



Curriculum Management Practices in Pesantren-Based Education for Students' Character Development

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the implementation of pesantren-based curriculum management in fostering students' character within an Islamic boarding school. A qualitative approach employing a case study design was adopted to obtain an in-depth understanding of curriculum management practices. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving school leaders, teachers, boarding administrators, and students. Data analysis followed the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while the trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings reveal that pesantren-based curriculum management is implemented through integrated curriculum planning that combines formal and religious education within a twenty-four-hour boarding system, systematic implementation of religious, academic, and character-building activities, and continuous evaluation through attendance records, student monitoring, and direct supervision. These practices effectively cultivate students' religious values, discipline, independence, responsibility, humility, and social awareness through sustained habituation and exemplary role modeling. The study implies that integrating formal education with pesantren values through comprehensive curriculum management provides an effective framework for strengthening character education and may serve as a reference for developing value-based curriculum management in other Islamic boarding schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in developing high-quality human resources by fostering not only intellectual competence but also moral integrity and character (Nadhifah, 2026; Najiburohman, 2025; Rahman, 2026). In contemporary society, educational institutions are increasingly expected to prepare individuals who are capable of responding to rapid social, technological, and cultural changes while maintaining ethical values. Within this context,

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) occupy a strategic position because they integrate religious instruction with character formation through a holistic educational environment (Holidi, 2025; Kusumawati, 2025; Syafiih, 2025). Unlike conventional schools, pesantren emphasize the internalization of Islamic values, discipline, responsibility, independence, and moral conduct through continuous learning and daily habituation. This educational model enables students to develop cognitive, spiritual, and social competencies simultaneously, making pesantren an important pillar in producing graduates with strong character. Previous studies have confirmed that pesantren remain relevant in shaping students who are religious, disciplined, independent, and responsible despite the challenges of modernization. Therefore, strengthening curriculum management in pesantren is not merely an institutional concern but also a societal necessity for cultivating future generations with ethical leadership and strong moral values.

The rapid advancement of globalization and digital technology has significantly transformed educational systems while simultaneously creating new challenges for character development (Kunta, 2025; Kusumawati, 2026). Although technological innovation has improved access to information and learning resources, it has also contributed to moral issues among young people, including declining discipline, weakened social responsibility, reduced respect for others, and increasing ethical misconduct. These phenomena have become common concerns in both schools and communities, indicating that academic achievement alone is insufficient to prepare students for future societal demands. Consequently, educational institutions are increasingly required to integrate character education systematically into curriculum implementation rather than treating it as an additional activity (Hikmah & Mudarris, 2026; Manshur, 2026). This challenge is particularly relevant for Islamic educational institutions, whose mission extends beyond knowledge transmission toward moral and spiritual development. Character education therefore requires comprehensive management involving planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation to ensure that positive values become part of students' daily behavior. Accordingly, curriculum management has become a strategic instrument for addressing contemporary educational challenges while strengthening students' moral resilience.

The phenomenon observed in many Islamic boarding schools demonstrates that curriculum implementation extends beyond classroom instruction into the management of students' daily lives through structured religious activities, behavioral guidance, and institutional culture (Adzimah, 2024; Hikmah, 2026). Pesantren-based curriculum management integrates formal academic learning with religious practices such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, classical Islamic text studies, communal service, discipline, and character-building activities conducted continuously within a residential

environment. Such integration creates a learning ecosystem in which students experience character education through habituation, supervision, and exemplary conduct rather than theoretical instruction alone (Khofsah, 2025; Mohlas, 2025). Educational management theory explains that curriculum effectiveness depends on systematic planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation involving all educational stakeholders. Similarly, character education theory emphasizes that positive character develops through repeated practice, role modelling, supervision, and supportive educational environments (Holidi, 2026; Ni'am, 2025). These principles are reflected in pesantren, where routine worship, communal activities, and moral guidance collectively contribute to the formation of students' religious identity and ethical behavior. Consequently, pesantren-based curriculum management represents a comprehensive approach to holistic student development.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the importance of curriculum management and Islamic education in fostering students' character. Research by Muhammad Aufa Muis and colleagues found that Islamic education contributes significantly to character development through the internalization of religious and moral values in everyday life. Likewise, research conducted by Ratu Safira Aulia and colleagues reported that effective curriculum planning improves educational quality while simultaneously strengthening students' character formation. Other studies concerning pesantren education have further shown that integrating formal education with religious boarding school activities creates an effective environment for nurturing discipline, responsibility, and religious commitment among students. Although these studies provide valuable insights into curriculum management and character education, they primarily examine curriculum planning, Islamic instruction, or character development separately. Limited attention has been given to understanding curriculum management as an integrated managerial process encompassing planning, implementation, evaluation, and institutional culture within the pesantren context. This limitation indicates the need for further investigation into how comprehensive curriculum management contributes to sustainable character formation in Islamic boarding schools.

