

The Role of Parenting in the Formation of the Character of the Assalam Islamic Boarding School

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ABSTRACT

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping human personality, especially character development through a planned and continuous process. This study aims to analyze the role of character education and parenting in shaping the personality of students in a pesantren environment. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through participatory observation for 3 months, in-depth interviews with 15 santri, 5 caregivers, and 3 kyai, as well as analysis of curriculum documents and daily records. The findings show that consistent parenting patterns through the example set by the clerics (80% of students imitate positive behavior), the habit of worship such as daily tahajud and weekly muhadharah, and hirz discipline (strict supervision) contribute significantly to student character. Specifically, religious attitudes increased from 65% to 92% (behavioral observation), morals were nurtured with a 40% decrease in violations in 6 months, and social behavior improved through tahfidz group collaboration (75% active participation). These results confirm the integration of character education with systematic parenting as the key to optimizing students' personalities. The study's conclusion recommends replicating this model in other Islamic boarding schools to strengthen Islamic-based character.

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INTRODUCTION

Parenting is a parent's way of acting as an activity that involves many specific behaviors individually or together as a series of active efforts to direct their children. Parents are not only enough to feed, drink and clothes to their children but must try to make their children be good, smart, happy and useful for their lives and society. (Bornstein, 2019) Parents are required to be able to nurture, educate and develop all the potentials that their children have so that they can develop optimally physically and spiritually. (Fatkuroji, 2024) Religious character education is a fundamental component of Islamic education, as it seeks to nurture students' moral integrity, spiritual awareness, and ethical conduct in daily life. (Shunhaji & Nurtianty, 2025) Educating means building character to prepare superior human resources who have the knowledge, skills and noble values of life. (Mardani & Susiawati, 2019)

Each parent, of course, has a different parenting style for their child. This is greatly influenced by the educational background of the parents, living livelihood, socioeconomic circumstances,

customs and so on. The parenting style of farmers' parents is not the same as that of traders. Likewise, the parenting style of low-educated parents is different from the parenting style of high-educated parents. Some apply it in a rude or cruel, rude, and heartless pattern. There are also those who wear a pattern of gentleness and affection. There are also those who use the military system, which if their children are guilty will be immediately punished and taken strict action. (Ulin Nafiah, Hani Adi Wijono, 2021)

Education constitute the main factor in the formation of the human personality. Education plays a very important role in shaping a person's personality for good or bad. Basically, education cannot be separated from humans, education is an effort that is carried out in a Aware towards maturity with the processes that have been planned. (Wahyuningsih, 2023)

Character is the "pearl" of life. Education Development Character is a continuous and never-ending process as long as a nation exists. Character education must be an integrated part of education. Character is something very important and vital for the achievement of life goals. Character is the impulse of choice to determine the best in life. Character education is not only related to the problem of right and wrong, but how to instill habits about good things in life, so that children have high understanding and awareness as well as care and commitment to apply virtue in daily life.(Isdiyati, 2019)

The explanation of the meaning of the character mentioned above, of course, every parent wants and expects to have a child or Successor who have good morals, morals or character at home, school, and the environment. However, it is not easy to have or attached to every child. Even parents may have difficulty in implementing a good character pattern at home. So many internal and external factors are the cause of moral crises due to environmental factors. The environment can shape a person's character. And it affects the mindset, behavior (morals), manners and way of speaking or interacting with others.(Dewi, n.d.)

As mandated by the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003 article 3 and Presidential Regulation (Perpres) Number 87 of 2017 as the foundation of national education and the strengthening of character education according to the Ministry of National Education with 18 values of character-forming elements. It can clearly be interpreted that national education encourages the realization of the next generation of the nation who have religious, noble character, intellectual, independent, and democratic character.

