

## IMPLEMENTATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION VALUES IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS (A CASE STUDY OF MA NU DARUL ISLAH SURENGEDE, WONOSOBO)

Anif Adniyansah<sup>1</sup>, Maryono<sup>1\*</sup>, Fatiatun<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Islamic Education Program, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Al-Qur'an University of Sciences, Wonosobo, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Physics Education Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Education, Al-Qur'an University of Science, Wonosobo, Indonesia

Email corresponding author: maryono@unsiq.ac.id

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of character education values in Islamic boarding schools, with a case study at MA NU Darul Islah Surengede, Wonosobo. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach through interviews, observation, and document analysis, the research examines how pesantren-based character values are integrated into the educational process. The findings reveal that character education at MA NU Darul Islah is implemented through a holistic approach that combines the national Merdeka Curriculum with the distinctive Nahdlatul Ulama pesantren curriculum via the Madrasah Operational Curriculum (KOM). Key values cultivated include religiosity/spirituality, noble character (akhlaq), discipline, responsibility, independence, religious moderation, social concern, and leadership. These values are instilled through daily habituation programs (such as congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, mujahadah, and classroom cleaning schedules), teacher role modeling, and extracurricular activities. Supporting factors include visionary leadership, consistent teacher role modeling, strong stakeholder collaboration, and the supportive pesantren environment. However, challenges persist, including students' diverse backgrounds, the dominance of academic focus, uncontrolled use of mobile phones, and external environmental influences. The study concludes that effective character education in pesantren requires consistent integration of formal and non-formal approaches, strong role modeling by educators, and continuous collaboration among all stakeholders to overcome existing obstacles.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In education, values are a fundamental concept with a very broad and profound meaning. Generally speaking, values can be understood as something that is valuable, of high quality, and embodies qualities that are beneficial to human life. Values in education are closely linked to the process of knowledge transfer, character building, and the development of students' potential (Baginda 2018). Education, there are many ways to instill values. Values are embedded in academic subjects, extracurricular activities, and school culture. Teachers play a vital role as role models in instilling these values in their students, not only through verbal instruction but also by setting a real-life example. A positive school environment also helps instill positive values in

students (Editor: 2011).

Education plays a vital role in shaping students' character, fostering good citizenship, and helping students develop and build their character. It is no exaggeration to say that Indonesia is currently facing a decline in the quality of its students' character. This is evident in issues such as violence, student brawls, and a lack of mutual support (Muhamad Syaiful Amin, Maryono 2023). Values are the foundation of character education. If we do not have a clear understanding of the values we wish to instill through character education, we will lose our direction and purpose. Values such as integrity, honesty, responsibility, discipline, religious devotion, tolerance, cooperation, and many others serve as the philosophical foundation that helps define the character we aim to cultivate through the educational process (Aini 2024).

Character education must integrate the noble values of Pancasila as the philosophical foundation of the Indonesian nation, which include values such as belief in God, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice. It is hoped that character education will shape Indonesia's golden generation—one that is not only intellectually outstanding but also possesses a strong character, high ethical standards, and integrity (Paolina et al. 2022). Values in character education refer to a set of moral values that are systematically instilled through role modeling, daily activities, and culture to develop personalities who are faithful, virtuous, and responsible for social and national life. Character education encompasses cognitive and psychomotor instruction as well as affective habituation, so that these principles become habits and ways of life (Fahham 2013).

In accordance with the mandate of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and the Character Education Strengthening program of the Ministry of Education and Culture, character education is an essential part of shaping morally upright younger generations. Values such as tolerance, integrity, and responsibility are increasingly neglected amid global developments and the rapid flow of digital information (Indonesia 2003). Character education must integrate the noble values of Pancasila as the philosophical foundation of the Indonesian nation, which include values such as belief in God, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice. It is hoped that character education will shape Indonesia's golden generation who are not only intellectually excellent but also possess resilient personalities, strong ethics, and high integrity (Paolina et al. 2022).

Schools should become a second home for students to build their character by applying positive values in daily life. The process of character education does not take place only in the classroom, but also through teachers' examples, a good school culture, and the active participation of all parties involved in education, including families and the community (Utama 2023). However, the reality on the ground shows that character education at the Ma Nu Darul Islah Surengede Islamic boarding school still faces many complex problems and challenges. One of the issues identified is that students do not feel empathy toward their teachers. This is reflected in the students' attitudes and behavior when interacting with teachers on a daily basis within the madrasah. This problem is closely linked to students' lack of awareness regarding the importance of respecting and valuing teachers as those who impart knowledge and life values.

Another concerning phenomenon is the lack of attention and empathy shown by students during class. This situation affects the effectiveness of learning and reflects a lack of character values such as courtesy, respect for others, and a sense of responsibility toward one's studies. The lack of adherence to school rules also indicates that efforts to enforce discipline and compliance have not yet been fully successful. Students still frequently break school rules, arrive late, fail to

complete assignments, or ignore the rules.

