



Value-Based Management and Character Development in Islamic Boarding Schools: A Systematic Review

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Abstract :

This study aims to formulate a value-based Islamic educational management model for strengthening santri character development in pesantren dormitories. Pesantren have long functioned as centers of religious learning and moral formation in Indonesia; however, character education is often practiced through inherited traditions, while systematic management mechanisms remain limited. This study employed a qualitative integrative literature review to synthesize empirical sources on pesantren education, Islamic education management, and character development. Following PRISMA procedures, 64 sources were identified, 35 were selected, and the data were analyzed using thematic content analysis in NVivo 12 Plus. The findings show that santri character development is rooted in *ta'dib*, *tawhid*, worship, *akhlaq*, and moral habituation. Character formation emerges as a holistic process involving cognitive, affective, moral, social, and spiritual dimensions. Dormitory life functions as a hidden curriculum through exemplary leadership, habituation, supervision, and communal discipline. Effective development requires structured planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, evaluation, and adaptive Islamic management. The implications indicate that pesantren leaders should institutionalize value-based character education programs that are systematic, measurable, sustainable, and responsive to contemporary educational challenges, while integrating Islamic moral values, dormitory-based habituation, and educational management functions into a coherent framework for stronger, accountable, and contextually relevant santri character formation in pesantren.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have long served as a cornerstone of Islamic education in Indonesia, functioning not only as centers for religious instruction but also as transformative spaces for moral and character development (Jubba, 2022; Zainuri et al., 2025). As one of the largest Islamic educational institutions in the country, pesantren occupy a strategic position in shaping students' moral, spiritual, and social identities. According to data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Indonesia had approximately 42,391 pesantren with 6,267,741 santri as of October 2025, indicating the significant scale and social relevance of pesantren-based education in national character formation. The pesantren model, characterized by 24-hour immersion, communal living, religious discipline, and spiritual mentoring, has been widely recognized as effective in shaping santri discipline, sincerity, responsibility, and social awareness (Jahidin, 2023; Wanayati

et al., 2025). As character formation becomes an increasingly global educational concern, the value-based educational culture of pesantren aligns with international discourses on holistic, ethics-centered, and spiritually grounded pedagogy.

Despite this potential, the empirical implementation of character education in many pesantren still shows a gap between ideal values and structured managerial practice. Character education is often carried out through normative traditions, moral advice, exemplary behaviour, and habituation, but it is not always supported by systematic, evidence-based management mechanisms (Pujiastuti et al., 2026; Wahyuningsih et al., 2026). Recent empirical studies on pesantren character education indicate that exemplary leadership, habituation, and moral guidance remain dominant strategies; however, these practices are frequently implemented informally and are not consistently integrated into formal planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluation systems. While the existing literature emphasizes the importance of *akhlaq* and exemplary behaviour (*uswah hasanah*), few studies explicitly connect these moral ideals with concrete management functions, such as planning, organizing, implementing, supervising, and evaluating character development programs (Wawan, 2026). This condition highlights an urgent need to reconceptualize santri character formation as a deliberately managed educational process rather than merely a by-product of tradition, dormitory routines, or charismatic leadership alone.

Recent studies further suggest that adaptive and collaborative management frameworks can enhance pesantren's ability to respond to contemporary challenges, including digital disruption, pluralism, globalization, and changing student behaviour, without compromising core Islamic values (Halimah et al., 2024; Yugo, 2025). Eco-pesantren models, inclusive educational strategies, and dormitory-based character programs demonstrate that Islamic values can be operationalized through structured, programmatic interventions rather than remaining at the level of moral discourse (Inayati et al., 2025). These innovations reaffirm the role of Islamic educational management in bridging classical Islamic moral philosophy with contemporary educational administration. However, the literature still lacks an integrated conceptual framework explaining how value-based management can systematically guide santri character development in pesantren dormitories.