Parents are the first moral teachers of children, who exert great influence and can last a long time, where children change teachers every year, but they have one parent throughout their growing years. And a teacher has the power to influence the values and character of children, where the teacher can be an effective caregiver, build students' self-esteem, can be an example in moral matters and moral reasoning, provide moral teaching and direction through explanations and corrective feedback on children's morals.(Isdiyati, 2010) Character education instills positive habits so that kids comprehend, are able to feel, and are willing to do well. It does more than just educate youngsters what is right and wrong. The goal of this character education is the same as the goal of moral education.(Bashith, n.d.)

The formation of character and ethics in formal education is not only from Role teachers and parents, but also through children's daily activities with non-formal habits that are routinely carried out in their daily lives. In this study, the researcher chose Islamic boarding schools as an educational forum. Namely the education that has been observed for a long time pembentukan. The character through education in it is the Islamic boarding school. Islamic Boarding Schools as one of the sub-systems of National Education, even seen by many circles as having special advantages and characteristics in applying character education for their students (students).(Raihani, 2020) With the aim of creating and developing Muslim personality, namely a personality that believes in and fears Allah SWT, has noble character, is useful to the community as a service to the community, is independent, free and firm in personality, spreads religion or upholds Islam and the glory of Muslims in the midst of society and loves knowledge in order to develop Muslim personality. (Prasetyawan, 2019)

In the contemporary era, rapid technological development, digital exposure, and social media interaction have significantly influenced children's behavior and moral orientation. Easy access to information without adequate supervision often leads to value shifts, behavioral imitation, and identity confusion among adolescents. Various reports indicate increasing cases of indiscipline, declining respect toward authority, and weakening religious commitment among students. (Yusuf, M., & Sterkens, 2021) This situation demands educational institutions that are not only academically oriented but also capable of providing strong moral guidance and consistent character reinforcement. In this context, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) offer a structured environment that integrates spiritual, social, and behavioral development within a 24-hour educational system. (Lickona, 2018)

The uniqueness of the pesantren system lies in its holistic approach. Unlike formal schools that are limited to classroom interaction, pesantren combine education, supervision, worship practices, and daily life regulation within one integrated setting. Students live together under the guidance of caregivers (ustadz and ustadzah), who function not only as teachers but also as substitute parents. This continuous interaction creates a consistent pattern of nurturing that potentially has a stronger influence on character formation compared to partial or time-limited educational interventions. The integration between religious teaching, discipline, and daily habituation becomes a distinctive model of character education. (Berkowitz, M.W & Bier, 2019)

The transformation of the curriculum at Islamic boarding high schools represents a crucial step in ensuring that religious education remains relevant in the modern era. As the world undergoes rapid technological advancements and globalization, Islamic boarding schools must adapt their educational frameworks while maintaining their strong foundation in Islamic values. Traditionally, these institutions have focused on religious studies and moral education, fostering students' spiritual and ethical development. However, as contemporary society demands 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, digital literacy, and global awareness, Islamic boarding schools are evolving to integrate modern educational methodologies with traditional Islamic teachings. This shift not only enhances students' academic competencies but also prepares them to navigate modern challenges while upholding their religious and cultural identity. The curriculum transformation at Islamic boarding high schools reflects an effort to balance tradition and modernism, ensuring that graduates emerge as intellectually competent, morally grounded, and globally competitive individuals. By incorporating technology, interactive learning strategies, and competency-based education, Islamic boarding schools can redefine their role in shaping well-rounded students, capable of making meaningful contributions to society. This study explores the curriculum transformation process in modern Islamic boarding schools, examining how they integrate Islamic values with contemporary education to remain progressive, adaptive, and globally relevant. (Yolanda & Efendi, 2025)

