



## Character education through philosophical values in traditional Islamic boarding schools

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### Article Info

*Article history:*

Received 18 April 2022

Revised 14 March 2023

Accepted 20 March 2023

Available online 15 December 2023

*Keywords:*

adaptation,  
character building,  
Islamic boarding school,  
philosophical values student

### Abstract

Each Pesantren culture has a unique variation in shaping the religious attitudes of students. Given that the cultivation of character is a process, then this can be provided through formal, non-formal, or informal education that is carefully planned and designed. Therefore, traditional Islamic boarding schools can be an alternative educational institution to overcome the moral crisis which has recently become the central issue of the Indonesian nation. These recent studies go beyond previous research by demonstrating how specific philosophical concepts from values impact students' moral character. This study focuses on a set of philosophical value ideas imparted to students at the Islamic Boarding School of Sumber Pendidikan Mental Agama Allah (SPMAA) in Lamongan, Indonesia. This study used a qualitative research approach. The participants were students in different stages, teachers, structural function, and scholars of SPMAA Islamic boarding school. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Three rooted values concepts that students internalized and applied in their social life were highly incorporated with learning intention, improving behaviour for the better while studying in an Islamic boarding school, and even after. At the SPMAA Islamic boarding school, students go through several stages. These stages produce different levels of adaptation success for each student. Alumni internalized the three values of Islamic philosophy in their social life as life guidance to achieve success. The findings provide ideas and practical implications as intercultural information to improve learning outcomes and enable students to live meaningful lives.

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## Introduction

One of the pioneers and foundational elements of education in Indonesia is the Islamic boarding school or Pesantren as it is known in Indonesia. Pesantren is a school that has demonstrated a significant contribution to the dissemination of religious sciences in society. There are at least seven categories of children who are not in school, according to the Indonesian National Strategy Document on Non-Schooling Children (ATS) for 2019–2020. Children who do not have formal education (9 years of compulsory education) and only attend Islamic boarding schools are included in category number seven. They fall under yet another ATS category. Data from the Educational Management System (EMIS) of the Ministry of Religion are also used when formulating policies for the National Strategy (Kementerian Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional Republik Indonesia/Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional [PPN/Bappenas], 2019). This demonstrates how crucial the Pesantren's strategic role in schooling is.

According to Syukri et al. (2020), Pesantren play two key roles in the general empowerment of communities: they serve as centres for Islamic mental and spiritual growth and as educational institutions with an Islamic aesthetic. The adoption of religious principles by Pesantren has the capacity to transform the local population from a receptive to an engaged community. The development of Pesantren in the future is dependent on quality human resources. In summary, this scenario could have an impact on the welfare of the populace since Pesantren with higher education levels tend to have better individuals who respect and believe in Allah SWT.

The religious sentiments of students are uniquely shaped by each Pesantren culture. Traditional Pesantren education is a distinct culture when compared to other educational systems (Aulia et al., 2018). Its distinctiveness is at least demonstrated by its independent leadership, timeless literature that has endured for generations, and a different set of values from those practised by the community outside of the Pesantren (Octavia, 2014). Traditional Islamic boarding schools also serve the objective of training students towards developing an intellectual, devoted, and moral character (Amadin, 2021). The formation of a deeply religious person who is constantly prepared to serve Allah SWT is the primary goal of Islamic education, according to Abdul Mujib, who contends that using Islamic educational methods is how educators can comprehend the nature of the method and its relevance to this goal as well as how to encourage their students to use their minds in studying their lives and the environment around them (Muhamimin, 1993).

Some individuals believe that character should be built and implanted rather than taught, like physics, social science, and other subjects. The goal of education is to develop character and talents in addition to cognitive abilities. Imamudin et al. (2020) cited Abuddin Nata as saying that ethics education is the soul and spirit of Islamic education and that one of the Prophet Muhammad's goals in this world is to elevate human character.

Behavior is intrinsic from birth and develops during a person's life (Henrich et al., 2010). The character may be developed by education, work, cultivation, formation, training, direction, coaching, and a lot of sincere struggles. Internalizing knowledge is how one develops character, and developing excellent character in one's life takes time (Nakissa, 2022; Norenzayan et al., 2016). Given that character development is a process, this may be accomplished through properly thought-out formal, non-formal, or informal schooling.

Thus, traditional Islamic boarding schools can serve as an alternative educational setting for resolving the moral problem that has recently emerged as Indonesia's most pressing issue. If one considers the community, family, and educational contexts, there are several evidences that character must be established through education. If not, teaching humanity Islamic religious education would be pointless since, at its core, religious education entails character education. By demonstrating specific insights from philosophical ideals impacting students' moral character, these pieces go beyond previous research.

This study focuses on a set of philosophical value ideas taught to santri students at the SPMAA Islamic Boarding School in Lamongan, Indonesia as a foundation for character development. Alumni of SPMAA are recognised to have tenacious and straightforward personalities. To build the fundamental character of santri students in Indonesia, it is interesting to analyse the educational principles and philosophical ideals produced at SPMAA. This study aims to: (1) identify the philosophical values that students have internalised; (2) describe the values that students have adopted as a means of behavioural adaptation in community empowerment; and (3) overview the stages of student adaptation to shifts in social behaviour.