The novelty of this study lies in its systematic integration of value-based Islamic education management with santri character development in the specific context of pesantren dormitory life. Unlike previous studies that tend to discuss character education either as a moral-religious tradition or as a set of instructional practices, this study positions character formation as a structured managerial process grounded in Islamic ethical values. It contributes theoretically by linking classical Islamic moral thought, particularly the ideas of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih, with modern educational management, Social Learning Theory, and concepts of the hidden curriculum. Practically, this study offers a conceptual model that can assist pesantren leaders, dormitory supervisors, and educators in designing, implementing, and evaluating value-based character education programs more systematically and sustainably.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill both theoretical and practical gaps by examining how Islamic education management can be systematically applied to dormitory-based character education. It draws on classical Islamic scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawaih while integrating Social Learning Theory and hidden curriculum concepts as explanatory frameworks (Pahrurroji, 2025). The main objectives of this study are to: (1)

explore how santri character is conceptualized in Islamic educational traditions; (2) analyze the managerial strategies used to implement character development in pesantren; and (3) formulate a conceptual model that integrates Islamic moral principles with modern educational management to enhance the effectiveness of character education in pesantren dormitories.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative integrative literature review to synthesize theoretical, empirical, and policy-based findings on the management of character education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). This approach was selected because it enables an in-depth analysis of diverse sources and supports the development of a conceptual model relevant to value-based education. The integrative review method is suitable for this study because it allows the researcher to connect Islamic educational values, management functions, and santri character development within the context of pesantren education (Madya et al., 2026; Sarwadi & Raihan, 2025).

The data sources consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, dissertations, and official policy documents related to pesantren education, Islamic education management, value-based education, and santri character development. The literature was retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, DOAJ, SINTA, and Google Scholar using keywords such as pesantren, Islamic boarding school, Islamic education management, character education, santri character development, and value-based education management. The inclusion criteria were publications discussing pesantren-based education, santri character development, Islamic values, dormitory-based education, or educational management published within the last 5 years. Sources were excluded if they were non-academic, irrelevant to the research focus, duplicated, or lacked sufficient conceptual or empirical contribution.

Following the PRISMA protocol (Elsman et al., 2022; Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021), 64 sources were initially identified, and 35 were selected for final analysis after screening titles, abstracts, keywords, and full texts. Since this study was based entirely on literature and policy documents, it did not involve human participants, interviews, or field observations. Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis in NVivo 12 Plus. The process involved open coding, axial coding, and conceptual integration. Themes related to Islamic values, management functions, pesantren culture, and educational strategies were synthesized into a proposed conceptual model. This method provides analytical rigor and a systematic basis for understanding value-based character development in pesantren settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the findings and discussion of the integrative literature review. The analysis focuses on three major themes: (1) the concept of santri character development from the perspective of Islamic education, (2) strategies for implementing character building in Islamic boarding school dormitories, and (3) management models of character education within the framework of Islamic educational transformation. To ensure analytical clarity, the findings are first presented as review-based evidence, followed by the author's interpretation and conceptual synthesis.

Table 1. Summary of Reviewed Literature and Main Findings

Main Theme	Findings from Reviewed Literature	Author's Interpretation	Key Implication
Concept of Santri Character Development	Santri character formation is rooted in <i>ta'dib</i> , <i>akhlaq</i> , <i>tawhid</i> , worship, and moral habituation within pesantren life (Wafa et al., 2025).	Character education in pesantren should not be understood only as moral instruction but as a holistic process involving cognitive, affective, spiritual, and social development.	Pesantren character education needs to be framed as an integrated educational process.
Role modelling and habituation	Character development is strongly influenced by <i>uswah hasanah</i> , daily religious routines, supervision, and hidden curriculum practices (Sahrandi et al., 2026).	The dormitory functions as a living curriculum where values are learned through observation, repetition, and lived experience.	Character education becomes more effective when values are embedded in daily routines.
Dormitory culture	Pesantren dormitories cultivate values such as discipline, sincerity, independence, brotherhood, and responsibility through communal life (Rahayu et al., 2024).	Dormitory culture works as a moral ecosystem that reinforces individual and collective responsibility.	Dormitory-based education is a strategic medium for value internalization.
Value-based management	Planning, organizing, implementing, supervising, and evaluating are essential to sustain character education programs (Haq et al., 2022).	Islamic education management is not merely administrative but also moral, spiritual, and value-oriented.	Pesantren need structured management systems to ensure consistency and sustainability.
Curriculum integration	Character values are integrated into formal, co-curricular, and non-formal activities such as <i>halaqah</i> , <i>muhadharah</i> , and <i>khidmah</i> (Sah & Fuad, 2024).	Character education is most effective when academic learning, religious practice, and social engagement are unified.	Curriculum design should connect knowledge, practice, and moral action.
Contemporary adaptation	Pesantrens are required to respond to globalization and digitalization through value-based leadership and Islamic digital ethics (Warisno, 2025).	Adaptive management enables pesantren to preserve Islamic identity while responding to modern educational challenges.	Pesantren character education must be both tradition-based and future-oriented.

