CONTRIBUTION OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL IN CHARACTER FORMATION OF STUDENTS AT BAHRUL ULUM ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL PUJON MALANG

Royyan Atabik, Badrul Arifin

Universitas Al-Qolam Malang, Indonesia
Jalan Putatlor Gondanglegi Malang Jawa Timur
Email: royyanatabik22@alqolam.ac.id, badrularifin@alqolam.ac.id

Abstract: This study investigates the contribution of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Pujon, Malang, to the character development of its students. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the research focuses on the strategies implemented by the pesantren, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors in the character-building process. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and literature review, and were analyzed using an interactive method until reaching saturation. The findings reveal that the pesantren plays a pivotal role in shaping students' social character through four main strategies: instructional activities, role modeling, habituation, and the use of advice and corrective punishment in an educational manner. Supporting factors include students' intrinsic motivation, the conducive environment of the pesantren, and the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure. Conversely, challenges arise from limited teacher quality and financial constraints. These results highlight that pesantren function not only as religious educational institutions but also as strategic agents of social and moral development, significantly contributing to the formation of disciplined, responsible, and morally upright students.

Keywords: Pesantren, Character Education, Students

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji kontribusi Pondok Pesantren Bahrul Ulum Pujon, Malang dalam pembentukan karakter santri melalui pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Fokus penelitian diarahkan pada strategi yang diterapkan pesantren, faktor pendukung, serta hambatan yang dihadapi dalam proses pembentukan karakter. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan studi pustaka, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis interaktif hingga mencapai saturasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pondok pesantren berperan sentral dalam membentuk karakter sosial santri melalui empat strategi utama, yaitu pembelajaran, keteladanan, pembiasaan, serta pemberian nasihat dan hukuman yang bersifat edukatif. Faktor pendukung yang ditemukan mencakup motivasi internal santri, lingkungan pesantren yang kondusif, serta ketersediaan sarana prasarana yang mendukung proses pembinaan. Namun, proses tersebut juga menghadapi tantangan berupa keterbatasan kualitas pengajar dan lemahnya sumber pendanaan. Temuan ini mempertegas bahwa pondok pesantren tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai lembaga pendidikan agama, tetapi juga sebagai institusi strategis yang berkontribusi nyata dalam pembentukan karakter santri yang berakhlak, disiplin, dan bertanggung jawab.

Kata Kunci: Pesantren, Pendidikan Karakter, Santri

INTRODUCTION

Education is a learning process that holds a very essential position in the life of every human being. In general, education can be interpreted as an effort carried out consciously and systematically designed to develop the various potentials of students (Ki Hajar Dewantara, 2013; Tilaar, 2015). From an etymological perspective, the term education in English is known as education,

while in Latin it is called educatum. This term is formed from a combination of two words, namely E and Duco. The element E represents the process of developing from a small condition to a larger state, while Duco means to grow or experience development. Thus, etymologically, education can be understood as a process to grow and develop the abilities and potential of individuals towards more optimal achievements (Langgulung, 2003; Nata, 2016).

Education plays a very essential role as the primary responsibility of every individual, because through education various significant benefits are obtained, including increased scientific insight and the formation of character and noble morals (Lickona, 2012; Sudrajat, 2011). The effectiveness and quality of a nation's education system is reflected in its ability to produce a young generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has character, moral integrity, and noble ethics (Tilaar, 2015). Education itself takes place in various areas of human life throughout their lifespan, thus playing a strategic role for the sustainability of life and the development of civilization, where the role of teachers is very crucial as figures who guide morally and become real role models for students (Suyanto & Asep, 2010). In addition, the role of parents has a significant meaning in building a moral foundation for children, considering that in general parents are the first to carry out the educational function and have the greatest influence in the early stages of child development (Hasbullah, 2013).

PAI or Islamic Religious Education is a structured effort to provide students with knowledge, understanding, and experience related to Islamic teachings sourced from the Qur'an and Hadith (Daradjat, 2014; Nata, 2016). The fundamental goal of this education is to shape Muslim individuals who have faith and piety, noble morals, and are able to carry out the function of the caliphate on earth in order to achieve happiness in life in this world and in the hereafter (Ramayulis, 2015). In practice, PAI not only teaches aspects of religious knowledge, but also emphasizes the development of character and morals (Muhaimin, 2012).

