



The Role of Islamic Boarding Schools as Educational Institutions for Forming the Character of Students

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ABSTRACT

Islamic boarding schools are Islamic educational institutions that provide teaching, education, and example every second, minute, and hour from a kyai to its students. Education in Islamic boarding schools aims to forge students into independent individuals and develop a spirit of togetherness, which includes an attitude of mutual assistance, solidarity, and brotherhood among fellow students. In terms of individual character development, Islamic boarding schools teach a frugal attitude and simple living that is far from consumerism. The role of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia is not only as educational institutions but also as religious institutions which are the basis for the process of forming the character of the people. In Islamic boarding schools, the basics of science are taught to shape the character of the people, because having good character is an obligation that students must have when they enter society. As a da'wah mission in the form of providing an example. Thus, Islamic boarding schools as Islamic educational institutions have great potential for the formation of human resources and the potential for realizing the nation's intelligence prosperity, and good character. There is quite a bit of da'wah that can be done through Islamic boarding schools, both da'wah which conveys Islamic teachings, as well as da'wah about life and of course for the formation of the character of the people.

Keywords: *Islamic Boarding Schools, Educational Institutions, Character of Students*



ANJASMORO

ISLAMIC INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION

The role of Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions is very important in developing religious values (Ma'arif et al, 2022). With the concept of education that is timely, focused, and structured. Islamic boarding schools can equip their students' personalities with commendable attitudes, such as being diligent, honest, trustworthy, independent, responsible, creative, innovative, hard-working, and others (Seprina & Rahmat, 2024). Thus, the character will grow in him to become a strong Muslim, devout in worship, able to manage his time so that it is used for useful things, and overcome problems that arise from within him. All of this is an important role for Islamic boarding schools in forming the character of students (Ria, 2018).

There are many interesting things about Islamic boarding schools that are not found in other institutions, including First, the *Santri* are very respectful and civilized towards the Kyai. Second, produce Islamic cadres who have good character, and moral character and can know the Islamic laws contained in the yellow books, such as jurisprudence laws and others. Third, teaching about *adabiah* and the spirit of life is democracy, brotherhood, equality, and others (Ismail, 2013). Research related to character education in the Islamic boarding school environment has been carried out by many other parties, such as the First, research conducted by Imam Syafe'i entitled "Islamic Boarding Schools: Islamic Boarding School Formation Educational Institutions." Second, research was conducted by Zulkaernaen Zawadipa entitled "Character Formation of Santri at the Panggung Tulungagung Islamic Boarding School (Zawadipa, 2017)." Third, research conducted by Mita Silfiasari & Ashif Al Zhafi entitled "The Role of Islamic Boarding Schools in Character Education in the Era of Globalization (silfiasari, 2020)."

The research above discusses how Islamic boarding schools play a role as character-formation institutions in the millennial era. In line with this, Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic boarding schools states that to increase faith and piety as well as noble morals, Islamic boarding schools that grow and develop in society with their uniqueness have made an important contribution to realizing Islam that is *rahmatan lil'alam* by producing believers. who has character, love of the country, and progress, and is proven to have a real role



ANJASMORO

ISLAMIC INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

in both the movement and struggle for independence and national development within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Islamic boarding schools as a subculture have unique characteristics that have taken root, lived, and developed in society in educational, missionary, and community empowerment functions. *Pesantren* is one of the *iqomatuddin* bodies, which has two main functions, namely the *tafaqquhu fi ad-din* activity function, namely teaching, understanding, and deepening the teachings of the Islamic religion, and the *Indzar* function, namely conveying and preaching Islamic teachings to the community. Thus, the presence of Islamic boarding schools is not only an educational institution but also a missionary institution (Musyarofah, 2006).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach and literature review methods. The data collection technique used by researchers is collecting data from various library sources, including books, journals, and the results of discussions with experts relevant to the research theme. After the data was collected, the researcher carried out data analysis using data interpretation techniques and the researcher provided sufficient explanation in terms of theory that was relevant to the problem at hand (Satori & Komariah, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Boarding School

According to Nurcholis Majid, Islamic boarding schools are artifacts of Indonesian civilization that were built as religious educational institutions with a traditional, unique, and Indigenous style. This means that from a historical perspective, Islamic boarding schools are not only synonymous with Islamic meaning but also contain the meaning of Indonesian authenticity. Still according to Nurcholis Majid, Islamic boarding schools are "institutions which can be said to be a manifestation of the natural process of developing the National Education system (Nurcholis, 1997).