A more serious issue is the rise of juvenile delinquency, such as student bullying. This phenomenon indicates that students lack values such as empathy, tolerance, and compassion. Bullying not only has a psychological impact on the victims, but also suggests that the character education system is failing to teach people to value and respect one another. On the contrary, teaching character through example is the most effective method, but some teachers fail to exemplify character values effectively. If teachers do not demonstrate consistency between their actions and their words, they cannot help students internalize those values. Based on the above discussion, the author is interested in conducting a study titled “The Implementation of Character Education Values in Islamic Boarding Schools (A Case Study of MA NU Darul Islah Surengede, Wonosobo)”

## **2. METHOD**

Descriptive qualitative research is a research method designed to understand and explain an event in detail and as it is, without the influence of excessive interpretation. This type of qualitative research is descriptive in nature and tends to utilize analysis (Waruwu 2024). This type of study places greater emphasis on process and meaning, using theoretical frameworks as a guide to ensure that the research focus aligns with reality. Generally, qualitative research gathers its primary data through interviews and observation (Sugiyono 2020).

This type of research falls under the category of case analysis. The study involves a detailed examination of various events and actions that have taken place over a specific period—whether involving individuals, groups, organizations, or programs—in order to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of a specific entity within its current context. This type of research is field research. Field research is a method conducted directly in the area where an event takes place. The primary objective of this method is to collect primary data directly and in context through direct interaction with the objects or subjects under study (Kaharuddin 2021).

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. Implementation of the Various Values of the Pesantren Curriculum at Ma NU Darul Islah Surengede Wonosobo**

The research conducted at a madrasah under the auspices of a pesantren foundation in Kertek District, Wonosobo Regency, Central Java, produced various findings that need to be described before further analysis. This description is intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research setting, including the institution’s profile, the characteristics of the informants, and a general overview of the implementation of character education values that are characteristic of the pesantren education system. These values include religiosity, morality, discipline, responsibility, independence, and other noble values that serve as the foundation for shaping students’ personalities.

### **3.1.1. Curriculum Integration and Educational Methods**

The implementation of pesantren-based character education values does not rely solely on informal activities, but is also formally integrated into the applicable curriculum. The vice principal for curriculum explained that the approach used is holistic, combining the national curriculum with the distinctive features of Nahdlatul Ulama-based pesantren education. This integration is reflected in subject matter, daily habituation, and pesantren activities and culture, which are inseparable parts of the learning process. Curriculum is a learning plan designed to help students make the most of their time to explore concepts and strengthen their competencies in achieving learning outcomes (Khasanah, Majid, and Fatiatun 2023).

In addition to formal approaches, non-formal methods are also implemented through habituation, direct experience, and role modeling. Through this approach, values such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, and noble character are not only understood conceptually, but also become part of students' personalities in daily life. The main strategy for combining the Merdeka Curriculum with the pesantren curriculum is carried out through the Madrasah Operational Curriculum (KOM), which includes morning routines such as joint prayer, dhuha prayer, mujahadah, teacher role modeling, and continuous evaluation involving various stakeholders. This approach allows the national curriculum requirements to be met without losing the identity and spirit of pesantren education.

### **3.1.2. Habituation Programs and Character Value Implementation**

The cultivation of character values in the classroom is carried out through a relaxed but meaningful approach, namely motivational dialogue that encourages students to imitate honesty and responsibility. The homeroom teacher explained that such interaction is not merely verbal, but is also realized through giving students real responsibility, such as maintaining classroom cleanliness through a daily cleaning schedule, which reflects the values of discipline and environmental care.

The implementation of discipline is not limited to classroom activities, but is also reflected in the habit of arriving on time. The arrival time limit is set by considering the condition of students who live in the pesantren, so that they can still fulfill their obligation to recite the Qur'an before coming to the madrasah. Thus, the discipline of time applied is not merely a formal rule, but a reflection of understanding the balance between academic obligations and religious responsibilities.

### **3.1.3. Identification of Core Values**

Character values that form the foundation of education in this institution are manifested through various structured and consistent habituation activities. Activities such as Qur'an recitation, religious study, mujahadah after the Asr prayer, and Qur'an memorization are an integral part of students' daily life and simultaneously function as a means of internalizing religious values. Congregational prayers, both noon and dhuha prayers, are monitored systematically through an attendance system to ensure that every student carries them out with full awareness and discipline.

The values that are developed and prioritized include spirituality, which contains elements

of faith and blessing, followed by noble character, discipline, independence, religious moderation, social concern, and leadership. This is emphasized by the vice principal for student affairs, who highlighted that character development must proceed in balance among religious, social, and personal dimensions so that students can grow into complete and useful individuals in society.

#### **3.1.4. The Role of Educators as Role Models**

Educators are an inseparable element in the success of character education implementation. Teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge, but the main role models who bring character values to life in every activity at the madrasah. The vice principal for curriculum emphasized that teacher involvement is highly integral, as they are directly engaged in both the learning process and students' daily lives, working collaboratively and consistently, or *istiqamah*.