## Methodology

This study employed a qualitative methodology approach for severe considerations. It seeks to understand the important values that are internalized in students and how they affected to change students' attitudes. In this study, there are intervening circumstances that help the traits under research to arise (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

## Participants

The study was conducted at the Islamic boarding school of Sumber Pendidikan Mental Agama Allah (SPMAA) located in Lamongan, Indonesia. SPMAA Islamic Boarding School has been established in 1961 by KH Muchtar. The primary informants were santri students, teachers, and caregivers of boarding schools in the SPMAA. Santri, a term used particularly to describe students enrolled in the educational programme at Islamic boarding schools, will be used to refer to SPMAA Islamic Boarding School students for this article.

The subjects were divided into three groups of participants in this study: (1) santri students, (2) cadets, and (3) community compassionate workers. Santri students are those who are enrolled in early childhood education for the first three to six years. Although TPU is advanced students who have finished the first two years of duty and are helping in the community, cadets are the group of students that are undertaking a two-year service term. Three types of teaching personnel are in charge of the teaching and learning process: (1) co-facilitators, (2) facilitators, and (3) authority. The authorities are chairmen making decisions about SPMAA boarding school policies. Every category has three entrants. There were 18 participants in this study. Each category is made up by each code for use in this study (Table 1).

**Table 1** Coding of the informants of the study

Categories	Codes	N = 18
Santri students	SP	3
Cadets	ST	3
Community Compassionate Workers	TPU	3
Co-facilitator	US	3
Facilitator	US	3
Authority	PG	3

## Data Collection

The researchers employed three approaches simultaneously for data collection: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and study documentation. The information contains a summary of the social climate at boarding schools. The researchers studied the participants' emotional intensity, tone of voice, and body language during the meeting. Then, the researchers also use the language commonly used by each informant to reduce the gap between researchers and informants and then improve the trust. The researchers used all types of secondary data such as curriculum, strategic plan, written rules, and documentation (internal photos, records, and films). The purpose of each of these papers is to support the findings of the observations and interviews. Research that generates a variety of data types can boost the quantity and quality of research data (Ali & Gibran, 2020).

## Data Analysis

Constant comparative analysis was the method of data analysis adopted in this study. The researcher restricts the theory's applicability by comparing the occurrences presented in each category and combining their kinds and attributes. The research culminates with theory writing (Filler, 2012; Supriyono et al., 2017). Three steps to the analysis of all the data were: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion.

## Results

The qualitative data showed three primary subject areas and several subordinate themes. The major thematic areas were "Input: Describing the values instilled in the students," "Process: Implementation of values for santri through the stages of santri education," and "Output: Adaptation to changing attitudes of students as a result of instilling values."

### *Input: Describing Values Instilled in Santri*

Based on the findings of the documentation analysis, in-depth interviews, and observations, the researchers found that three philosophical values were strongly inspired and applied in all daily activities by the Pesantren environment, especially in students, and teachers. These core values include: (1) *Basic Values*, which are also known as the Three Great Humanity Projects (TGH-Projects), i.e., teachings on God, humanity, and sustainability; (2) *Space and Time Values*, which are also known as the Three B's of success which includes; learning (participation, knowledge & open-minded), working (creativity, initiative, hard work, productivity & independence), and praying (spirituality of a prophetic mission); and (3) *Value of Service* or so-called as *Value of Life Tips and Philosophy of Service* consisting of vision, holy struggle, humility, and sacrifice.

As a result, we briefly discussed each of the important philosophical principles that the SPMAA Islamic boarding school adopted in this chapter. Next, in the sub-chapter "Process; implementation of values to students through the phases of students' education," it will be discussed how the students adapt and how these values are applied.

#### *Basic values/three great humanity projects*

This value system stems from the original views of the Pesantren's founder, Mr. Guru MA. Muchtar, who in 1961, began construction on a boarding school facility that was once a buffalo cage. These sentences briefed historically by the participants as PG1 stated:

*“...He began to establish a Pesantren with the determination to transform a buffalo pen into a crater for human education, from herding cattle philosophy to shepherding a generation of humans with the vision of Religion and Human Nature Returning to The Originals.”*

Others (PG2 and PG3) explained how the idea of 'build from buffalo cage' was a significant part of how philosophical values arose, ensuring its inclusivity for all students till today. He stated:

*“...What he wants to build is universal humankind, not limited to one group, race, ethnicity, or religion. The effort began with what he was able to do, namely, to create a cadre of public servants by building the ideological foundation of Islamic boarding schools and community activities with the main basic values that he named the Three Great Projects of Humanity. The reason he named such the Three Great Projects of Humanity is that these values are universal. Thus, it is not only for santri or Muslims but for rahmatan lil’ alamin. It is called a big project because it is a big job that changes the mindset of the people, starting with instilling it in the younger generation, namely, the students at the Pesantren that he founded.”*

SPMAA Islamic Boarding School places divine values as the first material and the main foundation in developing santri behaviour. One of the core values of basic values is “learn to know god intimately and fundamentally” and also “Instilling Belief in the World and The Hereafter”. The divine value taught at the SPMAA Islamic Boarding School is to introduce the nature and existence of God through simple analogies to students in-depth. The value of God, which is considered heavy by some people, is conveyed in a simple and easy-to-understand manner through simple examples and logic.

