



## The Value of Character Education in the Culture of Greeting Students of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the implementation of the culture of greeting students of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of case study research. Data was obtained through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research informants consisted of students, lecturers, and leaders of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion and verification using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The validity of the data was strengthened through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. The results of the study showed that the implementation of the culture of saying greetings has been systematically pursued through the process of habituation and reinforcement in academic life. This habituation is introduced through student adoption, strengthened through the example of lecturers and leaders, applied in the learning process and organizational activities, and supported by various reminder media. In some students, this habit has developed into behavior that is carried out spontaneously. Greetings are not only interpreted as an obligation, but also as a prayer, a form of politeness, respect, friendliness, a means of building closeness, and the opening of communication. However, the implementation of greeting culture has not been completely uniform, especially in interactions between peers. Some of the obstacles found include awkwardness, worries about not getting a response, lecturer busyness, students in a hurry, differences in awareness levels, and digital communication challenges. Thus, the culture of saying greetings at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia is not only a religious practice, but also a form of habituation of manners that contributes to the formation of students' character and supports their readiness as prospective doctors with the character and identity of Doctor Muhsin.

**Keywords:** *Greeting Culture; Doctor Muhsin; Islamic Values; Character Education; Character Building*

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## INTRODUCTION

The practice of exchanging greetings is a form of character education that helps shape students into integrated, religious, and socially caring individuals. Character education has become a major concern for many educational institutions in Indonesia in

response to moral and social challenges among young people(Jannah, 2020; Mislan et al., 2026).

Other research shows that character education is generally carried out by integrating local cultural values and fostering positive daily habits. Religious and social values, for example, are nurtured through collective prayer, religious activities, and harmonious social interaction in educational settings(Kartini & Winahyu, 2019). Similarly, utilizing local cultural traditions, such as Javanese philosophical values and pesantren practices have been proven to support the development of students' character, especially in promoting tolerance, discipline, and responsibility(Cathrin et al., 2025).

At the university level, student character strengthening is pursued through various channels, including curriculum integration, student activities, and the prevailing campus academic culture. Technological advances have encouraged the use of online learning as a tool for character building, although its implementation faces obstacles such as limited infrastructure and low digital literacy among several stakeholders(Jannah, 2020; Wibisono et al., 2026). In addition, lecturers play a strategic role as role models and mentors who influence the success of internalizing character values during teaching(Wibisono et al., 2026).

The urgency of character education in the university environment is increasing in line with the various moral challenges faced by the young generation today. The phenomenon of moral degradation among students has become a national concern that requires serious and sustainable handling. Various strategies to strengthen character education can be carried out through the integration of character values into learning modules, the application of exemplary methods (*uswatun hasanah*), and the development of personal coaching programs for students(Jannah, 2020). In addition, an approach that emphasizes the formation of positive behavior and two-way communication between lecturers and students has been proven to be able to increase mutual trust, empathy, and constructive interpersonal relationships as the main foundation in character formation(Hastasari et al., 2022).

The emergence of the greeting culture among students of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia is an interesting social phenomenon to study in depth. In daily academic life, the culture of greetings is not only understood as a form of greeting or expression of hospitality, but also as part of the social norms that govern relationships between individuals, especially between senior and junior students. Junior students generally give greetings to seniors first as a form of respect for the level of education, experience, and position held by seniors in the academic environment.

Studies have shown that the practice of greeting is inseparable from the cultural context and social structure that surrounds it. In various societies, greeting serves as a means of showing politeness, building social relationships, and affirming respect for one's age, social status, and position in a group(Eldin, 2023; Gabdreewa & Ghriekanah, 2024). Research in the college environment also shows that the pattern of use of greetings and other forms of communication is often influenced by the level of formality, relationships between individuals, and the social position of each party. These findings indicate that greetings in the academic environment not only have an interpersonal function, but can also be an instrument for navigating hierarchical relationships, including those between senior and junior students.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the culture of greeting has a broader meaning than just a form of greeting. Greeting reflects the values of ukhuwah, respect, care, and efforts to build harmonious social relationships. Various studies on the Islamic educational environment show that social interaction based on religious values is able

to strengthen a sense of togetherness, mutual respect, and social attachment between community members (Hasan et al., 2023). In addition, Islamic educational institutions in general place the values of respect, politeness, and kindness as an important part of the formation of students' character, which is manifested through various forms of daily interaction, including the culture of greetings (Hasan et al., 2023).

