Analyzing Strategy of Character Building in Islamic Boarding Schools for College Students: A Comparative Case Study

Syaifulloh Yusuf[a, 1,*]; Marhumah[b, 2]; Aziz Muslim[c, 3]

[a] Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[bc] Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

[1] syaifulloh.yusuf@uii.ac.id; [2] marhumah@uin-suka.ac.id; [3] aziz.muslim@uin-suka.ac.id

*Corresponding Author

Article Info	Abstract
  	This study explores the implementation of character education in Islamic boarding schools for university students, focusing on two specific institutions namely Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan Student Islamic Boarding School, which is next called Persada UAD, and Surya Global Health College of Health Sciences Student Boarding School Yogyakarta which is called *Pesantren* STIKES Surya Global. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing interviews, observations, and document analysis involving several administrators from these boarding schools. The findings highlight the critical role of character education in shaping the morals and ethics of students, particularly their religious character. The presence of these Islamic boarding schools plays a significant role in reinforcing character values among students. The study identifies four key aspects of character education within these institutions: a clear and measurable vision, mission, and goals; an effective character education learning design; strict yet rational regulations for student conduct; and the practical application of character education values in daily student life. The research concludes that higher education institutions should integrate character education into both general and religious curricula, with Islamic boarding schools providing an ideal environment for this integration through a well-structured character education curriculum.

Introduction

The quality of student Islamic boarding school graduates cannot be separated from the curriculum and learning process. Intelligence, noble character, personality, and skills are some of the goals of the curriculum in improving the quality of education (Azhari, 2017, p. 124). *Santri* or students in Islamic boarding schools are educated not only to be *mujtahids* or Islamic preachers, but also as researchers and critical thinkers to face the global digital era (Shofa, 2016, p. 102), and the changes are carried out gradually (Rhoyachin & Wahyuni, 2019, p. 130). In this case, all administrative staff, including Islamic boarding school caretakers, helpers or administrators, or technicians or general helpers must have a responsive attitude (Yazidul Busthomi, 2020, p. 109) in facing changing times. Thus, in preparing the Islamic boarding school curriculum, administrator should also consider the efficient time for students to do their study (Prasetyo, 2018, p. 307), so that they graduate on time.

In addition, the implementation of local wisdom in character education through an ethnopedology approach has been proven effective in strengthening the character development of students, especially in environments rich in traditional cultural values (Sakti et al., 2024). The prophetic educational values embedded in the Indonesian language textbook further illustrate that character education extends beyond religious aspects to include principles of positive politeness that support the holistic development of students (Prayitno et al., 2022). Moreover, the integration of CIE education with the BIG 6 teaching strategy has significantly enhanced students' innovative motivation, creativity, and metacognition, which are crucial elements in preparing students to face the challenges of the digital era (Mei-Ju et al., 2014).

Every boarding school has a curriculum based on character education. The problem is, based on researchers' observations, that there are no clear boundaries between Islamic boarding school education in general and Islamic boarding school education for students. Islamic boarding school students do not yet have the strategies to build the characteristics of superior students. In addition, there is no clear measurement as to whether a student has a superior personality. Apart from that, santri students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor attitudes are not clearly visible and measurable. Lickona (Syafi'i & Yusuf, 2021, p. 107) stayed that character is a combined form of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral doing. In fact, currently there is no fixed indicator for the students' personal character as a form of superior personality. This challenge is also echoed in studies on change management in educational institutions, where the lack of clear strategies and measurable indicators for character development can hinder the effectiveness of character education programs (Nudin et al., 2024).

According to Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia concerning Character Education Improvement number 87 Year 2017, there are eighteen characters expected by the government (JDIH BPK RI, 2017) as well as Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 20 of 2018 concerning Character Education (JDIH BPK RI, 2018). The latest concept from the Minister of Education and Culture is related with the concept of Pancasila Students which also promotes character building improvement. In this case, students are human resources who must learn throughout their lives with global competence and Pancasila values. The six values of Pancasila students are namely,

(1) Faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character, (2) Global diversity, (3) Working together, (4) Creativity, (5) Critical reasoning, and (6) Independence (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2024).