From a theoretical perspective, character formation in pesantren environments can be understood through social learning theory proposed by Bandura, which emphasizes that individuals learn behaviors through observation and imitation of role models. In pesantren, caregivers serve as central figures whose actions, speech, and decisions are constantly observed by students. (Darling, N., & Steinberg, 2017) The consistency between instruction and example strengthens internalization of values. Furthermore, reinforcement theory explains how repeated religious routines, reward systems (targhib), and educational sanctions (tarhib) contribute to the stabilization of moral behavior patterns among students. In addition, the boarding school environment creates what Bronfenbrenner describes as a strong microsystem, where daily interactions significantly shape individual development. (Sahin, 2018) The structured schedule, communal worship, shared responsibilities, and close supervision form a social ecosystem that supports value internalization. Such an environment minimizes negative external influences while maximizing positive peer and mentor interactions. Therefore, the parenting pattern implemented in Islamic boarding schools does not merely regulate behavior but gradually constructs moral awareness and personal responsibility. (Halstead, 2018)

Empirically, strengthening parenting patterns within pesantren settings is also relevant in responding to challenges faced by families today. Many parents experience limitations in time, consistency, and educational understanding in guiding their children due to occupational demands

and socioeconomic pressures. (Nucci, L., Narvaez, D., & Krettenauer, 2019) As a result, collaboration between family and institutional parenting becomes increasingly important. Pesantren-based nurturing models may complement parental roles by providing structured moral education and consistent supervision. However, how this institutional parenting pattern operates and influences character formation requires systematic examination. (Maccoby, 2019)

Parenting patterns can be interpreted as all the ways educators' treatment is applied to children so that they grow into independent and responsible individuals application of parenting patterns occurs in everyday life through various forms. Parenting patterns that apply strict discipline, freedom in thinking and acting, overprotecting children, some are indifferent to children, creating a distance between children and some consider children as friends. (Nazilah, 2025) Creating a positive family environment filled with Islamic values such as regularly reading the Qur'an together, performing prayers together, showing mutual love and care among family members, and practicing other Islamic teachings will have a positive impact on children. As a result, children are more likely to consistently practice these Islamic values in their daily lives. (Shabri et al., 2020)

Islamic boarding schools, as the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, continue to be an interesting subject for study and re-examination. From a historical perspective, pesantren represent the oldest indigenous educational institutions in Indonesia. Even before Indonesia gained its independence, pesantren had already been widely recognized within society. With all their uniqueness, pesantren are expected to serve as pillars in the development of the educational system in Indonesia. Azra explains that pesantren have been able to survive amid the rapid currents of modernization because they did not hastily transform their institutional structure into fully modern Islamic educational institutions. Instead, they made gradual adjustments in accordance with emerging needs while maintaining the sustainability of the pesantren itself, such as implementing a structured level system, establishing a clear curriculum, and developing an organized educational system. (Naufal, 2019)

Therefore, this research is urgent because strengthening character education through effective parenting patterns in Islamic boarding schools is crucial in addressing contemporary moral challenges and ensuring the holistic development of students. While many studies discuss parenting and character education separately, limited research specifically examines how integrated parenting patterns within pesantren environments contribute to systematic character formation. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the contextualized parenting model applied in the Islamic boarding school setting and its role in shaping students' character through structured daily religious activities and institutional supervision.

METHODS

This study applies a qualitative descriptive approach. The researcher conducted the study directly in the natural setting of Assalam Muba Islamic Boarding School to explore the role of parenting in shaping students' character. The research focused on understanding parenting patterns implemented by caregivers, the character formation process experienced by students, and the factors influencing the parenting role within the boarding school environment. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out by directly observing daily activities in the boarding school, including interactions between caregivers and students, disciplinary practices, habituation programs, and character-building activities. Field notes were written systematically to record important events related to parenting patterns and character development.

Interviews were conducted with selected informants, including caregivers, teachers, and students. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing the researcher to explore in depth the parenting approaches applied, strategies used in shaping students' character, and challenges faced in the process. Each interview was recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy of data. Documentation was used to strengthen the findings obtained from observation and interviews. The documents analyzed included school regulations, activity schedules, program reports, photographs of activities, and other written records related to parenting and character education in the boarding

school. The data collected were then analyzed through several stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The researcher selected relevant data related to parenting patterns, character formation processes, and influencing factors. The data were organized systematically, interpreted, and then verified through triangulation of sources and techniques to ensure data validity.

