

Holistic and Integrative Observation Pillars in Islamic Education in Islamic Boarding Schools

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Submission Track:

Received: 27-12-2025, Final Revision: 24-04-2026, Available Online: 01-05-2026

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation and strengthening of holistic-integrative Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Pesantren Mahasiswa An-Najah (PESMA An-Najah). Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions that integrate religious knowledge, moral formation, and daily practices into a unified learning system. This research aims to describe how holistic PAI learning is applied through the pillars of kitab studies, role modeling (uswah hasanah), and pesantren-based activities, as well as to analyze the strategies used to strengthen this approach amid contemporary challenges. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through in-depth interviews with the Director of Madrasah Diniyah (Madin), observations of pesantren activities, and documentation analysis. The findings indicate that holistic PAI learning is implemented through structured daily habituation, a tiered Madrasah Diniyah system, exemplary behavior of caregivers and teachers, and student organizational activities under OSMA. These components collectively foster the development of students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Supporting activities such as literacy programs, religious arts, and language communities further enhance students' intellectual, spiritual, and social competencies. However, challenges remain, including time management for students who are also university learners and differences in educational backgrounds. The study concludes that holistic integrative PAI at PESMA An-Najah effectively internalizes Islamic values when supported by consistent role modeling, differentiated learning strategies, and adaptive institutional management. This research contributes to the development of a contextual and sustainable model of pesantren-based Islamic education.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education, Holistic-Integrative Approach, Islamic*

INTRODUCTION

Amidst the increasingly complex dynamics of globalization and modernization, Islamic boarding schools continue to demonstrate their existence as Islamic educational institutions that are capable of preserving local wisdom while selectively adapting to progressive values. Pesantren not only serve as centers for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, but also as strategic spaces for shaping national character through an educational approach that integrates religious knowledge, ethics, and social involvement (Muhdi & Halim, 2023). This makes the integration of book studies, role models, and pesantren activities an educational model that not only emphasizes mastery of religious knowledge, but also comprehensive character building (B. Yusuf et al., 2025). Thus, it is important to conduct a more in-depth study of how the implementation and strengthening of holistic PAI learning is applied in Islamic boarding schools, particularly at Pesantren An-Najah, in order to provide an empirical picture of the quality of the educational process and serve as a basis for developing a more effective and contextual concept of Islamic learning.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Islamic boarding schools has characteristics that differ from other formal educational institutions because it integrates scientific aspects, habits, and role models into a single educational process (Handayani & Achadi, 2022). Pesantren not only function as institutions for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, but also as centers for the development of morals, spirituality, and character of santri through various daily activities that take place in a controlled and value-laden environment. Thus, PAI learning in pesantren is essentially holistic, covering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in an integrated manner.

The study of religious texts in Islamic boarding schools not only serves as a means of mastering Islamic knowledge, but also contains moral and spiritual content that shapes the students' outlook on life. The exemplary behavior of Islamic boarding school leaders (kiai) and teachers (ustadz) becomes an effective medium of education because it presents the values of Islamic piety (taqwa) in a concrete way through their attitudes, speech, and daily practices. Meanwhile, pesantren activities such as congregational worship, wirid (prayers),

routine practices, and daily rules play a role in shaping the discipline, religious awareness, and character of students in a practical way. The integration of these three pillars reflects holistic and integrative Islamic religious education (PAI), which is a hallmark of pesantren education.

The implementation of holistic PAI in Islamic boarding schools is supported by several main pillars, namely habituation, exemplary role models (*uswah hasanah*), a tiered structure for studying the scriptures, and educational and transformative boarding school activities. Daily habits such as praying in congregation, reciting prayers, reading the Quran, time discipline, cleanliness, and manners in interacting with others are effective means of shaping the religious awareness and character of students (Auliya et al., 2025). The exemplary behavior of Islamic boarding school leaders (*kyai*) and teachers plays a crucial role as real-life models in shaping students' moral, spiritual, and intellectual development, as Islamic values are not only taught but also demonstrated through direct actions. Meanwhile, the tiered book learning system at Madrasah Diniyah reflects a holistic approach that takes into account the level of development and abilities of students, so that the strengthening of faith, jurisprudence, and morals can be carried out systematically and continuously (Kusuma et al., 2024).

