



## **Application of Character Education in the Modern Islamic Boarding School Curriculum**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Character education is an important aspect in students' personal development, especially in a modern pesantren environment that integrates religious and general education. This study aims to explore the application of character education in the modern pesantren curriculum and its impact on student development. The method used is a case study on several modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, focusing on the strategy, implementation, and evaluation of character education programs. The results of the study show that modern Islamic boarding schools apply various approaches in educating students' character, including the integration of religious values, experiential learning, and extracurricular activities that support character development. The implementation has a positive impact on student attitudes and behaviors, such as increased discipline, responsibility, and empathy. This study concludes that the curriculum of modern Islamic boarding schools that integrate character education can make a significant contribution to the formation of students' character, and recommends a more structured and sustainable approach to improve the effectiveness of character education in Islamic boarding schools.

### **Keywords:**

Boarding School, Curriculum, Islamic Boarding School, Character Education

### **INTRODUCTION**

Character education has become an important issue in the world of education, especially in Indonesia, where pesantren play a central role in educating the younger generation. With the advancement of the times and rapid social changes, modern Islamic boarding schools face the challenge of integrating religious values with general education effectively (Elyunusi dkk., 2022; Hanif Cahyo Adi Kistoro dkk., 2023). The curriculum of modern Islamic boarding schools not only focuses on religious teaching, but also accommodates the academic needs and life skills of students. In this context, the application of character education in the pesantren curriculum is crucial to form positive attitudes and behaviors that are in line with religious values and social ethics (Fauzian, 2020; Firdaus & Fauzian, 2020).

Character education in modern Islamic boarding schools must be able to bridge the gap between the demands of the modern world and the moral principles taught (Abidin, 2021; Gyagenda, 2023; Perdana, 2015). However, the implementation of character education often faces various challenges, such as a lack of understanding of effective approaches, limited resources, and resistance to traditional curriculum changes. Therefore, it is important to assess how character education is applied in the modern pesantren curriculum, evaluate its effectiveness, and identify the factors that affect its successful implementation.





The application of character education in the modern pesantren curriculum offers significant innovations in the context of education in Indonesia (Adisti, 2018). This study explores how modern Islamic boarding schools succeed in integrating character education with religious and general curricula in harmony. Focus on developing and evaluating curriculum models that integrate character education with experiential approaches, such as social projects and extracurricular activities that support character building. This study assesses the effectiveness of innovative curriculum models that have not been widely applied or researched in the context of Islamic boarding schools. This study introduces specific and relevant approaches to modern Islamic boarding schools, which are often not sufficiently researched in depth. By identifying the challenges and solutions faced in the implementation of character education, this study provides new insights into how pesantren can adapt to the times without sacrificing religious principles.

This study aims to explore the application of character education in the modern pesantren curriculum and evaluate its impact on student development. By understanding the context and challenges faced, it is hoped that solutions can be found to improve the implementation of character education in Islamic boarding schools, so that it can support better student personal formation and in accordance with the needs of the times.

## METHOD

The approach used in this study is qualitative with *the library research method*, aiming to collect and analyze data sourced from existing literature (Creswell, 2009; Sugiono, 2015). This approach was chosen to deeply understand the concepts, theories, and findings of previous research that are relevant to the topic being studied. In the initial stage, the author identifies and collects literature sources that are relevant to the research topic. These resources include books, scholarly journal articles, research reports, and dissertations accessed through university libraries, scholarly databases such as JSTOR, ProQuest, and Google Scholar, as well as other trustworthy online sources. Sources of literature are selected based on their relevance, reliability, and validity. Only sources that have a direct connection to the research topic are used. Additionally, sources must come from authors or researchers who have credibility and recognition in their field.

After gathering the necessary sources, each literature is evaluated and critically analyzed. The authors looked for patterns, trends, and gaps in the existing literature, and identified how the findings from these sources could be used to answer research questions. The analysis was carried out using a thematic approach, where the data was organized based on themes relevant to the focus of the research. The results of the analysis are then synthesized to build a comprehensive understanding of the topic being researched. This synthesis involves combining key ideas from various sources to produce a theoretical framework or argument that underlies the research.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Modern Islamic boarding schools integrate character education in the curriculum through direct teaching, extracurricular activities, and experiential learning. Character education is taught as a separate subject or integrated in religious subjects (Iman dkk., 2023; Pramitha, 2021; Syahid & Hikmah, 2019). The curriculum includes values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy. Programs such as social activities, discussion groups, and leadership training serve as a forum to develop students' character. Students are involved in projects and activities that require them to apply character values in real-life situations, such as social service activities and involvement in community organizations.