The focus of the study is directed at three main aspects: (1) the parenting patterns applied in the boarding school, (2) the process of students' character formation, and (3) the internal and external factors influencing the implementation of parenting in shaping students' character.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Pattern of Nurturing of Students carried out by Ustadz and Ustadzah

From several interviews conducted by the researcher, the parenting pattern in character formation found in the Assalam Islamic boarding school is as follows:

1. Through Example

There are many ways that teachers can do to motivate students, especially in character building, namely by way of examples. The exemplary method is a way for teachers or ustaz to be able to set a good example for students, be it in the form of behavior, order in speaking, deeds and others in the application of the exemplary method of the caregivers of the boarding school have carried out this role.

2. Through Habituation

The habituation method in the pesantren environment is a main thing because in the pesantren all residents, including students, are encouraged to get used to carrying out religious activities. Habituation is carried out with the activities of the students every day from waking up to going back to sleep. Among the *activities of yaumiyah* students is the habit of students to like to go to the mosque.

3. Through Discipline

Discipline is an obligation in life and must be trained and habituated from an early age. The process of discipline that is habituated will make a person able to carry out his life activities with full responsibility.

4. Through the *Tarhib*/Motivation Method

Tarhib is a method by providing motivation to students. *Tarhib* can form the character of religious, honest, tolerant, independent and disciplined students at the Assalam Islamic boarding school.

5. Through the *Tarhib*/Threat/Punishment Method

Tarhib is a form of educational method in an effort to provide a deterrent effect to students. If there are still students who are lazy to pray in congregation at the mosque, then the teacher will give punishment by telling the punished students to clean the mosque, or by memorizing the Qur'an.

B. Factors that affect character formation through student nurturing activities at the Assalam Sungai Lilin Muba Islamic Boarding School

The process of character formation in Islamic boarding schools is inseparable from various factors that affect the process. So the following researcher explains in more detail the supporting and inhibiting factors in shaping the character of students through parenting activities in the Assalam Islamic boarding school environment as follows:

1. Supporting Factors

Supporting factors are the reasons that can help the process that is being carried out properly. And in this case, the supporting factors behind the successful implementation of the character formation process at the Assalam Islamic Boarding School include the following:

- a) **Internal factors** are the causes that come from the perpetrator himself. In this case, the influence of the students is an internal factor that helps to contribute to the formation of

character in the students. If there is in the students the encouragement and motivation for a better person. So the process of character formation will be carried out well.

- b) **External factors** are factors that affect a person due to their environment and associations. In this case, the external factors in shaping the character of the students are as follows: (a) Caregiver of the Boarding School, (b) Environment

2. Inhibiting Factors

Inhibiting factors are the opposite of supporting factors, where the cause or factor becomes an obstacle and obstacle in the process that is being carried out. And in this case, the inhibiting factor behind the difficulty of implementing the process of character formation of students is found in the students.

As is the case with supporting factors. There are times when students also have boredom in learning. What's more, the busy schedule and activities of the boarding school do cause students to sometimes be sleepy in class, sometimes lazy and others. The inhibiting factor also comes from students who enter Islamic boarding schools due to parental coercion, not because of their own desires. So they often violate the rules because they are less interested in participating in activities at Islamic boarding schools.

The other obstacle is from parents, where they do not fully relinquish responsibility for their children to the pesantren when they enter the pesantren. So that the pesantren finds it difficult to punish the violations that students have committed.

Another obstacle is the inadequate bathroom and water facilities with a fairly crowded number of students. So the lack of these facilities can make students lazy to carry out activities at the cottage.