Based on documentation study's results, the founder, KH. Muchtar, is in charge of the teaching and learning process. Muchtar spoke a lot on the concept of “knowing God intimately and essentially” during the start of the new Pesantren period, one of which was the 2005 teaching and learning process, which was recorded on video and transcribed into writing by the researcher:

*“...We need to understand how close God is. But, despite liking Allah’s creations, we have never been content to approach Him. God created all of the goods that people pursue, want, capture, and adore, including water, air, vegetation, cattle,*

*cows, goats, and chickens. Yet, Allah, the Lord of all things, is not regarded, disregarded, forgotten, adored, or taken by humanity. This is unjust and out of proportion. Not only should you cherish God’s creations, but you should also cherish God, who is the rightful owner of those things.”*

(doc.vid.ba.2005).

In this first basic value, students are made to understand the importance of link and match between spiritual worship to God and social worship, namely, service to others following the values taught. The results of the researchers' observations related to the deepening of the soul of love that was instilled through the teachings of divine values appeared when the santri pickets bathed the general elderly. Only with a strong planting of divine values, then a child at a young age will willingly and sincerely carry out this task that is classified as unpleasant.

Many students articulated this sense of their authority when it came to participating in prayer. Two boys (SP2 and SP3) from Year Five stages spoke about their experiences of feeling close to God (Khusyu') while praying. They responded:

*“...Knowing Allah better actually helps me to become closer to Him. I used to believe I knew God, but it turns out I didn’t. In the past, I frequently thought about my phone, toys, friends, and other things when I was praying. Even if I haven’t become completely humble yet, I have started to realise that prayer is a conversation with Allah. So, we have to leave other matters during prayer.”*

When asked what they got after implementing these values into their daily activities, he responded:

*“...I couldn’t wash the elderly before enrolling in a boarding school, but I felt bad about it, especially after learning about knowing God; it seemed as though I had nothing except a soul of love. It was difficult at first, but now, Insyaa Allah I do everything with my heart sincerely.”*

The other core value identified at SPMAA Islamic Boarding School is recognizing the importance of the hereafter vision as the driving force behind the mission of the world's life. Santri must establish a firm belief in the notion of faith in the afterlife as the direction and objective of the concept of activity in the world's life. Those philosophical values are described well by making an analogy from a particular fruit such as a banana. Mr. KH. Muchtar's example of internalizing this principle is the banana fruit philosophy as remembered by the teachers (US1 and US2):

*“...All bananas are made up of skin and a filling. “Skin” represents the life of the world, whereas “content” or filling represents the afterlife.”*

The santri were asked to debate the fact that the skin and contents of bananas are inseparable. Likewise, the world and the hereafter are inseparable and are one unit. At this point, students are encouraged to ground the dogmatic concept of the afterlife into a realistic understanding of everyday life and practical behaviour. Make religion in the hereafter more accessible so that students feel a sense of crisis and concern and keep away from anti-social behaviour when they become role models for individuals in society in the future.

#### *The value of space and time*

The value of space and time is one of the important values applied to students. These values provide freedom for students to be able to use anything and anywhere to continue learning. The value of space and time emphasizes the principle of lifelong learners. The inscription “Pray without being restricted by time, work without being constrained by means, learn without being connected to a location” that is erected in front of the entry gate of the SPMAA Islamic Boarding School is a demonstration of the significance of space and time in life (Figure 1). Santri must apply three things that become the substance of the space and time of SPMAA students. These values are instilled in everyday basic life to survive, such as values on learning, values on working, and values on praying, wherever they are, whether they are in Islamic boarding school, on holiday, on apprenticeship to study with the community, or even when they have returned to society.



**Figure 1** (A)The monument and entrance to the SPMAA Islamic boarding school, (B) which is decorated with inscriptions valuing time and space

#### *1. The ever-living value of “Learning” and literacy in the santri mindset*

Learning Values are rigorously internalized at every opportunity, including the preaching after midday prayer, so-called *taushiah b'da fardlu* prayer. The value of “learning,” which includes components of literacy, is

interpreted as an effort to build a mind that is always alive or dynamic, as well as adaptable to the evolution of the atmosphere and surrounding surroundings while maintaining within the corridor of religious principles.

For instance, one of the authorities (PG3) frequently encourages students to always be able to read the problem in front of them and hope that they will be able to solve it. She pictures it on one of the daily activities of santri, as follows:

*“...if a page appears to be dirty surrounding the santri, they will clean it without waiting for orders”.*

Reading is defined as seeing something, then practicing responding to it with initiative actions, then getting used to it into a positive habit or behaviour, which is the meaning of the value of “learning” that is taught and instilled in students at the SPMAA Islamic Boarding School.