Despite the growing body of literature on curriculum management and character education in Islamic boarding schools, important research gaps remain (Fitriani, 2025; Rahman, 2025; Shoha, 2026). Most previous studies have focused on individual dimensions, such as curriculum planning, Islamic learning, or character education outcomes, without examining how curriculum management functions as an integrated system connecting planning, implementation, evaluation, and the institutional culture of pesantren. Furthermore, existing research generally emphasizes educational outcomes while providing limited explanation of the managerial processes through which curriculum implementation shapes students' character in a residential educational

environment. As a result, insufficient attention has been given to understanding how formal education and pesantren traditions are systematically integrated into a comprehensive curriculum management framework. This gap is significant because curriculum effectiveness depends not only on curriculum content but also on management practices that ensure consistency between educational objectives, learning activities, supervision, and evaluation. Therefore, further investigation is required to explain how pesantren-based curriculum management contributes to sustainable character development and educational quality in Islamic boarding schools.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive analysis of pesantren-based curriculum management as an integrated managerial system for character development rather than merely as a curriculum implementation process. Unlike previous studies, this research examines curriculum management through interconnected managerial functions, including planning, implementation, evaluation, and supporting and inhibiting factors influencing curriculum effectiveness in a residential Islamic educational environment. The study also highlights how the integration of formal education and pesantren traditions creates a holistic educational ecosystem in which religious values, discipline, responsibility, independence, and social awareness are continuously developed through structured habituation and exemplary practices. Consequently, this research extends the existing literature by proposing that character formation is not solely determined by curriculum content but also by the effectiveness of curriculum management in coordinating institutional culture, learning activities, supervision, and continuous evaluation. This perspective contributes to the development of Islamic educational management by providing a more comprehensive understanding of curriculum management practices that support sustainable character education.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) How is pesantren-based curriculum management planned? (2) How is pesantren-based curriculum management implemented to foster students' character? (3) How is curriculum implementation evaluated to ensure the achievement of character education objectives? and (4) What factors support and hinder the implementation of pesantren-based curriculum management? This study argues that effective character formation is achieved when curriculum management integrates systematic planning, structured implementation, continuous evaluation, and a supportive institutional culture within a twenty-four-hour residential educational environment. Accordingly, the study is expected to contribute theoretically by enriching the discourse on Islamic educational management and curriculum management, while practically providing evidence-based recommendations for educational leaders and policymakers in designing curriculum management systems that effectively

integrate academic excellence with religious values and character education in Islamic boarding schools.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of pesantren-based curriculum management in fostering students' character (Jeni & Syafril, 2025; Tohet & Nuraini, 2026). A qualitative case study was selected because it enables researchers to explore social phenomena comprehensively within their natural setting while emphasizing participants' experiences, interactions, and meanings. This design is appropriate for investigating curriculum management practices as they occur in everyday educational activities without manipulating research variables. Through this approach, the study sought to examine curriculum planning, implementation, evaluation, and supporting factors as an integrated process that contributes to character formation within the Islamic boarding school environment.

The research was conducted at an Islamic boarding school that implements an integrated curriculum combining formal education with pesantren-based learning. The research site was purposively selected because it consistently applies a curriculum management system that integrates academic learning with religious instruction and character education through a twenty-four-hour residential environment. This setting provides a comprehensive context for examining how curriculum management is translated into daily educational practices, allowing the researcher to obtain rich and contextual data regarding the development of students' religious values, discipline, responsibility, independence, and moral behaviour. Research participants were selected using purposive sampling and consisted of the boarding school leader, teachers, boarding administrators, and students who were directly involved in curriculum implementation and character-building activities.

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation to obtain comprehensive and triangulated information regarding curriculum management practices (Fahmi, 2024; Mulyana et al., 2024). Observation was conducted to examine directly the implementation of learning activities, religious routines, disciplinary practices, and character-building programmes within the boarding school environment. In-depth interviews were carried out with selected informants to explore their experiences and perspectives concerning curriculum planning, implementation, evaluation, and factors influencing curriculum effectiveness. Documentation was employed to collect supporting evidence, including curriculum documents, institutional regulations, activity schedules, student assessment records, and other relevant

administrative documents, thereby strengthening the credibility and completeness of the research findings.