The reviewed literature indicates that santri character development in pesantren is a holistic and value-based educational process rooted in Islamic principles such as *ta'dib*, *akhlaq*, *tawhid*, worship, and moral habituation. Character formation does not occur merely through formal moral instruction, but through the integration of religious values into daily dormitory life, where *uswah hasanah*, routine worship, supervision, communal discipline, and hidden curriculum practices function as continuous instruments of value internalization. Pesantren dormitories serve as moral ecosystems that cultivate discipline, sincerity, independence, brotherhood, and responsibility through lived experience and collective interaction. The findings also show that effective character education requires structured Islamic educational management, including planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation, so that character-building programs can be consistent and sustainable. Furthermore, curriculum integration through formal, co-curricular, and non-formal activities strengthens the

connection between knowledge, religious practice, and moral action. In the contemporary context, pesantren must adapt to globalization and digitalization through value-based leadership and Islamic digital ethics, enabling character education to remain rooted in tradition while also being responsive to future educational challenges.

The Concept of Santri Character Development in the Perspective of Islamic Education

The reviewed literature indicates that the development of santri character in Islamic boarding school dormitories is an integral educational process involving cognitive, affective, psychomotor, moral, and spiritual dimensions. In Islamic education, this process is closely related to the concept of *ta’dib*, namely the cultivation of manners, morality, discipline, and ethical consciousness as the core purpose of education. From this perspective, character education is not merely behavioral training, but a process of internalizing moral values until they become stable virtues and daily habits.

The pesantren, as a traditional Islamic educational institution, plays a strategic role in implementing this concept through its dormitory-based system and hidden curriculum. Values such as discipline, simplicity, responsibility, sincerity, and social care are not only taught formally. Still, they are also practiced continuously through daily routines, communal living, and direct interaction with kyai, teachers, and peers. Pesantren education does not merely focus on knowledge transmission; it prioritizes the formation of a religious personality grounded in universal Islamic values. Character building is therefore understood as a systematic effort to cultivate moral awareness grounded in *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *ikhlas* (sincerity), and *taqwa* (piety). This makes pesantren not only a place of learning but also a living space where moral and spiritual culture is practised continuously through daily interaction and community engagement.

Furthermore, character formation in pesantren is commonly developed through three main mechanisms: exemplary behaviour, habituation, and spiritual guidance. Exemplary behaviour is reflected in the role of kyai, teachers, and dormitory supervisors as moral figures. Habituation is achieved through daily religious and social practices such as congregational prayer, Qur’anic study, maintaining cleanliness, time management discipline, and collective responsibility. Spiritual guidance is provided through supervision, mentoring, advice, and self-reflection. These practices demonstrate that santri character formation is rooted in value-based educational management, where all activities are directed toward cultivating integrity, spiritual discipline, and social responsibility.

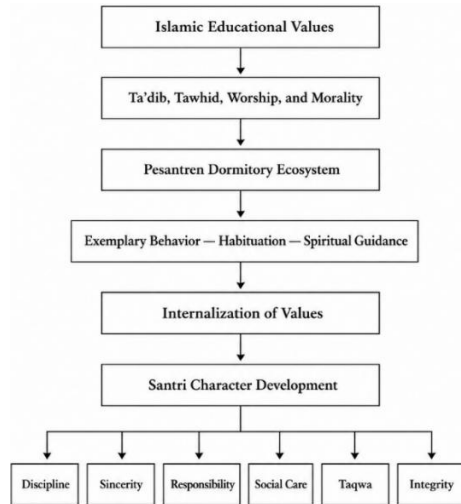


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Santri Character Development

Figure 1 illustrates the holistic process of santri character development in pesantren. It begins with Islamic educational values, including *ta'dib* (cultivation of manners), *tawhid* (monotheism), worship, and morality, which serve as the foundational principles. These values are embedded within the pesantren dormitory ecosystem, where students live in a communal, 24-hour learning environment. Within this context, character is shaped through three interrelated mechanisms: exemplary behaviour by kyai, teachers, and supervisors; habituation through daily religious and social routines; and spiritual guidance via mentoring, supervision, and self-reflection. This leads to the internalisation of values, resulting in stable virtues that manifest as practical qualities in the santri, such as discipline, sincerity, responsibility, social care, *taqwa*, and integrity. The model emphasizes that character development is not limited to formal instruction but is a continuous, value-based process integrated into the social, moral, and spiritual fabric of pesantren life.