The central role of Islamic Religious Education is reflected in its contribution to the development of students' character, particularly through the instilling of moral and ethical values based on Islamic teachings (Azra, 2012). This education provides a comprehensive understanding of core values such as honesty, justice, and compassion, which are sourced from the Qur'an and Hadith (Zubaedi, 2011). Thus, students are encouraged to develop commendable morals while fostering a sense of responsibility in social life (Lickona, 2012). Furthermore, Islamic Religious Education also helps students understand the importance of establishing harmonious relationships with Allah SWT, themselves, and other human beings (Muhaimin, 2012).

In the process of character formation for students, Islamic Religious Education plays a very significant role. By understanding and practicing Islamic teachings, students can develop into individuals with strong character and commendable morals (Ramayulis, 2015). Through Islamic Religious Education, it is hoped that a younger generation will

emerge with moral integrity and the ability to become the nation's future leaders, making real and beneficial contributions to society (Azra, 2012).

Character education can be understood as a structured process aimed at shaping and developing an individual's personality to foster a strong, positive, and noble character (Lickona, 2012). Through this education, individuals are trained to master the ability to make sound decisions, face life's challenges, and build healthy interactions with others (Zubaedi, 2011). Character education also serves to instill the values of integrity, responsibility, and a high level of moral awareness (Kemdiknas, 2010).

The focus of character education is not limited to achieving intellectual abilities, but also encompasses the development of emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions (Goleman, 2007). Thus, character education emphasizes not only the provision of knowledge but also the development of attitudes, behavior, and the formation of individual identity (Lickona, 2012).

Character education can be realized in various ways, including instilling moral and ethical values, developing social and emotional skills, fostering positive behavior, and providing hands-on experiences (Zubaedi, 2011). Character education can also be implemented through activities such as discussions, reflections, and projects related to the internalization of character values (Ministry of National Education, 2010).

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are one of the educational institutions that play a significant role in the character formation of students (Dhofier, 2011). As

educational institutions based on religious and moral values, Islamic boarding schools aim to develop students with strong personalities and positive character (Ziemek, 2009).

The contribution of Islamic boarding schools to the character development of students is highly significant, as these institutions are capable of providing holistic and integrated education (Azra, 2012). The educational process in Islamic boarding schools does not solely emphasize intellectual development, but also encompasses spiritual, emotional, and social aspects (Dhofier, 2011).

As an educational institution based on religious principles, Islamic boarding schools play a role as the main forum in forming the character and identity of students through extracurricular and social activities (Hasbullah, 2013).

Moreover, the implementation of leadership based on Sufism by the kyai has been recognized as a crucial element in the process of forming the personality of students in the Islamic boarding school environment (Bruinessen, 2015).

Previous research has highlighted the diverse backgrounds of Islamic boarding school students (santri) who come from various regions with varying cultural characteristics (Handayani et al., 2020). Studies on culture-based character education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) emphasize the urgency of internalizing cultural values in shaping the character of students (Rahman, 2019).

As stated by some scholars, "al-bī'ah muhazzibah" (the environment shapes character), which emphasizes that the Islamic boarding school environment has a

significant influence on the formation of the character of students (Al-Ghazali, Ihya' Ulumuddin).

METHOD

The research approach used in this study is qualitative with a descriptive-analytical nature. The researchers chose this approach because it was deemed most appropriate for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena studied in depth and context without manipulating the research conditions or variables (Moleong, 2018; Creswell, 2014). The data analysis procedure follows the interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman, which includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. This analysis process is carried out iteratively, interactively, and continuously until the data reaches saturation or no longer produces new findings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Data collection was carried out through two main steps. First, researchers conducted a literature review by examining various relevant literature, such as academic books, scientific journal articles, and previous research results related to the research focus. This literature was critically analyzed and systematically compiled in accordance with scientific writing principles (Zed, 2014; Sugiyono, 2019). Second, field research was conducted through in-depth interviews and direct observation of informants deemed competent, experienced, and directly related to the research object, ensuring that the data obtained were factual and contextual (Creswell, 2014; Sugiyono, 2019).