Eko Sujadi (Sujadi et al., 2022, p. 144) considered corruption as a serious problem in the world, especially developing countries. Since Indonesia is a developing country, the potential for corruption is also high. Indonesia has established the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), in which one of the aims of which was to establish the nation's character values to become honest human beings. Malaysia also established the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) which is trying to eradicate corruption, while Singapore had prepared a law called PCA (The Prevention of Corruption Act). The success of Singapore in handling corruption needs to be seen as a model for Indonesia and other countries that still have the same problems.

Apart from that, the current reality is that character education is still an important topic in the world of education (Alquriyah & Ahmadi, 2021, p. 89). However, even though it is recognized that character education is very important, many educational institutions prioritize academic education and view character education as less important. Character education should focus on improving behavior and moral values. The reality is that character education is still a controversial issue in several countries, for example in terms of curriculum, education policy, learning methods, and human resources.

Another global problem in Indonesia according to Maulana from Monash University Australia is that teachers in Indonesia still find it difficult to implement character education for students. The difficulty of implementing this is due to several things, namely the large amount of academic material, the lack of professional development programs, and the lack of active involvement from the community (Maulana, 2022, p. 132).

Therefore, researchers are very interested in exploring the concept of character education at two student Islamic boarding schools in Yogyakarta. The selection of Yogyakarta as the research location is motivated by its reputation as a student city with diverse learning models, criteria, and strategies. In this environment, the UAD Yogyakarta student boarding school and the STIKES Surya Global Yogyakarta student boarding school were identified as institutions that consistently integrate both academic and religious education. From these two institutions, researchers aim to identify the ideal model of character education and a comprehensive learning system.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research method, which is particularly suited for exploring complex social phenomena such as character education in Islamic boarding schools. The qualitative approach was chosen to allow for a deep understanding of the subjective experiences and perspectives of the participants involved. The qualitative approach was selected due to its flexibility in exploring the in-depth and nuanced experiences of students, teachers, and administrators within their natural settings. This method is particularly valuable in understanding how character education is conceptualized and implemented in specific contexts. The research was conducted at two Islamic boarding schools: the PERSADA UAD Yogyakarta student boarding school

and the STIKES Surya Global Yogyakarta student boarding school, both of which offer a unique blend of academic and religious education.

Researchers collected data through a combination of in-depth interviews, direct observation in the field, and the collection of relevant supporting documents (Moleong, 2018, p. 176). The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for a thorough exploration of the participants' experiences and thoughts, while also providing the flexibility to probe deeper into areas of interest. Direct observation was conducted to capture real-time interactions and behaviors in the schools' natural environments. Additionally, relevant documents such as curriculum guidelines, school policies, and student records were analyzed to provide contextual background and complement the interview and observation data. Data collection was carried out in a structured manner (Sugiyono, 2015, p. 231), to ensure the comprehensiveness and richness of the data obtained. Triangulation was employed by combining multiple data collection methods to enhance the validity of the findings (Sugiyono, 2015, p. 494).

The data were analyzed using an interactive model, which includes four key stages: data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2015, p. 447). Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, and focusing on the most relevant data to make it more manageable and comprehensive. After condensing the data, it was systematically organized and presented to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the analysis, although these conclusions were considered provisional and subject to further validation as new evidence emerged.

One of the primary challenges encountered during the research was the potential for bias in self-reported data from interviews. To mitigate this, data triangulation was used to cross-verify the information from different sources. Another limitation was the observer effect, where the presence of the researcher during observations may have influenced participants' behavior. To reduce this effect, the researcher spent extended periods in the field to allow participants to become accustomed to their presence. Additionally, time constraints limited the scope of observations, potentially leading to gaps in the data collected.