Based on the literature reviewed, santri character development can be understood as a holistic, value-based educational process. It is not limited to formal instruction or moral advice; rather, it is shaped by the integration of Islamic values, dormitory culture, social interaction, and managerial practices. In this sense, pesantren character education differs from conventional school-based character education because it operates within a 24-hour educational ecosystem.

From a theoretical standpoint, this process is closely related to Social Learning Theory, especially the idea that students learn through observation, imitation, and repeated practice. In the Islamic educational context, this theory is reflected in the concept of *uswah hasanah*, where santri learn moral values by observing and imitating kyai, teachers, and senior students. The novelty emerging from this finding is that santri character development should be conceptualized not merely as a moral-religious tradition, but as a value-based management process. This means that Islamic values must be translated into structured managerial functions, including value-oriented planning, organizing, implementing, supervising, and evaluating. Therefore, Islamic educational management in pesantren is not purely administrative; it is fundamentally moral and spiritual in orientation.

Strategies for Implementing Character Building of Santri in Islamic Boarding School Dormitories

The reviewed literature shows that character building in Islamic boarding school dormitories is implemented through a holistic, continuous management system. Character education is not confined to classroom instruction but is embedded in the 24-hour life of the dormitory. Through this system, santri are consistently guided through spiritual supervision, moral exemplification, religious habituation, and collective discipline.

Empirical studies indicate that the daily communal life of pesantren functions as a living curriculum that systematically internalizes religious and moral values through structured routines, role modelling by kyai and teachers, and a value-oriented institutional culture. The exemplary leadership and moral authority of kyai play a central role in shaping students' character, as their daily conduct serves as a primary reference for ethical behaviour and spiritual discipline among santri.

In addition, character formation is reinforced through the strengthening of pesantren religious culture and the integration of value-based curricula across academic, co-curricular, and dormitory activities. This integration ensures coherence between

learning, living, and moral practice. The literature also emphasizes that role modelling, or *uswah hasanah*, is one of the most important strategies for shaping santri character. Santri acquire moral and spiritual values through sustained interaction with respected figures such as kyais, teachers, and dormitory supervisors, whose behaviour serves as a living example of Islamic ethics.

Habituation also appears as a dominant strategy. Daily practices such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, cleanliness programs, discipline in dormitory routines, and spiritual reflection form a hidden curriculum that shapes students' moral dispositions beyond formal teaching frameworks. These practices show that character building in pesantren occurs not only through instruction but also through repeated moral action.

The reviewed literature further indicates that dormitory culture plays a decisive role in nurturing santri character. The dormitory is designed as a moral and social ecosystem infused with religious values. Norms of disciplined communication, mutual advice, obedience, responsibility, and ethical conduct are practiced continuously. Studies on pesantren culture emphasize that values such as *ukhuwah*, sincerity, discipline, and independence serve as the moral foundation of daily life and function as an internalized system of social control sustained by the santri community.

Value-aligned management practices also support effective character development. The managerial functions of planning, organizing, implementing, supervising, and evaluating are deliberately aligned with Islamic ethical principles. Participatory planning, such as involving students in leadership roles as *musyrif* or dormitory monitors, cultivates responsibility, discipline, and moral leadership. Supervision is implemented through spiritual mentoring and peer-based social monitoring, fostering a continuous moral reinforcement environment.

Character building is also integrated into formal and non-formal curricula. Activities such as *halaqah*, *muhadharah*, and *khidmah* function not only as religious exercises but also as practical arenas for developing communication skills, leadership, discipline, and social responsibility. Research on integrative pesantren curricula shows that character values are most effectively internalized when academic learning, religious practice, and social engagement are unified within a single educational ecosystem.

In the contemporary context, pesantren have also begun to adopt digitally oriented strategies to support character formation. Digital literacy programs grounded in Islamic ethics are introduced to guide students toward responsible, ethical, and reflective engagement with technology and social media. This adaptive approach reflects the effort to harmonize traditional pesantren values with 21st-century competencies.

