

INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC STUDIES AS A FOUNDATION FOR COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS AMONG ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS: A STUDY OF AQIDAH, SHARIA, AKHLAK, AND ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

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Keywords:

Introduction to Islamic Studies, Aqidah, Sharia, Akhlak, Islamic Civilization, English Education Students.

Abstract

This study aims to describe the role of the Introduction to Islamic Studies course as a foundation for developing a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings among English Education students. The background of this study is based on the importance of providing students, especially those in the English Education Department, with a holistic understanding of Islam that is not limited to ritual practices but also includes the dimensions of aqidah, sharia, akhlak, and Islamic civilization. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach through library research and conceptual analysis of the fundamental materials in Introduction to Islamic Studies. The findings show that Introduction to Islamic Studies plays a strategic role in shaping students' perspectives on Islam as a comprehensive religion. Aqidah serves as the basis of faith and life orientation, sharia functions as a guideline for regulating human relationships with Allah and fellow human beings, akhlak represents the practical manifestation of Islamic values in daily behavior, while Islamic civilization provides historical insight into the contribution of Muslims to science, education, culture, and social life. For English Education students, this comprehensive understanding is essential because they are prepared not only to become language educators but also Muslim educators who are able to integrate Islamic values into learning processes, intercultural communication, and academic life. Therefore, Introduction to Islamic Studies can serve as a fundamental basis for shaping religious, moderate, critical, and globally minded English Education students.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic studies is an important academic field that provides students with a fundamental understanding of Islam as a comprehensive religion (Ramadani & Sofa, 2025). Islam is not only understood as a set of ritual practices, but also as a complete system of life that covers faith, law, morality, knowledge, culture, and civilization (NURUL, 2024). Therefore, the Introduction to Islamic Studies course has a strategic position in higher education, especially in Islamic universities, because it introduces

students to the basic structure of Islamic teachings in an academic, systematic, and contextual manner (SITI, 2024).

For students of English Education, the Introduction to Islamic Studies course is highly relevant (Hasanah & Sofa, 2025b). English Education students are prepared not only to become language teachers, but also educators who are able to communicate knowledge, values, and character in multicultural and global contexts (Firdausiyah & Sofa, 2025). In this regard, their understanding of Islamic teachings should not be limited to normative knowledge, but should also include the ability to relate Islamic values to educational practices, intercultural communication, and modern social life. This makes Islamic studies an essential foundation for shaping students' religious awareness, moral responsibility, and intellectual openness (Shalawati & Sofa, 2025).

A comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings can be developed through four main dimensions: aqidah, sharia, akhlak, and Islamic civilization. Aqidah serves as the foundation of faith that shapes a Muslim's worldview and spiritual orientation. Sharia provides guidance for human life, including worship, social relations, ethics, and legal principles. Akhlak represents the practical manifestation of Islamic values in daily behavior, such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, discipline, and respect for others. Meanwhile, Islamic civilization shows the historical contribution of Islam to science, education, culture, philosophy, and social development (Habibah et al., 2025).

In the context of English Education students, these four dimensions are important because they support the formation of educators who are religious, moderate, critical, and globally minded. The study of aqidah strengthens their spiritual identity; the study of sharia introduces them to Islamic principles of order and justice; the study of akhlak guides them in building ethical communication and professional character; while the study of Islamic civilization broadens their perspective on the contribution of Islam to global knowledge and human progress. Thus, Introduction to Islamic Studies can help English Education students integrate Islamic values into their academic and professional development (Sofa et al., 2021).

However, in practice, Islamic teachings are often understood partially. Some students may view Islam only from the aspect of worship, while others may not fully understand the relationship between Islamic teachings and their field of study. This indicates the need to strengthen the role of Introduction to Islamic Studies as a foundation for comprehensive Islamic understanding. Through this course, students are expected to understand Islam not only textually, but also contextually, so that Islamic values can be applied in learning, communication, social interaction, and future educational practice (Sukandarman et al., 2024).

