



Leadership Strategies for Developing a Student Discipline Culture: A Qualitative Case Study Through George R. Terry's POAC Management Framework

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ABSTRACT

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The phenomenon of moral degradation in the contemporary era requires educational institutions to strengthen the value system through systematic leadership management. This study aims to evaluate the leadership strategy of the head of the boarding school in constructing a culture of student discipline at the API ASRI 2 Bandongan Islamic Boarding School using the theory of the management function of POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) from George R. Terry. The research method applied is qualitative with an explanatory case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation, then analyzed using the interactive model Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña using purposive sampling techniques. The findings of the study revealed that the internalization of discipline culture is carried out through four stages: participatory planning based on traditional values, structured division of tasks to avoid overlapping authority, implementation through leadership example (uswah hasanah) and persuasive communication, as well as digital supervision accompanied by educational sanctions. In conclusion, the success of the formation of discipline in Islamic boarding schools does not rely enough on rigid legal-formal rules, but requires synergy between exemplary leadership figures, orderly organization, and communication that humanizes human beings in applying fair and transparent sanctions.

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary era has intensified concerns over character disruption and moral degradation, making the strengthening of value-based education an urgent priority for societies worldwide (Zaini & Maula, 2022; Dahri, 2023). Educational institutions are increasingly expected not only to transmit

knowledge but also to cultivate ethical behavior, discipline, and social responsibility among learners (Sakdiyah et al., 2026; Nabila et al., 2025). Within this context, Islamic educational institutions play a strategic role in fostering students' moral development through comprehensive educational environments that integrate academic, spiritual, and social learning. Among these institutions, pesantren have long been recognized as effective centers for character formation because they provide continuous supervision and value internalization throughout students' daily lives. Discipline constitutes one of the most fundamental values cultivated within pesantren and serves as the foundation for developing responsibility, self-control, and integrity. Previous studies affirm that discipline is a decisive pillar in shaping students' character because it transforms institutional values into habitual behavior through consistent guidance and supervision (Agus & Kholilurrohman, 2025; Hanapi, 2024). Consequently, strengthening disciplinary culture has become a strategic necessity for ensuring the sustainability of character education in contemporary Islamic educational institutions (Jannah et al., 2025; Achadah & Rohmah, 2022).

Despite the strategic role of pesantren in character education, maintaining a sustainable culture of discipline has become increasingly challenging amid rapid social transformation and globalization. The growing influence of digital technology, changing patterns of youth interaction, and the expansion of information access have significantly altered students' attitudes toward institutional regulations and authority. These developments frequently create a gap between formally established disciplinary policies and students' actual behavioral practices (Izza et al., 2025). Such conditions indicate that discipline cannot be sustained solely through written regulations or punitive mechanisms but requires effective educational leadership capable of integrating organizational management with moral guidance. Leadership in Islamic educational institutions represents not only administrative responsibility but also a moral mandate that must be implemented through accountable and effective governance (Rosmini et al., 2024). Accordingly, educational leaders are expected to formulate adaptive policies, mobilize institutional resources, and establish organizational systems capable of maintaining discipline while responding to contemporary educational challenges (Rachman et al., 2023; Lamirin et al., 2023).

Field observations further demonstrate that the effectiveness of disciplinary culture largely depends on how leadership strategies are translated into systematic managerial practices. In many Islamic boarding schools, inconsistencies between institutional policies and their implementation frequently emerge because planning is insufficiently participatory, organizational responsibilities overlap, communication between leaders and

students remains ineffective, and supervisory mechanisms lack consistency. These managerial weaknesses often reduce students' compliance with institutional regulations and weaken the internalization of disciplinary values. From the perspective of Islamic Education Management, these challenges highlight the importance of integrating classical management principles with the spiritual traditions that characterize pesantren education. George R. Terry's management framework, consisting of Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC), provides a comprehensive analytical perspective for examining how educational leadership can systematically organize institutional resources to achieve disciplinary objectives (Septihandini et al., 2025). Furthermore, leadership effectiveness remains the primary determinant in directing organizational change, motivating human resources, and ensuring that educational values are consistently translated into students' daily behavior (Ramadani et al., 2024).