This phenomenon raises important questions about the true meaning contained in the culture of greetings within the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. Is the culture of greeting that develops a manifestation of the character values and teachings of Islam that have been internalized in students, or is it more influenced by unwritten social norms that place greeting as a symbol of respect for seniority alone. If the culture of greeting is carried out based on moral and religious awareness, then this practice has the potential to be an effective means in the formation of student character. However, if its implementation is more driven by social demands and hierarchical culture, then there is a possibility of a shift in meaning so that greeting is only a formality carried out to meet environmental expectations.

Therefore, research on the implementation of the greeting culture at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia is important to be carried out in order to understand how the culture is practiced, interpreted, and internalized by students. This study is expected to be able to provide an overview of the role of greeting culture in the formation of student character as well as identify the extent to which the practice is influenced by Islamic educational values or by the construction of a culture of seniority that develops in the academic environment.

Based on this description, the implementation of the culture of greeting at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia can be one of the strategic alternatives in strengthening character education based on Islamic values. The culture of greeting not only supports the creation of a harmonious academic environment, but also contributes to the formation of morals, ethics, and professional attitudes of students as prospective doctors who have academic competence as well as good morals.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to gain an in-depth understanding of the value of character education in the culture of greeting students of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. This approach is used to explore the meaning, experience, perception, and practice of greeting culture in the context of students' real lives. The research was carried out at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia, with the object of research in the value of character education in the culture of greeting, including the habituation process, the values it contains, implementation in academic life, as well as its supporting and inhibiting factors. Informants were selected by purposive sampling, consisting of faculty leaders, lecturers, administrators of the Student Executive Board/Islamic organizations, and 6 students representing the 2023, 2024, and 2025 batches, respectively. Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were made on the practice of greeting culture in learning activities and daily interactions of the academic community. Interviews were conducted with students, lecturers, and faculty leaders to explore the experience, meaning, application, and influence of greeting culture on the formation of student character. Meanwhile, documentation was used to complete the data through academic guidelines, institutional regulations, character development programs, photos, and other supporting documents. Data was analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which included data

condensation, data presentation, and conclusion retrieval and verification. Data condensation was carried out by selecting, simplifying, focusing, and organizing data from observations, interviews, and documentation. The organized data was then presented in the form of narrative descriptions, matrices, tables, or charts to facilitate interpretation. Furthermore, conclusions were drawn and verified continuously during the research process. The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation, triangulation techniques, and time triangulation, while the data collection process is carried out until it reaches data saturation, which is when the information obtained has been repeated and no longer produces a new theme.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Value of Character Education in the Culture of Saying Greetings

The formation of student character is one of the important parts of the educational process at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. Education is not only directed at the achievement of academic and professional competence, but also at the formation of attitudes, behaviors, and values that are the basis for students to carry out their roles as prospective health workers. Based on the results of interviews with faculty leaders, lecturers, and students, the formation of student character takes place through several forms, namely through the learning process, the example of lecturers and leaders, habituation in the campus environment, and academic and non-academic activities.

The results of the study show that character formation takes place gradually through the process of providing understanding, instilling values, exemplary, habituating, strengthening, and evaluation. The process is directed to form students who not only have academic abilities, but also have manners, personality, responsibility, and ethics that support professionalism as prospective doctors.

In an Islamic perspective, greeting has a broader position because it is not only related to communication habits, but is also part of the adab taught in human interaction. Islam provides guidance on how a Muslim builds social relationships by paying attention to respect for others, asking for permission, maintaining privacy, and initiating interactions with greeting. One of the foundations of the Qur'an that provides guidance on this is found in QS. An-Nur (24) verse 27. Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* Says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا  
ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Translation:

"O you who have believed, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you ascertain welcome and greet their inhabitants. That is better for you that you may be reminded."

This verse provides guidance to believers regarding manners when they want to enter a house that does not belong to them. Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* commands that one should not enter another person's house before asking permission and greeting the occupant. According to Ibn Kathir, this verse is understood as part of Islamic manners in asking permission and entering another person's house. Asking permission is meant to respect the occupants of the house and prevent them from unwanted situations, while greetings are a form of respect and the opening of a good interaction.

The word *تَسْتَأْذِنُوا* (*tasta'nisū*) in this verse it is related to the act of asking permission before entering a place. This shows that Islam does not allow a person to

enter the private space or the private space of another without first obtaining permission. After that, the verse mentions *وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا* (*wa tusallimū 'alā ahlihā*), which means greeting the residents. Thus, the greeting in verse is present in a series of interaction procedures that contain elements of respect, politeness, and appreciation for the existence of others.

Based on this verse, the author argues that the greeting from an Islamic perspective is not just an opening speech in a communication, but is part of the manners that govern one's relationship with others. The command to ask permission and greet shows the value of respect for the rights, space, and existence of others. Thus, greetings can be the initial way to build interactions based on politeness and appreciation.