Based on this background, this article aims to examine the role of Introduction to Islamic Studies as a foundation for comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings among English Education students. The discussion focuses on four main aspects, namely aqidah, sharia, akhlak, and Islamic civilization. This article is expected to contribute to the development of Islamic studies learning that is more integrative, contextual, and relevant to the needs of students in the field of English Education (Laili et al., 2026).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to Islamic Studies is a fundamental course that provides students with a basic academic understanding of Islam as a comprehensive system of teachings. It

introduces the main sources, principles, and dimensions of Islam, including faith, worship, law, morality, history, and civilization. In higher education, this course functions as an initial framework for students to understand Islam not only as a religion of ritual practices, but also as a worldview that shapes human thought, behavior, social relations, and cultural development (Arifin & Sofa, 2025).

Islamic Studies does not merely discuss religious doctrines in a normative way. It also examines Islam through historical, social, educational, cultural, and philosophical perspectives. Therefore, Introduction to Islamic Studies is important for students because it helps them understand the relationship between Islamic teachings and real-life contexts. Through this course, students are introduced to the idea that Islam contains values that are relevant to personal life, academic development, social interaction, and professional responsibility (Zakiyullah & Sofa, 2025).

Aqidah as the Foundation of Islamic Worldview

Aqidah refers to the fundamental beliefs in Islam. It includes belief in Allah, angels, revealed books, prophets and messengers, the Day of Judgment, and divine decree. Aqidah becomes the foundation of a Muslim's worldview because it shapes how Muslims understand the purpose of life, human responsibility, morality, and the relationship between humans and Allah. A strong understanding of aqidah helps students build spiritual awareness and religious identity (Hanafi & Sofa, 2024).

In the context of Islamic education, aqidah plays an important role in directing students' attitudes and behavior. It is not only a theoretical belief, but also a spiritual foundation that influences moral action. For English Education students, aqidah provides an ethical and spiritual basis in learning, communicating, and teaching. It strengthens their awareness that knowledge and education should be directed toward goodness, responsibility, and service to humanity (Sholeha & Sofa, 2025).

Sharia as Guidance for Life

Sharia is the Islamic system of guidance that regulates human life. It includes rules related to worship, social relations, family life, economic transactions, ethics, and legal principles. Sharia is often understood as Islamic law, but its meaning is broader than legal rules. It contains values of justice, benefit, order, responsibility, and social welfare. Therefore, sharia provides a framework for Muslims to live in accordance with divine guidance.

In Introduction to Islamic Studies, the study of sharia helps students understand that Islam provides guidance not only for individual worship, but also for social life. Sharia teaches that human actions should be based on justice, honesty, responsibility, and public benefit. For English Education students, this understanding is important because it can shape their professional ethics as future educators. They are expected to teach with fairness, discipline, responsibility, and respect for learners.

Akhlak as the Practical Manifestation of Islamic Values

Akhlak refers to Islamic morality and character. It is the practical expression of faith and religious understanding in daily life. Akhlak includes values such as honesty, trustworthiness, patience, humility, respect, tolerance, discipline, and social care. In Islamic teachings, akhlak has a central position because religious knowledge is expected to be reflected in good behavior (Ilahi et al., 2025).

The study of akhlak in Introduction to Islamic Studies helps students understand that Islam emphasizes not only correct belief and proper worship, but also noble character. Akhlak connects religious knowledge with real actions. For students of English Education, akhlak is highly relevant because teaching is not only a process of transferring knowledge, but also a process of building character. A teacher must become a moral model for students through good communication, fairness, empathy, and responsibility.

Islamic Civilization and the Development of Knowledge

Islamic civilization refers to the historical development of Muslim societies and their contributions to science, education, law, philosophy, culture, architecture, literature, and social institutions. The study of Islamic civilization shows that Islam has played an important role in the development of human knowledge and world history. Muslim scholars contributed to various fields, including medicine, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, language, and education (Saifullah & Sofa, 2025).

In Introduction to Islamic Studies, Islamic civilization broadens students' understanding of Islam beyond ritual and legal aspects. It shows that Islam encourages the pursuit of knowledge, intellectual creativity, and social progress. For English Education students, the study of Islamic civilization is important because it develops historical awareness and global insight. It also helps students understand that Islamic values can contribute to education, intercultural dialogue, and global civilization.

