



Educational Management of Character Values Based on Ta'limul Muta'allim: Strengthening Ethical Practices among Santri

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the implementation of character education values based on Ta'limul Muta'allim and their role in shaping the ethical behavior of santri, with a focus on the learning process, influencing factors, and educational management practices. A qualitative field research approach was employed, with data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving teachers, administrators, and students. Data analysis was conducted using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing through an inductive approach, while validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings reveal that the learning process is carried out through traditional methods such as bandongan and sorogan, combined with direct character value internalization. The implemented values include sincerity, humility (tawadhu'), discipline, patience, and respect for teachers, which are reflected in students' daily behavior. These values contribute to the development of ethical attitudes such as respect, responsibility, and obedience to institutional rules. Supporting factors include a religious environment, teacher role modeling, and structured habituation, while inhibiting factors involve differences in student backgrounds and levels of awareness. The study implies that effective educational management, particularly in planning, supervision, and character-based learning strategies, is essential to strengthen the internalization of ethical values and ensure sustainable character development.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping individuals' holistic development, encompassing intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions (Surbakti et al., 2024). This study is important because contemporary society

increasingly faces moral challenges among youth, including declining respect, discipline, and ethical behavior. In the context of Islamic education, the goal of education extends beyond knowledge acquisition to include the formation of noble character and moral integrity (Khairul Anam, 2024). Character education is therefore essential in developing individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also ethically responsible (Hart, 2022; Taja et al., 2021). Empirical evidence suggests that moral education grounded in religious values contributes significantly to shaping socially responsible individuals. From an educational management perspective, the integration of character education into institutional systems is necessary to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness (Figueiró et al., 2022; Pizzutilo & Venezia, 2021). Therefore, this study contributes to understanding how character education can be systematically implemented to address broader societal needs and support the development of morally grounded generations.

Despite its importance, character education in Islamic institutions faces several challenges (Mujahid, 2021). The main problem lies in the gap between the conceptual ideals of character formation and their practical implementation in educational settings. Although Islamic teachings emphasize moral values derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, their internalization among students is not always optimal. Factors such as diverse student backgrounds, varying levels of awareness, and institutional limitations can hinder the effectiveness of character education (Rojak et al., 2024). In many cases, students may understand moral values theoretically but fail to consistently apply them in daily life. From an educational management perspective, this problem reflects the need for structured planning, implementation, and supervision of character education programs. Without effective management strategies, character education risks becoming symbolic rather than transformative, thereby limiting its impact on students' ethical development (Smith & Kouchaki, 2021).

In practice, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) serve as key institutions for implementing character education through both formal and informal learning processes. One of the primary approaches is through the study of classical Islamic texts, particularly *Ta'limul Muta'allim*, which emphasizes ethical conduct in seeking knowledge (Firdaus & Hermawan, 2023). This text teaches values such as sincerity, respect for teachers, discipline, and perseverance (Khanna, 2023). In *pesantren* environments, these values are reinforced through daily routines, role modeling by teachers, and communal living systems. However, field observations indicate that not all students are able to internalize these values effectively. Differences in personal motivation, learning engagement, and social interaction influence how students practice these values (Lu et al., 2022). This phenomenon highlights the importance of not only teaching moral values but also managing the processes that support their internalization within educational institutions (Ledger & Kawalilak, 2020).

Previous studies have examined character education within Islamic educational contexts, particularly focusing on the relevance of classical texts such as *Ta'limul Muta'allim*. Research indicates that the values contained in this text

remain highly relevant in modern education, as they promote ethical awareness, responsibility, and discipline (Obizue et al., 2025). Other studies emphasize that pesantren education plays a significant role in shaping students' character through integrated learning systems that combine knowledge and moral training (Zainuri et al., 2025; Muhajir, 2022). These studies highlight the effectiveness of traditional learning methods in fostering moral development (Purwaningsih & Ridha, 2022). However, most research focuses primarily on the content of character education rather than the processes through which these values are implemented and managed within educational institutions.

