

## Youth Participation in Religious Activities and Nation Character Development in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Almost every religion involves youth participation in activities; signifying growing awareness of the need for youths in the continuity of religious practices and vice versa, as young people depend on religion as a basis for good character in facing the challenges of their time. This study examines youth participation in understanding religion, especially Islam, and why participating in religious activities establishes itself in the context of migratory or young migrants. In doing so, this study explores the what, why and how forms of youth participation in such religious activities contribute to the development of national character. Further to this, youth participation in the *Hijrah Fest* is in line with the theory of a relational development system where relationships that occur between individuals such as youths in particular strengthen each other to form an independent hijrah community. Using qualitative methods, this study found that the Hijrah Fest is a social capital for the community, whose activities encourage many young people to be independent, work together and develop good morals. This is in line with the state's goal of developing the character of Indonesian youth. Hijrah Fest is also supports the vision of the Indonesian government in realizing a sovereign, independent youth personalities through such collaboration.

**Keywords:** *Youth participation, religion, hijrah fest, religious moderation, nation character.*

### INTRODUCTION

Bung Karno, the first President of Indonesia understood very well the importance and magnitude of the role of youth for the change of the nation so that it gave birth to the famous saying, "[...]give me 10 youths I will surely shake the world[...]" (CNN Indonesia, 2023). He highlighted the significance of young people who were key to the process of building an independent Indonesia. Likewise, Tan Malaka, a philosopher, an Indonesian independence activist also posited the value of youths in shaping the nation, "[...]Idealism is the ultimate luxury that only youth have[...]" (Ruslan, 2019). This interpreted that the youth are still free from the influence of external pressures, cannot be dictated, walk with such ideals in mind and at the same time, their youthful physiques are able to implement thoughts from their ideal minds.

The two opinions of these national figures summarise the important values as well as the role of youths. Youth is a time when humans are at the peak of their potential as their spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical potential makes them one of the most vital players in the development of civil society (Andriani, 2017; Moran, 2020). Being young is a synonym for change, progress and the future (Rojas, 2020). Young people are the most dynamic, creative, innovative and strong; and play a very important role in the process of growth and development of every community, nation, state or society. A nation finds its motivation in the dreams and hopes of its youth; a community thrives through their participation and involvement; through their talents and creative powers, a society makes great strides, and progresses with its youth (Uzoma, 2019).

The demographic rise that will be faced by Indonesia in 2020 to 2035 expects the majority of youth to be in the best condition, physically and mentally healthy, dynamic, creative, innovative, productive and of good character (Hasanah & Armanda, 2021; Novrizaldi, 2021; Roringkon & Sardjito, 2021; Sutikno, 2020). These preparations are expected to start at present because young people today will hold the baton of leadership in the next phase of their lives. Based on these predictions, youths will have a strategic role in supporting a higher quality of life among Indonesian society. The potential of young people can be optimised in supporting national development and national character development. By definition, "character" refers to the notion of character or inner temperament, meaning personal form of behavior or character. The character of the nation is understood as the cultural values and beliefs that manifest in the culture of a society and radiate outward characteristics so that people can respond to it as a personality of the community (IndonesiaSatu, 2018).

Shaping the nation's character is an effort that requires a lengthy process. This includes efforts to foster physical, spiritual, mental and spirituality that lead to character (character noble), a high fighting attitude, sportsmanship, respect and brotherhood. It begins by nurturing the youth and the responsibility of youth development in Indonesia is carried out by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (Kemenpora). Kemenpora targets the following for human and community development in sports: (1) enhancing character development, the growth of patriotism, a culture of achievement and professionalism youth; (2) increasing youth participation in various fields of development, especially in the social, political, economic, cultural and religious fields; and, (3) enhancing sports culture and achievements at regional and international levels (Yumna, Elmira, Izzati, & Dewi, 2019; BAPPENAS, 2020; Kementerian Pemuda dan Olahraga Republik Indonesia, 2019; Sulistyaningrum, 2018).