Through a combination of library research and field research techniques, the data obtained is expected to have a high level of validity and analytical depth (Patton, 2015). The findings of this study are expected to provide academic contributions, both as a scientific reference and as a basis for further research development. To broaden its reach, the research results are planned to be published in a national journal with an ISBN or an accredited journal, so that they can be widely accessed and utilized by academics and researchers (Arikunto, 2016).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A Glance at Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School

Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School is located in Bengkaras hamlet, Madiredo village, Pujon district, Malang Regency, East Java Province. Founded in 1950 on the initiative of Al Magfurllah K.H. Hasan Bisri, the Islamic boarding school emphasizes religious education, character building, and community service. The institution is known for its compassionate environment and strong commitment to instilling Islamic values and academic education.

Initially, educational activities began with a small prayer room (musholla) that served as a community center for students to study religion. At that time, not only local residents but also students from outside the area came to study. However, in 1959, the prayer room collapsed due to a natural disaster, temporarily halting activities, and some students returned to their hometowns.

KH. Hasan Bisri remained steadfast in his advocacy for religious education, and eventually, the Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School flourished again, attracting

dozens to hundreds of students from various regions, even outside Java. To this day, the boarding school remains strong and thriving, offering both school and after-school education from early childhood education (PAUD) to Islamic high school (MA/SMK), as well as Madrasah Diniyah (Islamic Madrasah Diniyah) as its primary religious education.

This development demonstrates significant progress over that period, indicating that this Islamic boarding school has succeeded in becoming an educational institution that attracts people from various regions. Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School also plays a strategic role in providing both religious and general education for its students, with an approach aligned with the needs and dynamics of the modern era.

Philosophy and Characteristics of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School

1. Conceptual Basis

Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School is an Islamic educational institution that emphasizes the principles of moderation and openness, by accepting students from various levels of society without differentiating between backgrounds.

2. Philosophical Basis

"Practicing Knowledge and Having Good Morals"

3. Vision and mission

Vision: To make Islamic values and teachings a guide to life, a basis for life orientation, and functional competencies in daily life. Striving to create a comfortable, conducive learning environment that fosters environmental awareness.

Mission: To foster a spirit of religious learning, and to develop Islamic behavior, attitudes, and practices within the madrasa environment. (Asmaul Husna, 2001)

Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School's Contribution to the Formation of Student Character

The research results confirm thatThe role of Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in forming the social character of students is fundamental and systemic.Islamic boarding schools play a role asholistic education systemwhich integrates learning, habituation, and role models in shaping the social behavior of students. Collective life in Islamic boarding schools allows for the continuous internalization of social values.Social characters that are formed, such as attitudes of mutual respect, cooperation, and empathy, emerge as a result of social interactions that have educational value.This shows that Islamic boarding schools function effectively as social agents in shaping the personalities of students who have Islamic character, are disciplined, independent, respect time, and function as a representation and self-identity that has positive values.

Islamic boarding schools play a significant role as the primary agents in developing the social character of their students. All activities and elements within the Islamic boarding school environment serve as effective channels for developing their social character. In this process of character formation, the implementation of integrated learning is essential. Importantly, Islamic boarding school learning is based on the study of established classical literature (yellow books), particularly those oriented toward Islamic law and morals.Muhyiddin, 2022)

The study of the yellow books is

carried out in stages according to grade level, with each level studying a different book with aligned material and levels of understanding. Focusing on the teaching of Islamic law and morals is crucial, as these two books are the primary references for character development and student attitudes, including social attitudes such as mutual cooperation, respect, and tolerance.Space, 2022)

Through the study of religious texts, Islamic boarding schools serve to guide students to understand and internalize the moral and ethical values necessary for social life. Furthermore, through daily activities and social interactions among students, Islamic boarding schools foster an environment conducive to their social development. Students are also guided to cultivate mutual respect, foster cooperation, and assume responsibility in their daily activities.Arif, 2024)

Zamroni explained that students are guided to practice the values of discipline, independence, respect for teachers, and social life. He stated, "Here, students not only study the scriptures, but are also trained to be disciplined with time, live independently, respect teachers, and help each other." (Atabik, 2025). As a medium for social-based character building, Islamic boarding schools contributes significantly to the development of students with integrity and noble morals, as well as readiness to actively participate in community life. In addition to education and development, students also strengthen their individual roles through involvement in student organizations.

This Islamic boarding school comprises several divisions or sections: security, education, cleanliness, and worship. Through these organizational activities, students actively participate and support each other in completing their respective tasks responsibly, thus optimizing individual activities while ensuring the continuity of their lives within the realm of assignments and participation within the Islamic boarding school environment.

Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School's Strategy in Building the Character of Students

As a strategy for developing the character of its students, the Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School implements a number of systematic development strategies. Interviews conducted by researchers with Ahmad Saiful, the Chairman of the Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, revealed that the development of student character is carried out through a structured and continuous process. Saiful explained that several methods serve as the foundation for character development within the Islamic boarding school environment, namely role modeling, habituation, providing advice, and the application of educational punishments. (Atabik, 2025)

The first strategy is the learning method, which emphasizes the instilling of educational values through the process of imparting knowledge to students. Through this insight transfer mechanism, students gain a theoretical foundation of understanding regarding attitudes and behaviors that should be applied in everyday life. Furthermore, Islamic boarding schools utilize the role model method as an effective tool, where the

ustadz and administrators act as role models. By demonstrating noble morals, politeness in speech, and ethical behavior, the ustadz provide concrete models that students can use as references. The application of this method is an effective means of shaping students' social character through the process of identifying, imitating, and internalizing the positive values demonstrated by educators at the Islamic boarding school.Ghafur, 2025)

The habituation method is also implemented as a strategy for building the character of students. Islamic boarding school administrators play a crucial role in guiding and habituating students to consistently carry out various positive activities, such as waking up early in the morning, performing Tahajud prayers, obligatory prayers, and other religious activities. Through this ongoing habituation process, students are gradually formed to carry out the daily routine of the Islamic boarding school with good and practiced attitudes. This method also includes routine activities that are internalized for each student/tullab, such as the division of duty duties, which are designed to instill the values of discipline, responsibility, a spirit of togetherness, and a spirit of mutual cooperation among students.Juandi, 2022)

Furthermore, methods of admonition and punishment are also implemented as part of the parenting system at Islamic boarding schools. The punishments administered are not physically painful or harmful, but rather aim to instill discipline and responsibility in the students.Roisul said:"Punishment is given as a means of education, not to harm. For example, students are told to memorize verses or clean the bathroom. The goal is to make them realize that every violation has consequences." (Atabik, 2025)

Common forms of mild punishment include direct advice, memorization of specific surahs (chapters), mutola'ah (religious texts) and mahfudzot (religious texts), and cleaning duties such as picking up trash or cleaning public facilities like bathrooms. The purpose of these punishments is to teach students a lesson, encouraging them to recognize their mistakes by violating the rules of the Islamic boarding school. This is expected to prevent them from repeating the same offense and to improve their behavior. (Madrah, 2022)

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Forming the Character of Students at Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School

The character formation process carried out in Islamic boarding school environments is certainly closely related to a number of factors that play a supporting or inhibiting role in its implementation.

The supporting factors experienced by Bahrul Ulum Islamic boarding school are:

1) Motivating students. The educator, ustadz, or guardian serves as a primary role model, demonstrating honesty, patience, and hard work in their daily lives, both in worldly and afterlife affairs.

2) The Islamic boarding school environment. Through religious and moral education, the habituation of independent daily activities, exemplary behavior from educators, the socialization of values through boarding school activities and rules, and social interaction among fellow students under the full supervision of the administrators.

3) Adequate facilities and infrastructure are available to foster religious activities and independence, such as a mosque, library, comfortable dormitories, and student activity areas. (Haryanto, 2023)

Some of the inhibiting factors experienced are:

1) The quality and qualifications of the teachers, the lack of Arabic language skills of some of the administrators.

2) Weak funding sources for Islamic boarding schools have led to a decline in teacher welfare and limited access for poor students to good character education. (Ramadhani, 2025)

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School plays a strategic role in shaping the character of its students, particularly in social aspects. The character-building process is carried out through learning, role models, habits, and educational advice and punishment. The success of character development is supported by student motivation, a supportive Islamic boarding school environment, and the availability of representative facilities and infrastructure, although there are still obstacles related to the quality of teachers and limited funding. Thus, the Islamic boarding school has proven to be a successful educational institution in shaping a generation with ethics, manners, discipline, and responsibility.

This study recommends that Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School continue to develop character-building methods such as learning, role models, habituation, and educational advice and punishment. Increasing the number of caregivers is also crucial to support the student development process. Students are expected to actively participate in Islamic boarding school activities with full awareness so that character values can be firmly embedded. Support from the government and relevant institutions is needed to strengthen the role of Islamic boarding schools, particularly in terms of facilities and teacher training. Furthermore, future researchers are advised to develop similar studies with different approaches or objectives to enrich the understanding of character education.

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