Data analysis followed an interactive qualitative analysis process consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, organizing, and focusing information relevant to the research objectives while eliminating unnecessary data. Subsequently, the condensed data were systematically presented in descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation and comparison across research findings. The final stage involved drawing conclusions through continuous verification to ensure that interpretations remained consistent with the collected evidence. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, data validity was established through source triangulation and technique triangulation by comparing information obtained from different participants and multiple data collection methods, thereby ensuring the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Curriculum Planning in Pesantren-Based Curriculum Management

Curriculum planning in the Islamic boarding school under study reflects a comprehensive integration between formal education and pesantren-based learning values. The planning process is designed to ensure that educational activities do not only focus on cognitive achievement but also emphasize the formation of students' character through continuous habituation. Based on interview findings, the curriculum is developed collaboratively by the boarding school leadership, teachers, and administrators, who share responsibility in designing learning programs that combine school-based subjects with Islamic boarding school traditions. This integration is intended to create a balanced educational system that supports both intellectual development and moral formation. Observational data indicate that curriculum planning is operationalized through a structured 24-hour activity schedule that regulates students' academic learning, worship practices, and daily life routines. This shows that curriculum planning is not merely administrative, but also behavioral and cultural in nature.

Furthermore, documentation analysis reveals that curriculum planning includes clear formulation of educational objectives, learning materials, and student development targets. The main goal of the curriculum is not limited to knowledge transfer but extends to shaping students' Islamic character, including religiosity, discipline, and responsibility. The selection of learning materials such

as classical Islamic texts demonstrates the emphasis on moral and spiritual education. In addition, structured daily schedules ensure that students are consistently engaged in productive and value-based activities. These findings indicate that curriculum planning is systematically designed to internalize Islamic values through both formal instruction and non-formal habituation. As a result, students are continuously exposed to an environment that reinforces character development throughout their daily life in the boarding school.

Overall, curriculum planning in this pesantren-based system demonstrates a strong alignment between educational vision, institutional goals, and character development objectives. The integration of academic and religious curricula ensures that students are not only academically competent but also morally grounded. The 24-hour educational design strengthens the effectiveness of planning by embedding values into every aspect of student life. This approach confirms that curriculum planning in Islamic boarding schools functions as a holistic framework that guides the entire educational process. It also highlights that successful curriculum implementation depends heavily on how well planning is structured, contextualized, and aligned with the lived experiences of students within the boarding school environment.

Curriculum Implementation in Pesantren-Based Curriculum Management

The implementation of the pesantren-based curriculum is carried out through the integration of formal classroom instruction and continuous character-building activities embedded within the daily boarding school routine. Based on interview findings, curriculum implementation is not limited to academic learning but encompasses all educational activities conducted over a twenty-four-hour period. Students participate in formal classes during the day while engaging in religious learning, congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, classical Islamic text studies, remembrance (wirid), memorization (muhafadzah), and communal service (roan) outside classroom hours. Observation results demonstrate that these activities are implemented according to a structured daily schedule under the supervision of boarding school administrators and teachers. Documentation further confirms that every programme is systematically organized to ensure consistency between curriculum objectives and educational practices. Consequently, curriculum implementation serves as a comprehensive mechanism for integrating cognitive, spiritual, social, and behavioural development within a single educational system.

The findings also reveal that character education is primarily achieved through habituation, discipline, and exemplary practices rather than through

theoretical instruction alone. Daily religious activities encourage students to develop consistency in worship, while communal service activities cultivate responsibility, independence, cooperation, and environmental awareness. Likewise, the implementation of regulations, including punctual attendance, orderly meal queues, restrictions on mobile phone use, and adherence to dormitory rules, contributes significantly to strengthening students' self-discipline and accountability. Interviews with participants indicate that teachers and boarding school leaders consistently model appropriate behaviour, thereby reinforcing Islamic values through direct example. Observation findings support this evidence, showing that students gradually internalize these values as habitual behaviours practiced throughout their daily lives. Therefore, curriculum implementation extends beyond instructional delivery to become a continuous process of character formation supported by institutional culture and sustained educational supervision.