One of the strategic goals in realising that national character can be achieved through active participation of youth in various activities in the fields of social, political, religious, economic and cultural life. Mutual cooperation among citizens and the nation state is the basis of the noble philosophy and cultural characteristics from the Indonesian identity, which were inherited from the nation's predecessors; therefore young people with character are the principle target groups for this development. The development of national character can begin from the understanding of religion and its participation in religious activities among youths. The Merial Institute, in its release in *Republika*, revealed that although religious activities among the public look promising, the data released by the Central Bureau of Statistics, showed a declining trend in the last ten years. In a 2009 BPS report, youth participation in religious activities was at 67.18% and this figure dropped dramatically to 55.13% in 2012. Furthermore, in a 2015 BPS report, the figure continued to decline sharply until it reached 51.72%. This data showed the index in rural areas had reached 58.84%, while in urban areas it had only reached 45.30% (Fakhrudin, 2018). If this trend continues then the index would decline to a figure below 10% in 2025 (Sukmawijaya, 2017). The keenness of youth participation in religious activities is still limited in certain environments such as big cities as the statistical data covers all religions and all regions. The participation of youth in religion in these reports is limited to cyberspace compared to physical events that were not recorded by the survey.

The fluctuation in youth participation in religious activities occurred in various phases, such as the Youth Movement Reading the 2017 Scriptures which is a series of the 2017 *Kirab* (name of Carnival event) *Pemuda Nusantara* in Serang, Banten; followed by 500 young people from six different religious backgrounds from thirty-four provinces in Indonesia gathering to

voice the courage to unite in the midst of diversity (Sukmawijaya, 2017). Unfortunately, in 2018, the citizen youths were less enthusiastic about *Kirab Pemuda Nusantara*, and were even rejected in several provinces in Sumatra. Due to the elections and the figure behind the organisation, in 2019 there were almost no activities organized for the *Kirab Pemuda Nusantara*.

In 2018, *Hijrah Fest* activities were initiated and driven fully by young people and were financially independent without the involvement of government or ministry offices. The enthusiasm of young people who attended the event encouraged the committee to implement the event again in 2019. The activity was filled with Islamic studies and became a venue for promoting sharia business. *Hijrah Fest* gave an illustration of how young people were very keen in getting Islamic knowledge and practicing Islam which is *kaffah* (Islam perfectly). The sporadic formation of Islamic study communities in various regions has also developed youth clusters that appeared to be separate but have since become unified and united to respond to contemporary Islamic issues. The popularity of young clerics on social media has spread throughout the archipelago, easily accessed due to the presence of smartphones and the internet asserting the global village posited by Marshall McLuhan (Pamungkas, 2017) and Thomas Friedman (Sudarto, 2019) is justified. This situation certainly cannot be separated from various factors; first, the role of social media, where they are connected between individuals, between communities, between youth mosques, campuses, and even national and international scale Islamic organisations. Second, there are figures that are trusted in Islamic scientific capacity and capability. Third, there is endorsement from public figures and artists who are members of the hijrah community as organised this event (Amelia, Kamalludin, & May Syarah, 2020; Annisa, 2014; Hasan, 2019).

This study will further explore the interesting and unique phenomenon of the festival's *hijrah*, about what, why and how hijrah as a form of youth participation in religious activities contribute to the development of the nation's character. For this reason, this study aims to describe youth participation through festival hijrah activities and their relevance in building the character of the Indonesian nation. This study is expected to contribute to the Indonesian government's efforts to improve character development and increase youth participation in various fields, especially in the social, political, economic, cultural, and religious fields.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Combination of words participation and youth actually has led to a new understanding that is broader and connotatively approaches the role of youths. In the *Models of Youth Participation Handbook*, youth participation is a topic with several definitions, theoretical underpinnings, and a variety of actions, making it challenging to settle on a definition or a common strategy. It depends on the focus and perspective used. In simple terms, participation can be said to be the act of taking part or being actively involved or sharing. However, the reality is that youth participation is more complex and definitions are based on concepts related to youth activities, such as: decision-making, taking part, and active social citizenship. Youth engagement, for example, can be described as "the right of young people to engage and assume duties and obligations in everyday life at the local level and the right to influence their life processes democratically," if the focus is on human rights. Thus, youth participation can be said to be a process by which young people, as active citizens, take part in, express views on, and have the power to make decisions about issues that affect them (Barros et al., 2020).

Taking part is a fundamental right of the youth in the development of the nation. One of the tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has been reiterated in numerous subsequent Declarations and Conventions, is this. Through active involvement, young people gain the power to play a significant part in their own development as well as that of their communities, supporting the development of critical life skills, human rights knowledge, and civic engagement. Young people need the correct tools, such knowledge, education, and access to their civil rights, in order to engage effectively (United Nations, n.d.).

