

Integrating Pesantren Values into Islamic Religious Education for Character Strengthening

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Abstract: This study examines pesantren-based Islamic Religious Education learning strategies in strengthening students' character at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an Tebuireng Jombang. The study aims to analyze the implementation of pesantren-based learning, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and examine its contribution to students' moral and spiritual development. This research employed a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving school principals, Islamic Religious Education teachers, pesantren supervisors, and students. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that character strengthening is implemented through the integration of religious learning, worship habituation, Qur'anic recitation, congregational prayers, moral discipline, and teacher exemplification within students' daily activities. The pesantren environment functions as a moral ecosystem that continuously reinforces Islamic values through collective educational culture. Supporting factors include strong religious traditions, teacher commitment, parental support, and structured pesantren regulations, while inhibiting factors involve students' adaptation difficulties, diverse family backgrounds, and the influence of digital culture. The study concludes that pesantren-based learning strategies effectively strengthen students' discipline, responsibility, honesty, independence, and spiritual awareness. This research contributes theoretically to Islamic education discourse by emphasizing the importance of integrating religious values, educational culture, and moral habituation within contemporary character education.

Keywords: Pesantren-Based Learning, Islamic Religious Education, Character Strengthening, Moral Education, Islamic Education.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam berbasis pesantren dalam memperkuat karakter siswa di MTs Madrasatul Qur'an Tebuireng Jombang. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi pembelajaran berbasis pesantren, mengidentifikasi faktor pendukung dan penghambat, serta mengkaji kontribusinya terhadap perkembangan moral dan spiritual siswa. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan kepala madrasah, guru Pendidikan Agama Islam, pembina pesantren, dan siswa. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penguatan karakter dilakukan melalui integrasi pembelajaran agama, pembiasaan ibadah, tilawah Al-Qur'an, salat berjamaah, disiplin moral, serta keteladanan guru dalam

aktivitas sehari-hari siswa. Lingkungan pesantren berfungsi sebagai ekosistem moral yang secara terus-menerus memperkuat nilai-nilai Islam melalui budaya pendidikan kolektif. Faktor pendukung meliputi tradisi religius yang kuat, komitmen guru, dukungan orang tua, dan aturan pesantren yang terstruktur, sedangkan faktor penghambat meliputi kesulitan adaptasi siswa, latar belakang keluarga yang beragam, dan pengaruh budaya digital. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa strategi pembelajaran berbasis pesantren efektif dalam memperkuat disiplin, tanggung jawab, kejujuran, kemandirian, dan kesadaran spiritual siswa.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran Berbasis Pesantren, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Penguatan Karakter, Pendidikan Moral, Pendidikan Islam.

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Introduction

The rapid development of technology, globalization, and social transformation has not only had positive impacts on educational advancement but also contributed to moral degradation among students, including declining discipline, weak social ethics, reduced respect for teachers, and the emergence of consumerist and individualistic lifestyles among younger generations (Ainiyah et al., 2025; Dewi et al., 2024). In this context, Islamic educational institutions are required not only to transfer knowledge but also to strengthen students' moral and spiritual character through integrated educational strategies rooted in Islamic values and local religious culture.

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have long been recognized as educational institutions that emphasize character formation through the internalization of religious values, discipline, spirituality, and social ethics (Agustina et al., 2020; Azra, 2019). Unlike formal schools that tend to prioritize cognitive achievement, pesantren education integrates intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual development simultaneously. This educational orientation positions pesantren as one of the most influential institutions in shaping students' character within Indonesian Islamic education. According to Azra, (2020), pesantren education emphasizes the cultivation of akhlaq al-karimah through religious habituation, exemplary leadership, and continuous moral supervision. Similarly, (Arfah & Wantini, 2023; Hasan, 2021) argues that pesantren-based education develops students' moral awareness not only through formal instruction but also through the construction of a religious culture embedded in students' daily lives.

In recent years, many Islamic schools and madrasahs have attempted to integrate pesantren values into formal classroom learning, particularly in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) (Rohman & Muhtamiroh, 2022). This integration aims to strengthen character education by connecting academic learning with religious habituation and moral practice (Nursobah et al., 2025). The implementation of

pesantren-based learning is considered relevant because it enables students to experience Islamic values not merely as theoretical concepts but also as practical behaviors manifested in daily activities (Siswati et al., 2023; Yugo, 2025). Consequently, pesantren culture becomes an important educational instrument in building students' discipline, honesty, responsibility, respect, and spiritual awareness.