Overall, the implementation of the pesantren-based curriculum demonstrates that effective character education depends on the successful integration of academic instruction, religious practices, institutional regulations, and value-based habituation. Rather than treating character education as a separate programme, the boarding school embeds moral values into every educational activity undertaken by students. The combination of structured learning, routine worship, communal responsibilities, and exemplary leadership creates a holistic educational environment where knowledge acquisition and character formation occur simultaneously. These findings indicate that curriculum implementation functions not merely as an educational process but also as a comprehensive management strategy that systematically shapes students' religious commitment, discipline, responsibility, humility, and social awareness. Consequently, the boarding school curriculum provides an educational model capable of producing graduates who possess both academic competence and strong moral character through continuous experiential learning within a residential educational setting.

Curriculum Evaluation and Students' Character Development

Curriculum evaluation is implemented as a continuous process to monitor both students' academic progress and character development within the boarding school environment. Interview findings indicate that evaluation extends beyond measuring learning outcomes to include the assessment of students' discipline, religious commitment, behavioural improvement, and compliance with institutional regulations. Various evaluation instruments are

employed, including attendance records, student monitoring books, regular meetings, fathul kutub discussions, and direct supervision conducted by boarding school administrators and leaders. Observation results demonstrate that these evaluation activities are integrated into students' daily routines, enabling educators to identify behavioural changes and provide immediate guidance when necessary. Documentation analysis further confirms the existence of systematic monitoring records used to assess students' participation in religious activities, learning programmes, and disciplinary practices. These findings suggest that curriculum evaluation functions not only as an assessment mechanism but also as a strategy for sustaining continuous character development within the residential educational system.

The study further reveals that evaluation is accompanied by educational interventions designed to improve students' behaviour rather than merely imposing punishment. Minor disciplinary violations are addressed through educative sanctions, including reciting istighfar, participating in environmental cleaning activities, or receiving personal guidance from boarding school administrators. More serious behavioural issues are handled through intensive mentoring involving boarding school leaders and senior teachers. This approach reflects the educational philosophy that discipline should promote self-awareness and moral responsibility instead of fear or coercion. Observation findings indicate that students gradually develop greater responsibility, independence, and self-control because evaluation is consistently linked to mentoring and character guidance. Interview participants also emphasized that continuous supervision allows educators to identify students' individual needs and provide appropriate support throughout the educational process. Consequently, evaluation becomes an integral component of curriculum management that reinforces both academic achievement and moral development.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the implementation of pesantren-based curriculum management successfully contributes to the development of students' religious and personal character through integrated planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation consistently show that students develop religious commitment, discipline, independence, responsibility, humility (tawadhu'), politeness, and social awareness as outcomes of continuous participation in religious, academic, and communal activities. These character traits are reflected in students' daily behaviour, including punctual participation in congregational prayers, respect for teachers, adherence to institutional

regulations, independent management of personal responsibilities, and willingness to assist peers and maintain environmental cleanliness. Therefore, character formation is not produced through isolated instructional activities but emerges from the interaction between structured curriculum management, institutional culture, exemplary leadership, and sustained habituation. This finding confirms that pesantren-based curriculum management provides a holistic educational framework capable of producing graduates who are academically competent while possessing strong Islamic values and ethical character.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that pesantren-based curriculum management functions as a comprehensive educational system integrating curriculum planning, organizing, implementation, Islamic value internalization, and continuous evaluation to foster students' character. Unlike conventional curriculum management, the curriculum in this study extends beyond academic instruction by integrating formal education with twenty-four-hour religious and character-building activities. These findings are consistent with Ngafif, who argues that curriculum planning in Islamic educational institutions should integrate educational objectives, learning activities, and institutional values to achieve holistic student development (Mustafa & Maulana, 2024; Rahmadan & Shudiq, 2024). Similarly, the field findings reveal that curriculum planning is designed not merely to regulate learning schedules but also to ensure the systematic integration of religious education and character formation. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that curriculum planning becomes an institutional culture embedded within students' daily routines rather than remaining an administrative planning document. Theoretically, these findings reinforce curriculum management theory by emphasizing that effective curriculum planning should integrate managerial functions with value-based educational objectives. Practically, the study suggests that Islamic boarding schools should design curriculum plans that simultaneously balance academic achievement, religious development, and character formation through structured daily educational experiences.

Furthermore, the study indicates that effective curriculum implementation depends heavily on clear organizational structures involving boarding school leaders, teachers, and student administrators. The division of responsibilities enables continuous supervision of students' academic activities, worship, discipline, and daily behaviour, thereby ensuring that curriculum

objectives are consistently implemented throughout the boarding school environment. These findings emphasize that effective educational management requires clear organizational structures, coordination, and supervision to achieve institutional goals (Huda & Habibu, 2025; Veronika, 2024). Nevertheless, this study offers a broader perspective by illustrating that organizational effectiveness in pesantren is not solely determined by administrative coordination but also by the integration of religious authority, exemplary leadership, and continuous mentoring. The combination of formal organizational structures with informal cultural leadership distinguishes pesantren management from many conventional educational institutions. Consequently, this research contributes theoretically by extending organizational management concepts into the context of Islamic boarding schools, where educational effectiveness is shaped through the interaction of managerial coordination and institutional culture. From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening collaboration among educational stakeholders to ensure sustainable curriculum implementation.