Islamic boarding schools have an important role and are a moral reference in the surrounding community. The community views Islamic boarding schools as institutions that



ANJASMORO

ISLAMIC INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

support religious teachings. Because the obligation of da'wah is not limited only to ulama but is more emphasized on knowledgeable people who can convey knowledge about Islam, laws, knowledge, issues of *ijtihad*, *ushul*, and so on (Bin Ali Al-Qathani, 1994).

Islamic boarding schools are part of Islamic religious educational institutions that have been around for a long time in Indonesia, having been established long before Indonesia's independence. Even before there were Dutch colonial-style educational institutions, Islamic boarding schools already existed. The development of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia is relatively fast, you can find many Islamic boarding schools in every region.

Islamic boarding schools as one of the educational institutions in society have an important role in improving the quality of human resources. Islamic boarding school education not only provides technical knowledge and skills but what is much more important is instilling moral and religious values. As time goes by, Islamic boarding schools are required not only to provide religious education but Islamic boarding schools are also expected to be able to act as social institutions (Alfandi, 2019).

Elements of Islamic Boarding Schools

Cottage

There are three main reasons why Pondok (dormitory) must be in an Islamic boarding school. First, the fame of a *kyai* and the depth of his knowledge of Islam attracts students from far away to gain knowledge. To achieve this, it takes a long and regular time which requires a *santri* to live close to the kyai's residence. Second, most Islamic boarding schools are in villages where there is usually not enough housing (accommodation) to accommodate the students. Third, there is a reciprocal attitude between the kyai and the santri, where the students consider the *kyai* to be their fathers, and the kyai consider the students to be a gift from God who must be protected (Dhofier, 1994).

Kyai

Kyai has the most important role in an Islamic boarding school as the leader of the Islamic boarding school. The value of Islamic boarding schools depends a lot on the personality of the Kyai as a role model and at the same time the holder of absolute wisdom in Islamic



boarding school values. A Kyai must be able to accept change and improve the quality of his Islamic boarding school to maintain the existence of his Islamic boarding school. The role of *kyai* is very large in the areas of handling faith, guiding charity, disseminating and passing on knowledge, developing morals, educating charity, and leading and resolving problems faced by students and the community. In terms of thinking, *kyai* are more in the form of forming certain patterns of thinking, attitudes, souls, and orientations to lead according to the *kyai*'s personality background (Ziemek, 1986).

Students

Santri and Islamic boarding schools are two sides that cannot be separated. The most basic characteristic of Islamic boarding schools is the existence of *kyai* and *santri*, because *kyai* are the transmitters of knowledge while *santri* are the recipients of knowledge who will later become the successors of the kyai and will preserve the knowledge taught.

Teaching of the Classical Scriptures

To obtain maximum results, Islamic boarding schools in the learning process in Islamic boarding schools use several teaching methods, including:

1) *Sorogan* Method

The *sorogan* method is that a student hands him a book and reads it in front of the Kyai. When there is a mistake, the Kyai immediately corrects it. (Ghazali, 1996).

2) *Wetonan* or *Bandongan*

The *wetonan* or *bandongan* method is the main method used in Islamic boarding schools to teach books. In this system, a group of around 50 to 500 students listen to a teacher reading, translating, explaining, and reviewing Islamic books in Arabic, each student pays attention to his book and makes notes about difficult words or thoughts (Dhofier, Islamic Boarding School Traditions, 1994).

3) Deliberation or *Mudzakaroh*

The *mudzakaroh* method is a method for discussing various problems found in students. This method is used when a problem occurs, then a deliberation is held to find a solution and address the problem. This method is often used just to discuss a book (Mujahideen, 2005).



ANJASMORO

ISLAMIC INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

4) Memorizing

This method is only used to memorize the contents of the book they are studying. Memorizing material is not the same for each Islamic boarding school because an Islamic boarding school usually has a certain target in studying a book (Mujahideen, 2005).

5) *Laran*

Recitation is a method of repeating material. Usually done independently, the material that is repeated is usually the material discussed in the *sorogan* or *bandongan* (Mujahideen, 2005).

Mosque

The mosque is an element that cannot be separated from Islamic boarding schools and is considered the most appropriate place to educate students, especially in the practice of five daily prayers, sermons Friday prayers, and teaching classical Islamic books.