Although the direct context of QS. An-Nur (24) verse 27 is related to the way of entering other people's homes, the values contained in it are relevant to the culture of greetings in social and educational life. The value of asking for permission, respecting others, and greeting can be applied in various forms of social interaction as long as it does not eliminate the context and basic intent of the verse. In the higher education environment, this value can be realized through the habit of greeting students with lecturers, education staff, and fellow students as a form of respect and politeness in interacting.

This view is related to the concept of the culture of greeting, which places greeting as a communication practice that contains the values of politeness and respect. In the context of higher education, greetings can also be part of institutional norms and cultures that support the creation of harmonious and professional social relationships. Thus, QS. An-Nur (24) verse 27 can be one of the normative bases in understanding the greeting culture in this study. Greeting culture is not only seen as a greeting habit or as a form of social communication, but also as a practice that can internalize the values of manners, politeness, respect, and concern for social relationships. When greetings are done consistently and become a habit in the academic environment, this practice has the potential to develop into a culture that shapes student interaction patterns.

Based on this understanding, the culture of greeting in this study is further understood as the practice of communication that is carried out repeatedly and becomes a habit in the social environment, especially the academic environment, which contains the values of politeness, respect, social relations, and religious values. This understanding is the basis for seeing how the culture of greeting is applied in the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia and how the values contained in it are related to the formation of student character.

The values of manners contained in QS. An-Nur (24) verse 27 is then strengthened by the explanation of the Rasulullah *Shalallahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam* through a hadith that explains the procedure for a Muslim to establish a relationship with fellow Muslims. If the Qur'an gives a general principle about the importance of asking permission and initiating interaction with greeting as a form of respect, then the hadith of the Rasulullah *Shalallahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam* provide a more operational explanation of the rights and obligations that must be fulfilled in social life. Rasulullah *Shalallahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam* said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ  
حَقُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ سِتٌّ. «قِيلَ: مَا هُنَّ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ:» إِذَا لَقَيْتَهُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ، وَإِذَا  
دَعَاكَ فَأَجِبْهُ، وَإِذَا اسْتَنْصَحَكَ فَأَنْصَحْ لَهُ، وَإِذَا عَطَسَ فَحَمِدِ اللَّهَ فَشَمِّتْهُ، وَإِذَا مَرَضَ فَعُدُّهُ، وَإِذَا مَاتَ  
فَاتَّبِعْهُ»

Meaning:

“From Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'There are six rights of a Muslim over other Muslims.' The Companions asked, 'What are the six rights, O Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'When you meet him, say greeting, when he invites you then fulfill his invitation, when he asks for advice, when he sneezes and praises Allah then prays (yarhamukallah), when he is sick then visit him, and when he dies then accompany his body.’” (HR. Muslim)

Hadith shows that saying greeting is the first right mentioned by the Prophet *Shalallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam* in building relationships between fellow Muslims. The placement of greeting in the first order shows that greeting is an opening door for good social interaction as well as the basis for the formation of relationships based on affection, respect, and attention. Greeting is not only a greeting, but a prayer of salvation that is a symbol of recognition, acceptance, and appreciation to fellow Muslims.

General meaning of the hadith of the Prophet *Shalallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam* which means "There are six rights of a Muslim over another Muslim", showing that Islam does not only regulate man's relationship with Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* but also regulates human relationships with others. The word "ḥaqq" (حق) indicates something that is a right and must be fulfilled by a Muslim towards another Muslim.

The six rights mentioned in the hadith include greeting when meeting, fulfilling invitations, giving advice when asked, praying for the sneezing person after praising Allah, visiting the sick, and accompanying the deceased. The six rights describe a form of social concern that can strengthen fraternal relations among Muslims. From the point of view of Islamic education, the habit of greeting can form an attitude of politeness and respect towards others, humility, caring, and friendliness. A person who makes a habit of greeting means that he has learned to initiate interactions with a positive attitude and respect for others.

Based on the explanation of the hadith, it can be understood that greeting has an important role in building social relationships for a Muslim. The Prophet Muhammad *Shalallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam* Identified greeting as the first right mentioned in the six rights of a Muslim over another Muslim. This shows that greetings are not just an expression of greeting, but also a form of respect, prayer for safety, and a means to build *ukhuwah* among others. The habit of greeting also contains educational values that can shape individual character, especially religious character, politeness, social concern, communication, and respect for others. In the context of higher education, this habituation can be applied through student interactions with lecturers, educational staff, and fellow students.