Previous studies have extensively examined leadership within Islamic boarding schools from various perspectives, demonstrating that leadership significantly influences institutional effectiveness and educational quality. Research conducted by Sangapan (2025) primarily emphasizes the contribution of charismatic kiai leadership in preserving institutional authority and maintaining organizational legitimacy. Meanwhile, Hidayatullah, Dahlia & Amin (2025) focus on instructional leadership by highlighting its influence on teachers' professional performance and learning outcomes. Other scholars argue that educational leadership should function as a catalyst for organizational reform by integrating managerial competence with institutional vision and strategic policy implementation (Mudarris & Rizal, 2023; Scott, 2024). Likewise, studies grounded in management theory suggest that educational organizations require systematic governance encompassing planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling to achieve institutional objectives effectively (Faiz et al., 2024). Collectively, these studies confirm the strategic importance of leadership in educational institutions; however, they predominantly examine leadership from macro-organizational, charismatic, or instructional perspectives while providing limited explanation of the operational managerial processes through which discipline is systematically cultivated in students' everyday lives.

Although the existing literature offers valuable insights into pesantren leadership, several important limitations remain unresolved. Most previous investigations treat discipline as an educational outcome rather than examining it as a managerial process produced through integrated leadership functions. Consequently, insufficient attention has been devoted to explaining how planning, organizational structure, leadership practices, communication patterns, supervision, and evaluation interact continuously to establish a

sustainable disciplinary culture. Furthermore, studies rarely explore how traditional Islamic values can be harmonized with modern management principles to address contemporary educational challenges, including technological change and increasingly complex student behavior. The hidden curriculum that shapes students' obedience, behavioral norms, dress ethics, and institutional commitment has also received relatively limited managerial analysis despite its substantial contribution to character formation (Husna & Hamid, 2025). Therefore, a comprehensive investigation employing George R. Terry's POAC framework is necessary to bridge this theoretical and practical gap by explaining the concrete managerial mechanisms through which educational leadership internalizes disciplinary values within Islamic boarding schools in a systematic and sustainable manner.

This study offers a different perspective by positioning leadership not merely as an individual attribute or a source of institutional authority, but as an integrated managerial process that systematically shapes students' disciplinary culture. The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of leadership through the interconnected functions of Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC), which are examined as a unified management cycle rather than as separate administrative activities. Instead of emphasizing charismatic influence or instructional leadership alone, this study investigates how participatory planning, structured organizational arrangements, exemplary leadership, persuasive communication, and continuous supervision operate collectively to internalize disciplinary values. Furthermore, it highlights the integration of modern management principles with the traditional educational values of Islamic boarding schools, demonstrating that effective discipline is produced through a balance between organizational governance and moral guidance. This perspective provides a more holistic framework for understanding how leadership management can sustain institutional discipline in the context of rapidly evolving educational and social environments.

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How does the leadership strategy of an Islamic boarding school leader, viewed through George R. Terry's POAC management framework, contribute to the development of a sustainable culture of student discipline? This study argues that the effectiveness of disciplinary culture depends on the integration of systematic management functions rather than on the enforcement of formal regulations alone. Leadership is expected to function as the driving force that aligns institutional planning, organizational structures, implementation strategies, and supervisory mechanisms into a coherent managerial system capable of transforming institutional values into students'

everyday behavior. Accordingly, this research aims to develop a comprehensive leadership framework that explains the managerial processes underlying the internalization of disciplinary values. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the advancement of Islamic Education Management by enriching leadership studies from a managerial perspective and practically by providing an adaptable model for educational leaders seeking to strengthen discipline, character formation, and organizational effectiveness in Islamic educational institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using an explanatory case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of leadership strategies in developing a culture of student discipline within an Islamic boarding school. A qualitative case study was selected because it enables researchers to explore managerial processes, leadership practices, and organizational interactions within their natural context, thereby providing a comprehensive explanation of complex educational phenomena that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative approaches (Trimurti et al., 2025). The research was conducted at an Islamic boarding school recognized for its well-established disciplinary management system and its integration of traditional Islamic values with contemporary educational management. This setting was purposively selected because it represents an information-rich case capable of providing comprehensive insights into the implementation of leadership management based on George R. Terry's POAC framework. In qualitative inquiry, the researcher served as the primary research instrument (human instrument), responsible for collecting, interpreting, and validating empirical data throughout the research process. Research participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that informants possessed substantial knowledge and direct experience regarding institutional leadership and disciplinary management (Tajik et al., 2024). The participants consisted of the head of the Islamic boarding school, four boarding administrators (*musyrif*) responsible for student development and security, and eight students representing diverse disciplinary experiences.