The findings suggest that effective character building in pesantren dormitories depends on integrating five major strategies: role modeling, habituation, dormitory culture, value-based management, and curriculum integration. These strategies do not stand separately; rather, they operate as an interconnected system.



Figure 2. Value-Based Management Model for Sustainable Character Development

Figure 2 illustrates a value-based management model for sustainable character development among santri in pesantren dormitories. The model shows that character formation begins with Islamic educational values, including *ta'dib*, *tawhid*, *akhlaq*, worship, *ikhlas*, *taqwa*, *ukhuwah*, and responsibility, which serve as the moral and spiritual foundation of the entire process. These values are then translated into structured managerial stages, starting from value-oriented planning, organizing and role distribution, implementation of character practices, supervision and moral guidance, and evaluation for sustainability. Through this layered process, daily pesantren activities such as congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, cleanliness, discipline, *khidmah*, *halaqah*, *muhadharah*, mentoring, and peer monitoring are not merely routine activities but strategic instruments for internalizing Islamic values. The model emphasizes that sustainable character development requires integrating traditional pesantren practices with systematic management functions so that values such as discipline, sincerity, responsibility, integrity, social care, independence, and *taqwa* can be consistently, measurably, and continuously developed.

The author interprets the pesantren dormitory as a value-based educational ecosystem. In this ecosystem, every activity has moral meaning and educational function. Prayer, study, cleanliness, discipline, leadership roles, peer interaction, and community service are not merely routine activities; they are instruments of character formation. This indicates that the strength of pesantren character education lies in its ability to transform daily life into a continuous process of moral learning.

The key novel finding from this review is that pesantren character education becomes more effective when traditional Islamic practices are managed through a structured value-based management framework. In other words, *uswah hasanah*, habituation, and dormitory culture need to be supported by clear planning, role distribution, supervision, and evaluation. Without management, these values may remain informal and inconsistent. With value-based management, however, they can become systematic, measurable, and sustainable.

Management Models of Character Education in Islamic Boarding Schools within the Framework of Islamic Educational Transformation

The reviewed literature reveals that management models of character education in Islamic boarding schools have progressively evolved from traditional exemplar-based approaches toward more integrative, adaptive, and structured frameworks. Contemporary studies show that pesantren no longer rely solely on traditional moral transmission, but increasingly apply management strategies that harmonize spiritual formation, social development, institutional governance, and contemporary educational demands.

Character education management in pesantren is fundamentally rooted in a religio-paternalistic paradigm, where the moral example of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, *kyai*, and teachers serves as the main reference for shaping santri character. This paradigm emphasizes the balanced development of the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, with spiritual consciousness serving as the ethical core of personality formation.

Empirical evidence indicates that character education management in pesantren is implemented through systematic strategies of habituation, role modelling, mentoring, and supervision. Research on pesantren-based management models demonstrates that

integrating institutional vision, dormitory culture, and the active involvement of kyai and ustadz is decisive in fostering students' discipline, independence, and moral responsibility.

Compared to public schools, character education in pesantren is often considered more intensive because of the emotional closeness between santri and kyai and the continuous moral supervision embedded in the 24-hour dormitory system. This environment enables constant interaction, guidance, correction, and moral reinforcement. As a result, *uswah hasanah* becomes the primary instrument for nurturing *akhlaq karimah*.

The literature also shows that pesantren character education management integrates classical Islamic scholarship, especially kitab kuning, with everyday religious and social practices. This integration ensures that intellectual mastery is accompanied by moral refinement, enabling students to internalize ethical principles through lived experience rather than solely through cognitive instruction.

Structurally, character management in pesantren is often divided into two major domains: supervision (*pengasuhan*) and instruction (*pengajaran*). Both domains prioritize values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, peace, perseverance, sincerity, and independence. These values are supported by coordinated planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes.

Recent studies also emphasize that pesantren culture contributes significantly to the internalization of religious and social character, not only within pesantren institutions but also in formal schools that adopt pesantren values. Values such as simplicity, sincerity, independence, and *ukhuwah* serve as moral capital that strengthen students' social awareness and national identity in the context of globalization.