Islamic Studies for English Education Students

English Education students are prepared to become language educators who are able to teach in diverse cultural and social contexts. Therefore, they need not only linguistic competence, but also ethical, religious, and intercultural awareness. Introduction to Islamic Studies can support this need by providing a foundation for understanding Islamic values and applying them in educational practice.

The integration of Islamic values into English Education does not mean reducing the academic nature of language learning. Rather, it enriches the learning process by connecting language competence with moral responsibility, cultural awareness, and religious character. Through the understanding of aqidah, sharia, akhlak, and Islamic civilization, English Education students can develop balanced competence as future educators who are intellectually capable, morally responsible, religiously grounded, and globally oriented (Ramadhani & Sofa, 2025).

Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature above, Introduction to Islamic Studies can be understood as a foundational course that integrates four main dimensions of Islamic teachings. Aqidah provides the basis of faith and worldview; sharia gives guidance for life and social responsibility; akhlak forms moral character and ethical behavior; while Islamic civilization expands students' historical and intellectual perspectives. These four dimensions are interrelated and contribute to the formation of comprehensive Islamic understanding among English Education students (Amelia & Sofa, 2025).

Therefore, this study views Introduction to Islamic Studies as an important academic instrument for shaping English Education students who are religious, moderate, ethical, critical, and globally minded. The course is expected to help students understand

Islam holistically and apply Islamic values in academic life, communication, teaching practice, and social interaction (Asia & Sofa, 2026).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because the study aims to describe and analyze the role of the Introduction to Islamic Studies course as a foundation for developing comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings among English Education students. The focus of this study is not to measure statistical relationships, but to explore concepts, meanings, and educational relevance related to aqidah, sharia, akhlak, and Islamic civilization (Sudaryanto & Sofa, 2025).

The type of this research is library research supported by conceptual analysis. Library research was used because the main data were obtained from written sources related to Islamic studies, Islamic education, aqidah, sharia, akhlak, Islamic civilization, and English education. The data sources include books, journal articles, academic references, course materials, and relevant documents discussing the basic concepts of Islamic teachings and their relevance to higher education.

The object of this study is the concept of Introduction to Islamic Studies as a basic course for English Education students. The discussion focuses on four main dimensions of Islamic teachings, namely aqidah as the foundation of faith, sharia as guidance for life, akhlak as moral character, and Islamic civilization as the historical and intellectual contribution of Islam. These four dimensions are analyzed to understand how they contribute to the formation of comprehensive Islamic understanding among students.

Data were collected through documentation techniques. The researcher identified, selected, and reviewed relevant literature related to the topic of the study. The collected data were then classified based on the main themes of the research, including the concept of Islamic Studies, aqidah, sharia, akhlak, Islamic civilization, and the relevance of Islamic values for English Education students.

The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive analysis. The analysis was carried out by reading the relevant sources, reducing unnecessary information, grouping the data according to the research focus, interpreting the relationship between concepts, and drawing conclusions. Through this process, the study explains how Introduction to Islamic Studies can function as a foundational course that strengthens students' religious understanding, moral awareness, academic orientation, and professional character as future English educators.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses source triangulation by comparing several academic references discussing Islamic teachings and Islamic education. The researcher also examines the consistency of ideas among different sources to strengthen the accuracy of the findings. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to provide a strong conceptual basis for understanding the importance of Introduction to Islamic Studies for English Education students (Putri et al., 2026).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction to Islamic Studies as a Foundational Course for English Education Students

The results of this study indicate that Introduction to Islamic Studies has an important role as a foundational course in shaping students' comprehensive

understanding of Islamic teachings. For English Education students, this course is not only relevant as a basic religious subject, but also as an academic instrument that strengthens their religious identity, moral awareness, and professional character as future educators. Through this course, students are introduced to Islam as a complete system of life that includes faith, worship, morality, law, history, culture, and civilization (Nadia & Sofa, 2025).

The study found that Introduction to Islamic Studies helps students understand Islam beyond ritual practices. Islam is not only taught as a religion that regulates worship, but also as a worldview that guides human behavior, social interaction, education, and civilization. This finding is important because English Education students are prepared to become language teachers who will interact with learners in diverse social and cultural contexts. Therefore, they need a strong foundation of Islamic values to guide their communication, teaching ethics, and educational responsibility.