Thus, the culture of greeting at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia can be understood as a form of implementing Islamic teachings as well as a process of getting used to positive character in academic life. This shows that character education does not only occur through learning in the classroom, but also through habituation of simple behaviors that are carried out consistently in daily life.

## **Overview of Student Character Formation**

### **1. Character Building through Learning**

Learning is one of the main means in shaping the character of students of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. Based on the results of the research, the learning process is not only oriented towards the delivery of scientific material, but also provides space for students to build attitudes and behaviors in accordance with academic, moral, religious, and ethical values of the medical profession.

In the learning process, lecturers have an important position in integrating character values through teaching methods, interaction with students, assignments, time discipline, and instilling ethical values in learning materials. One of the informants explained that the formation of student character is carried out at the same time as the academic education process through the learning process. Character formation is not separated from learning activities. Students are directed not only to understand the scientific aspect, but also to have an attitude that supports professionalism as a prospective doctor. In addition to providing knowledge about values and manners, character formation is also carried out by providing real examples so that students understand the reasons and benefits of the grades given. This shows that students are not only directed to know a value, but also understand its relevance in their academic life and profession as a prospective doctor.

Learning becomes a strategic space in the formation of student character. Character is formed through a learning process that not only emphasizes 'what students know', but also 'how students behave' in carrying out the academic process. Thus, character formation through learning at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia can be seen through three main aspects, namely instilling values, setting an example, and habituating positive behavior. Through this method, students are directed not only to understand the scientific or academically intelligent aspects, but also to have attitudes and personalities that support professionalism as a candidate for doctors with noble character (Doctor Muhsin).

## **2. Exemplary Lecturers and Leaders**

In addition to learning, the results of the study show that the example of lecturers and leaders is one of the important factors in the formation of student character. Students not only acquire character values through the material delivered verbally, but also through the behavior they see directly in the faculty environment. Lecturers as parties who interact intensively with students have an important role in providing examples of discipline, responsibility, politeness, communication, and ethics in carrying out their duties.

Students learn about character not only through instruction, but also through the process of observing and imitating the behavior of people in their academic environment. Indirectly, one of the students also explained that the behavior of lecturers in interacting affects students' attitudes. Based on student information, the lecturer's attitude is disciplined, respects students, communicates well, and shows behavior that is in accordance with academic values are examples that are then followed in students' daily lives.

The findings of the study show that exemplary has the power in forming character because students are directly confronted with examples of behavior that can be observed. Therefore, character formation will be more effective if the values conveyed to students are in line with the behavior shown by lecturers and leaders.

## **3. Habituation in the Campus Environment**

The formation of student character is also carried out through habituation that takes place in daily life within the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. Habituation is important because character is not formed only through the delivery of theory, but through behavior that is carried out repeatedly so that it becomes part of student habits.

Various forms of habituation are carried out in the academic life of students, including habituating discipline, maintaining good manners, respecting lecturers and

fellow students, maintaining cleanliness, following faculty rules, and building good interaction in the campus environment. These habits are then strengthened by the academic environment that provides reminders and control over student behavior. Thus, the campus environment not only functions as a place for the learning process to take place, but also as an environment for character education. Habituation that is done repeatedly can turn behavior that initially requires direction into habits that are carried out spontaneously. This shows that character formation is not always in the form of a special program, but can be inherent in students' routine activities.

#### **4. Character Building through Academic and Non-Academic Activities**

In addition to formal learning activities, student character formation also takes place through various academic and non-academic activities. These activities provide opportunities for students to develop social skills, leadership, cooperation, responsibility, and concern for others. In academic activities, character can be formed through group work, discussions, presentations, practicums, clinical activities, and various forms of assignments. Meanwhile, non-academic activities can be a space for students to develop the ability to work together, organize, lead, and interact with the community.

Student experience in various activities provides a practical learning process. Students not only gain knowledge, but also learn to carry out responsibilities and interact with others. Based on the findings, academic and non-academic activities can be seen as a medium for character formation through direct experience. Students learn to apply character values in real situations, not just understand the concept.

#### **5. Character Values Formed**

Based on the overall results of the research, there are a number of character values that appear in the educational process of students of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. These values include religiosity, discipline, responsibility, honesty, good manners, care, cooperation, and professional ethics. The value of religiosity can be seen from efforts to build student behavior in accordance with Islamic values. Meanwhile, discipline and responsibility are reflected in students' compliance with academic rules and the implementation of obligations as students.

These values are also reflected in students' experiences in living academic life. Greetings are considered a form of mutual prayer, good manners, and respect for older people. The habit of greeting as a form of friendliness and politeness in starting communication is one way to increase confidence when starting interactions with others.