Data were collected through three complementary techniques to capture the phenomenon comprehensively. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the head of the boarding school, administrators, and selected students to explore leadership strategies, organizational practices, and the implementation of disciplinary policies. Second, passive participatory observation was undertaken to document naturally occurring interactions, leadership practices, student behavior, and disciplinary routines within the

boarding school environment. Third, documentation analysis was employed to examine institutional regulations, disciplinary records, organizational documents, supervisory reports, and other relevant archival materials. To ensure consistency between the theoretical framework and the empirical investigation, the interview protocol, observation guidelines, and document analysis checklist were developed based on George R. Terry's POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling) management framework. As presented in Table 1, each management function was operationalized into specific indicators and corresponding interview questions, enabling the systematic exploration of leadership strategies related to disciplinary planning, organizational structure, leadership practices, communication, supervision, and educational sanctions. These operational indicators served as the primary guide for collecting and categorizing qualitative data throughout the study, thereby ensuring alignment between the research objectives, data collection procedures, and analytical framework.

The collected data were analyzed continuously using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of four interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification (Prakoso et al., 2021). During the data condensation stage, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary evidence were systematically organized, coded, and reduced to identify themes related to leadership management and disciplinary culture. The organized data were subsequently presented through descriptive matrices and thematic displays to facilitate interpretation and comparison across different data sources. Finally, conclusions were generated and continuously verified through iterative comparison between emerging findings and empirical evidence to ensure analytical consistency. To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, data validity was established through source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentary evidence (Malik et al., 2025). In addition, member checking was conducted by presenting preliminary interpretations to key informants for confirmation and clarification, thereby minimizing researcher bias and strengthening the credibility of the findings. The final interpretation of all qualitative data was guided by George R. Terry's POAC management framework, which has been widely recognized as a comprehensive model for analyzing organizational management and leadership practices across diverse institutional contexts (Yansyah et al., 2026).

Table 1. Operationalization of Leadership Strategy Variables of the Head of the Pondok (POAC Perspective)

Management Functions	Key Indicators	Focus Interview Questions (Examples)
Planning	Participation in the preparation of rules and integration of sharia/tradition values.	How is the involvement of the management in formulating the rules? How are the values of pesantren integrated in regulations?
Organizing	Division of labor and description of duties of the housekeeper.	How is the division of duties between management, security, and roommates? How to prevent the overlap of authority?
Actuating	Exemplary (uswah hasanah) & persuasive-humanist communication.	How does the hut chief set an example? What is the communication strategy to make students aware without violence?
Controlling	Digital supervision (WhatsApp) and application of educational sanctions (takzir).	How is the 24-hour control mechanism performed? What are the criteria for providing fair and educational sanctions?

Table 1 presents the operationalization of the leadership strategy variables based on George R. Terry's POAC management framework. Each management function was translated into specific operational indicators and corresponding interview questions to ensure consistency between the conceptual framework and the empirical data collection process. The indicators served as analytical guidelines for exploring how leadership strategies were implemented in the areas of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. Meanwhile, the interview questions were designed to elicit participants' experiences, perceptions, and managerial practices related to the development of student discipline. This operationalization also guided the observation and document analysis by providing a clear framework for identifying evidence relevant to each management function. Consequently, the table functioned as the primary reference for maintaining alignment between the research objectives, data collection instruments, and qualitative data analysis throughout the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings revealed that the leadership strategy for developing a culture of student discipline was implemented through four interconnected managerial activities. The planning process began with the formulation of disciplinary objectives aligned with the institutional vision of fostering obedient, responsible, and self-disciplined students. According to the head of the Islamic boarding school, the preparation of disciplinary regulations integrated Islamic principles,

pesantren traditions, and students' developmental needs. Planning was conducted through regular deliberation meetings involving the boarding school management, during which administrators were encouraged to contribute ideas regarding disciplinary policies, supervision mechanisms, and program implementation. This participatory process enabled administrators to understand the rationale behind institutional regulations and strengthened their commitment to implementing disciplinary policies. Institutional documents further showed that disciplinary programs and regulations were collectively formulated before being officially implemented, indicating that decision-making was based on consultation rather than unilateral authority.

The implementation of disciplinary management was supported by a structured organizational system with clearly defined responsibilities. Operational authority was delegated to several management divisions, each assigned specific duties in supervising students and maintaining institutional order. The security division was responsible for monitoring students' compliance with regulations throughout the boarding school environment, while room supervisors (*musyrif*) monitored attendance, religious activities, daily behavior, and room discipline. Administrators reported that supervision results were documented and regularly submitted to the head of the boarding school for evaluation. Observational data confirmed that each management unit performed its designated responsibilities according to predetermined job descriptions, minimizing overlapping authority and facilitating coordination among administrators. This organizational arrangement enabled disciplinary supervision to be conducted systematically across different levels of student activities while maintaining continuous communication between the management and institutional leadership.