This image illustrates the key stages in the qualitative research process used to explore character education in Islamic boarding schools. This approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the subjective experiences and perspectives of participants, as well as how character education is conceptualized and implemented in specific contexts. The research followed a systematic methodology, starting from method selection to the drawing of conclusions, which were further validated, ensuring that each research step contributes meaningfully to the final outcomes.
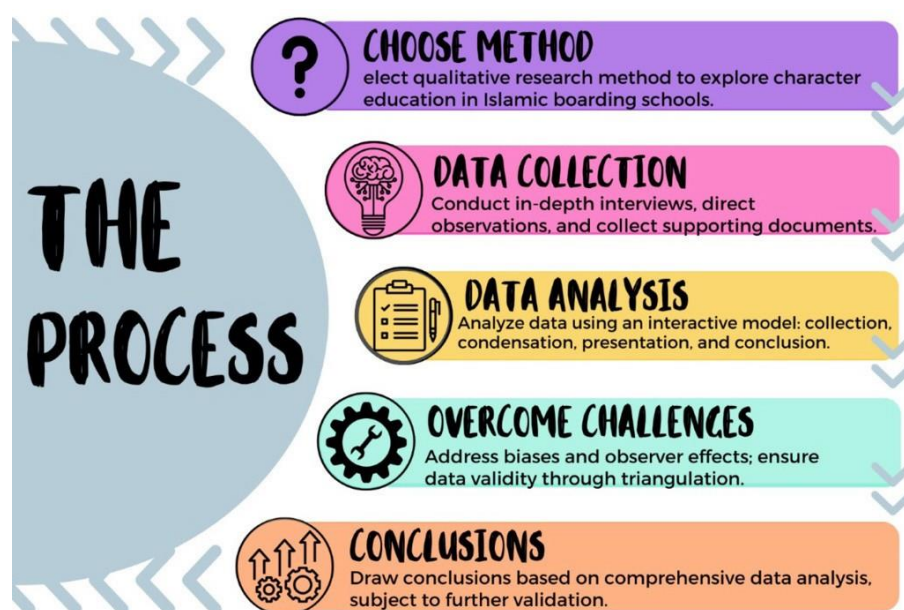
Figure 1:
Qualitative Research Process in Character Education Development

By following this research process, the study was able to generate deep and valid findings on character education in Islamic boarding schools. Each stage, from data collection to analysis, was designed to address potential challenges and ensure that the research results are not only theoretical but also practically applicable. This image provides a clear visual guide to the process undertaken, highlighting the importance of each step in reaching data-driven and reliable conclusions.

Result and Discussion

Based on research that has been conducted from both study objects, namely the PERSADA UAD student Islamic boarding school and the STIKES Surya Global student Islamic boarding school, this section describes the results of the two-character education concept models implemented by these institutions. The goal is that the ideal model identified here can be applied to other student Islamic boarding schools in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, outside Java, and even beyond Indonesia.

Moreover, recent research on communication patterns in Islamic boarding schools has shown that effective communication within these institutions is essential for the successful implementation of character education (Hastasari et al., 2022). This aligns with the findings of this study, where the integration of academic and religious education in both PERSADA UAD and STIKES Surya Global fosters a holistic development of students. The adaptation to new norms and leadership responses during the COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted the resilience and adaptability of Islamic boarding schools, which has further implications for character education (Hanafi et al., 2021).

Unlike earlier research that primarily focused on traditional Islamic collage (*pesantren*) settings, this study provides new insights into the application of character education in a modern, university-based Islamic boarding school environment. By doing so, it extends the discussion of character education beyond primary and secondary

education levels, addressing the specific challenges and opportunities present in the tertiary education context. The integration of academic and religious education in these institutions underscores the evolving nature of *pesantren* education, which now includes contemporary educational strategies while preserving core Islamic values.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering a comparative analysis of two distinct Islamic boarding schools that cater to university students. Previous research often focused on the role of individual educators in shaping students' character, but this study shifts the focus to institutional and systemic factors. It reveals that a well-defined vision and mission, combined with a comprehensive curriculum and supportive regulations, are crucial for the successful implementation of character education programs.

Furthermore, while earlier studies may have emphasized the challenges of modernizing Islamic education (Wajdi & Nur Aulia, 2019)the University Level of Pesantren (Ma'had 'Aly, this research provides empirical evidence of how modern educational practices can be successfully integrated with traditional Islamic teachings. The findings suggest that the ideal model of character education in a higher education setting involves a holistic approach that addresses both academic and spiritual development, thereby offering practical guidelines for other Islamic boarding schools aiming to enhance their character education programs. Additionally, insights from the use of innovative technologies in administrative tasks, such as the E-Santren app, highlight the potential for enhancing administrative efficiency and supporting educational outcomes in *pesantren* (Nuha et al., 2024).

Vision and Mission of Student Islamic Boarding Schools

Fred R. David (Anisa & Rahmatullah, 2020, p. 86), posits that vision and mission are critical elements in strategic management, crucial for securing both profit and sustainability. In the context of student Islamic boarding schools, these concepts are applied in a non-profit capacity under the auspices of a university. Here, "profit" refers to long-term benefits, not in a monetary sense, but in terms of service, pride, and fulfillment. The vision and mission thus play a vital role in guiding Islamic educational institutions, particularly within the framework of Islamic education.