The reviewed literature indicates that pesantren character education management has shifted from a predominantly traditional, charismatic model to a more strategic, collaborative, and outcome-oriented educational system. This transformation does not mean that pesantren abandon tradition. Rather, pesantren reinterpret their traditional values through more systematic management practices.

The author's synthesis suggests that an effective management model of pesantren character education should consist of five interconnected components: (1) Islamic value foundation, (2) exemplary leadership, (3) dormitory-based habituation, (4) structured management functions, and (5) adaptive transformation. The novelty of this study lies in proposing that character education in pesantren should be understood as a value-based Islamic educational management model. This model integrates classical Islamic moral philosophy, pesantren dormitory culture, and modern management functions into one conceptual framework. Based on a synthesis of the reviewed literature, this study proposes a value-based management model for developing santri character in Islamic boarding schools.

Table 2. Value-Based Management Model for Santri Character Development

Component	Description	Expected Character Outcome
Islamic Value Foundation	Integration of <i>tawhid</i> , <i>akhlaq</i> , <i>ikhlas</i> , <i>taqwa</i> , responsibility, sincerity, and discipline	Moral awareness and spiritual consciousness
Exemplary Leadership	Kyai, teachers, and supervisors act as living models of Islamic ethics	Respect, obedience, integrity, and moral imitation
Dormitory Habituation	Daily routines such as prayer, Qur'anic study, cleanliness, discipline, and communal living	Discipline, independence, responsibility, and consistency

Spiritual Supervision	Mentoring, advice, reflection, peer monitoring, and moral correction	Self-control, accountability, and ethical awareness
Curriculum Integration	Integration of character values into formal, co-curricular, and non-formal activities	Leadership, communication, social care, and civic responsibility
Evaluation and Reflection	Continuous assessment of behaviour, participation, and moral development	Sustainable character growth and institutional improvement
Adaptive Islamic Management	Integration of Islamic ethics with digital literacy and contemporary educational needs	Digital responsibility, adaptability, and global readiness

Table 2 shows that santri character development is not produced by a single factor, but by the interaction between Islamic values, leadership, dormitory culture, structured management, curriculum, supervision, and adaptive transformation. Therefore, the model strengthens the argument that pesantren character education must be managed as a systematic, value-based, and sustainable educational process.

The contribution of this study lies in its effort to reconceptualize santri character development as a value-based Islamic educational management process rather than merely as a traditional moral formation practice. By synthesizing findings from previous studies, this research offers an integrative framework that connects Islamic educational values, dormitory-based habituation, exemplary leadership, curriculum integration, supervision, and adaptive management into a single conceptual model. This framework strengthens the theoretical understanding of pesantren character education by showing that moral development is not only shaped by religious instruction, but also by systematic managerial functions that organize, sustain, and evaluate value internalization in daily dormitory life. Therefore, this study enriches the discourse on Islamic educational management by positioning pesantren dormitories as strategic educational ecosystems where spiritual, moral, social, and managerial dimensions interact continuously.

The impact of this study is expected to be relevant for pesantren leaders, dormitory supervisors, teachers, and Islamic education policymakers. Practically, the proposed model can be used as a reference for designing character education programs that are more structured, measurable, sustainable, and responsive to contemporary challenges. For pesantren institutions, the findings encourage the development of clear planning, role distribution, supervision mechanisms, reflective evaluation, and digital ethics programs without neglecting the core values of *ta'dib*, *tawhid*, *akhlaq*, *ikhlas*, *taqwa*, and *ukhuwah*. At the policy level, this study supports the need to strengthen dormitory-based character education as an important component of Islamic educational transformation. Thus, the impact of this research is not limited to conceptual development, but also extends to practical improvement in managing santri character formation in a more accountable and future-oriented manner.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that santri character development in Islamic boarding school environments is a multidimensional process that integrates Islamic values, dormitory culture, habituation, and value-based management systems. When compared with existing literature, the results strongly confirm the argument of Mujahid (2021) and Munawir et al. (2025) that character formation in pesantren is rooted in *ta'dib*, *akhlaq*, and continuous moral habituation. However, this study extends prior work by showing that character formation is not only a pedagogical or cultural process, but also a structured managerial system. This finding aligns partially with Yakin et al. (2025) regarding Islamic educational management, yet the present study strengthens the argument by positioning management functions as the central mechanism that