The study of youth and religion, youth participation and its relation to the formation or development of character, both personal character and national character, has been studied by many scientists in various countries and in various scientific perspectives. One of them, Kiilakoski (2020) analyzed why youth participation is considered important, how youth participation is seen and what models are made, and how youth participation is associated with various views on democracy. The results of his research explain three conditions needed for participation. First, participation requires a recognised and legitimate role in society. Such recognition should be both formal and informal. Second, there needs to be action. Third, it views participation as a relationship between individuals and larger entities, such as peer groups, classes, schools, communities, cities, societies, and ecosystems. To achieve quality participation, it is necessary to pay attention to both sides: training and empowering young people, as well as critically analyzing whether society is really capable of helping young people to participate. Participation is a two-way street (Kiilakoski, 2020).

Then, Malinakova's research shows that religiosity and spirituality can be of particular interest in many aspects of human life and personal values, and can lead to preferences for religious activities. It also involves organizing certain norms and behavioral expectations. In the United States, most residents identify with religious groups. In contrast, the Czech Republic has the highest proportion of non-religious people in the world (76.4%), meaning that religion is not a significant determinant of mainstream youth culture. Spirituality and Religious Attendance (RA) have been associated with personal attitudes and values. This can have implications for youthful RA and lifestyles where spirituality is associated with more active leisure activities (Malinakova et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, American National Family and Religious Research on Positive Religious and Spiritual Development of Youth It presents detailed results from six previous studies of religious youth and their parents. This study was conducted in relation to (a) social and political activism, (b) popular media and music, and (c) participation in secular activities (sports, arts, games, etc.). several ways to strengthen the youth development literature by promoting spiritual development, (d) struggle with major issues (i.e., issues of existence, intimacy, and God), (e) conversion and separation, (f) interreligious knowledge and experience, (g) influential personal, (h) volunteerism and service, (i) religious rituals, rituals and traditions, (j) madness, (k) mindfulness and meditation choice, (n) sexual orientation and experience, and (o) generative commitment (Dollahite & Marks, 2019). Still about youth and religion in four countries in Europe, finding the influence of membership in religious groups on the importance of religion for adolescents (Leszczensky et al., 2020).

Another study of religion and secularity in the perspective of science and culture sees religion as part of culture and an expression of spirituality, which exists in people's lives. The new UNESCO approach was developed through the prism of intercultural dialogue, intercommunity dialogue and interfaith dialogue in the European Union as a recommended practice to solve and prevent problems related to multicultural societies in particular religious phenomena (Bouma, 2017; Ecklund et al., 2019; Edara, 2017; Morris, 2017).

Richard Lerner had included a study of character development in a two-decade research program based on Lerner and Lerner's model of active youth development. Personality development involves acquiring the emotions, thoughts, and skills necessary to act coherently in a positive and mutually beneficial way in the course of an individual's relationships with others. Research in the United States and elsewhere suggests that she has three key characteristics for successful character development efforts in children and adolescents: Mentors and models, opportunities to build skills, opportunities to participate in important family, school and community activities and demonstrate leadership. The implication of this research is that character development is the foundation for building other important aspects of human prosperity (competence, confidence, connectedness, compassion, etc.) and can be an important foundation for the empowerment of young people. Includes thoughts. Actively contribute to improving their own lives and their families, schools and communities (Lerner, 2018).

Youth development programs, both through school education and outside school, have been developed in research that discusses the importance of promoting character among the nation's youth. Explore the grand design of character education and perspectives Islamic, the relationship between youth participation in development programs outside of school through character attributes, moral virtue, perseverance, knowledge, skills and commitment. Likewise sports participation among young people can produce healthy lifestyles and shape social character (Samah et al., 2017; Defitrika & Mahmudah, 2021; Firmansyah, Sauri, & Kosasih, 2021; Reksiana, 2019; Palomäki et al., 2018; Yuniarto & Yudha, 2021). Morally speaking, young people believe that religion is about being a good person, friendly, respectful and responsible. Social interaction, trust, and shared vision are social capital that allows social ties related to religion to influence moral behavior. Thus the positive contribution of religion serves both as a protective influence and a catalyst for positive development (Faqihuddin, 2021; Fox et al., 2021; Iwuagwu, 2018; Pavić, 2021).