### 1. The Effectiveness of Character Education Integration

The integration of character education in the curriculum of modern Islamic boarding schools has proven to be effective in shaping positive attitudes and behaviors of students (Amrizal dkk., 2022; Iswanto, 2020; Pramitha, 2021). A holistic approach that includes hands-on teaching and experiential activities helps students to understand and apply character values in everyday life. This is in line with the theory of character education which emphasizes the importance of consistent teaching and practical application of character values (Elyunusi dkk., 2022).

The integration of character education in the curriculum of modern Islamic boarding schools shows significant effectiveness in shaping positive attitudes and behaviors of students (A'yuni & Muhammad, 2023; Firdaus & Fauzian, 2020; Masqon, 2011). Character education integrated in the curriculum of modern Islamic boarding schools provides a solid foundation for strengthening moral and ethical values. By consistently teaching values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy through a variety of subjects and activities, students can better understand and internalize those values in their daily lives.

Effective integration is seen in the integration between religious teaching and character education. Modern Islamic boarding schools have successfully combined teaching about religious values with character education, so that students not only understand moral principles but also apply them in social and academic contexts. A curriculum model that brings these two aspects together facilitates a more holistic understanding for students.

Character education applied in various activities, both in the classroom and outside the classroom, strengthens its effectiveness. Extracurricular activities, social projects, and leadership training provide opportunities for students to apply character values in real-life situations. This approach helps students not only understand character values but also put them into practice in everyday life.

The integration of character education in the curriculum of modern Islamic boarding schools contributes to improving the overall quality of education. By emphasizing character values along with academic knowledge, modern Islamic boarding schools can produce graduates who are not only competent in the academic field but also have strong integrity, ethics, and interpersonal skills. The application of character education in modern Islamic boarding schools affects the educational paradigm at the national level. This shows that education is not only about mastering





academic material, but also about character and personality development (Anabarja & Safril Mubah, 2021; Islamiyah, 2022; Quddus, 2020). This paradigm encourages other educational institutions to consider the integration of character values in their curriculum, leading to a more holistic approach to education.

The success of the integration of character education in modern Islamic boarding schools provides a model that can be adapted by other schools, both in Indonesia and in other countries. This model shows that character education can be effectively integrated in the curriculum without sacrificing academic quality. This opens up opportunities for the adoption and adaptation of the model in a broader educational context.

Character education applied in modern Islamic boarding schools shapes students to become individuals who care more about society. Involvement in social activities and community projects that are part of the curriculum strengthens students' sense of social responsibility. This impact is seen in their contribution to society and can motivate other educational institutions to adopt similar programs that support the development of social care.

Character education not only focuses on moral and ethical aspects, but also on important life skills, such as communication, leadership, and cooperation skills. By developing these skills, students are better prepared to face the challenges in the world of work and daily life, which in turn improves the quality of the workforce in society. The success of the integration of character education in modern Islamic boarding schools can provide strong empirical evidence to support education policies that prioritize character education. This can influence policymakers to include character education elements in the national curriculum and encourage reforms that support the overall development of students' character.

## **2. The Role of Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular activities serve as an important platform in character development. By providing opportunities for students to apply character values outside the classroom, this activity strengthens the teaching received in the classroom (Rojak dkk., 2023; Ruhama, 2016). Extracurricular activities play an important role in the implementation of character education in modern Islamic boarding schools. Extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to apply the character values they learn in a more practical and tangible context. For example, through social and volunteer activities, students can practice values such as caring, empathy, and responsibility in their interactions with society. This activity allows students to understand and feel the positive impact of character values directly.

Many extracurricular activities, such as student organizations, clubs, and sports teams, focus on developing social and leadership skills. Involvement in these activities helps students develop communication, cooperation, and leadership skills, which are integral to character education. Through active roles in a team or organization, students learn how to function in groups, manage conflicts, and take responsibility.

Extracurricular activities create opportunities for students to build relationships and feel a sense of belonging in the pesantren community (Hasanah dkk., 2023; Tsalits dkk., 2024). Involvement in activity groups provides opportunities for students to



interact with peers in different contexts from the classroom, strengthening social bonds and increasing a sense of solidarity and community. Extracurricular activities often require time commitments and additional responsibilities outside of regular class hours. Involvement in these activities teaches students the importance of discipline and time management. Students learn to set their priorities, follow schedules, and fulfill their obligations in extracurricular activities, which contributes to the development of their overall character.