The implementation of disciplinary policies emphasized exemplary leadership accompanied by continuous interpersonal communication. Observations indicated that the head of the boarding school consistently demonstrated punctuality in daily activities, congregational prayers, educational programs, and compliance with institutional regulations. Students acknowledged that these behaviors served as concrete examples in their daily lives. Regular coordination meetings were conducted with administrators to monitor disciplinary implementation, identify emerging problems, and determine follow-up actions. Student guidance was delivered through personal conversations, religious advice, and persuasive communication aimed at increasing students' awareness of the importance of discipline. Rather than relying exclusively on authoritative instructions, administrators approached students individually to explain the purpose of institutional regulations and

encourage voluntary compliance. Interviews with students suggested that this communication pattern created a more positive relationship between administrators and students, making disciplinary guidance easier to accept.

The supervision and evaluation of student discipline were implemented through a continuous twenty-four-hour monitoring system involving room supervisors and the security division. Daily attendance, participation in religious activities, and compliance with institutional regulations were monitored and reported using WhatsApp groups, enabling administrators to communicate student attendance and disciplinary conditions efficiently. The head of the boarding school received regular reports to identify students requiring additional supervision or guidance. Records of disciplinary violations were maintained systematically and used as the basis for determining appropriate follow-up actions. Students who committed initial violations received verbal guidance and advice, whereas repeated violations resulted in educational sanctions adjusted to the seriousness of the offense. The sanctions included cleaning designated areas of the boarding school, standing while reciting the Qur'an, and other educational activities intended to reinforce responsibility. Students demonstrating consistent compliance with institutional regulations also received appreciation and positive recognition from administrators as part of the institution's efforts to encourage sustained disciplinary behavior.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the leadership strategy for developing a culture of student discipline operated as an integrated managerial process rather than as isolated administrative activities. The planning process established shared disciplinary objectives through collaborative decision-making, the organizing process ensured a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities, the actuating process translated institutional regulations into daily practices through exemplary leadership and persuasive communication, and the controlling process maintained the consistency of disciplinary implementation through continuous supervision, digital reporting, and staged educational sanctions. Observations and interviews consistently indicated that the coordination among the head of the boarding school, administrators, and room supervisors enabled disciplinary policies to be implemented systematically across students' daily academic, religious, and social activities. Documentary evidence further confirmed that disciplinary management followed established procedures supported by routine reporting, evaluation, and follow-up actions, resulting in a consistent implementation of institutional regulations throughout the boarding school environment.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the planning stage of disciplinary management extends beyond the preparation of institutional regulations by functioning as a strategic process for integrating organizational values into educational practice. This result supports the view that leadership serves as a strategic determinant in shaping institutional direction and responding to contemporary educational challenges (Armaini et al., 2026). The participatory planning model implemented in this study is also consistent with the argument that collaborative leadership strengthens organizational commitment through shared decision-making and active stakeholder involvement (Listrianti & Khoiriyah, 2026). However, the present study identifies a distinctive pattern that has received limited attention in previous research. Rather than focusing solely on administrative planning, the boarding school integrated Islamic principles, pesantren traditions, and students' developmental needs into a unified planning framework. Consequently, disciplinary regulations functioned not only as institutional control mechanisms but also as instruments for internalizing educational values. These findings extend George R. Terry's Planning function by demonstrating that leadership planning in Islamic educational institutions should integrate managerial, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. Practically, involving administrators in policy formulation strengthens their ownership, responsibility, and commitment during policy implementation.

The organizing function identified in this study also broadens the understanding of educational leadership by demonstrating that effective organizational structures require not only formal delegation but also complementary managerial roles. This finding is consistent with previous studies emphasizing that leadership effectiveness depends on coordinated organizational governance capable of integrating institutional resources toward common objectives (Rosmini et al., 2024). Likewise, the establishment of a structured organizational hierarchy supports the argument that visionary leadership contributes to adaptive institutional management and sustainable organizational performance (Ramadani et al., 2024). Nevertheless, this study reveals a distinctive organizational arrangement in which the security division and the **musyrif** perform complementary rather than overlapping responsibilities. While the security division ensures institutional compliance, the **musyrif** provide continuous mentoring and daily supervision of students. This combination creates an organizational system that balances formal control with interpersonal guidance, thereby strengthening coordination across managerial levels. From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that disciplinary management is more sustainable when organizational structures simultaneously facilitate administrative accountability and close educational interaction between leaders, administrators, and students.