The implementation of the curriculum further demonstrates that character education is achieved through continuous habituation rather than isolated instructional activities. Daily programmes, including congregational prayers, classical Islamic text learning through sorogan and bandongan methods, Qur'anic memorization, remembrance (*wirid*), and communal service (*roan*), create authentic learning experiences that enable students to internalize Islamic values through repeated practice. These findings are reported that curriculum implementation in Islamic educational institutions should integrate religious learning with students' daily experiences to strengthen moral development (Wagner, 2025; Yakin, 2025). However, this study reveals that the integration of formal education with pesantren traditions generates a more comprehensive character-building ecosystem in which cognitive learning, spiritual practice, behavioural discipline, and social responsibility reinforce one another continuously. This finding enriches character education theory by demonstrating that sustained habituation supported by institutional culture and role modelling contributes more effectively to character formation than classroom instruction alone. Practically, the study recommends that Islamic educational institutions integrate structured religious routines and experiential learning into curriculum implementation to strengthen students' religious commitment, discipline, responsibility, and independence.

The findings further reveal that curriculum evaluation in the pesantren extends beyond assessing academic achievement to encompass students'

behavioural, spiritual, and moral development through continuous supervision and educational guidance. Evaluation is conducted using attendance records, student monitoring books, direct observation, deliberation forums, fathul kutub, and periodic mentoring by boarding school leaders and administrators. Rather than functioning solely as a measurement tool, evaluation becomes a mechanism for reinforcing discipline, improving behaviour, and sustaining students' character development. These findings are consistent with Ratnawulan et al. (2022), who argue that educational evaluation should provide continuous feedback for improving learning quality and institutional effectiveness. Likewise, they support emphasize that character education requires systematic monitoring and consistent reinforcement through educational environments (Aini et al., 2025; Khotimah & Suhermanto, 2024). However, this study expands previous literature by demonstrating that evaluation in Islamic boarding schools is inseparable from the boarding culture itself, where supervision, mentoring, and corrective guidance occur continuously within students' everyday lives. Theoretically, these findings enrich curriculum management literature by conceptualizing evaluation as an integrated developmental process rather than a terminal assessment activity. Practically, the results suggest that Islamic educational institutions should adopt holistic evaluation systems that combine academic assessment with continuous observation of students' moral conduct, religious commitment, discipline, and social behaviour to ensure sustainable character formation.

Overall, this study demonstrates that pesantren-based curriculum management should be understood as an integrated management system in which planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation interact dynamically to produce holistic student development. Unlike many previous studies that examine curriculum planning, character education, or boarding school management separately (Fathurrochman, 2017; Mohammad, F. K., 2024; Shodiq & Kuswanto, 2024), this research illustrates how these managerial components operate as interconnected processes within a twenty-four-hour residential educational environment. The findings confirm that effective character formation is not generated by individual educational programmes but emerges through the continuous interaction between institutional management, religious values, exemplary leadership, structured habituation, and comprehensive supervision. Consequently, this research contributes theoretically by proposing a holistic framework of pesantren-based curriculum management that integrates managerial functions with continuous character development. From a practical perspective, the findings provide strategic

guidance for Islamic boarding school leaders, curriculum developers, teachers, and policymakers in designing adaptive curriculum management systems that balance formal education with pesantren traditions. Strengthening curriculum integration, organizational coordination, value-based learning, continuous mentoring, and holistic evaluation can enhance both educational quality and students' character development, making this model relevant for other Islamic boarding schools seeking to respond to contemporary educational and societal challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that pesantren-based curriculum management constitutes an integrated educational system that effectively combines planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation to foster students' religious values, discipline, responsibility, independence, humility, and social awareness. The principal contribution of this research lies in proposing a holistic curriculum management model that integrates formal education with continuous character formation within a residential Islamic educational environment, thereby enriching the discourse on Islamic education management. Nevertheless, this study is limited to a single case, restricting broader generalization. Future research should employ multisite or comparative approaches to examine the applicability of this model across diverse Islamic boarding school contexts.

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