#### *2. “Work” values that grow diligent and productive behaviour*

The educational product is a person with a hard-working character who always works with high creativity which is not only in theory but creativity and real productivity. Every day, students are provided with a selection of extracurricular activities from which to pick. Pesantren provide various training in any kind of fields such as agriculture, carpentry, information technology, and health administration. This will encourage students to increase the productivity of worship services by participating in the community learning program while filling semester holidays.

One of the students (SP1), who gets the benefit of these values well thought it might be difficult at the beginning, but as he got used to getting money from working (practicing it in economics class), he felt the benefit of these values significantly, which is implied in the response answer as follows:

*“...Even though the money wasn't much at first, I was delighted to get it since I learned a lot. At first, everything was quite complicated. Understanding how difficult it is for our parents to provide for us financially, the spirit of working hard, being extremely thankful, as well as more appreciative of Allah's provision.”*

In the SPMAA Islamic Boarding School, “work” is created to be more than only economically beneficial; it is also focused on social work and, as a result, the development of spiritual character. The Santri Service Program for the Social Community around the Pesantren Applied the Concept of Value. Santri are used to giving

back to the community without asking for anything in return. Santri is also knowledgeable on how to assess productivity, specifically how to do it from both an economic and a social perspective.

Like the authority (PG2), who stressed the need of instilling the concept of "working" in the character formation of the students, he explained:

*“...From an economic, social, and spiritual perspective, a value holistically integrates effective motivation. Students can continue their prophetic mission to be prolific immaterially through devotion as a way of life, in addition to being productive materially”.*

### *3. Values of “praying” and drawing closer to god as a sword of devotion*

From the results of the observations, there are five strategies used by the SPMAA Islamic Boarding School in applying the value of praying to the students. The five strategies are: (1) requiring students to replace the boarding school registration fee with money in the form of *wiridan* 100 thousand; (2) including special activities for *wirid* and contemplation of Allah called sacred remembrance. Santri is invited to do *i'tikaf* together, or staying in the mosque while doing *wirid*, starting from around 21.30 to 24.00, which is then followed by *tahajjud* in the congregation. These activities are carried out twice a week every Thursday night and Sunday night; (3) get students used to saying a lot of *basmalah* and *hamdalah* when starting activities when the process reaches the end of their daily life; (4) require students to always do *wirid* after the five daily congregational prayers supervised by students who walk around the sidelines of the *shof* to make sure all students are *wirid* and not sleepy; and (5) accompany students to balance between relaxing, joking and patiently remembering Allah.

An ideal value which, although it has not been fully practiced by the students, has given *ibroh* the importance of prayer in the learning process and *nidhom* or clear rules on how to internalize the values until they are transformed into positive behaviour of students. Internalization of the Space and Time sub-values is carried out through a strategy of combining book study and cognitive theory with practices both inside and outside the Pesantren complex. Diligent hard effort, personal *iqro'* or literacy, solemnity, and *wirai* or prudence in thinking, speaking, and behaving are the behaviours that emerge from the value of Space and Time instilling.

US2 shared his desire to the authors as he and other facilitators always rooted for these values as life principles, He responded:

*“...It is hoped that when the santri reintegrate into society, the power of prayer would act as the primary motivator and inspiration for their practical knowledge and good acts. performing prayer and mardlotillah service”.*

### *Value of life tips and philosophy of devotion*

Learning actors encounter a barrier in transitioning from current conditions to desired conditions. Students at SPMAA Islamic Boarding School face hurdles as candidates for people-loving personnel or TPU who will serve and serve in the community in two stages: while still in boarding and later when they are working in the community. During these two phases, a student requires specific guidance on how to apply the instilled information and beliefs. Santri and the people require a strategy to instil basic ideals in their hearts in an *istiqomah* manner. A way for lessons and values to go beyond the academic setting and be demonstrated in practice is not only a curriculum teaching but can also become a philosophy of everyday life when in the Pesantren to the community later.

#### *1. Get harder in prayer*

The harder meaning of praying means that students do not only pray on ritual occasions but the word "harder" represents awareness that prayer is heavy, so it must be done more often and more solemnly than usual. Santri must be strong in praying whatever, wherever, especially in the middle of the night when they wake up from sleep to do *tahajjud*, night prayer.