From the perspective of educational theory, character formation cannot be separated from the educational environment and learning culture constructed within educational institutions. Lickona, (2019) explains that effective character education must involve moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action simultaneously. In other words, students should not only understand moral values cognitively but also internalize and practice them consistently in social life. In Islamic education, this process is closely related to the concept of *tarbiyah ruhiyah*, which emphasizes spiritual nurturing, moral habituation, and ethical discipline as integral components of education (Siregar, 2026). Therefore, integrating pesantren culture into PAI learning becomes a strategic approach in strengthening students' moral development.

Empirically, several studies have discussed character education in pesantren and Islamic schools. Research conducted by Sarwadi & Raihan, (2025) revealed that pesantren-based character education significantly contributes to improving students' discipline and religious attitudes. Another study by Sholikah et al., (2025) found that religious habituation programs in Islamic schools positively influence students' social behavior and moral awareness. Meanwhile, research by Tabassum et al., (2024) emphasized that integrating Islamic values into classroom instruction can strengthen students' ethical understanding and learning motivation. However, most previous studies mainly focused on general character education programs and religious habituation activities without specifically analyzing how pesantren-based learning strategies are systematically integrated into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning processes within formal madrasah education.

Furthermore, previous studies generally positioned pesantren merely as a supporting educational environment rather than as an integrated pedagogical approach within classroom instruction. Limited studies have explored how pesantren values are transformed into concrete learning strategies that influence students' character formation through curriculum implementation, teacher interaction, learning methods, and classroom culture. This condition indicates a significant research gap regarding the integration of pesantren-based learning strategies in formal Islamic education settings, particularly at the madrasah tsanawiyah level.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on analyzing pesantren-based Islamic Religious Education learning strategies as an integrated model of character

strengthening within formal madrasah education. Unlike previous studies that mainly discussed pesantren culture as an extracurricular or environmental aspect, this study specifically examines how pesantren values are systematically incorporated into classroom learning processes, teacher pedagogical approaches, religious habituation, and students' daily academic activities. This research also integrates perspectives from Islamic educational theory, character education, and pesantren pedagogy to construct a more comprehensive understanding of pesantren-based learning implementation.

In addition, this study is conducted at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an Tebuireng Jombang, an Islamic educational institution with a strong pesantren tradition and Qur'anic educational orientation. The institution represents a unique educational environment where formal madrasah learning is closely integrated with pesantren culture and religious life. This context provides an important contribution to understanding how pesantren-based learning strategies operate within formal Islamic educational institutions and how they influence students' character formation.

From the Islamic perspective, character education is fundamentally rooted in the prophetic mission of moral transformation. The Prophet Muhammad SAW stated: "Indeed, I was sent to perfect noble character" (HR. Ahmad). This hadith emphasizes that moral development constitutes the central objective of Islamic education. Similarly, the Qur'an highlights the importance of moral excellence and educational responsibility, as stated in QS. Luqman [31]: 17, which encourages Muslims to establish prayer, promote righteousness, prevent wrongdoing, and remain patient in facing life challenges. These Islamic principles reinforce the importance of integrating spiritual and moral values into educational practices.

Therefore, pesantren-based learning strategies in Islamic Religious Education are not merely pedagogical innovations but also represent efforts to actualize Islamic educational values within contemporary educational contexts. Through integrating religious habituation, moral discipline, spiritual mentoring, and Islamic learning culture into classroom instruction, madrasahs are expected to produce students who are intellectually competent, spiritually mature, morally responsible, and socially ethical.

Based on the background above, this study aims to analyze the implementation of pesantren-based Islamic Religious Education learning strategies in strengthening students' character at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an Tebuireng Jombang. This research specifically explores the forms of pesantren-based learning strategies, their contribution to students' character development, and the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing their implementation within the madrasah educational environment.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to explore the implementation of pesantren-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies in strengthening students' character at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an Tebuireng Jombang. A qualitative approach was selected because this research aimed to understand educational phenomena comprehensively within their natural setting and social context. According to Creswell, (2015), qualitative research is appropriate for investigating social and educational phenomena through participants' experiences, meanings, and interactions. Meanwhile, Yin, (2018) explains that the case study method is suitable for examining contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Therefore, this approach enabled the researcher to analyze deeply the integration of pesantren values into formal Islamic Religious Education learning within the madrasah environment.