The vision of an Islamic education institution should encompass several essential elements: first, it must have a long-term perspective with clearly defined boundaries; second, it should articulate a forward-looking goal that reflects the institution's future direction; third, it should emphasize the quality and moral development of students; fourth, the vision must be clearly articulated and easily understood; and fifth, it should involve the active participation of all members of the Islamic educational community. Meanwhile, the mission of these institutions should align with and support the vision, promote and instill moral values, provide a clear structure and articulation, and engage all members of the institution in its realization (Anisa & Rahmatullah, 2020, p. 87).

PERSADA UAD, the Islamic boarding school of Ahmad Dahlan University (referred to as PERSADA UAD throughout this article), embodies a vision and mission designed to lead its students toward success. As an Islamic boarding school grounded in Muhammadiyah values, PERSADA UAD emphasizes progressive Islam, as reflected in

its vision: "To become an Islamic Boarding School for Muhammadiyah Cadre Students that is Progressive and Imbued with Islamic Values" (Admin Web PERSADA UAD, 2020). This vision is operationalized through various programs aimed at fostering excellence and progressiveness among students. For example, PERSADA UAD regularly conducts superior research and community service programs that align with its vision, ensuring that students not only excel academically but also contribute meaningfully to society.

The administrators at PERSADA UAD have clearly articulated that graduates should embody qualities such as *alim* (knowledgeable), *amil* (practical), *mukhlis* (sincere), and *muhsin* (virtuous). This aligns with the broader objective that PERSADA students should stand out from their peers by adhering to the values of Al-Islam Muhammadiyah. The institution's goal is to produce students who excel not only in their academic fields but also in religious studies, particularly in Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah values (AIK), which are integral to their education (D. Fathurrahman, personal communication, 5 October 2023).

PERSADA UAD also emphasizes international cooperation, such as its student exchange program with Malaysia. This collaboration allows students to study abroad for one semester at partner universities, fostering cross-cultural understanding and academic enrichment. The program is structured to be financially accessible, ensuring that all selected students can participate without incurring significant costs. This international dimension of PERSADA UAD's vision enhances the global outlook of its students and strengthens the institution's reputation.

Similarly, the STIKES Surya Global Student Islamic Boarding School shares a commitment to providing holistic education through its dual programs: academic courses and religious training. The institution's vision, "To become a Higher Health Education Institution that produces health workers with religious, humanist, and competent character," underscores its goal of integrating religious principles with professional competence (S. Usman, personal communication, 5 October 2023). This vision is reflected in its mission to cultivate health professionals who are not only skilled in their fields but also committed to applying Islamic values in their practice.

The STIKES Surya Global Islamic Boarding School's educational approach is also humanist in nature, encouraging students to engage in various social programs, such as community health services, which embody the institution's broader mission to instill both professional competence and social responsibility (Admin Web STIKES Surya Global, 2024). Students are expected to excel in their respective fields—whether public health, pharmacy, or nursing—while also upholding and promoting Islamic and humanist values within their communities.

In conclusion, both PERSADA UAD and STIKES Surya Global Islamic boarding schools are committed to nurturing students who are distinguished by their academic achievements, moral character, and adherence to Islamic values. The goals of these institutions are reflective of their vision and mission, which are operationalized through structured programs that integrate religious and general education. These efforts aim to produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable and skilled but also embody the principles of progressive Islam and humanism.

Student Islamic Boarding School Learning Design

The learning design in student Islamic boarding schools is a critical aspect of their educational approach, determining how students engage with both religious and academic content. Although PERSADA UAD and STIKES Surya Global student boarding schools share some similarities in their learning designs, there are notable differences that distinguish their approaches. Learning design in these institutions can be categorized into several components, including learning materials, learning schedules, and learning strategies.

Both PERSADA UAD and STIKES Surya Global emphasize the importance of religious education, particularly the memorization of the Qur'an and Hadith, which are central to their curricula. However, the structure and delivery of learning materials differ between the two institutions. At PERSADA UAD, the curriculum is divided into two semesters, with students receiving foundational material in the first semester and advanced material, such as higher-level Arabic and English courses, in the second semester (D. Fathurrahman, personal communication, 5 October 2023). This progression is designed to build a strong foundation before moving on to more complex topics, ensuring that students are well-prepared for both academic and religious challenges.