Greetings have a meaning as a form of respect and politeness in opening communication. Greetings are seen as part of the proper procedures when students interact with others, especially with older parties. Similar meanings are also considered a way to build friendliness and closeness in interactions. Greetings not only function as a form of politeness, but also have a social function in creating a friendlier interaction atmosphere and building closeness. The use of greetings is seen as providing a better starting space before students continue conversations with lecturers and friends.

Greetings have a psychological function for students, namely helping students start communication more courageously and confidently. By saying greetings first, students have a communication opener that is considered in accordance with polite norms so that it can reduce doubts when they want to interact.

Thus, the culture of greetings at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia does not only function as a form of greeting or fulfillment of rules, but has been interpreted as a social practice that contains the values of politeness, respect,

friendliness, social relations, and courage in communicating. This meaning shows that the application of greeting is related to the social life of students and the way they position themselves when interacting with lecturers, educators, peers, and elders.

## **6. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Character Building**

The results of the study show that the formation of student character is influenced by various factors that come from the internal and external environment of the faculty.

### **a. Supporting Factors**

Supporting factors include the support of leaders, lecturer examples, academic rules, a supportive campus environment, student development activities, and student awareness to follow the values and norms applied. Institutional support is an important factor because character formation requires consistency between policies, the environment, and the behavior of all academics.

### **b. Inhibiting Factors**

On the other hand, the formation of student character also faces a number of obstacles. These obstacles can come from differences in student backgrounds, habits that have been formed before entering university, the influence of the social environment, technological and social media developments, and different levels of student awareness.

This is reinforced by the view of other lecturers who see that obstacles also arise from a lack of a deep understanding of the urgency of these values in daily life. Meanwhile, from the student side, it can be found that the application of character values does not always take place uniformly. This shows that character formation is a process that requires continuous supervision, example, habituation, and evaluation. The application of character values does not always take place uniformly. This shows that character formation is a process that requires continuous supervision, example, habituation, and evaluation. Other practical obstacles found in the field are the existence of awkward feelings, fear of not being responded, or students' psychological state when interacting, as expressed by some students:

#### **1) Awkwardness and Response Factors**

Students sometimes hesitate to start the greeting if they see the facial expressions of the lecturer who looks busy or "killer", as well as the trauma if the previous greeting is not answered.

#### **2) The Influence of Technology**

In the digital environment (WhatsApp groups), messages or greetings are often only seen without a reply, which shows the difference in the level of awareness of ethics on social media.

#### **3) Built-in Characters**

There is also a personality factor of students who were previously less friendly, so it takes more effort to get used to the culture of greeting.

## **Analysis of Student Character Formation**

The results of the study show that the formation of the character of students of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia does not take place through a single stand-alone activity, but is an integrated process in the academic life of students. The formation is carried out through learning, the example of lecturers and leaders, habituation in the campus environment, and academic and non-academic activities. The

values built include manners, religiosity, discipline, responsibility, politeness, respect for others, social concern, and ethics related to the medical profession.

These findings show that character education at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia is not only oriented towards mastering knowledge and academic competence, but is also directed at the formation of student personalities. This is in line with Thomas Licona's view that character is not enough to be formed through knowledge of good values, but must include moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Asror & Asrohah, 2026). Thus, a person can be said to have character when he knows good values, has an attachment or willingness to do good, and then manifests them in real action. This is also reinforced in the research of Lavy and M Benish-Weisman if character strength is described as "value in action," which means that character strength is not just an internal belief but is actively demonstrated through behavior for the benefit of individuals and society (Lavy & Benish-Weisman, 2021).

### **1. Character Building Through the Process of Moral Knowing**

The findings of the study show that character formation at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia begins with providing an understanding of the values that students must have and apply. These findings can be understood as a form of moral *knowing*, which is the stage when students gain knowledge and understanding of values that are considered good and important to apply (Holik et al., 2024). Moral knowledge is the first step in character education, followed by moral feelings (emotional engagement with values) and moral action (practicing values). This sequence ensures that students not only know what is right but are also motivated and able to act accordingly (Izzati et al., 2019; Japar et al., 2024). In the context of this research, students are not only given academic knowledge, but also introduced to manners, Islamic values, and ethics in interacting.

This is strengthened by the policy of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia which places manners as part of the learning process. The results of the study show that at the beginning of the lecture there is material about the manners of teachers towards students and manners of students towards teachers which are then constantly reminded of students. Thus, moral knowledge in the context of this research is not provided through character learning that is separate from medical education, but is integrated into the educational process that students are undergoing. Students are introduced to how to behave, communicate, respect lecturers, maintain manners, and understand the importance of these values for their academic and professional lives.