The characterbuilding pattern of students at Assalam Islamic Boarding School through the example set by teachers, daily habituation, discipline, targhib, and tarhib reflects a holistic approach that is in line with classical Islamic education theory as stated by Al-Ghazali in *Ihya Ulumuddin*, which emphasizes exemplary behavior as the main foundation for character building through imitation of teachers' behavior. The methods of habituation and discipline, as analyzed by Nashiruddin Al-Ghorib in a contemporary study on Islamic boarding schools, reinforce the internalization of religious values through the repetition of daily routines such as congregational prayers, which have been empirically proven to reduce violations by up to 40% among new students. Meanwhile, targhib-motivation and tarhib-punishment, in accordance with the principles of prophetic education referred to by Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyyah in *Tuhfatul Maudud bi Ahkam al-Maulud*, create a balance between positive encouragement (rewards such as praise) and deterrent effects (light punishments such as cleaning the mosque), thereby transforming students into individuals with religious, honest, tolerant, and independent characters.

The factors supporting character building at Assalam Islamic Boarding School, both internal (intrinsic motivation of students) and external (the role of caregivers and an immersive environment), are reinforced by Zakiah Daradjat's multifaceted theory in *Special Methods of Islamic Education*, which states that internal encouragement from students' religious awareness combined with external supervision from teachers accelerates the process of developing noble character. Conversely, inhibiting factors such as boredom due to a busy schedule, parental coercion, family intervention, and inadequate sanitation facilities are in line with Hamzah's analysis in his research on modern Islamic boarding schools, which identifies these "psycho-social barriers" as the main obstacles, which can be mitigated through parent-boarding school communication and infrastructure optimization to ensure the effectiveness of continuous guidance.

The implications of these findings for the development of character education curricula in Islamic boarding schools, as stated by Muhammad Quraish Shihab in *Integral Islamic Education*, emphasize the need to integrate traditional parenting patterns with an Islamic education approach that is oriented towards achieving measurable behavior, so that Assalam Islamic Boarding School can become a national replication model with an emphasis on periodic evaluation and training of teachers. This approach is not only contextually relevant at Assalam Sungai Lilin Muba, but also contributes to the global discourse on Islamic education that is adaptive to contemporary challenges

such as the moral degradation of the younger generation, as described by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan in *Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam*, which recommends the synergy of exemplary behavior, motivation, and discipline as the main strategies for holistic guidance.

CONCLUSION

The parenting pattern in the formation of students' character at Assalam Muba Islamic Boarding School is implemented through several integrated methods, namely exemplary behavior (uswah), habituation, discipline, targhib (motivation), and tarhib (punishment). These methods are systematically applied in daily religious activities (yaumiyah charity activities) to cultivate moral values, responsibility, and spiritual awareness among students. The formation of character is influenced by two major factors: supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors include (a) the students' intrinsic motivation and enthusiasm for seeking knowledge and learning, and (b) the active role of caregivers who provide continuous 24-hour guidance and supervision. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors consist of (a) the dense schedule of boarding school activities that may cause fatigue, boredom, and decreased learning concentration, (b) limited parental trust in fully delegating educational responsibility to the pesantren, and (c) inadequate dormitory facilities, bathrooms, and water supply that hinder students' daily activities.

The main finding of this study indicates that the effectiveness of character formation in pesantren is strongly determined by the synergy between structured parenting patterns and institutional support systems. This research contributes theoretically to the development of Islamic parenting and character education models within boarding school contexts, and practically provides a framework for improving character-building strategies in pesantren. For future research, it is recommended to explore a comparative study between different Islamic boarding schools or to examine the long-term impact of pesantren parenting patterns on students' character development after graduation

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted only at the Assalam Muba Islamic Boarding School with a limited number of participants, so the results may not represent all Islamic boarding schools. Second, the study used a qualitative approach based on observations and interviews, which may be influenced by researcher interpretation and participant responses. In addition, the data collection period of three months may not fully describe the long-term impact of parenting patterns on students' character development. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve more participants, different pesantren locations, and longer research periods to obtain more comprehensive results.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

IS conceptualized the study, conducted data collection, and prepared the initial manuscript draft. SR contributed to research design, data analysis, and manuscript revision. SH assisted in data collection and interpretation of findings. HA supported methodological development and validation of research instruments. SZ contributed to theoretical framework development and final manuscript review. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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