Responsibilities of Islamic Boarding Schools

One of the problems currently being faced by the world of education is the moral degradation experienced by some of the young millennial generation, both in terms of the values of politeness, friendliness, responsibility, mutual help, solidarity, honesty, and others. Now these values are increasingly fading among them, the factors that cause this are advances in information technology and the lack of optimality in formal educational institutions that shape the character of their students. This happens because formal education only focuses on students' knowledge and pays less attention to the students' moral values and personalities. The decline in morals of the millennial generation is caused by an uncondusive environment and a lack of social institutions to control existing social changes, ultimately having a negative impact on them. All problems experienced by the millennial generation related to declining manners and personality can be overcome in the Islamic boarding school environment (Mualli, 2020).

Considering its historical track record, Islamic boarding schools as the oldest institutions in Indonesia whose existence has existed since the Wali Songo era until now, are of course required to make efforts to solve and respond to the challenges of this sophisticated life. Islamic boarding schools as institutions of Islamic education and character education have the



ANJASMORO

ISLAMIC INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

responsibility to be carriers of change (agents of change) in character, especially for the current young generation, some of whom have experienced moral degradation.

In its philosophy, education in Islamic boarding schools is based on a meaningful relationship between humans as creatures or creatures, and Allah SWT as the creator or *keholiq*. The middle point of this relationship is what is called morals. So that the meaning of the relationship can produce beauty and greatness of character or noble morals. All activities, behaviors, and ethics both in *mahdob* worship and social worship receive guidance and role models from the teacher for the students, so that the students can apply their knowledge, develop themselves, and develop joint activities in the community in the future (Nurcholis, 1997).

So, whether it is acknowledged or not, the existence of various forms of Islamic boarding schools and their variations in learning methods is an indelible part of civilization and makes Islamic boarding schools able to play a role in building the character of the people and even fighting for Indonesian independence at that time. This shows that Islamic boarding schools are true to the principle that the existence of Islamic boarding schools is to humanize humans. Not only being a good human being but also being a person with character through his educational activities.

In terms of individual character development, Islamic boarding schools teach an attitude of thriftiness and simple living that is far from the consumerist nature of urban society. Thus, Islamic boarding schools as community-owned educational institutions have great potential to be developed into centers for the development and formation of Human Resources (HR) towards the realization of the nation's intelligence and prosperity. However, the reality shows that from the colonial era until now, Islamic boarding schools have not been popular educational institutions compared to formal schools.

Shaping *Santri* Character

In its historical track record, Islamic boarding schools have made a major contribution to the world of education. Its role in educational institutions is to shape the character of students. In the millennial era, the role of Islamic boarding schools cannot be underestimated. This is different from formal education which focuses on students' intellectual abilities.



ANJASMORO

ISLAMIC INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

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However, in general, in this case, Islamic boarding schools have the potential to progress and develop, empowering themselves and the community around them. This is because of the potential and opportunities in Islamic boarding schools, including:

First, institutional Islamic boarding schools, which were founded independently by and for the community, play a very important role in the formation of the nation's morals. Second, there are ulama or charismatic figures in Islamic boarding schools who are respected and become role models for the surrounding community. Third, the availability of adequate human resources at Islamic boarding schools. Fourth, the availability of large areas of land, because generally Islamic boarding schools are located in rural areas. Fifth, the spirit of independence, sincerity, and simplicity that grows among Islamic boarding school students and extended families. Sixth, public interest in Islamic boarding schools is quite large because apart from providing religious education, they also provide moral guidance (Indonesian Ministry of Religion, 2023).

In the journey of Islamic boarding schools as a vehicle for spreading Islamic da'wah, Islamic boarding schools have several advantages in conveying education compared to others,



ANJASMORO

ISLAMIC INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

including:

a. Provide examples or role models

The word exemplary in the Qur'an is synonymous with the word *uswah* which is then given the characteristic *hasanah* behind it which means a good example. The word *uswah* is exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the Prophet Ibrahim, "In the Messenger of Allah you can find a good example." (QS 33: 21). Regarding the example of the Prophet Ibrahim, Allah explained "Indeed, in them (Ibrahim and his people) there is a good example for you..." (QS 60: 4) and in Surah al-Ahzab verse 21 it is also explained, "In Allah's Messenger you can find a good example...". According to Muhammad Qurthb, this exemplary method is considered important because the religious aspect contains morals which are included in the affective area which is manifested in the form of behavior (Qutb, 1984).

b. Telling Stories in the Qur'an, many stories or stories are told, and there is even the name of Surah al-Qashash in particular. Stories or narratives as a method of preaching have an appeal that touches feelings. Islam is aware of the human nature of liking stories and realizes their great influence on feelings. Therefore, Islam adopted this story as a technique for preaching. Telling various types of stories, such as factual historical stories that show an example of human life, is intended so that human life can be like the perpetrator shown by the example. Or the story of the destruction of the past people, intended so that today's people do not follow the actions of those past people. Through teaching at Islamic boarding schools these stories can be studied simultaneously.