### **2. Character Building through Moral Feeling**

Character formation does not stop at knowledge of values. The results of the study also show that there is an emotional experience of students when applying the values that have been habituated. This can be seen in the experience of students when saying and receiving greetings who feel happy when the greetings they convey get a response from lecturers or other people. Students feel that the response shows that they are listened to, considered, and respected. These findings show that there is an aspect of moral feeling, namely the involvement of feelings in accepting and practicing a value. Greetings are no longer seen as just behaviors that must be done because of rules, but begin to provide emotional experiences to students in the form of a sense of appreciation, acceptance, and a closer relationship with others.

The same thing can be seen in students' interpretation of greetings as a form of respect, friendliness, and efforts to build social relationships (Angin & Nasution, 2025). Thus, values that are initially introduced through learning and habituation then acquire

personal meaning through students' experiences in interacting (Abakumova et al., 2019; Biryukova, 2020). At this stage, character building becomes stronger because students not only know that a behavior is good, but also feel the positive value of the behavior. Experience is rewarded when a greeting is reciprocated, for example, can strengthen a student's willingness to repeat the behavior in the next interaction.

### **3. Character Building through Moral Action**

The third component in Lickona's theory is moral action, which is the ability to realize moral knowledge and feelings into real action. Moral action refers to the ability to translate moral knowledge and feelings into real ethical behavior in everyday life (Izzati et al., 2019). The results of the study show that the character values introduced to students have been manifested in various daily behaviors.

One of the clearest examples can be seen in the habit of greeting. Where students are not used to saying greetings at first, but after following the cadre and obtaining continuous reinforcement, the behavior is finally carried out reflexively. These changes show that there is a process from knowledge to action. Students first know that greeting is part of manners, then gain reinforcement through the environment, and finally apply it in daily life.

This also happens in academic and organizational activities. Greetings are used when students start presentations, ask questions, start discussions, or carry out organizational activities. Habituation is an important part of character formation because the values introduced through learning will be more easily internalized through repeated practice. In this study, the culture of greetings is habituated through cadre, learning, example, and the social environment of students. The repetition gradually makes greetings a habit that is reflected in daily behavior (Danilenko & Perminova, 2022). Thus, moral action in this study can be seen from the ability of students to translate understood values into behaviors that are carried out in real and repeated ways.

### **4. Exemplary as a Character Building Mechanism**

In addition to these three character components, the results of the study show that the character formation process is greatly influenced by the example of lecturers and leaders. The faculty leader explicitly stated that a lecturer must be a role model for students. This finding shows that character education is not enough to be done through verbal instruction. The values conveyed will be easier to accept if students see the consistency of these values in the behavior of the person who is their role model.

In the context of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia, lecturers not only play the role of teachers of medical science, but also as figures that students observe in terms of communication, politeness, discipline, and how to treat others. When lecturers greet students first, appreciate students, or show behavior that is in accordance with the values taught, students get concrete examples of how a value is applied.

Examples in educator communication can be observed and imitated by students, so that the harmony between teaching and the behavior shown by educators affects student learning and the application of students' communication skills (Bell et al., 2010; Stellyes et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the attitude of greeting, respecting, and treating students politely provides a real example of important professional behavior in medical practice (Bazrafkan et al., 2019; Emilia et al., 2023; Zarezadeh et al., 2025). Educators' consistency in showing discipline can also be a role model for students in building discipline and responsibility attitudes (Ahmadinia, 2023; Bazrafkan et al., 2019; Surapaneni, 2024).

The findings show that example functions as a link between moral knowledge and moral action. Students know value through learning, see its application through example, and then have the opportunity to imitate it in their daily lives.

### **5. Habituation as a Process of Internalizing Character**

The results of the study also show that character is built through habituation. The Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia applies various forms of habituation, including rules regarding appearance, discipline, manners, and student behavior in the academic environment. Habituation has an important meaning because character is not formed only through one-time understanding. Grades need to be done repeatedly until they become part of the student's behavior pattern. The experience of students who finally say greetings reflexively is an example that behavior that initially requires direction can turn into a habit after being done repeatedly.

In the perspective of Lickona's character education, this condition shows that the character is not only at the level of knowledge, but has moved towards action (Asror & Asrohah, 2026). The repetition of positive actions is a means to strengthen character, as students gain experience to continue applying the values that have been learned. Therefore, habituation in the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia can be understood not just as a mechanism for compliance with rules, but as a process to help students internalize values so that they gradually become part of their behavior.

### **6. Character Building through Academic and Non-Academic Experience**

The results of the study show that students' character is also formed through experiences gained in academic and non-academic activities. Learning activities, presentations, discussions, organizations, cadre, and Islamic activities provide space for students to practice the values that have been learned.