Santri is required to be a servant who always feels close to Allah, and always depends on all his problems not only on outward endeavours but on inner endeavours, namely, prayer, as PG 1 responded:

*“...Education that relies on physical skills without being accompanied by penance and strong prayer will produce students who do not have a mental devotion, full of knowledge but empty of faith and *ihsan*. With strong prayer, SPMAA students are encouraged to have a “*qoulan wa ‘amalan*”, *istiqomah* between words and actions, and stay away from “no action talk only” or *NATO*” behaviour”.*

#### *2. Prepared to be undervalued*

Educational materials that devote a significant portion of their time to the development of a humble attitude are deemed important for developing learners who are not in a hurry to believe that they are full of knowledge and then oblivious, which will only hinder their progress in new knowledge and wider practice. This idea is expressed in a principle known as “prepared to be undervalued”

at the SPMAA Islamic Boarding School. This notion may appear unusual and undesirable in society, especially when hedonism is so entrenched that fame and pride are regarded as measures of success. Students of SPMAA Islamic Boarding School, on the other hand, who are future servants of the people, must be able to accommodate all diversity. A student must know the blue ocean strategy, that she/he must have a heart and insight as wide as the ocean that can accommodate all differences, accept challenges, overcome obstacles, and even insults. To achieve this, students must instil in themselves to be “ready to be belittled”, that is, learn to put themselves in the position of servants or people who do not expect pride and feel that they are nothing.

From the teaching material document on the value of service philosophy, this “ready to be underestimated” sub-value is laid on the foundation of thinking: (1) the raw material for the creation of all humans is from semen; (2) this skin and flesh is just a casing; (3) this body is only temporary, and will be buried or burned to the ground; (4) there is no one without sin; (5) Prophet Muhammad SAW as a superior being on earth is underestimated; and (6) Allah the Almighty, Most Rich, Most Beautiful, Most High, and all-powerful is even underestimated by humans.

One piece of advice that teachers frequently impart to students during the teaching and learning process is the significance of having and mastering the value of “get ready to be underestimated” as an adaptive behaviour of students to always be able to survive in any living conditions, as SP1 explained:

*“...A servant of God doesn’t want to be a cult member or someone who never gives up and always wins. Santri must be kind-hearted, willing to compromise, and lacking in conceit. Santri must develop a behavioural character that is adaptable to any changes from the very beginning.”*

### *3. Give more charity*

The goal of this sub-value of giving more charity is to instil in the souls of students a social spirit and a sense of crisis. Santri can only have numerous opportunities to practice more of the teachings learned during their stay at the Pesantren if they provide a lot of charity. Santri is motivated by the knowledge that alms will receive the Apostle’s prayers and blessings for making others happy. The Prophet also stated, “*shodaqtu tadfa’ul balaa*,” which indicates that *shodaqoh* has the authority to refuse reinforcements. Alms are not restricted to wealth; it also includes removing thorns on the path, praying for others, smiling truly, participating in community work or cooperation, and even *istiqomah* praising, *tahmid*, *tahlil*, and *takbir*.

### *Process: Implementation philosophical values on student education level*

The programs implemented at the SPMAA Islamic Boarding School encourage students to be involved in direct practice in social life. Through direct experience in the organization, better students will be formed (Krapfl & Kruja 2015; Rasyad, 2016). Santri is confronted with social realities both within and beyond the Pesantren. Direct connection occurs through outbound survival drills, community support, and book studies. SPMAA Islamic Boarding School implements adult education theory through a series of continuous processes between cognitive represented by book studies and theoretically taught values that are connected with direct practice based on the needs of the students through vocational training in Islamic boarding schools. Santri can choose, plan, and establish the learning patterns that are delivered.

The credit system in this Pesantren also allows students to maturely determine their interest in their studies. Students are given the freedom to choose the required training packages in a participative manner in the curriculum. Curriculum design and training program planning are done in a participatory manner by incorporating many associated parties, particularly management, to “create a supportive situation in the implementation and post-training” (Wiyono et al., 2021; Wiyono et al., 2022). Through prayer and God’s contemplation, Santri is encouraged to discover a serene and comfortable environment throughout the learning process. Before becoming a prophet, the Prophet Muhammad SAW used to contemplate at Hira Cave through *dzhikr* and worship to become closer to Allah (Kosasih, 2015).

SPMAA, on the other hand, measurably establishes the direction and learning objectives that must be met by all educational actors involved. The SPMAA Islamic Boarding School’s three basic beliefs direct their students toward the desired behaviour modification. The teachers and students then use this concept as guidance for themselves- and behaviour development. A crucial stage in the process of philosophical internalization, which is subsequently translated into learning concepts, occurs consciously and deliberately. Santri at a certain stage is given the freedom to digest, discuss and then manage the learning outcomes at the previous level at the next stage of learning. Lifelong learning at SPMAA, which is marked semiotically with the concept of “no alumni”, is comprehensively structured. One of the important stages for students is community survival called Learning Together with the Community (LLC). At the time of LLC, students entered one of the stages of long-life learning. At the Pesantren, students are trained to deal directly with the facts on the ground, both within the Pesantren with its one-stop service, and when students

engage in training to interact directly with the community. This becomes material that contains elements of social capital that are expected to be useful when they enter the real world, dealing with their respective local communities. Participation in learning tends to increase social capital by helping to develop social competence, expand social networks, and promote shared norms and tolerance of others (Merriam & Kee, 2014).