In contrast, STIKES Surya Global offers a more comprehensive and condensed curriculum that integrates religious studies with health-related subjects. The curriculum includes courses on Aqidah, Fiqh, Hadith, Mustalah Al Hadith Science, *Sirah Nabawiyah*, Quranic Therapy, and the application of religious principles in the health sector. This integrated approach allows students to apply Islamic teachings directly to their professional fields, ensuring that their religious education complements their academic studies. Moreover, the curriculum is designed to align with the specific study programs offered at STIKES Surya Global, such as Public Health, Pharmacy, and Nursing.

The different priorities of the two institutions are also reflected in the scheduling of the learning activities. Students at PERSADA UAD can reconcile their religious duties with their scholastic obligations by participating in religious studies during the Maghrib and Isha prayers, as well as again following the Fajr prayer. Given the students' varied academic backgrounds, this plan works especially well because it allows them to seamlessly blend their religious studies with their chosen fields of study (R. Hartono, personal communication, 16 October 2023).

On the other hand, STIKES Surya Global schedules its religious education courses during the day, integrating them with the general academic schedule. This approach allows for a seamless blend of religious and academic education, with evening and early morning hours reserved for Qur'an memorization. The integration of the Islamic boarding school curriculum with the general campus curriculum at STIKES Surya Global is a unique feature, creating a holistic educational experience that prioritizes both religious and professional development.

In terms of learning strategies, both institutions employ a classical learning model, which includes lectures, question-and-answer sessions, discussions, and explorative methods. This approach encourages active participation from students, allowing them to engage deeply with the material and seek clarification on complex topics. By fostering an interactive learning environment, these strategies help students develop critical thinking

skills and a deeper understanding of the material.

In conclusion, while PERSADA UAD and STIKES Surya Global share a commitment to integrating religious education with academic excellence, their approaches to learning design reflect the unique goals and contexts of each institution. PERSADA UAD focuses on a semester-based progression of religious studies that complements the diverse academic backgrounds of its students, while STIKES Surya Global integrates religious education directly with its health-focused academic programs. Both approaches exemplify the adaptability and innovation of Islamic boarding schools in preparing students for both spiritual and professional success.

The table below provides a comparative overview of key aspects related to student residency and study duration in the two Islamic boarding schools that were the focus of this research: PERSADA UAD and Stikes Surya Global. These aspects are crucial in understanding how each institution structures its educational program and how this influences the implementation of character education within their respective contexts.

Table 1: *Comparison of Student Residency and Study Duration*

No	Aspect	PERSADA UAD	STIKES
1	Study Duration	Maximum 1 year due to building capacity and regulations; graduation from PERSADA does not guarantee university graduation.	4 years for S1, 3 years for D3; aligns with university study duration.
2	Student Capacity	Approximately 120-130 male students, with a similar number of female students; new students each year.	All students are both university students and boarding school residents.

This comparison highlights the distinct approaches taken by PERSADA UAD and STIKES Surya Global in managing student residency and study duration. PERSADA UAD operates under a more constrained timeline due to building capacity and institutional regulations, while STIKES Surya Global aligns student residency with the full duration of their academic programs. Understanding these differences is essential in evaluating the impact of residency duration on character development within each boarding school setting.

Regulations for the Development of Student

General regulations in Islamic boarding schools are designed to ensure that students adhere to the principles and values of the institution, thereby fostering their spiritual and academic growth. These regulations typically require students to participate in congregational prayers, attend lectures, and engage in various forms of religious and academic evaluations. However, each Islamic boarding school implements its own set of rules that reflect its unique vision and mission.

At PERSADA UAD, specific regulations are in place to maintain discipline and ensure that students remain focused on their spiritual and academic responsibilities.

For instance, students are required to obtain permission from the boarding school administrators for any activities outside the school, especially at night. This regulation underscores the importance of community and collective worship, as students are expected to participate in evening prayers and other religious activities at the mosque or the Islamic Center of UAD.

The rationale behind these regulations is to create an environment that minimizes distractions and maximizes students' opportunities to engage deeply with both their religious and academic studies. The requirement for students to obtain permission for external activities serves as a mechanism to control the flow of students in and out of the boarding school, ensuring their safety and encouraging a focused lifestyle centered around their studies. This approach is particularly significant in a boarding school setting, where the boundaries between personal time and communal obligations are carefully managed to cultivate discipline and responsibility.