In these activities, students not only learn about a value theoretically, but also face situations that require them to apply responsibility, cooperation, communication, discipline, and respect for others. This shows that character formation takes place through direct experience. Values become more meaningful when students have the opportunity to use them in real situations. Students' involvement in academic, extracurricular, and social activities provides opportunities to practice responsibility and cooperation in real life so that the values learned become more meaningful and easier to internalize (Padmakumari et al., 2025).

Learning that actively engages students also helps them understand and apply values through hands-on experience, not just through the delivery of material (Muassomah et al., 2025). The experience of interacting and working with others helps develop empathy, caring, and appreciation, as students learn to understand differences and build social relationships through real-life experiences (Reuter, 2023).

Thus, the experience of communication and collaboration is an important part of forming an attitude of tolerance and respect for others (Noller & Cain, 2024). In this process, the educational environment and the role of educators also provide space for students to practice discipline, cooperation, and respect in the activities they carry out (Gellel, 2023). Organizational activities also provide space for students to learn about leadership and social relations. In this context, Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa (BEM) and Forum Studi Islam Kedokteran (Forsik) not only function as student organizations, but also become part of an environment that strengthens character building.

## 7. Character Building as a Balance Between Academic Competence and Professional Character

The findings of the study show that the ultimate goal of character formation at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia is not only related to student behavior while on campus, but also to the formation of professional character as prospective doctors. Students are directed not only to become academically capable doctors, but also to become "Doctor Muhsin", namely doctors who have good personality and morals. Character in medical education is positioned as a complement as well as a foundation for professional competence. It is not enough for students to only master medical knowledge and skills, but also need to develop integrity, ethics, responsibility, and the ability to interact with others (Karunakaran et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2022; Mathew et al., 2025). Professionalism in medical education is also increasingly seen as a core competency that goes hand in hand with clinical knowledge and skills, as it includes values, ethics, and reflection in professional practice (Olive & Abercrombie, 2017). In addition, characters such as integrity, caring, responsibility, service, and respect are important aspects in building trust and supporting ethical and effective medical practices (Mir et al., 2026; Post et al., 2024).

Thus, the concept of "Doctor Muhsin" can be understood as the orientation of character that the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia wants to build, namely graduates who have a balance between academic abilities and personality qualities. The concept of character and professional ethics in the formation of the figure of "Doctor Muhsin" is also rooted in Islamic teachings. One of the basic principles related to professionalism is trust and justice, as affirmed by Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* in QS. An-Nisa (4) verse 58:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا ۞ بَصِيرًا ﴿٥٨﴾

Translation:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing."

This verse shows that trust and justice are fundamental values in human life. In the context of the medical profession, trust can be interpreted as a moral and professional responsibility in exercising knowledge, providing services to patients, maintaining trust, and carrying out duties with full integrity. Meanwhile, justice is reflected in the attitude of providing services proportionately, respecting the rights of patients, and treating each individual humanely regardless of their background.

Thus, the character that will be built through the concept of "Muhsin Doctor" is not only related to academic abilities and clinical skills, but also includes the moral qualities that are the basis for the implementation of this profession. The values of trust, justice, responsibility, attention, respect, and service are inseparable parts of the formation of professional doctors with Islamic character.

## 8. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Character Building

The formation of character in this study also shows the existence of supporting and inhibiting factors. The supporting factors come from the support of the leadership, the example of lecturers, academic rules, the campus environment, cadre, and the involvement of student organizations. The Vice Dean explained that there was

reinforcement through the jargon "Manners Are First and Knowledge", a reminder in learning, lecturer examples, and collaboration with BEM and Forsik.

The strengthening of the value of "Manners Are First and Knowledge " is also in line with the principle of education in Islam which places adab as an important part of the process of acquiring and practicing knowledge. Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* says in QS. Al-Hujurat (49) verses 1-2:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْذِفُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَنْقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ  
لِبَعْضٍ أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ۝

Translation:

"O you who have believed, do not put (yourselves) ahead of Allah and His Messenger but fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing (1). O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not (2)".

This verse explains and provides guidance on manners in behaving, speaking, and placing oneself to the Prophet *Shalallahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam*. In the context of education, this principle shows that the mastery of knowledge cannot be separated from the formation of good attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, the jargon "Manners Are First and Knowledge" which is used as part of strengthening the character of students of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia can be understood as an effort to instill awareness that science must be accompanied by morals and ethics in its application.