The role of teacher role modeling is very important because students are more likely to imitate behaviors they observe directly than those explained only verbally. Therefore, the success of character education depends greatly on teachers' consistency in behavior, speech, obedience to rules, and practice of the values being taught. In the *pesantren* context, teachers are central figures who do not only transfer knowledge, but also instill values through concrete examples in daily life.

### **3.2. Factors Supporting and Hindering Character Education Values at the MA NU Darul Islah Islamic Boarding School in Surengede, Wonosobo**

The success of implementing character education values in this institution is supported by a number of interrelated factors. From an internal perspective, the most decisive factors are the visionary leadership of the madrasah principal, the consistent role modeling of teachers, and the *pesantren* system that supports the entire educational process. These factors are strengthened by a solid curriculum team, a well-structured culture of habituation in the madrasah, the availability of adequate facilities, and the consistent enforcement of rules. All of these elements create a conducive educational environment for the internalization of character values in students.

The supporting factors also include the involvement of all stakeholders, both in terms of physical resources, policy, and finance. Coordination among the foundation, the committee, the teachers' council, the dormitory administrators, and the *ustaz* and *ustazah* is carried out continuously in order to achieve shared success. At the classroom level, collaboration within a solid team of teachers becomes a main pillar, where every emerging problem is solved collectively through mutual support and the sharing of solutions. The *pesantren* environment itself is also a significant supporting factor, because students who live in the *pesantren* are already accustomed to character-building habits from the beginning.

On the other hand, there are several inhibiting factors that pose challenges to the implementation of character education. Externally, the heterogeneity of students' backgrounds from various regions, with diverse cultures, creates a challenge that requires intensive coordination with the foundation, dormitory administrators, and parents. In addition, the curriculum still tends to emphasize academic aspects, so character development does not receive sufficient attention. The *pesantren* curriculum has also not yet been fully written down and measured, and the integration between the *pesantren* curriculum and teachers' capacities has not been optimal.

Another significant obstacle is the use of digital devices, especially mobile phones, which

may distract students from the learning process. To address this, students living in the pesantren are prohibited from bringing mobile phones, while non-resident students are allowed to use them under strict supervision. However, field observations show that covert use of mobile phones remains a real challenge and makes the learning process less conducive. Another external inhibiting factor is the influence of students who do not come from a pesantren background, which may affect the behavior of other students. The vulnerability of adolescents to peer influence makes consistent supervision an unavoidable necessity.

In response to these challenges, the main strategy applied is to integrate, simplify, and maximize what already exists, rather than adding new burdens. This approach allows facilities and infrastructure to be optimized, resources to be maximized, and pesantren values to continue running consistently. In addition, communication with parents is facilitated through an online communication group that enables the madrasah to directly convey students' conditions and confirm appropriate solutions. In this way, parents are not merely information recipients but active partners in the process of instilling character values.

The impact of character education implementation does not appear instantly, but results from persistent and consistent policy application. The foundation's support in policy and funding has been proven to positively strengthen students' character through various religious activities such as mujahadah, PHBI, classroom learning activities, and Pramuka extracurricular activities. The madrasah principal explained that every obstacle and finding that is not aligned with the goals is always discussed with the foundation as material for evaluation and future policy making.

Overall, the factors that have a positive impact include the dormitory system and habituation, teacher role modeling, parental support, and structured activity programs. Meanwhile, the factors that have a negative impact include lack of supervision, outside environmental influences, uncontrolled mobile phone use, and weak collaboration between parents and the community. Therefore, comprehensive evaluation and coordination among the foundation, teachers, and students themselves are urgently needed so that pesantren character education values can be realized, maintained, and developed sustainably.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The implementation of character education values at MA NU Darul Islah Surengede Wonosobo has been carried out through a holistic and integrative approach that combines the national curriculum with the unique characteristics of pesantren education. Character values such as religiosity, noble character, discipline, responsibility, independence, and social concern are successfully instilled through daily habituation, teacher role modeling, and structured pesantren activities. This study concludes that the pesantren system provides a highly conducive environment for character formation because education is not limited to the classroom but encompasses all aspects of students' daily lives. The synergy between formal learning, habituation, and the living example of teachers and dormitory administrators forms the main strength of character education in this institution. However, several challenges remain, including the heterogeneity of students' backgrounds, the influence of digital devices, and suboptimal curriculum documentation. To optimize the implementation of character education, it is necessary to strengthen teacher capacity, improve the documentation and evaluation of the pesantren curriculum, enhance supervision of students' use of technology, and increase active collaboration

with parents and the community. Ultimately, the successful implementation of character education in Islamic boarding schools is expected to produce graduates who are not only academically competent but also possess strong faith, noble character, and the ability to contribute positively to society, in line with the vision of forming Indonesia's golden generation with Pancasila values and Islamic teachings.

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