Furthermore, existing literature tends to emphasize pedagogical aspects while giving limited attention to the role of educational management in supporting character education (Muzakkir et al., 2024). Although studies acknowledge the importance of habituation, role modeling, and environmental factors, they often overlook how planning, organizing, and supervising these processes contribute to successful character formation. This gap is significant because educational management plays a crucial role in ensuring that character education is implemented consistently and effectively (Osman, 2026). Without a clear management framework, the internalization of moral values may vary across students and contexts. Therefore, there is a need for research that integrates character education with educational management practices to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how ethical values can be effectively developed in students.

This study offers a novel contribution by integrating character education based on Ta'limul Muta'allim with an educational management perspective (Asbari, 2025). Unlike previous studies that focus mainly on values or teaching methods, this research examines how character education is implemented, managed, and influenced by supporting and inhibiting factors (Zhao et al., 2023; Chotimah et al., 2025). The novelty lies in analyzing character education as a structured process involving planning, implementation, and evaluation within educational institutions. By incorporating management dimensions, this study provides a more holistic understanding of how ethical values are internalized in students. This approach is important for developing more effective strategies to strengthen character education in Islamic boarding schools and ensure its sustainability in the face of contemporary challenges.

Based on the discussion above, this study addresses the central research problem: how character education values based on Ta'limul Muta'allim are implemented and managed to shape students' ethical behavior. This study argues that effective character formation requires not only the transmission of values but also systematic management processes that support their internalization. It is assumed that a well-managed educational environment, supported by appropriate teaching methods, role modeling, and institutional

structures, can enhance students' ethical development. Through a qualitative approach, this research aims to provide in-depth insights into the implementation of character education and its impact on students' behavior. The findings are expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical perspectives, particularly in strengthening educational management strategies for character education in Islamic institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to explore the implementation of character education values based on Ta'limul Muta'allim and their influence on students' ethical behavior. The qualitative case study was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of social phenomena, particularly how character values are internalized and practiced within an educational setting (Alhazmi & Kaufmann 2022; Islamic et al., 2024). This approach is appropriate for examining not only the learning process but also the broader context of students' daily behavior. From an educational management perspective, the case study design enables the analysis of how planning, implementation, and supervision of character education are carried out within institutional practices. The research was conducted in an Islamic boarding school environment, selected due to its active implementation of Ta'limul Muta'allim as a foundational text for character education, making it a relevant context for investigating ethical formation among students.

Data were collected through multiple techniques to ensure depth and triangulation. Observation was conducted by directly examining the learning process of Ta'limul Muta'allim and students' behavior in applying ethical values in their daily activities. In-depth interviews were carried out with key informants, including school leaders, teachers, administrators, and students, to obtain comprehensive insights into the implementation of character education. Documentation was also used to support the data, including institutional profiles, activity schedules, and relevant educational records. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on individuals who were directly involved in the implementation of character education and were considered capable of providing accurate and relevant information (Husen et al., 2022; Hidayati et al., 2020). This combination of data sources allowed for a holistic understanding of both instructional practices and institutional management processes.

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive qualitative approach involving data condensation, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. In the data condensation stage, the researcher selected and simplified relevant information from observations, interviews, and

documentation. The data were then organized and presented systematically to identify patterns and relationships related to character education implementation. Finally, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified through cross-checking across data sources to ensure credibility and validity. From an educational management perspective, this analytical process highlights how structured implementation, supervision, and evaluation contribute to the effectiveness of character education programs. Through this approach, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how character values are managed and internalized within the educational environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of character education values based on Ta'limul Muta'allim has been carried out systematically and continuously, producing a significant impact on shaping the ethical behavior of santri in seeking knowledge. Based on observations, santri demonstrate behaviors that reflect character values such as respect toward teachers (ta'dzim), seriousness in learning (jiddiyah), sincerity (ikhlas), and humility (tawadhu'). These attitudes are evident in daily learning activities, such as attentively listening to teachers, not interrupting, and completing assigned tasks responsibly. Outside the classroom, santri also show discipline, mutual respect, and proper manners in communication and behavior.