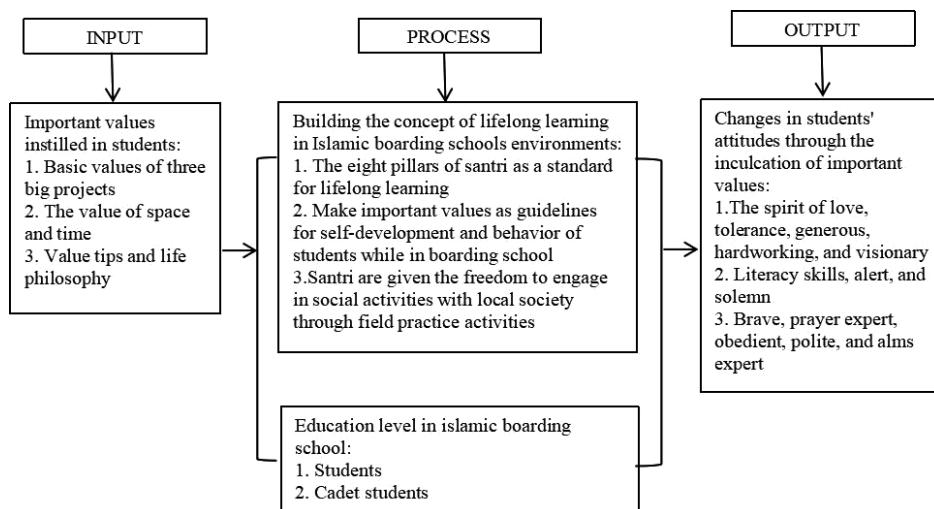
Field practice exercises are one of the stages of LLC. Santri is transported to an isolated island for six months to devote their knowledge learned at the Pesantren. They are given the option of choosing any island on the Indonesian map. Only departure tickets are available from Pesantren. During the six months, the students must be able to adjust their behaviour and social understanding with the local population. The ability to mingle and engage is carried out in tandem with the demands of the community, which will then be judged as a success criterion when the assignment is completed. The success criteria for this level are also simple and very full of meaning. Santri is regarded as successful if the local community contacts the Pesantren and requests that the santri continue to serve in that location.

Based on the results, a conceptual model was developed to show changes in the attitudes of students in Islamic boarding schools. This theoretical idea was established by researchers using topic analysis, academic research, and expert consultation. This conceptual model explains how students' views are changed at Islamic boarding schools. Three components make up the model: (1) Input, meaning important values are taught and instilled in students at the SPMAA Islamic Boarding School; (2) Process, namely, the process that includes the stages or levels of education that students go through

while at the Islamic Boarding School; and (3) Output, is an attitude that students have after applying important values in their daily lives as a provision for adaptation in social life. Students' behaviour can show signs of achieving changes in their attitudes, such as having a tolerant and obedient attitude toward others, feeling empathy for friends and the community around them, being able to interact with each other, caregivers, and teachers, and finally having the responsibility to study the field of education, both academic and Islamic. **Figure 2** depicts the researcher's description of the model.

*Output: The application of philosophical values of santri in social life*

Some SPMAA Islamic Boarding School graduates have a social life based on the ideals instilled in them at the Islamic Boarding School. Huda (TPU1) from Lamongan is one of these graduates. Huda began attending boarding school when he was 12 years old and finished the Pesantren education process (*nyantri*) after six years, plus two years of service. The values that are assimilated in Islamic boarding schools are translated into multi-role capabilities in society in an extraordinary way. He is currently an extra-curricular Adiwiyata instructor in numerous schools, in addition to maintaining an agricultural business as a source of family income. Furthermore, he is a driving force in the growth of organic plants and family medicine for the residents. At times, he is well-known and required by government and corporate organizations as a facilitator in different environmental conservation events and training. Of course, he is a Koran teacher without pay for the children of the people of the area where he resides one day a week.



**Figure 2** The theoretical model of students' process in attitudes changes based on internalized important values in Islamic Boarding Schools

Toni (TPU2) is a student who does another excellent practice. This Lombok student began studying behaviour in 2010. Completing school in 2012 was accompanied by two years of mandatory service. Furthermore, he opted to devote his life to pioneering education for children in the outlying islands, where access to school was extremely difficult. The survival techniques taught at the time while he was in Pesantren made Toni dare to take risks in remote areas. Abang Island, which borders Singapore, must be reached by small boat, which does not dampen the spirit of his dedication to establishing early childhood education and Koran education parks in small villages on the island. Toni understands that his commitment to education on the island does not guarantee pay or economic worth since he is armed with a vision for the future and a prophetic prophetic mission. To address this issue, he established a source of revenue for fishermen and vegetable growers to cover not only their personal and family requirements but also the operating demands of his service.

Santri with multi-role skills and capacities in society, as well as santri who can live in any challenging situations and conditions, are some of the common profiles of Pesantren graduates sought by SPMAA Islamic Boarding Schools. The santri alumni have tough and militant personalities as well. They create programs based on the fundamental concepts learned at the Pesantren. A student can bring a behavioural perspective, and once he understands the nature of the environment, he will be able to place himself in a well-suited environment (Krapfl, 2016; Rasyad et al., 2019).