In comparison, STIKES Surya Global student Islamic boarding school also enforces strict regulations, particularly concerning permissions for leaving the premises. However, the focus here is on ensuring students' safety during their time away from the school, with specific permissions required for extended trips or activities outside the local area. This regulation is reflective of a broader concern for student welfare, particularly in preventing and managing potential risks associated with travel and extracurricular activities.

Both institutions also emphasize the importance of evening lectures and religious study sessions, which are integral to the students' development. At STIKES Surya Global, these sessions are carefully structured to integrate religious teachings with the students' professional studies in health-related fields. The focus on Qur'anic recitation and memorization, combined with academic learning, reflects the institution's commitment to producing well-rounded graduates who are both religiously devout and professionally competent.

The implementation of punishment systems at both boarding schools further reinforces the importance of adhering to these regulations. Violations result in the accumulation of demerit points, which students must "repay" through additional religious activities such as Qur'anic recitation or participation in extra religious studies. This approach to discipline not only maintains order but also reinforces the religious values that are central to the students' education.

The regulations at both PERSADA UAD and STIKES Surya Global serve as more than just disciplinary measures; they are deeply tied to the broader educational philosophy of each institution. By structuring the students' daily routines around religious obligations and academic commitments, these regulations help instill a strong sense of discipline, time management, and ethical responsibility. These qualities are essential not only for the students' personal development but also for their future roles as professionals and community leaders.

Moreover, the emphasis on permission for external activities and the structured punishment system highlights the institutions' commitment to creating a controlled and safe environment that prioritizes the students' educational and spiritual well-being. This approach can be seen to mitigate the challenges of balancing religious and academic

commitments, ensuring that students are able to achieve success in both areas without compromise.

The findings from this study have significant implications for the broader context of Islamic education. The regulations observed at these boarding schools demonstrate a model of how Islamic educational institutions can effectively combine strict discipline with compassionate guidance to produce students who are both academically successful and spiritually grounded. The integration of religious principles into the daily routines and academic structures of these institutions serves as a powerful example of how education can be holistic, addressing the needs of the whole person rather than just focusing on academic achievement.

Furthermore, these findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on the role of Islamic education in modern society. The balance between strict adherence to religious practices and the need for academic and professional development highlights the adaptability of Islamic boarding schools in meeting the challenges of contemporary education while remaining true to their religious foundations. The regulations at PERSADA UAD and STIKES Surya Global Islamic boarding schools not only facilitate the students' adherence to Islamic principles but also prepare them for the complex demands of modern life. By fostering discipline, ethical behavior, and a strong sense of community, these regulations contribute to the development of well-rounded individuals who are equipped to contribute positively to both their religious communities and the wider society.

Character Education Values for Students

Both institutions share a commitment to nurturing key character traits such as religiosity, discipline, honesty, tolerance, and responsibility. However, each school also has its own distinctive focus. For instance, PERSADA UAD places a greater emphasis on discipline, particularly in the context of memorizing the Qur'an and Hadith. Students are closely supervised by *musyrif* (guides), and their progress is meticulously recorded in a learning attendance system. Additionally, strict regulations are enforced, such as the prohibition against leaving the boarding school after 21:00 without permission. This approach to discipline reflects PERSADA UAD's commitment to creating a structured environment where students can focus on their spiritual and academic growth.

In contrast, STIKES Surya Global emphasizes the development of independence as a key character trait. Students are encouraged to engage in activities that promote self-reliance, such as participating in homecare services, running honesty canteens, managing student cooperatives, and becoming involved in *santripreneur* initiatives. These activities not only provide students with practical skills but also reinforce the values of honesty and responsibility, which are essential for their future professional lives. The school's emphasis on independence aims to prepare students to navigate the complexities of life after graduation, equipping them with the tools they need to succeed both personally and professionally.

Social care is another important character value emphasized at STIKES Surya Global. The school integrates this value into its health-related curriculum, ensuring that students learn to serve patients with compassion and empathy, grounded in strong

religious principles. This integration of religious values into professional practice is seen as essential for producing graduates who are not only competent in their fields but also capable of providing care that is both technically proficient and spiritually sensitive. The emphasis on social care aligns with the broader mission of STIKES Surya Global to produce health professionals who are deeply committed to the welfare of their patients.