In addition, pesantren activities such as student organizations, literacy, *muhadharah*, and other religious activities provide a space for students to develop leadership, social responsibility, communication skills, and self-reflection. Through the integration of contextual lectures, role modeling, and hands-on practice, PAI learning is directed at shaping students who not only understand Islamic teachings but are also able to practice them consciously and responsibly (M. Yusuf et al., 2024). This holistic approach has proven to have an impact on changes in student behavior, such as increased sensitivity to manners, awareness of worship, prudence in *fiqh*, social skills, and the growth of a reflective attitude in dealing with life issues.

However, the implementation of holistic PAI learning in Islamic boarding schools also faces various challenges, including time management for students who are also university students, differences in students' backgrounds and abilities, limitations in learning facilities

and media, and the uneven distribution of positive habits among all students (Mohammad Yahya et al., 2025). These challenges require strengthening strategies through curriculum adjustments, learning differentiation, improving educator competence, strengthening role models, and innovating contextual learning methods and media. Therefore, a study on the implementation and strengthening of holistic PAI learning in Islamic boarding schools is important to provide an empirical picture of how religious education is carried out in a holistic, integrative, and relevant manner to the needs of students and the challenges of the times.

Pesantren Mahasiswa An-Najah (PESMA An-Najah) is an Islamic boarding school for university students committed to implementing holistic and integrative Islamic Religious Education (PAI), particularly in addressing the unique characteristics and challenges faced by students in higher education. Accordingly, this study aims to describe and analyze the implementation and strengthening of holistic Islamic education at An-Najah Student Islamic Boarding School through the pillars of book study, role modeling, and boarding school activities. The study employs observations and in-depth interviews, with the Director of Madrasah Diniyah (Madin) serving as the primary informant, to obtain rich and comprehensive data on the ongoing PAI learning process.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation and strengthening of holistic PAI learning at the An-Najah Islamic Boarding School, which includes the study of scriptures, role models, and boarding school activities. Data were collected using three techniques. First, structured interviews were used to explore information about the experiences, perceptions, and implementation of holistic PAI learning at the pesantren, including obstacles and reinforcements. Second, documentation in the form of photos of activities, the pesantren environment, and supporting files was used to supplement the interview data. Third, a literature review examining books, journals, and scientific sources related to the concept of holistic PAI learning, pesantren methods, role models, and the internalization of values through pesantren activities.

The data obtained was analyzed qualitatively by describing the findings based on the information provided by the informants without manipulation. This method allowed the researchers to present a complete picture of the implementation of holistic PAI learning at the An-Najah Islamic Boarding School.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of Holistic-Integrative Islamic Religious Education in Islamic Boarding Schools

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in this pesantren takes place through a holistic-integrative approach, which is an approach that combines the development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects as a whole (Romadhoni et al., 2025). In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this holistic approach is realized through an education system that not only focuses on classroom learning but also involves all activities in the lives of the students (Fitria, 2022). All daily activities of the santri are considered part of the process of shaping Islamic values within them. Thus, PAI is not only about imparting knowledge, but also shaping character, habits, and awareness of religion. This approach is implemented through various interconnected aspects, including daily habituation, role modeling provided by teachers and Islamic boarding school leaders (kyai), the learning structure of Madrasah Diniyah, and various pesantren activities that support students' spiritual, social, and intellectual development. Therefore, in this study, the discussion on the implementation of PAI is divided into the following main subtopics.

Daily Habits (Habituation)

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in this pesantren shows a strong holistic approach, as all daily activities are designed as a means to strengthen Islamic values. One of the main pillars is daily habits (habituation) that are carried out regularly and consistently. A habit is a behavior that is carried out frequently, starting from conscious action and then becoming unconscious (Regiawan et al., 2021). Through routines such as waking up before dawn, praying in congregation, reciting wirid, tadarus, cleaning duties, and maintaining good manners in interactions, the students are nurtured to have a stable religious awareness. The interview results also support this. The head of Madin explained

that the key to successful learning lies in the formation of positive habits that are carried out continuously, "The key lies in the formation of awareness and habits... Once positive habits are formed, they will be more prepared, more disciplined, and more receptive to any material given."