## Discussion

The current study aimed to expand earlier results about participant-reported outcomes from the education system in Indonesia's Islamic boarding schools and to further our understanding of the Islamic boarding school education system as a process of developing the character of santri students. Because roles, values, norms, and culture are associated with one another, the process of enculturation may result in patterns of human culture and conform their attitudes and ideas to the traditions, laws, and conventions that govern their way of life. Because enculturation begins when a person is young, first in the family environment, then in the context of playing with friends, attending school, and participating in the community, enculturation is a process that occurs in all aspects of human existence, whether they are family, school, or society.

The process of enculturing the culture of the traditional Islamic boarding school SPMAA has resulted in the formation of a deeply ingrained culture that embodies a culture of spirituality, a culture of humanity, and a culture of sustainability that crystallises the santri's religious sentiments. According to Nakissa (2022), cognitive science and religion claim that people are predisposed to hold certain sorts of non-utilitarian morality (such as the need to take care of relatives or refrain from engaging in "disgusting" behaviours) and religious beliefs (e.g., belief in spirit beings, belief in immortal souls). Because of these ingrained inclinations, colonialism had an impact on a number of religious and cultural traditions, including Islam. As well, Gervais et al. (2011) claimed that religious representations can be best explained as cognitive by products of ordinary human-thinking.

This research outlines the fundamental elements (spirituality, humanism, and sustainability) that shape students' character development in the SPMAA boarding school setting. In Islamic boarding schools, character building occurs not only during the formal educational process of teaching and learning in the classroom but also during daily life. This way, the values can maintain the connection between students' religious knowledge and morality as a single, cohesive whole. According to Graham and Haidt's (2010) study on the study of religion, which focused on the connection between religion and morality—which many religious people see as being inseparable—they established their social-functional concept theory. They explored the unique roles that the three "binding" foundations—in-group/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity—play in religious morality. The scientific goal is to understand why certain people have particular propositional ideas (about God, the afterlife, etc.,) that are considered to be part of religion.

The students' personalities exemplify the virtues taught at the SPMAA boarding school, showing how these values may have a constructive and positive impact on their growth. The often-used distinction between "intrinsic" religiosity (containing individual practises and beliefs) and "extrinsic" religiosity (including communal practises and beliefs) reveals this emphasis on individual belief as the entrance point for the study of religion (encompassing social aspects such as collective rituals). Moreover, Sedikides and Gebauer (2010) have described several hypotheses about religious beliefs in terms of their capacity to improve one's intrapsychic well-being:

The same loneliness that causes individuals to anthropomorphize toasters and animals may also be the cause of religious beliefs.

Being religious may help people improve themselves and feel better about themselves by raising their self-esteem.

Islamic theologians view harmful occurrences that affect a person or group as proofs or indicators (*āyāt*) that God is planning to either (1) punish them for their sins or (2) test them. Events that cause harm include sickness, death, earthquakes, storms, and military defeats. For instance, much like the Bible, the Qur'an narrates several accounts of historical prophets (e.g., Nūh, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lūṭ, Shu'ayb) whose peoples suffer natural calamities as retribution for their immoral actions (e.g., flooding, storms, earthquakes). Although the Qur'an occasionally depicts occurrences that cause pain as punishments (e.g., Qur'an 2: 155, 214, 3: 142, 186; 9: 126; 11:7), other times it depicts them as testing. The purpose of tests is to find out whether a person would follow the divine precepts and act righteously in the face of difficulty (Nakissa, 2022).

Those who pass their exams will get recompense from Heaven (*janna*), according to the Qur'an. Hell is the punishment for those who fail (*jahannam*). Islamic scholars, on the other hand, view circumstances that bring advantages to a person or society as proofs (*āyāt*) that God is planning to either (1) reward them for their good deeds, (2) test them, and (3) freely bestow rewards upon them. Combat triumphs (Qur'an 3:13, 123–127), safety escapes (Qur'an 2:49–50), and the advent of tasty animals and water for people in need of sustenance are examples of occurrences that offer benefits (2: 57–60).

Due to the simultaneous implementation of these principles in the classroom setting, students can internalise them and develop positive personalities. This may be referred to as the final result of group behaviour in moulding the character of the santri because this value is not only designed for one specific santri but also for all human elements or persons who are in the Pesantren setting.

Durkheim (1965 in Graham & Haidt, 2010), who believed that morality was inextricably linked to religious rituals, practises, and beliefs, provides the justification for the significance of group conduct. According to him, the person enters into "moral harmony" with the other congregation members, and the collective deeds carried out for a religious purpose sustain our moral character through time. Similar to this, Gervais et al., (2011) analysed recent theories about how religion has developed and proposed cultural evolutionary models. A variety of issues with commitment and cooperation are then resolved by a shared belief in these agents, especially agents that have developed (culturally) into "moralising

high Gods," for example, by assisting individuals in making and keeping promises to one another and by suppressing selfishness and free-riding (Norenzayan & Shariff, 2008). The world's main faiths also provide moral guidance on deferring to authorities, abiding by laws and commandments, carrying out one's social obligations, and honouring the customs and institutions of the religious in-group (Graham & Haidt, 2010; Lang et al., 2019).