Based on the description of the study above, it can be understood that participation is taking part and being part of an activity. Being informed and empowered as a form of recognition is important for action. There must be a sense of participation for the action to be meaningful. If young people do not feel they are accepted as part of an activity, a formal structure, are not empowered and are not given opportunities, then there will be no participation. Participation involves a two-way relationship between the youth and the larger entities of society and government. Therefore, to involve youth in religious activities as a character development effort, mentors and models are needed, including from the family.

Youth age is a survival tool for a nation and state, so it must be equipped with noble morality (good character), armed with scientific intellect, knitted with mutual respect and mutual cooperation, brazenly to love the country, maintain excellent physical fitness, all of which are excellent. Indonesia recognises the conception of Kawah Candradimuka (a term in Java puppetry, which means a place to train oneself to be strong, trained, and agile). In the current perspective, Kawah Candradimuka is interpreted as an institution to train or galvanise young people as the nation's successor cadres with Indonesian character (Chaidir, 2012; KBB Online, n.d.). The concept of noble akhlaq or noble character focuses on the role of religion for youth, where a young person who practices religion well at its peak is well behaved, noble character has good behavior (Yulia, 2018; Marlina & Asbari, 2022). These traits provide peace, security, and comfort for their social environment, because virtuous akhlaq is the antithesis of all bad deeds.

Participation in religious activities in this research is focused on the phenomenon of *hijrah* in Indonesia. Within the framework of implementing the concept of noble akhlaq, as the name suggests *hijrah* which means to move. Referring to the history of the Prophet Muhammad who in the context of youth today is moving from bad behavior to good behavior or good character. This is in line with the concept of migration in Islamic literacy:

*Hijrah* means "*at-tarku*", leaving something behind. While in Islamic law, *hijrah* is defined as parting or moving from the land of kufr to the land of Islam because of concern for the safety of religion. In the hadith, the Prophet Muhammad SAW said "Let you migrate to the land of Habashah, because there is a king who has no one who is wronged on his side. Habashah is a land of honesty so that Allah will make it a solution for you from the suffering you are experiencing," and in a broader context, referring to the explanation of Al-Hafiz Abdurrauf Al-Munawi (952-1031 AH/1545-1622 AD), an Egyptian hadith expert, *hijrah* is essentially *tarkul manhiyyat*, leaving various religious restrictions. Therefore, *hijrah* is not limited to outward movement, but also includes inner movement or change (Muntaha, 2018).

#### METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative methods with descriptive analysis. Data collection through interviews and literature study. Qualitative research aims to explore deeper understanding of the subject and their social environment in order to find meaning so that they can make interpretations of their behavior (Fadli, 2021). Researchers examine the phenomenon of the *hijrah* festival, which is attended by youth as participation in religious activities, especially Islam so that understanding the meaning of *hijrah* can have an impact on the development of national character. The research subjects were taken from representatives of the Indonesian Ministry of Religion and *hijrah* festival participants. As Kholisoh and Bymoreno (2020) said, the research subject is a collection of information data that is relevant to the subject at hand. Interviews were conducted with participants who participated in the *hijrah* festival. Informants were selected directly during the event based on their voluntary availability. There were 10 participants who became informants in this study. Interview questions to participants were developed to get an overview of participants' knowledge and experience, motivation to participate in activities and their contribution to character building. Representatives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs were included to get an overview of the role and contribution of the government in religious activities in youth and also about religious moderation. In addition, data was also obtained from various secondary sources such as the performance report of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Strategic Plan and Performance Report of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Indonesian National Development Plan, journals relevant to the research topic both national and international, previous research and mass media.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A large portion of the young population characterises the composition of Indonesia's population. Youth according to Law No. 40 of 2009 are Indonesian citizens aged 16 to 30 years. According to the results of the 2019 National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas), the estimated number of youths is 64.19 million or a quarter of Indonesia's total population. There are more male than female youth, with a gender ratio of 103.16. The percentage of youth in urban areas is greater (57.94%) than in rural areas (42.06%). Based on distribution by region, more than half of youth are concentrated in Java, 55.28%. Unmarried youths are around 59.17% and are married at 39.44%, and the rest are divorced. A demographic map of

Indonesian youth can be seen in Figure 1 below:

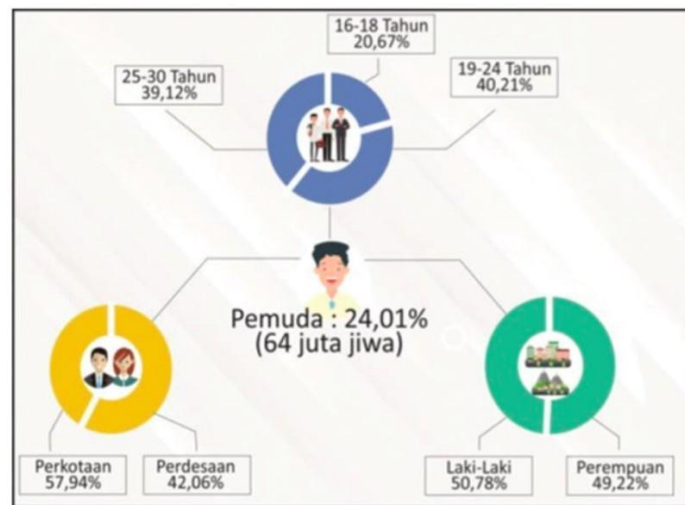


Figure 1. Distribution of Indonesian Youth 2019  
Source: BPS, Susenas March 2019

One of the strategic goals of youth development is to realise youth with character. The development of national culture and character has a central position in national development to create a nation state that is advanced, modern, superior, competitive and able to compete with other nations. One of the areas of national development that is very important and forms the basis of social, national and state life is the development of national character (Sukowati, 2017).

The aim of youth development is to present youth who are superior, reliable, virtuous, civilised, tolerant, helpful, nationalistic, energetic, upholding cultural values, and knowledgeable in science and technology based on Pancasila and imbued with faith and piety to God Almighty. Indonesian youth with character can be realised through mutual cooperation activities in several areas of social, political, religious, economic and cultural life. Youth mutual cooperation can be interpreted as youth who collaborate, in which a group of youth in it can help each other without the direct rewards they receive, the results of which are for the common good or public interest. The Ministry of Youth and Sports as the executor of development in the field of youth has carried out various activities to increase youth participation that produce significant output and have an impact on the embedded character of working together in developing the nation and country among the youth.

Religion is a moral and ethical foundation in community, nation and state, so that understanding and practice of religion properly is expected to support the realisation of Indonesian people with character (Desi et al., 2021; Putri, Maryana, & Eko, 2021; Sutisna, 2019). In line with the development of youth character through religious activities, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia) increases. Service programs and facilitation for religious people in performing worship and encourages and increases community participation in organising religious life services. Organising religious activities such as the holy book competitions of each religion are like the Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) and the Tilawatil Qur'an Selection (STQ) for Muslims.

Among Christians, the scripture-reading contest is held in the organisation of the Church Choir Festival (Pesparawi) and Church Music Performance for Catholics. Similarly, organising Utsawa Dharma Gita for Hindus, implementation of Swayamvara Tripitaka Gatha (STG), Sippa Dharma Samajja and Mahaniti Loka Dharma is also done within the Buddhist community (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2018). However, referring to data on youth participation in religious activities as outlined in the introduction, in the last ten years also shows a declining trend. Three indicators measure the participation of youth religious activities, namely the activity of teaching or prayer meetings, religious lectures, and religious holidays. All three are measured based on youth religious activities in houses of worship and elsewhere (Annisa, 2017; Putri, 2021; Fakhruddin, 2018).

Islamic religious activities are showing growth in mosques and on social media. The hijrah movement is becoming a new social trend among Muslim youth in Indonesia, and is an interesting topic for many researchers in Indonesia. Lectures delivered by *Ustadz* that are popular among youth and the general public gain great interest from worshipers in various cities in Indonesia. This communication style of such religious teachers is favoured by many and the question-and-answer sessions becomes guidance for pilgrims in applying Islamic teachings correctly. Motivation follows the youth hijrah movement due to the desire to change them for the better to find the meaning of hijrah for them (Giovanly & Chatamallah, 2018; Putra, 2018).

In the opinion of the research informants, there are some who have participated for the first time and those who have attended the hijrah fest several times. Informant V said: "I just joined and didn't know that this event has been going on since 2018, I feel the excitement of the young Islamic community at this event". Likewise, informant G who had attended the previous hijrah fest, "I came again because I was motivated by contemporary Islamic studies that are more relevant to the current condition of the ummah". In addition to learning religion, participants are also motivated to seek experience and learn business. Informant A stated that his goal was to find sharia shelter and business while informant S was more about finding experience in the current youth trend. When asked why they came to hijrah fest, according to them, hijrah fest provides a forum for sharia consumers and producers to meet at this event. Henceforth it is like motivating young entrepreneurs to try to live in sharia compliance. They consider hijrah fest as a gathering place to build communication and ecosystems among fellow Muslims. Usually this is related to sharia products.