This finding is in line with Yasin's (2022) research, which shows that the character building of santri in Islamic boarding schools is rooted in structured and continuous daily activities. Through routines such as congregational prayers, supererogatory worship, reading the Qur'an, learning activities, and maintaining personal and environmental hygiene, santri are accustomed to living a disciplined and responsible life. This pattern of habit formation becomes an important foundation in shaping the independence and readiness of santri in facing life outside the pesantren (Yasin, 2022).

Thus, daily habits at the boarding school are not only a routine of discipline, but also a conscious way to instill Islamic values through the students' daily experiences. These continuous habits help students internalize values such as worship, responsibility, and independence, thereby forming religious behavior that arises from self-awareness, not just because of rules or supervision.

In addition, values based on habits are also seen in daily attitudes and actions, such as manners in carrying books, behaving in assemblies, and respectful attitudes towards teachers in accordance with the teachings of Ta'limul Muta'allim. This is reinforced by the explanation from the source, "Students don't just learn the theory, but actually apply what is called living text... how to hold a book, put it down, and carry it to class." Thus, daily habits in Islamic boarding schools are not only part of discipline, but also a PAI learning strategy that results in comprehensive character building.

Madin Level Structure

The tiered educational structure of Madrasah Diniyah (Madin) in this pesantren reflects the implementation of comprehensive and flexible Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The class system ranging from the I'dad (preparatory) class to Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 is not merely an administrative grouping of students, but also serves as a framework to guide the learning process in accordance with the development of students' cognitive, spiritual, and

learning capacities. The study of classical Islamic texts is not delivered uniformly; rather, it is adjusted to the level of each class.

The teaching of religious texts is not given equally, but is tailored to the abilities of each student, because the pesantren's considers students to be learners with different backgrounds and abilities. Furthermore, the intensity of the studies is also quite high, where "in one period, around 15-20 books can be studied," indicating a strong, dense, and systematic curriculum structure. In addition, there are bandongan studies that all students participate in, as well as intensive market studies, such as Ta'limul Muta'allim, Bidayatul Hidayah, and tafsir. This system reflects the principle of differentiation in holistic education students are not treated equally, but are guided according to their academic development level. The main objectives of this system, as explained by the source, include strengthening faith, prudence in fiqh practice, and moral habits: "Morals distinguish santri from their friends who may have never studied at a pesantren." Thus, the book level system serves as an academic structure that strengthens the cognitive, spiritual, and moral dimensions of santri in an integrative manner.

Class placement at Madrasah Diniyah (Madin) begins with an *imtihān* (entrance assessment) conducted prior to class grouping to identify students' foundational competencies in religious studies. This assessment is administered not only to newly admitted students but also to those who have been residing in the pesantren, as the results of the *imtihān* serve as the basis for determining students' appropriate class levels. Class placement is not determined by age or length of stay in the pesantren, but rather by the level of mastery of religious knowledge. As explained by the informant, "New students are first assessed. If they demonstrate sufficient competence, they may be placed directly into Level 1 or Level 2 classes, and in some cases, they are even allowed to skip levels, although they belong to the same cohort." The *imtihān* primarily takes the form of *qirā'atul kutub* (classical text reading), in which students are asked to read selected passages usually the opening section or one chapter of a text specified by the examiners. The assessment is conducted separately for male and female students, with examiners consisting of both central pesantren administrators and Madrasah Diniyah staff. The *qirā'atul kutub* sessions are organized in

different locations to ensure an orderly and focused evaluation process. This practice reflects the principle of *assessment for learning*, where evaluation functions as a foundation for instructional decision-making, ensuring that the process of *ta'allum* (learning) proceeds effectively and proportionally in accordance with students' actual abilities.

Prior to the implementation of the *imtihān*, the pesantren applies a stage of *menaftis kitab* (text completion and verification), which functions as a prerequisite for students to be eligible to participate in the examination. At this stage, students are required to complete and finalize sections of the kitab that are not yet complete. The kitab used in the *taftīsh* process is determined by the Director of Madrasah Diniyah (Madin), typically based on the texts studied under the guidance of the pesantren caregivers. The *imtihān*, which is conducted regularly each semester, serves as the primary basis for determining students' promotion to the next class level. The requirement to complete the *menaftis kitab* prior to the *imtihān* demonstrates that Madrasah Diniyah (Madin) applies clear and measurable learning achievement standards. This structured evaluation mechanism ensures that students' academic progression is grounded in actual mastery of religious knowledge rather than merely administrative considerations or length of stay in the pesantren.