This course also provides students with an integrated understanding of Islamic teachings. The dimensions of aqidah, sharia, akhlak, and Islamic civilization are not presented as separate topics, but as interconnected elements. Aqidah strengthens faith, sharia provides guidance for life, akhlak shapes moral behavior, and Islamic civilization broadens students' historical and intellectual awareness. These four dimensions become the basis for developing students who are religious, moderate, ethical, critical, and globally oriented.

Aqidah as the Basis of Faith and Islamic Worldview

The results show that aqidah becomes the most fundamental aspect in building students' Islamic understanding. Aqidah provides the foundation of faith that shapes the way students view life, knowledge, education, and human responsibility. Through the study of aqidah, students understand that faith in Allah is not only a theological concept, but also a spiritual foundation that influences thought, attitude, and behavior (Bulqiyah & Sofa, 2025).

For English Education students, aqidah plays an important role in forming religious identity and moral orientation. As future educators, students need to understand that knowledge is not value-free. Knowledge should be directed toward goodness, responsibility, and benefit for society. Aqidah helps students realize that learning and teaching are part of human responsibility before Allah. Therefore, the teaching profession is not merely a technical occupation, but also a moral and spiritual mission.

The discussion also shows that aqidah can strengthen students' confidence in facing global and multicultural challenges. English Education students are closely related to foreign language learning, global communication, and intercultural interaction. Without a strong foundation of faith, students may understand global culture only as imitation. However, with aqidah, students can engage with global knowledge and culture while maintaining their Islamic identity.

Sharia as Guidance for Life and Educational Ethics

The study found that sharia is understood as guidance for life that regulates the relationship between humans and Allah, humans and other humans, and humans and social institutions. In Introduction to Islamic Studies, sharia is not only explained as legal rules, but also as a system of values that contains justice, responsibility, order, discipline,

and benefit. This understanding is important because it prevents students from viewing sharia narrowly (Helmi & Sofa, 2025).

For English Education students, sharia contributes to the formation of professional ethics. The values contained in sharia, such as justice, honesty, responsibility, discipline, and respect for others, are highly relevant to the teaching profession. A future teacher must be fair in treating students, honest in academic work, responsible in carrying out duties, and disciplined in managing learning activities.

The discussion shows that sharia can be connected to educational practices. In classroom interaction, sharia values can be reflected in fairness, respect, trustworthiness, and responsibility. English Education students can apply these values when designing learning activities, assessing students, communicating with learners, and building an inclusive classroom atmosphere. Thus, sharia becomes not only a theoretical concept, but also a practical ethical foundation for future educators.

Akhlak as the Manifestation of Islamic Values in Student Character

The results indicate that akhlak is the practical manifestation of Islamic teachings in daily life. Akhlak connects faith and knowledge with real behavior. Through Introduction to Islamic Studies, students learn that Islamic understanding must be reflected in noble character, such as honesty, patience, humility, tolerance, empathy, discipline, and social care (Hasanah & Sofa, 2025a).

For English Education students, akhlak has a very important position because teaching is closely related to communication and character building. A teacher is not only responsible for transferring knowledge, but also for becoming a moral example for students. Therefore, English Education students need to develop good communication ethics, respectful attitudes, patience in teaching, and responsibility in guiding learners.

The discussion shows that akhlak can strengthen students' readiness to become professional educators. In English language teaching, students will later communicate with learners from different backgrounds, abilities, and personalities. Akhlak helps them build respectful and humanistic communication. It also supports the creation of a learning environment that is ethical, friendly, and inclusive. Therefore, the study of akhlak in Introduction to Islamic Studies contributes directly to the development of students' pedagogical character.

Islamic Civilization as Historical and Intellectual Awareness

The results also show that Islamic civilization broadens students' understanding of Islam. Through the study of Islamic civilization, students realize that Islam has made significant contributions to science, education, culture, law, philosophy, language, literature, and social development. This finding is important because it helps students understand Islam not only as a religion of worship, but also as a source of knowledge and civilization (Khofifah & Sofa, 2025).