Social media is an important tool in sharing information that can spread information faster than traditional media. Islamic scholars also use social media for propaganda purposes to reach young people mainly because of their digital literacy (Kadir, Sahari, & Judi, 2019). Lectures at the mosque by well-known and less-known clerics were normalised on social media so that netizens, who are generally millennial to get more enlightened (Amelia et al., 2020). The existence of solutions in studying Islam for young millennials is like filling the void of young people who are looking for their true identity. For adults born in the 1960s-1970s, listening to the knowledge of Islam is like revisiting what they already know. At the same time those born from the year 1980-2000, listening to the study of popular clerics is developing knowledge of the Islamic religion whilst also analysing and enabling their personal critique on the matter. This "*socially mediated publicness*", a situation when social media functions as a reflection; mediates public mediation on social issues (Chen, 2018; Gagrčin, 2022; Pang, Liu, & Lu, 2022; Raetzsch & Lünenborg, 2020).



The trend of the hijrah is strengthened with the emergence of figures from groups of public figures that also show the shift from those who do not wear the hijab to the veil, and the formation of elite communities in learning religious values (Addini, 2019; Hasan, 2019). The rise of the hijrah study activity was also followed by the desire to run the religion of Islam in a comprehensive manner, including protecting modesty with Islamic fashion, using other halal products, as well as building the people's economy through the festival hijrah (Alam et al., 2017; Hamudy & Hamudy, 2020; ISEF, n.d.). The phenomenon of hijrah also colored religious movements among Indonesian people, as Wictorowicz (cited in Addini, 2019) said that a movement requires the mobilisation of a set of elements: resources and monetary structures, communication technologies, gathering places, social networks, etc. that is used to collect individual complaints and organise, lead and mobilise resistance (Addini, 2019). This movement also shows that the activities of the *sunnah* are different from the stereotypes of religious views which tend to be radical and intolerance not only to adherents of different religions but also those of the same religion, also caused by the influence of the use of social media on youth (Addini, 2019; Musa, 2019; Suraya & Mulyana, 2020).

Hijrah fest or other hijrah studies increases youth activities initiated by the government and at the same time hijrah activities are sporadically growing in many places in Indonesia. The messages of hijrah are very closely related to youth independence, both independence in deciding to migrate privately or communally. Independence can be seen from one's decision to change for the better, to become a *kaffah* Islam, not using usury funds, helping with kindness, selling their own products, until the formation of an Islamic economic community becomes a form of youth independence.

At present Indonesia has only passed through the second phase in the direction and priority stages of national character development, namely the strengthening of strategy and implementation, and entering the third phase in the direction of national character development policy for 2010-2025. The priority stage at this stage is to carry out continuous development of the results achieved at stages 1 and 2. Development is carried out by efforts to maximise the factors supporting success and minimise the factors causing failure through a continuous monitoring and evaluation process. The success of the national character development awareness raising movement and the strengthening of strategy and implementation development is a huge social capital to take steps at the national macro level.

Lyda Judson introduced the concept of social capital in her article entitled "The Rural School Community Center" in the early 20th century. According to Judson, social capital is not assets or money, but rather an intrinsic factor in society including; good will, friendship, mutual sympathy, social relations and close cooperation between individuals and families in social groups (Santoso, 2020). Social capital is supported by social relations where (1) there is a flow of information about various kinds of social environmental needs; (2) there are influences that are able to mobilise support; (3) become a means / media to instil and spread trust that is mutually beneficial to one another; (4) it becomes a means to reinforce social identity so that people will easily develop mutual respect relationships. This mutual respect creates a conducive condition for sharing interests and resources, and provides a sense of security that ensures continuity of activities (Fathy, 2019).

Referring to the opinion above, the hijrah fest is social capitals for the community, whose activities encourage many young people to be independent, work together, have good morals, and this is in line with the state's goal of building the character development of Indonesian youth. In its activities the hijrah community uses the means of communication to

help each other in mutual cooperation with fellow worshipers and outside the congregation. The activity was designed by the management and leaders (*ustadz*) who have the influence to move where the mutual assistance is directed. This migratory community grew out of mutual trust among its members and without them knowing it had formed the social identity of the emigrated youth.