The research was conducted at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an Tebuireng Jombang, an Islamic educational institution characterized by strong pesantren traditions and Qur'anic educational culture. Research participants consisted of the headmaster, Islamic Religious Education teachers, pesantren supervisors, homeroom teachers, and students selected purposively based on their active involvement in pesantren-based learning activities. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. According to Sugiyono, (2017), in-depth interviews are conducted to obtain comprehensive information regarding participants' experiences, perceptions, and educational practices. Interviews in this study focused on learning strategies, character formation processes, religious habituation, and students' responses toward pesantren-based education. Participant observation was conducted during classroom instruction, Qur'anic learning activities, congregational prayers, and daily student interactions to observe directly the implementation of pesantren culture within educational practices. Documentation techniques were also used to analyze lesson plans, curriculum documents, school regulations, students' activity reports, and institutional archives related to character education programs.

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles et al., (2019), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The researcher continuously organized and categorized findings into themes related to pesantren-based learning strategies, character strengthening, religious habituation, and educational culture. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources, triangulation of techniques, prolonged engagement, and member checking to confirm the credibility and consistency of research findings (Arikunto, 2019). Ethical considerations were also maintained throughout the research process by ensuring participants' confidentiality, voluntary participation, and respectful interaction during data collection and analysis.

Results And Discussion

Result

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of pesantren-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an Tebuireng Jombang plays a significant role in strengthening students' character through the integration of religious values, learning culture, and daily habituation within the madrasah and pesantren environment. The results indicate that character formation is not conducted merely through theoretical classroom instruction but is systematically integrated into students' daily educational experiences through religious discipline, moral habituation, teacher exemplification, and pesantren cultural practices.

One of the main findings of this study concerns the integration of pesantren values into classroom learning activities. Islamic Religious Education teachers did not only delivered conceptual religious materials but also connected learning content with students' moral behavior and daily religious practices. During classroom observation, the researcher found that teachers consistently related Islamic learning materials to practical moral values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect toward teachers, and social awareness. Learning activities often began with Qur'anic recitation, short religious reflection, and motivational advice related to students' character development. Teachers also emphasized the importance of implementing Islamic values not only during school activities but also in students' personal and social lives.

An Islamic Religious Education teacher explained:

"PAI learning here is not only about delivering theories or completing curriculum targets. We always try to connect every lesson with students' daily behavior because the essence of Islamic education is character building and moral practice."

This statement demonstrates that learning strategies at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an prioritize moral internalization alongside academic achievement. Based on classroom observations, teachers frequently used contextual learning approaches by integrating real-life examples, pesantren experiences, and moral reflection into classroom discussions. Students were encouraged to relate Islamic teachings to their daily conduct within the dormitory, classroom, mosque, and social environment.

The findings also reveal that religious habituation became an essential component of pesantren-based learning strategies. Character strengthening was continuously implemented through structured religious activities such as congregational prayers, tahfidz al-Qur'an, Qur'anic recitation, religious mentoring, and Islamic discipline practices. These activities were conducted routinely and became part of students' educational culture within the institution. Observation results showed that students demonstrated relatively high discipline in participating

in religious activities because these practices had become integrated into their daily routines.

One student stated:

“At first, some activities felt difficult because the schedule was very disciplined. But over time, we became accustomed to praying in congregation, memorizing the Qur’an, and managing our daily activities responsibly.”

This finding indicates that the pesantren environment contributes significantly to shaping students’ discipline and spiritual awareness through continuous habituation. Religious activities were not treated as supplementary programs but as integral educational processes aimed at forming students’ moral character and self-discipline.

Another important finding concerns the role of teachers and pesantren supervisors as moral role models in students’ character formation. The study found that students’ character development was strongly influenced by teachers’ behavior, communication patterns, and interpersonal interactions within both classroom and dormitory environments. Teachers consistently demonstrated discipline, politeness, simplicity, and religious commitment, which became practical examples for students. This condition reflects the pesantren educational principle emphasizing *keteladanan* (exemplary behavior) as a central method of moral education.