Interview results with pesantren leaders reveal that the implementation of values from Ta'limul Muta'allim is not limited to formal learning processes but is also reinforced through habituation and role modeling (uswah hasanah) in daily life. Teachers actively serve as role models, enabling students to internalize character values naturally. Meanwhile, pesantren administrators play a role in supervising and guiding student behavior through structured activities and regulations, such as daily schedules, institutional rules, and character-building programs.

Furthermore, interviews with ula-level santri indicate that most students understand the importance of the values contained in Ta'limul Muta'allim as guidelines for seeking knowledge. They recognize that success in learning is determined not only by intellectual ability but also by proper ethics and attitudes. However, the level of understanding and application varies among students, influenced by factors such as educational background, family environment, and individual capacity. Documentation data also support these findings, showing structured learning activities, schedules, and character development programs, indicating the existence of a systematic institutional framework that supports the consistent implementation of character education.

Based on the research problem formulation, the findings demonstrate that the implementation of character education values—such as respect for teachers, diligence, habituation, and high aspirations—has been carried out systematically

and integrated into pesantren educational activities. In terms of planning, character education is implemented through curriculum integration and daily activities. Respect for teachers is planned through the cultivation of proper conduct in learning, diligence through structured study schedules, habituation through routine activities, and high aspirations through motivational guidance. This planning reflects a structured effort aligned with the educational philosophy of Burhanuddin Az-Zarnuji, emphasizing the importance of intention and ethics in learning.

In the implementation stage, character values are practiced in students' daily lives. Santri demonstrate respectful behavior toward teachers, seriousness in learning, and consistent participation in religious and disciplinary routines. These practices show that character education is not merely theoretical but embedded in daily life. From an educational management perspective, this reflects the organizing and leading functions of pesantren management, where roles of teachers and administrators are clearly defined to ensure the consistent application of character values.

In the evaluation stage, character education is assessed through continuous observation and guidance by teachers. Respect is evaluated through student-teacher interactions, diligence through learning participation and discipline, habituation through daily behavior, and high aspirations through motivation and enthusiasm for learning. This evaluation reflects the controlling function in educational management, emphasizing that character education success is measured not only cognitively but also through behavioral change.

In the discussion, the findings confirm that Ta'limul Muta'allim serves as a fundamental source of character education values that are both practical and relevant to students' lives. The integration of these values through learning, habituation, and supervision demonstrates a holistic educational approach encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. From an educational management perspective, this reflects the integration of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling functions in managing character education effectively.

However, the study also identifies several challenges, including differences in student backgrounds and external environmental influences that affect the internalization of values. These challenges indicate the need for stronger management strategies, such as improving instructional quality, strengthening leadership roles through exemplary behavior, and developing more innovative character-building programs. Therefore, effective educational management plays a crucial role in ensuring that character education is implemented consistently and sustainably.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the implementation of character education values based on Ta'limul Muta'allim has been effectively carried out through integrated planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. These values have proven to contribute significantly to shaping students' ethical

behavior. Nevertheless, continuous improvement is required to ensure consistency and optimize the impact of character education in forming morally grounded and ethically responsible students.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the implementation of character education values based on Ta'limul Muta'allim has been carried out effectively through integrated processes of planning, implementation, and evaluation within the pesantren environment. The most important insight is that character formation is not achieved solely through formal instruction but through a combination of structured learning, habituation, role modeling, and continuous supervision. Values such as respect for teachers, sincerity, diligence, and humility are reflected in students' daily behavior, indicating successful internalization. From an educational management perspective, the strength of this study lies in its contribution to demonstrating how the functions of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling can be applied in managing character education. This study enriches the academic discourse by positioning Ta'limul Muta'allim not only as a source of ethical values but also as a foundation for systematic character education management in Islamic boarding schools.

However, this study has several limitations. The findings are context-specific and based on a limited scope of participants, which may affect their generalizability to other educational settings. In addition, variations in students' backgrounds and levels of understanding indicate that character internalization is not uniform. Future research is recommended to explore broader contexts and include diverse stakeholders such as parents and community members. Further studies may also adopt mixed-method or longitudinal approaches to examine the sustainability of character education outcomes over time. Strengthening educational management strategies, particularly in supervision and program innovation, is essential to optimize the implementation of character education and ensure its long-term effectiveness.

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