The contribution of hijrah fest to the development of the nation's character was responded positively by the informants. They said that hijrah fest invites the nation's children to be humble and avoid prejudice, be friendly, have good prejudices, help, use halal products and so on. The character that is expected to grow from this hijrah fest according to them is mutual respect. That a Muslim is not only encouraged to memorise the Quran but also to practice it. This means that these activities are positively correlated with the concept of national character building.

The empirical basis of hijrah is clearly mentioned above; even the conceptualisation of the character of hijrah is 14 centuries old from Indonesia today. The concept of hijrah has been practiced and spoken for generations through time and place through Islamic religious traditions in the archipelago. The concept of Islamic hijrah has also been assimilated by the local wisdom of the archipelago in the form of commemoration of the Islamic New Year's such as *Asyuro*, one-night *suro*, *grebeg keraton*, *sedekah laut* and others which appear as cultural festivals with the distinctive character of the Indonesian archipelago, where in the activity is very thick "tepo seliro" mutual cooperation and tolerance. This phenomenon is relevant analysed through the model of relational development systems and character development, conceptualising character as an attribute of an individual's relationship with its social context involving coherent "doing the right thing" (morally and behaviorally) across time and place to provide mutually beneficial benefits for themselves and others (Lerner, 2018).

Youth participation in national development needs to be increased in a variety of positive activities including religious activities both facilitated by the government and initiated by the community in a sustainable manner in order to realise the nation's character. Good character, good behavior, noble character is very closely related to religious teachings. Respecting fellow religions and between religions is also a priority in youth development. An understanding of moderation in the context of religion is the essence of plural and multicultural Indonesian society in building harmony in religious diversity.

Religious moderation is a shared moral goodness that is relevant not only to individual behavior, but also to the community or institution. In the Indonesian context, religious moderation is needed as a cultural strategy in caring for Indonesia's (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019). Indonesia consists of various heterogeneous ethnic groups who have agreed to live together within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and Pancasila has become a glue for various understandings and religions that have evolved and passed through a period of half a century. Religious values have sold themselves with local cultural wisdom, even the State instituted several religious laws so that religious rituals can work well, and interfaith relations are harmonious and peaceful. Such is the Indonesian empiricism, which has almost reached the age of a century in its wholeness. Indonesia with its polite character, tolerant and able to dialogue with diversity.

## CONCLUSION

Youth participation in religious activities and character building of the Indonesian nation in general has decreased, while on the other hand hijrah fest colors youth participation in Islamic religious activities in order to strengthen the bond of brotherhood among Muslims.

Hijrah fest is the culmination of activities in the hijrah community, because it brings together various hijrah communities initiated by artists and art workers who have begun to migrate, explore and practice Islamic teachings in their lives. Hijrah Fest is open to the public, both for those who have just emigrated and those of different faiths who want to get to know Islam. Unlike the study format that has been identically held in mosques, hijrah fest packs it so interestingly, with the selection of places that represent the current image such as the Jakarta Convention Center, which is usually used for large events. Combining the concept of stage, tenants, and communication that really suits the tastes of millennials. Hijrah fest introduced the beauty of Islamic teachings to young people by optimizing the use of social media through narratives that are loved by today's youth. In addition to featuring nationally renowned ustadz, as well as preachers from various regions in knowledge studies, this event opened an exhibition of various Islamic products, lifestyle, tour & travel, Islamic finance, fashion show, halal food corner, philanthropy, bazaar and so on. Youth participation in hijrah fest illustrates how youth are very enthusiastic in gaining knowledge about the message of Islam, namely hijrah which contains obedience to Allah SWT, practicing religion kaffah, economic independence without ribawi, brotherhood among Muslims, tolerance and love for the country.

Religious moderation offers a solution for global change in understanding religion and transnational issues to safeguard Indonesia's national interests. Religious moderation in its application aims to maintain harmony between ethnic groups and between adherents of religion so as not to get caught up in fanaticism that damages tolerance and national unity. Religious moderation is also closely related to youth participation, in which its role in society is like a fence that fosters the growth and development of Indonesian youth character. Youth participation in the hijrah fest is in line with the theory of the relational development system in which individual youth relationships that occur strengthen one another to form an independent hijrah community. Hijrah Fest is in line with the vision of the Indonesian government for the realization of a sovereign, independent and personality based on mutual cooperation.

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#### BIODATA

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