c. Giving Advice

The *kyai* at Islamic boarding schools educates the students by giving lots of advice that comes from divine revelation. So, the advice from the *kyai* is always used as a guide in living his life giving a response that the advice method was used in teaching at Islamic boarding schools as an effective method of conveying *da'wah* (Nata, 1997).

d. Get used to it

Islamic boarding schools also provide education through habits that are carried out in stages. Islamic boarding schools use unlimited habits in the form of actions feelings and thoughts. In other words, the refraction carried out by Islamic boarding schools also



ANJASMORO

ISLAMIC INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

involves passive and active aspects. These two aspects depend on socio-economic conditions, not regarding mental conditions which are closely related to faith or ethics. Meanwhile, those that are active or require implementation are found to be thoroughly habituated (Shihab, 1983).

e. Sanction and reward methods

If examples and advice are not enough, then at that time firm action must be taken that can put the problem in the right place. This firm action is punishment. There are pros and cons to this stage of giving punishment, agreeing, and refusing. Modern educational methods tend to view punishment as taboo, but in the world of Islamic boarding schools, punishment is not the first action that must be carried out by an educator, nor is the method that takes precedence, but the advice is the most prioritized (Bukhari, 1987).

Islam uses all educational techniques. Not leaving a single window unentered to reach the soul. Islam uses examples and advice as well as *tarhib* and *targhib*, but apart from that, it also uses methods of frightening and threatening at various levels, from threats to the implementation of those threats. Thus, the existence of punishment and reward is recognized in Islam and is used in the context of fostering humanity in *da'wah* activities. These punishments and rewards are applied to more specific coaching targets. Punishment is for people who violate and do evil, while rewards are for people who obey and show good deeds.

f. Sermon

Lectures or sermons are among the methods most often used to convey or invite other people to follow predetermined teachings (AM, 2023). According to Hilmi Muhammadiyah, the sermon is also called *tabligh* or conveying a teaching, especially verbally, its existence is acknowledged, and it has even been practiced by the Prophet in inviting humanity to the path of God (Muhammadiyah, 2000). This method is widely used, including in teaching, because this method is the cheapest, easiest, and does not require much equipment. This model is also used by teachers in teaching students at Islamic boarding schools (Zarkashi, 1985).



g. Discussion Method

Islamic boarding schools also use this method to educate and teach people to further strengthen their understanding and attitude toward a problem. Allah's command, in this case, is that we invite them to the right path with wisdom and goodwill and refute them with a good discussion.

Meanwhile, according to Mujamil Qomar, the existence of Islamic boarding schools is to develop citizens to have Muslim personalities following the teachings of the Islamic religion to instill this sense of religion in all aspects of their lives and to make their students or *santri* people useful for religion, society, and the state. The specific objectives of Islamic boarding schools according to Mujamil Qomar are (Qomar, 2000):

- a. Educate students or students who are members of the community to become Muslims who are devoted to Allah SWT, have noble character, have intelligence, and skills, and are physically and mentally healthy as citizens who adhere to Pancasila.
- b. Educate students to become Muslim human beings as cadres of ulama and preachers who have a sincere, steadfast, tough, entrepreneurial spirit in practicing Islamic history in a complete and dynamic manner
- c. Educating students to become skilled workers in various development sectors, especially mental and spiritual development
- d. Educate students to help improve the social welfare of environmental communities in the context of national community development efforts.

Meanwhile, Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools states that to increase faith and piety as well as noble morals, Islamic Boarding Schools which grow and develop in society with their uniqueness have made an important contribution in realizing Islam that is *rahmatan lil'alam* by giving birth to believers who character, love of the country and progress, and proven to have a real role in both the movement and struggle for independence and national development within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Islamic boarding schools as a subculture have unique characteristics that have taken root, live, and develop in society in carrying out educational functions, missionary functions, and community empowerment functions (RI Law, 2019).



ANJASMORO

ISLAMIC INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

CONCLUSION

Islamic boarding schools carry out their role as educational institutions for character formation in the millennial era through reading yellow books, especially those related to the formation of the character of students (kitab *adabul alim wal muta'alim, washoya', alala*), ordering students to get used to good morals or character. both in every activity, providing role models or examples of good actions and words in everyday life, and the activities in the boarding school also play a big role in shaping the character of the students in the future. This will also be reflected in all the students' activities, such as respecting the *kyai* and other students, and being polite and gentle when speaking in everyday life.

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ANJASMORO

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