A pesantren supervisor explained:

“Students observe not only what teachers say but also how teachers behave. Therefore, educators here are expected to become examples in discipline, worship, communication, and daily ethics.”

Observational findings confirmed that students showed strong respect toward teachers and pesantren supervisors. Interaction patterns between students and educators reflected pesantren traditions characterized by politeness, humility, obedience, and moral discipline. Students habitually greeted teachers respectfully, maintained proper communication ethics, and followed institutional regulations with relatively high awareness.

The study further found that pesantren-based learning strategies contributed positively to strengthening several dimensions of students’ character, particularly religious character, discipline, responsibility, independence, and social awareness. Teachers explained that students gradually developed stronger emotional control, greater respect toward others, and higher awareness of religious obligations after adapting to pesantren educational culture. The integration of academic learning and religious habituation created a learning atmosphere that encouraged students to internalize Islamic values more consistently.

In addition, the findings indicate that collaborative interaction between madrasah and pesantren environments strengthened the effectiveness of character education. Unlike formal schools that often separate academic instruction from

students' daily social life, MTs Madrasatul Qur'an integrated educational supervision within both classroom and dormitory settings. Students' behavior was continuously monitored and guided through coordinated educational practices involving teachers, dormitory supervisors, and religious mentors. This integration enabled the institution to maintain consistency between instructional goals and students' practical moral behavior.

However, the study also identified several challenges in implementing pesantren-based learning strategies. One major challenge involved students' varying backgrounds and levels of adaptation to pesantren discipline. Some students initially experienced difficulties adjusting to strict schedules, intensive religious activities, and institutional regulations. Teachers explained that students coming from non-pesantren educational backgrounds generally required longer adaptation periods.

A teacher stated:

"Not all students immediately adapt to pesantren discipline because they come from different family and educational backgrounds. Some students need intensive mentoring before becoming accustomed to the learning culture here."

Another challenge concerned the influence of digital technology and modern social culture on students' behavior. Teachers acknowledged that the increasing use of smartphones and social media created new educational challenges related to students' concentration, discipline, and moral behavior. Although the institution implemented regulations regarding technology use, educators still faced difficulties controlling external cultural influences affecting students' attitudes and lifestyles.

Despite these challenges, the findings indicate that pesantren-based Islamic Religious Education learning strategies at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an Tebuireng Jombang have generally been effective in strengthening students' character. The integration of religious learning, moral habituation, teacher exemplification, and pesantren culture created an educational environment that supports students' spiritual, moral, and social development comprehensively. These findings demonstrate that pesantren-based education remains highly relevant in responding to contemporary moral challenges and in developing holistic Islamic character education within formal educational institutions..

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that pesantren-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an Tebuireng Jombang significantly contribute to strengthening students' character through the integration of religious learning, moral habituation, and pesantren culture within formal madrasah education. The implementation of these strategies reflects a holistic educational orientation in which character education is not merely positioned as a supplementary educational objective but becomes the central foundation of the

learning process itself. This condition confirms that pesantren-based Islamic education possesses a distinctive pedagogical framework capable of integrating cognitive, affective, spiritual, and behavioral dimensions simultaneously. In the context of Islamic education, character formation is inseparable from the process of internalizing religious values within students' daily lives. Baharun, (2017) explains that effective character education must involve three interconnected dimensions, namely moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. This theoretical framework is clearly reflected in the educational practices implemented at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an Tebuireng, where students are not only taught Islamic concepts theoretically but are also directed to practice those values consistently through structured religious activities and social interaction within the pesantren environment (Mujahid, 2021).

The findings indicate that teachers consistently integrated Islamic moral values into classroom instruction by connecting learning materials with students' real-life experiences and social behavior. This strategy supports constructivist educational theory, which emphasizes that meaningful learning emerges when students actively connect academic knowledge with practical realities and social experiences (Kuh, 2016). In this study, Islamic Religious Education teachers did not merely explain theological concepts but contextualized them within students' moral responsibilities, worship discipline, and interpersonal relationships. Such integration made religious instruction more meaningful because students could directly observe and experience the practical relevance of Islamic teachings in their daily lives. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Mahfud & Zahriyah, (2025), which revealed that contextual Islamic learning positively influences students' moral awareness and behavioral consistency. However, this study extends earlier findings by demonstrating that pesantren culture strengthens the internalization process through continuous reinforcement beyond classroom instruction. Students experienced Islamic values not only academically but also socially and spiritually within their daily routines.