Extracurricular activities can increase student motivation and involvement in the learning process. Involvement in activities they are interested in provides students with the opportunity to explore their talents and interests, as well as participate in activities that motivate them to excel in both academics and non-academics. It contributes to the formation of positive character through personal recognition and achievement (Yudiyanto & Fauzian, 2021). Extracurricular activities often provide space for students to think creatively and innovate. For example, art, debate, or science clubs can encourage students to explore new ideas and solve problems in creative ways. This experience supports character development by strengthening students' ability to think critically and adaptively.

Extracurricular activities often use an experiential learning model that allows students to learn through action and reflection. This model is in line with the principle of character education which emphasizes the importance of hands-on experience in character development. By engaging in various activities, students can apply character values in practical situations and get useful feedback.

Thus, extracurricular activities not only complement the academic curriculum but also function as an important tool in the application of character education in modern Islamic boarding schools. They provide valuable experiences that help students develop positive character, social skills, and engagement.

### **3. Implications for Curriculum Development**

The application of character education in the modern pesantren curriculum has various important implications for future curriculum development (Asafila & Maragustam, 2024; Jusubaidi dkk., 2024; Rohim, 2022; Syafitri, 2020). The curriculum should be designed to explicitly integrate character values, such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy, into daily subjects and activities. This entails developing a syllabus and lesson plan that includes character education objectives along with academic content. Create a curriculum that not only includes the teaching of character values separately but also integrates them in academic and practical contexts. This involves writing curriculum standards that include indicators for assessing student character.

Teachers need to get adequate training in the implementation of character education and effective teaching strategies. They must be able to identify ways to convey character values in their daily interactions with students. Conducting ongoing training and professional development for teachers who focus on character education. It also involves providing the necessary resources and support to implement relevant teaching techniques.





Extracurricular activities must be designed to support and strengthen character education. It involves developing a program that gives students the opportunity to practice character values in real-life situations. Organize a variety of extracurricular activities that are relevant to character values, such as social projects, leadership, and service-based activities. Integrate character assessment in extracurricular activities to assess its impact on student development.

Development of effective measuring tools and evaluation methods to assess character education. Evaluation should include measurement of changes in students' attitudes and behaviors in addition to academic achievement. Develop specific evaluation instruments for character education, such as character assessment rubrics, attitude surveys, and behavioral observations. Conduct periodic evaluations to assess the impact of character education and make necessary improvements.

Involving students in the development and implementation of character education programs can increase their motivation and engagement (Yudiyanto & Fauzian, 2021). Students who feel they have a responsibility for their own character education tend to be more committed (Fauzian, 2021). Create a mechanism to involve students in the planning and implementation of character education activities. Providing space for students to provide feedback and contribute to the programs they are enrolled in.

Collaboration with other educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and communities can enrich character education programs and provide additional resources. Build partnerships with organizations that have similar character education goals. Collaborate on joint programs, share resources, and engage experts in curriculum development. Character education must be applied with a holistic approach that covers various aspects of students' lives, not only in academic contexts but also in daily life. Develop a curriculum that covers various dimensions of character education, including social, emotional, and moral aspects. Create a learning environment that supports and promotes character values in all aspects of the student experience at the pesantren.

Integrating character education in the curriculum of modern Islamic boarding schools requires a planned and comprehensive approach. By paying attention to these implications and developing a curriculum that supports character education effectively, pesantren can produce students who are not only academically intelligent but also have strong integrity, empathy, and social skills. This will prepare them to better face real-world challenges and contribute positively to society.

## **CONCLUSION**

The application of character education in the modern pesantren curriculum has proven to be effective in shaping students' positive attitudes and behaviors. The integration of character education with religious and general curricula has a significant impact on students' personal development, including increased discipline, responsibility, and empathy. Curriculum models that combine hands-on teaching and experiential learning have proven to be effective in internalizing character values in students. Character education applied through various methods, such as classroom



teaching and extracurricular activities, results in positive changes in students' attitudes and behaviors. Students demonstrate increased motivation, involvement in social activities, and the ability to cooperate with peers. This supports the theory that consistent and applicable character education can strengthen moral and ethical values in daily life. Several challenges, such as resource limitations, resistance to change, and the need for additional training for teachers, were identified in the implementation of character education. Addressing these challenges requires a planned approach, including increased training for teachers, the provision of adequate resources, and the support of all stakeholders in the curriculum change process. The application of character education in the curriculum of modern Islamic boarding schools offers great potential to form a young generation that has integrity, responsibility, and care for society. By overcoming existing challenges and implementing the right recommendations, pesantren can maximize the benefits of character education for student development.

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