Being compassionate to "orphans, the needy, neighbours near and distant, and travellers in need" is commanded in the Qur'an (4:36). Understanding moral problems that can only be viewed from a group-level viewpoint is necessary to comprehend the social factors driving religion. Do not consider Jews and Christians to be comrades because they are only allies to one another, the Qur'an warns. Everyone who joins with them becomes one of them; God does not lead such sinners (5:51; see also 29:68–69). From the perspective of an individualising morality, such exclusivity is unfair and immoral, but from the perspective of a binding morality, the objective of which is the development of an emergent entity, it is clear how religious adherents can feel a moral obligation to assist and trust their co-practitioners more than those who circle a different maypole or no maypole at all (Graham & Haidt, 2010).

Certain philosophical concepts, such as the worth of time and space, demonstrate how humans are empowered when they can distinguish between material and spiritual richness. Values like "pray more," "be ready to be misjudged," and "give more charity" have proven successful in teaching students how to control their complicated emotions. Students who live by these ideals and implement them in their social interactions tend to be emotionally upbeat and joyful despite their circumstances.

There is a tonne of evidence on this topic, and it clearly shows that religious individuals are, in fact, happier and emotionally healthier than their secular counterparts. Even after adjusting for age, sex, race, education, money, and family situation, there is still a correlation between religion and self-reported happiness (Myers, 2000; Seybold & Hill, 2001). Threats to personal control have also been shown to increase religious views, confirming the "system justification theory" idea that faith in a controlling God helps individuals feel better about their lack of personal control over the world (Kay et al., 2008). According to Brook (2008), religious practise (such as religious attendance or prayer), not religious identification, determines the association between religiosity and happiness (i.e., the specific doctrines and beliefs of any particular faith).

From the standpoint of moral foundations theory, we suggest that the key to comprehending how religions supply both meaning and well-being is the development of moral communities bonded together by shared group-level moral concerns. We can see that each of the five foundations helps to foster social cohesion, but the unifying foundations are the ones that put the needs of the moral community before those of the individual, adhering to Haidt's (2008) definition of morality as a network of interlocking systems that stifle selfishness. The religious exercise of the "self-control muscle" is typically carried out socially, through group rituals and practises. Even solitary prayer may be considered as a continuation of this activity since it consistently keeps the moral community and its common ideals in mind while inhibiting selfishness.

Results from Monsma (2007) are consistent with the deeply ingrained beliefs of "give more charity" in SPMAA. According to Monsma's (2007) analysis of the connections between religion and charitable giving and volunteerism, religious persons often uphold civic standards more effectively. Like with happiness, it appears that the best explanation for why religious individuals donate more to charity is being a part of a close-knit group with similar values. From the standpoint of moral foundations, we believe that the phenomena will best be understood in light of the binding foundations. When people are personally touched by pain, they are more kind and helpful (Batson & Shaw, 1991; Lang et al., 2019; Slovic, 2007). Such organisations would fit Haidt's (2008) definition of a moral system: they developed an interconnected set of values, virtues, norms, practises, identities, institutions, technologies, and evolved psychological systems to suppress or regulate selfishness and enable social life (with a high degree of cooperation). Religious practises and rituals, in our opinion, co-evolved with religiously minded minds, and they now fit together exceptionally well. Religions unite people into moral communities.

## Conclusion

Important values instilled in students are carried out by applying the concept of lifelong learning. The learning process is performed by implementing several activities that require students to be active, such as field practice activities by going directly into social life. Pesantren also makes important values as the basis and guidelines for measuring the self-development of each student during learning at the Islamic boarding school and when socializing with the community. Santri students and cadet students are in the stages of santri education at the

SPMAA Islamic Boarding School. Santri students are students who still have active santri status and attend Islamic boarding schools for active study programs till graduation, whereas cadet students are santri alumni who are still enrolled in Pesantren service programs. Armed with these fundamental ideals, students are supposed to adjust their attitudes to become better people, such as having tolerance for others as an outcome of the three major initiatives that were implanted from the beginning.

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## Recommendation

The results offer the theories and practical implications for Pesantren leaders as multicultural information to improve learning achievements, as well as in empowering students to get a valued life. This study could lead to improvements in Pesantren programmes by prioritizing the important values of life as a guideline, especially in traditional Pesantren.

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## Limitation

Given that this study is limited to one traditional Pesantren, further information, and further investigations are needed to contribute to adequate literature on Pesantren education. This study shows an attempt to identify the curriculum used by Pesantren in educating students and realizing it in the social life of students after education. Adding to this concern, more research is needed, especially in multi-contexts, such as a comparison of curricula between modern and traditional Islamic boarding schools for developing learning theories and improved curricula. Future study should expand on values, practises, and personality characteristics to widen Islamic values connected to multi-context of education and also involve a greater number of respondents in various Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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## Acknowledgment

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The authors would like to acknowledge SPMAA Pesantren, and all the participants in this study.

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