful coexistence. These values can be implemented in classroom activities such as group projects, community service, and collaborative learning that nurture social skills and empathy among students.

Finally, Hamka's sense of responsibility—seen in his commitment to fulfilling duties, respecting others, and maintaining integrity—provides an important lesson for character formation. Responsibility is essential for academic success and social trust, making it a core component of school-based character education. By modeling tasks such as keeping the classroom clean, completing assignments on time, or adhering to school rules, students learn to internalize responsibility as part of their personal identity. Through these character values, the novel *Buya Hamka* becomes not only a literary work but also a meaningful educational resource that can enrich history learning and strengthen students' moral foundations.

Character Values in Ahmad Fuadi's *Buya Hamka* as a Source for History Learning

Character education plays a crucial role in shaping moral integrity in Indonesia, especially as societal changes increasingly challenge traditional values. As Djumali (2014) notes, education functions as a medium for preparing individuals to face both present and future challenges. Similarly, Kurniawan (2017) explains that education involves the transmission of values, knowledge, experiences, and skills from one generation to the next to support physical, intellectual, and spiritual development. In this context, character education integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral components that guide individuals in their relationship with God, with themselves, and with society at large.

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Wulandari and Kristiawan (2017) emphasize that character education equips learners to become morally grounded future citizens capable of contributing to national development.

History learning is closely related to the development of character because it offers students an understanding of human life in the past, including political, legal, social, religious, artistic, and intellectual aspects. Zahro (2017) argues that history education not only transmits factual knowledge but also cultivates historical awareness, cultural identity, and appreciation for national values. Through historical narratives, students gain insights into the struggles, achievements, and moral choices of earlier generations, helping them internalize positive values relevant to contemporary life.

Within this research, the novel *Buya Hamka* by Ahmad Fuadi is used as a historical learning resource that embeds multiple character values through the life journey of the protagonist. The novel presents a wide spectrum of moral lessons, including religiosity, a love for reading, curiosity, perseverance, patriotism, tolerance, friendliness, and responsibility—qualities exemplified by Hamka from childhood to adulthood. As a biographical narrative set against the backdrop of Indonesia's political and cultural transformation, the novel provides an accessible medium for integrating character education with history learning. Through Hamka's experiences, students can relate moral values to real historical contexts, enabling them to understand the relevance of character development in facing social and national challenges today.

Character education has become increasingly significant in contemporary Indonesian education, particularly as moral challenges intensify in the current digital and globalized era. Modern scholars note that character development is no longer limited to classroom instruction but requires the integration of meaningful narratives and contextual learning experiences (Sutrisno & Marzuki, 2020). In this regard, education serves not only to transfer knowledge but also to cultivate ethics, attitudes, and social awareness that prepare students to face future societal demands. Furthermore, recent frameworks in character education emphasize holistic development—covering spiritual, emotional, and civic values—making literary and historical works powerful tools for building moral consciousness (Suharno et al., 2021).

History learning provides an ideal foundation for character formation because it exposes students to past human experiences, struggles, and moral decisions. Through historical narratives, students gain insight into political, cultural, religious, and intellectual developments that shape national identity. Current research highlights that historical literacy contributes to students' critical reasoning, empathy, and sense of belonging, which are essential components of national character building (Rahmawati & Wibowo, 2022). In addition, integrating history with cultural narratives—such as biographical novels—promotes deeper engagement and meaningful reflection. The use of stories strengthens students' understanding of moral values embedded in historical contexts, enabling them to connect past events with present-day ethical challenges.

In this study, Ahmad Fuadi's *Buya Hamka* is positioned as a valuable historical learning resource that presents character values through biographical storytelling. The novel illustrates Hamka's religiosity, perseverance, intellectual curiosity, patriotism, and compassion, offering concrete examples that can be integrated into classroom learning. Contemporary educational research underscores the importance of literary-based character instruction, noting that narratives of exemplary figures enhance students' moral reasoning and strengthen cultural identity (Hidayat & Prasetyo, 2023). Additionally, the novel's depiction of Hamka's resilience during imprisonment, his dedication to knowledge, and his moral integrity provides relevant lessons for today's students, who face complex social

and digital challenges. By incorporating *Buya Hamka* into history learning, educators can facilitate character development through reflective interpretation, discussion, and value-based learning activities (Putri & Ananda, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The novel *Buya Hamka* by Ahmad Fuadi offers a rich biographical narrative that traces the life journey of the renowned scholar Buya Hamka, beginning from his childhood, through his intellectual and spiritual development, until the final years of his life. The story illustrates not only Hamka's personal growth but also his dedication to learning, writing, and contributing to Indonesia's struggle for independence. Through its portrayal of various political conflicts and social challenges faced by Hamka, the novel provides readers with a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural contexts that shaped his thoughts, values, and character.

When examined through the lens of the Indonesian Ministry of Education's 18 character values—such as religiosity, honesty, tolerance, hard work, creativity, independence, curiosity, patriotism, and responsibility—the novel clearly reflects many of these essential traits. These values serve as a reference for analyzing the moral messages embedded within the narrative. Fuadi's storytelling reveals how Hamka consistently embodied these principles throughout the different stages of his life, making the novel a meaningful medium for understanding national character development from a historical perspective.

Based on the analysis, several character values stand out prominently in *Buya Hamka*, including religiosity, a love for reading, curiosity, perseverance, patriotism, tolerance, friendship, and responsibility. These values are not presented merely as abstract ideals but are woven into the events, decisions, and interpersonal relationships portrayed in the novel. As such, *Buya Hamka* functions not only as a biographical account but also as an educational resource that can support character formation, particularly in the context of history learning. By engaging with Hamka's life story, readers and students can gain inspiration and moral insight that remain relevant to personal development and civic responsibility today.

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