For English Education students, the study of Islamic civilization is highly relevant because it develops historical awareness and global insight. Students can understand that Muslims have contributed to the development of world civilization through intellectual traditions, translation movements, educational institutions, and scientific discoveries. This awareness can strengthen students' confidence as Muslim learners in the modern academic world.

The discussion indicates that Islamic civilization can also support intercultural understanding. English Education students learn foreign languages and are often exposed to global culture. By understanding Islamic civilization, students can develop a balanced perspective between Islamic identity and global engagement. They can appreciate other cultures while also recognizing the richness of Islamic intellectual heritage. This is important for forming students who are open-minded, but still grounded in Islamic values.

Integration of Aqidah, Sharia, Akhlak, and Islamic Civilization

The results of this study show that comprehensive Islamic understanding can be formed through the integration of aqidah, sharia, akhlak, and Islamic civilization. These four dimensions are interrelated and cannot be separated. Aqidah provides the foundation of faith, sharia gives guidance for action, akhlak shapes moral behavior, and Islamic civilization provides historical evidence of the application of Islamic values in society (Ilahi & Sofa, 2025).

For English Education students, this integration is important because they need both intellectual competence and moral character. The ability to speak and teach English should be accompanied by religious awareness, ethical responsibility, and cultural sensitivity. Therefore, Introduction to Islamic Studies can support the formation of future English teachers who are not only competent in language teaching, but also strong in character and Islamic values.

This integration also shows that Islamic education should not be understood partially. If Islam is only understood through aqidah, students may have belief without sufficient social awareness. If Islam is only understood through sharia, students may focus on rules without moral sensitivity. If Islam is only understood through akhlak, students may emphasize morality without strong theological foundation. If Islam is only understood through civilization, students may know history without internalizing values. Therefore, all four dimensions must be taught in an integrated way.

Relevance of Introduction to Islamic Studies for English Education Students

The findings reveal that Introduction to Islamic Studies is highly relevant for English Education students. This relevance can be seen in three main aspects: religious foundation, professional ethics, and global orientation. First, the course strengthens students' religious foundation by introducing them to the core teachings of Islam. Second, it develops professional ethics by connecting Islamic values with the responsibilities of future teachers. Third, it supports global orientation by helping students understand Islamic civilization and intercultural communication (Mardiyah & Sofa, 2025).

As future English teachers, students are expected to be able to teach language while also maintaining moral and cultural sensitivity. English language learning is often connected with global communication, foreign culture, and modern educational development. Therefore, students need Islamic values as a filter and foundation in responding to global challenges. Introduction to Islamic Studies helps students become open to global knowledge without losing their Islamic identity.

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that Introduction to Islamic Studies plays a strategic role in shaping comprehensive Islamic understanding among English Education students. The course provides a strong foundation for students

to understand Islam through aqidah, sharia, akhlak, and Islamic civilization. It also supports the formation of students who are religious, ethical, moderate, critical, and globally minded. Thus, Introduction to Islamic Studies should be strengthened as an essential course in the academic formation of English Education students.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Introduction to Islamic Studies plays a strategic role as a foundation for developing comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings among English Education students. The course provides students with an academic framework to understand Islam not only as a religion of ritual worship, but also as a complete system of values that guides faith, morality, law, education, social life, and civilization. Through this course, students are encouraged to view Islam holistically, contextually, and integratively.

The findings show that the four main dimensions of Islamic teachings, namely aqidah, sharia, akhlak, and Islamic civilization, are closely interconnected. Aqidah serves as the foundation of faith and worldview; sharia provides guidance for life, justice, and responsibility; akhlak represents the practical manifestation of Islamic values in daily behavior; while Islamic civilization broadens students' historical and intellectual awareness of Islam's contribution to global knowledge and human development. These four dimensions support the formation of students who are religious, ethical, moderate, critical, and globally minded.

For English Education students, Introduction to Islamic Studies has particular relevance because they are prepared to become future educators who engage with language, culture, communication, and global knowledge. A comprehensive understanding of Islam helps them develop religious identity, professional ethics, intercultural awareness, and moral responsibility in the teaching profession. Therefore, Introduction to Islamic Studies should be strengthened as an essential course in higher education, especially in Islamic-based English Education programs, to support the formation of competent educators who are intellectually capable, spiritually grounded, and morally responsible.

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