Caring for the environment is also a significant aspect of character education at STIKES Surya Global Islamic Boarding School. The institution emphasizes environmental stewardship, recognizing that maintaining a clean and healthy environment is essential for the well-being of both the students and the broader community. This focus on environmental care is in line with research by (Pane & Patriana, 2016, p. 222), which found that a majority of students (91%) in Jakarta agreed on the importance of courses dedicated to environmental protection for improving the quality of life. Similarly, STIKES Surya Global instills in its students the importance of environmental care as part of their overall character development, particularly in the context of living in a boarding school environment.

The character education values at PERSADA UAD and STIKES Surya Global are not just about instilling moral virtues; they are strategically designed to prepare students for real-world challenges. At PERSADA UAD, the focus on discipline serves to instill a sense of structure and responsibility, which is crucial for academic success and spiritual development. By adhering to strict schedules and rules, students learn to manage their time effectively and prioritize their commitments, skills that will serve them well in both their personal and professional lives.

On the other hand, the emphasis on independence at STIKES Surya Global reflects a broader educational philosophy that values self-sufficiency and initiative. By engaging in entrepreneurial activities and community service, students develop a sense of agency and confidence, which are critical for success in the healthcare field. The integration of these values into the students' education ensures that they are not only academically prepared but also equipped with the character traits necessary to navigate complex ethical and professional landscapes.

While both institutions have successfully integrated religious and character education into their curricula, it is important to consider the potential challenges of balancing these values with the demands of modern education. For instance, the strict discipline at PERSADA UAD, while beneficial in many respects, could be seen as limiting students' flexibility and autonomy. Conversely, the emphasis on independence at Stikes Surya Global, while fostering self-reliance, might pose challenges in ensuring consistent adherence to religious practices, especially in less structured environments.

These findings have broader implications for the field of Islamic education, particularly in how character education can be adapted to meet the needs of contemporary students. The experiences of PERSADA UAD and STIKES Surya Global suggest that Islamic boarding schools can effectively balance traditional religious teachings with modern educational practices, creating graduates who are both morally grounded and professionally capable. This balance is crucial in today's globalized world, where students must navigate diverse cultural and professional contexts while maintaining their religious identity. The character education values at PERSADA UAD and STIKES

Surya Global play a critical role in shaping students into well-rounded individuals who are prepared for the challenges of the modern world. By instilling values such as discipline, independence, social care, and environmental stewardship, these institutions not only contribute to the personal growth of their students but also ensure that they are equipped to make meaningful contributions to society. The success of these programs highlights the potential for Islamic boarding schools to serve as models for character education in broader educational contexts.

Conclusion

This study reveals the concept of character education for students living in Islamic boarding schools at private universities. The structure of character education cannot be separated from four important elements: the vision, mission, and goals of student Islamic boarding schools must be clear, measurable, and supported by comprehensive steps; learning designs should align with current developments and technology without compromising religious values and character; student guidance regulations must be strict yet rational; and character education values must be consistently applied by the boarding schools.

The implications of this research suggest that Islamic educational institutions, especially those running student boarding schools, must carefully formulate the concept of character education. The PERSADA UAD student boarding school and the STIKES Surya Global student boarding school share the goal of nurturing intellectual Muslim individuals who possess both professional skills and a strong religious foundation, shaped by their experiences in the boarding schools. The character values emphasized include religiosity, independence, discipline, responsibility, social care, and environmental awareness. These values are reinforced through structured guidance and the rules implemented by the boarding schools. Character formation is further supported by the quality of teaching materials and learning strategies. Both student boarding schools provide educational content during the day and evening, covering subjects such as Aqidah, Akhlak, Fiqh, Arabic, Quranic studies, and History, in addition to general courses from each study program, which together contribute to the holistic development of students.

Moreover, the researchers recommend that higher education institutions focus on preparing Muslim scholars by incorporating Islamic boarding school programs. These programs allow students to study both general and religious subjects simultaneously, supported by a curriculum designed to integrate teaching materials, credit hours, academic levels, learning strategies, and technology. Emphasizing the concept of character education is crucial, especially given the maturity of students' age and the challenges posed by an increasingly sophisticated era. However, it is important to note that this research is limited to two student boarding schools in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Future research should therefore expand to include a broader range of Islamic boarding schools across various regions in Indonesia to obtain more comprehensive results and insights.

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