ensures sustainability of character internalization. In contrast to studies that emphasize moral transmission alone, the results highlight that without systematic planning, organizing, implementation, supervision, and evaluation, value internalization tends to remain inconsistent and context-dependent. This creates a conceptual shift from value transmission to value governance in Islamic education.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings strongly support Social Learning Theory Zentall (2022), particularly the mechanism of observational learning, imitation, and reinforcement. The role of *uswah hasanah*, as emphasized by Jasuli (2025), becomes a structural driver of behavior formation within dormitory ecosystems. However, this study advances the theory by integrating it with Islamic educational epistemology, especially the concept of *ta'dib* as proposed in classical Islamic education discourse. Unlike conventional applications of Social Learning Theory in secular education contexts, the pesantren environment demonstrates a continuous 24-hour learning system where social reinforcement is not episodic but permanent. Furthermore, this study introduces a theoretical extension by conceptualizing dormitory life as a "value-based total institution" where behavioral learning, spiritual discipline, and moral regulation occur simultaneously. This synthesis provides a novel theoretical contribution by bridging Western behavioral learning theory with Islamic moral education frameworks.

Practically, the findings indicate that character development in pesantren requires structured integration between cultural practices and managerial systems. Strategies such as habituation, role modeling, and curriculum integration, as supported by Sah & Fuad (2024), are effective only when embedded in a systematic management framework. The results show that dormitory routines such as congregational prayer, Qur'anic study, and communal discipline are not merely religious activities but function as behavioral engineering tools that shape long-term character outcomes. This finding has significant implications for pesantren administrators, suggesting that informal value transmission must be formalized through structured planning and evaluation systems. Moreover, digital adaptation strategies highlighted by Warisno (2025) are increasingly relevant, as pesantren must now balance traditional moral education with digital literacy development. Therefore, practical implementation should focus on strengthening leadership capacity, institutional governance, and curriculum synchronization to ensure consistent character outcomes across different learning contexts.

The novelty of this study lies in the development of an integrated value-based management model that unifies Islamic educational values, dormitory habituation, exemplary leadership, and adaptive transformation into a single conceptual framework. While previous studies such as Fadlilah et al. (2026) Kartiko et al. (2026) examined these elements separately, this study synthesizes them into a coherent system that positions character education as a managed educational ecosystem rather than a spontaneous cultural outcome. This represents a significant conceptual shift in Islamic education research, where character formation is reconceptualized as a structured process of value governance. The study also contributes to filling a research gap by demonstrating that sustainability of character education depends on the alignment between moral values and managerial mechanisms. Thus, pesantren are not only cultural institutions but also dynamic educational organizations that require systematic governance to ensure long-term effectiveness of character formation.

Overall, the impact of this study extends to both theoretical advancement and practical transformation. Theoretically, it strengthens the discourse on Islamic educational management by integrating moral philosophy, social learning mechanisms, and institutional governance into a unified model. Practically, it provides a framework for pesantren leaders and educators to redesign character education programs that are measurable, sustainable, and adaptive to modern challenges. This includes strengthening supervision systems, improving leadership modeling, and integrating digital ethics into daily learning environments. In addition, the findings support educational policymakers in recognizing pesantren dormitories as strategic sites for national character development. By combining traditional Islamic values with structured management systems, this study offers a scalable model that enhances the quality, consistency, and impact of character education in Islamic boarding schools.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that santri character development in pesantren dormitories is not merely the result of religious instruction or inherited tradition, but a holistic educational process that becomes effective when Islamic values are systematically translated into daily life through value-based management. The main lesson from this study is that pesantren character education gains strength from integrating *ta'dib*, *tawhid*, *akhlak*, worship, habituation, exemplary leadership, dormitory culture, and continuous moral supervision within a 24-hour educational ecosystem. The scientific contribution of this study lies in proposing a value-based Islamic educational management model that connects classical Islamic moral thought, Social Learning Theory, hidden curriculum, and modern management functions, thereby enriching the discourse on Islamic education management and offering a practical framework for pesantren leaders, teachers, and dormitory supervisors. However, this study is limited by its reliance on an integrative literature review and does not include field-based empirical data, interviews, observations, or direct measurement of santri character outcomes. Therefore, future research should test this conceptual model through empirical studies in various pesantren contexts, using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method approaches to examine its effectiveness, adaptability, and impact on sustainable character development.

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