Another important finding concerns the implementation of religious habituation as a primary strategy for strengthening students' character. Religious activities such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic memorization, recitation, daily supplication, and discipline in worship were carried out systematically and consistently as part of students' educational experiences. The findings reveal that these habituation practices significantly contributed to the development of students' discipline, emotional control, spiritual awareness, and sense of responsibility. In Islamic educational philosophy, habituation (ta'wid) is regarded as one of the most effective methods for moral formation because repeated religious behavior gradually becomes embedded within an individual's personality (Yusuf et al., 2022). Students at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an were continuously trained to practice Islamic

discipline not only during formal lessons but throughout their daily activities in the pesantren environment. Consequently, religious values became internalized as part of students' personal identity rather than remaining abstract moral concepts.

This finding is also consistent with Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes that behavior is shaped through observation, imitation, and repeated social interaction (Bandura, 2021). Students living within the pesantren environment constantly observed teachers, supervisors, and peers practicing disciplined worship, respectful communication, and ethical behavior (Salim et al., 2025). These observations gradually influenced students' own behavior patterns and moral awareness. The pesantren environment therefore functioned not merely as a physical educational setting but as a moral community that continuously reinforced Islamic values through collective practices and social expectations. Durkheim's sociological perspective similarly argues that educational institutions contribute to constructing collective moral consciousness through shared norms and communal discipline (Durkheim, 2017). In this study, pesantren culture established a collective moral atmosphere that shaped students' attitudes, behavior, and ethical orientation through daily interaction and communal religious life.

The role of teacher exemplification (*keteladanan*) also emerged as a highly significant factor in students' character strengthening (Azizah et al., 2023; Azizah & Usman, 2023). Teachers and pesantren supervisors functioned not only as instructors but also as moral role models whose behavior directly influenced students' attitudes and conduct. Students observed teachers' discipline, humility, honesty, consistency in worship, and respectful communication, which gradually became behavioral references for their own character development. This finding reflects the Islamic educational principle of *uswah hasanah*, emphasizing that educators must embody the values they teach because moral education is more effectively transmitted through exemplary behavior than through verbal instruction alone (Ruswandi, 2025). Ibn Khaldun similarly argued that students develop moral consciousness through continuous interaction with morally exemplary educators who demonstrate ethical behavior in practical life (Bolatito, 2025). The findings of this study therefore, confirm that teacher personality and moral integrity constitute essential components of effective character education within Islamic educational institutions.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that pesantren-based learning strategies contributed significantly to strengthening students' independence and personal responsibility. Students were trained to manage their daily schedules independently, balance academic and religious obligations, and participate actively in collective educational activities. Such practices gradually developed self-regulation, discipline, and emotional maturity among students. This condition becomes particularly important within contemporary educational contexts where

many adolescents experience declining self-discipline, weak emotional control, and increasing dependence on external supervision. Pesantren education appears capable of addressing these challenges through structured routines and disciplined communal living. Students were not merely controlled externally but were gradually encouraged to internalize discipline as part of their personal awareness and religious responsibility. These findings support (Anisah, 2023) argument that effective educational environments must create continuous opportunities for students to practice responsibility, discipline, and moral commitment through real-life educational experiences.

However, despite these positive outcomes, the study also identified several challenges in implementing pesantren-based learning strategies. One major challenge involved students' adaptation to pesantren discipline, particularly among those coming from non-pesantren backgrounds. Several students initially experienced homesickness, emotional discomfort, and difficulties adapting to intensive worship routines and strict institutional regulations. This finding demonstrates that character formation is not an instant process but requires gradual adaptation and continuous guidance. Students' social and family backgrounds significantly influenced their readiness to adjust to pesantren educational culture. Those who previously experienced strong religious discipline within their families generally adapted more easily than students coming from less structured social environments. This condition suggests that educational institutions should provide adaptive mentoring and emotional support systems to assist students during their transition into pesantren life.