The findings concerning the actuating function demonstrate that leadership effectiveness is determined not only by the enforcement of institutional regulations but also by the leader's ability to translate organizational

values into everyday practice. This finding is in line with previous studies reporting that exemplary leadership and institutional culture play essential roles in strengthening character education among students (Khasanah et al., 2025). Similarly, the use of persuasive communication confirms that students are more likely to internalize institutional values when educational messages are delivered through dialogue and personal guidance rather than coercive instruction (Rohman et al., 2025). However, this study extends previous findings by demonstrating that exemplary leadership and persuasive communication operate simultaneously as integrated managerial strategies rather than separate leadership characteristics. Furthermore, students' disciplinary compliance was found to be driven not only by institutional authority but also by moral respect toward educational leaders and the internalization of religious values. This finding enriches the transformational-spiritual leadership perspective by showing that sustainable discipline emerges through the interaction between exemplary conduct, value-based communication, and systematic leadership management (Antika & Mesra, 2024). Theoretically, these findings expand George R. Terry's Actuating function by incorporating spiritual motivation as an essential component of leadership implementation in Islamic educational institutions.

The controlling function identified in this study demonstrates that disciplinary supervision can be strengthened through the integration of continuous monitoring, digital technology, and educational evaluation. The use of WhatsApp as a real-time reporting platform illustrates how a traditional Islamic boarding school can adopt technological innovation without diminishing its educational and spiritual identity. This finding is consistent with previous studies emphasizing that digital supervision improves the efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness of educational management systems (Alfauzi & Faslah, 2025). Likewise, the implementation of tiered supervision supports the argument that systematic monitoring enables educational leaders to identify disciplinary issues more accurately and respond promptly to emerging challenges (Sunaji, 2025). In addition, the application of educational sanctions rather than purely punitive measures confirms that effective discipline is achieved through balanced evaluation that combines institutional firmness with personal development (Hidayatullah et al., 2025). Unlike previous studies that primarily examined supervision as an administrative control mechanism, this research demonstrates that controlling also functions as a continuous educational process that reinforces students' responsibility, self-regulation, and awareness of institutional values.

The overall findings reveal that the implementation of George R. Terry's POAC framework within an Islamic boarding school extends beyond its conventional managerial application. Previous studies have generally discussed pesantren leadership from charismatic, instructional, or organizational perspectives without comprehensively explaining how the four management functions interact to establish a sustainable disciplinary culture. In contrast, this study demonstrates that planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling operate as an interconnected managerial cycle in which each function reinforces the others to achieve consistent behavioral outcomes. Another distinctive contribution lies in the integration of managerial principles with Islamic educational values, where organizational effectiveness is strengthened through the combination of participatory governance, exemplary leadership, persuasive communication, and educational supervision. Consequently, this study proposes a contextual leadership model that adapts the classical POAC framework to the characteristics of Islamic boarding schools, offering a more comprehensive explanation of how leadership management contributes to the internalization of discipline within faith-based educational institutions.

The findings of this study contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of Islamic Education Management. From a theoretical perspective, the study broadens the application of George R. Terry's management theory by demonstrating that each POAC function should be interpreted not only as an administrative activity but also as a mechanism for value internalization and character formation within Islamic educational institutions. The resulting framework highlights that sustainable discipline emerges from the interaction between organizational management, spiritual leadership, and institutional culture rather than from formal regulations alone. From a practical perspective, the study provides educational leaders with a systematic model for developing disciplinary culture through collaborative planning, accountable organizational structures, exemplary leadership, persuasive communication, continuous supervision, and educational evaluation. These findings may serve as a reference for managers of Islamic educational institutions seeking to strengthen student discipline while preserving the distinctive religious and cultural values of pesantren. Furthermore, the proposed leadership model offers an alternative approach for responding to contemporary educational challenges by integrating modern management practices with the moral and spiritual foundations of Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the successful development of a student disciplinary culture in Islamic boarding schools depends not on the enforcement of formal regulations alone but on the integration of participatory planning, accountable organizational structures, exemplary leadership, persuasive communication, and continuous supervision within a coherent management system. The principal lesson derived from this research is that George R. Terry's POAC framework becomes more effective when it is contextualized with Islamic educational values, enabling leadership to function as a mechanism for both organizational governance and character formation. Accordingly, this study contributes to the field of Islamic Education Management by extending the application of the classical POAC management model beyond its administrative orientation toward a value-based leadership framework for strengthening student discipline in faith-based educational institutions. Nevertheless, this study is limited to a single qualitative case, which may restrict the transferability of its findings to other institutional contexts. Future research is therefore recommended to examine different types of Islamic educational institutions, employ comparative or mixed-methods approaches, and explore the long-term influence of leadership strategies on student character development and organizational effectiveness.

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