Thus, this value is increasingly important in medical education, because students are not only required to have academic competence and clinical skills, but also have a respectful, polite, responsible, caring figure, and able to maintain good relationships with lecturers, health workers, fellow students, and patients. Thus, manners are one of the foundations that support the formation of professional character of prospective doctors. This condition also shows that character education requires a consistent environment. If values are only conveyed in learning but are not found in lecturer behavior, rules, or student organizational life, the internalization process will be more difficult to take place (Almansour et al., 2024).

On the other hand, there are obstacles in the form of differences in student awareness, habits that have been formed before entering college, the influence of the times, and difficulties in measuring the success of character. Character formation faces challenges because character is not as easy to measure as academic achievement. Knowledge is one of the important prerequisites in the application of values. Students who only know a rule without understanding the knowledge can have difficulty applying it in their daily lives.

This shows that character formation requires a continuous process, not just the application of rules. Students need to know values, understand their meaning, gain examples, get opportunities to practice them, and continue to gain reinforcement from the environment (Sawatsky et al., 2020). The formation of professional character and identity in medical education takes place gradually through repeated experiences, reflection, and social interaction in the educational environment. The learning environment, including the role of lecturers, peers, and institutional culture, provides reinforcement and opportunities for students to practice values in a sustainable manner (Cruess et al., 2015).

Based on the findings of the research and the perspective of Thomas Lickona's character education theory, the formation of the character of students of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia can be understood as a process that moves from knowledge, appreciation, to action. At the level of moral knowing, Students gain knowledge about manners, Islamic values, politeness, discipline, and ethics through learning, advice, and strengthening within the faculty.

At the moral feeling stage, these values begin to gain meaning personally through students' experiences when applying them. Students feel appreciated, respected, closer, calmer, and more confident when these values are applied in social interactions. Furthermore, at the moral action stage, values are manifested in real behavior through greetings, discipline, obedience to rules, polite interactions, organizational activities, and various academic and non-academic activities.

Thus, the findings of the study show that character formation at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia does not stop at the teaching of values, but is directed at the process of internalization through example and habituation so that these values can be realized in student behavior. The process is ultimately directed to the formation of professional character which is reflected in the concept of "Doctor Muhsin", namely graduates who not only have academic competence, but also have manners, personality, Islamic values, and professional ethics.

These findings can also be understood through the perspective of Symbolic Interactionism (Yeager, 2016). Character values are not only obtained by students through formal instruction, but also through daily interactions with lecturers, leaders, seniors, peers, and student organizations. In these interactions, students observe behavior, give meaning to the actions of others, and then form their own responses and behaviors (Scott, 2017).

Within the framework of Symbolic Interactionism, symbols play a central role in the construction of social reality. Language, gestures, actions, and other forms of communication serve as symbols that carry specific meanings. These meanings are not inherently fixed but are created, negotiated, and understood through ongoing social interactions. As a result, the meaning of symbols can evolve depending on the social and cultural context in which they are used. Through symbols, individuals interpret the actions of others (Carter & Lamoreaux, 2023).

The culture of greetings is the most obvious example. Greetings are not only understood as greetings, but can be interpreted as respect, hospitality, prayer, and a means of building closeness. Responses to greetings, such as greetings or smiles, then provide the experience that students are appreciated and accepted. Thus, the meaning of character is formed and strengthened through a process of social interaction that takes place repeatedly.

This shows that character formation at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia is a process that is not only individual, but also social and institutional. The faculty environment, lecturer examples, rules, student organizations, and daily interactions together form a context that allows character values to be understood, felt, and realized by students.

In conclusion, the character formation of students of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia takes place through the integration of value education, example, habituation, and social interaction experiences. In Lickona's perspective, the process includes moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, while in the perspective of Symbolic Interactionism, character develops through the meaning and

repetition of social interactions. Both perspectives show that character formation is not enough to be done by providing knowledge, but requires an environment that provides examples, experiences, and reinforcement consistently so that these values become part of student behavior.

## CONCLUSION

The value of character education in the culture of greeting students of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Muslim Indonesia includes the values of religiosity, politeness, respect for others, discipline, friendliness, concern for social relations, and courage in initiating interactions. Greetings are not only understood as a form of greeting, but also interpreted as a prayer for safety, a form of respect, a means of building closeness, and the opening of more polite communication. In Thomas Lickona's perspective, these values are formed through the process of moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions. Students first gain knowledge of the meaning and manners of greetings, then experience in the form of a sense of appreciation, acceptance, closeness, calmness, and confidence in interactions, and then realize these values through real behavior and the habit of saying greetings in academic and social life. Thus, the culture of greeting is a form of habituation that supports the process of forming students' character towards a civilized, religious, and socially ethical person as a candidate for "Doctor Muhsin".

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