Another important challenge identified in this study concerns the influence of digital technology and contemporary youth culture. Teachers acknowledged that social media, smartphones, and digital entertainment increasingly affect students' concentration, discipline, and moral behavior. Modern students live within highly connected digital environments that frequently expose them to lifestyles and values inconsistent with pesantren educational principles. This challenge reflects broader concerns regarding the impact of globalization and digital culture on adolescent character development. Therefore, pesantren-based education must continuously adapt its pedagogical approaches without abandoning its moral and spiritual foundations. Islamic educational institutions need to develop critical digital literacy rooted in Islamic ethics so that students can navigate modern technological environments responsibly and ethically. Students should be guided not only regarding ritual worship but also regarding ethical communication, responsible social media usage, and moral awareness within digital spaces.

The findings of this study provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the discourse of Islamic education and character formation. Theoretically, this research strengthens the argument that pesantren-based education offers a holistic

pedagogical framework capable of integrating religious learning, moral habituation, communal discipline, and spiritual development within formal educational systems. This study also expands contemporary discussions on character education by emphasizing the importance of educational culture and environmental reinforcement in shaping students' moral identity. Practically, the findings suggest that effective character education requires not only curriculum development but also the creation of supportive educational cultures, exemplary teacher behavior, and continuous moral supervision. Educational institutions seeking to strengthen students' character should therefore integrate moral values into all dimensions of educational life rather than limiting character education to formal classroom instruction alone.

Overall, this study confirms that pesantren-based Islamic Religious Education remains highly relevant in addressing contemporary educational challenges related to moral decline, social fragmentation, and spiritual crises among adolescents. Through integrating religious learning, moral discipline, spiritual habituation, and communal educational culture, pesantren-based education provides a comprehensive educational model capable of developing intellectually competent, morally responsible, spiritually mature, and socially ethical students. Consequently, pesantren educational traditions should not merely be viewed as traditional religious practices but as dynamic pedagogical resources capable of contributing significantly to contemporary character education discourse within modern Islamic education.

Conclusion

This study concludes that pesantren-based Islamic Religious Education learning strategies implemented at MTs Madrasatul Qur'an Tebuireng Jombang play a significant role in strengthening students' character through the integration of religious instruction, moral habituation, exemplary teacher behavior, and pesantren culture within formal educational practices. The findings demonstrate that character education becomes more effective when Islamic values are not only taught cognitively in classrooms but are also continuously internalized through structured worship activities, communal discipline, social interaction, and daily educational routines. The pesantren environment successfully creates a holistic educational atmosphere that shapes students' spiritual awareness, discipline, responsibility, honesty, independence, and social ethics simultaneously. Teachers function not merely as academic instructors but also as moral role models who influence students through exemplary conduct and continuous guidance. As a result, character formation emerges as a comprehensive process involving intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and behavioral dimensions within students' educational experiences.

This study also reveals that the effectiveness of pesantren-based learning strategies is influenced by several supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors include the strong religious culture of the pesantren, consistent teacher supervision, collective worship routines, parental support, and the integration of moral values into both curricular and extracurricular activities. However, several challenges were also identified, particularly students' adaptation difficulties to pesantren discipline, differences in students' social backgrounds, and the growing influence of digital technology and contemporary youth culture. These findings indicate that character education within pesantren institutions requires adaptive educational approaches that are capable of responding to modern social changes while maintaining Islamic moral principles. Consequently, pesantren-based education should continue strengthening emotional mentoring, moral supervision, and digital literacy grounded in Islamic ethics to address contemporary educational challenges effectively.

The study contributes theoretically to the development of Islamic education discourse by reinforcing the perspective that pesantren-based education provides a holistic pedagogical framework for character strengthening through the integration of spirituality, morality, discipline, and communal educational culture. Practically, the findings provide recommendations for Islamic educational institutions to develop character education not only through formal curriculum content but also through educational culture, teacher exemplification, and continuous habituation practices. Nevertheless, this study remains limited to one educational institution and focuses primarily on qualitative analysis. Future studies are therefore recommended to explore comparative pesantren educational models across different regions and examine quantitatively the long-term impact of pesantren-based learning strategies on students' character development and social behavior.

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