The exam results, together with the outcomes of the *naftīs* (text completion) process, indicate that Madrasah Diniyah (Madin) applies clear and measurable learning achievement standards. However, these standards are not rigid, as the pesantren provides opportunities for santri with above-average abilities to advance more quickly through a grade-skipping policy. This flexibility reflects the application of mastery-based learning principles, in which students' learning progression is determined by their level of understanding rather than by a fixed tiered class structure. From an Islamic pedagogical perspective, this system positively influences students' learning motivation and attitudes, as high-achieving students are not constrained by slower learning rhythms, while others continue to receive guidance appropriate to their abilities. Consequently, this approach fosters a fair and balanced learning environment and encourages santri to take greater responsibility for their own learning process.

Madrasah Diniyah, as a community-based Islamic educational institution, functions to fulfill the need for Islamic education in the community (Sef & Damayanti, 2024). Overall, the level structure of Madrasah Diniyah (Madin) in this Islamic boarding school shows that the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is carried out holistically, contextually, and focuses on the development of students. The level system, gradual assessment, and flexibility to skip grades not only ensure the effectiveness of religious knowledge understanding but also shape the character of students to be independent, have good morals, and be ready to face life outside the pesantren.

These findings are reinforced by research by Abdul Holik et al. (2025) on Book Completion-Based Learning Design at Madrasah Diniyah Al-Mardliyah Pamekasan. The study shows that madrasah diniyah consciously designs a complete learning system at each grade level, with the aim of ensuring that students have truly mastered the book material before continuing to the next level. Mastery learning is understood as the achievement of a minimum level of mastery that has been set, both individually and in groups, so that the material studied is not partial, but is mastered comprehensively (Holik et al., 2024).

OSMA (Student Santri Organization)

The implementation of holistic PAI learning in this pesantren is clearly seen through various pesantren activities that are not only carried out as routine activities, but are designed as tools for character development. Activities such as OSMA serve as a place for leadership training that equips santri with the ability to manage tasks professionally. Here, santri are trained to create work programs, compile reports, coordinate activities, and communicate effectively. In addition, OSMA also helps build a sense of trustworthiness, discipline, responsibility, and critical thinking skills, so that the theories of Islamic morals and leadership taught in the books can be applied in real life.

As an organization that plays an important role in helping the personal development of students, OSMA is not only a place to train leadership skills, but also manages various activities designed to develop the full potential of students in accordance with their interests and talents. These activities include literacy, spirituality, language, arts, character building, and discipline. From the various student activities organized under OSMA, Pondok Pena,

Luthfun Najah (LN), and the An-Najah Arabic Javanese English Community (AARJEC) were selected for further discussion, as each represents the cognitive, spiritual, and communication skills aspects that constitute an important part of comprehensive Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in this pesantren.

Pondok Pena

Literacy activities at Pondok Pena are a distinctive feature not found in other Islamic boarding schools. Pondok Pena is a community that focuses on writing and reading, encouraging students to improve their thinking, critical thinking, and writing skills, both academic and creative. Through various activities such as reading books, writing essays, writing reviews, and discussing religious and social issues, students learn to connect the content of texts with real life and develop reflective thinking skills, which are an important part of holistic learning.

Pondok Pena not only fosters a strong culture of literacy, but also helps students prepare themselves to have good academic skills, especially when facing college assignments, writing papers, and compiling theses. This shows that Islamic boarding schools do not only focus on mastering rituals and religious texts, but also on developing skills.

Luthfun Najah (LN)

Currently, Luthfun Najah (LN) activities are more focused on developing the art of hadroh in a structured and sustainable manner. The LN training pattern is divided into two main forms, namely class training and joint training. Class training is the initial stage, where students are divided into groups according to their abilities and roles. At this stage, students are divided into several sections, such as vocals, Hadroh A, Hadroh B, darbuka, bass, and tung, so that each student can develop more focused and appropriately according to their talents.

The division of roles in class-based training demonstrates a structured teaching approach in the development of religious-based art. Students are not only given the task of playing musical instruments or chanting poetry together, but are first trained gradually until they are able to meet technical standards. Once their abilities in class practice are deemed adequate, practice continues in the form of joint practice, which emphasizes cooperation,

rhythmic harmony, and harmony between sections. This pattern reflects a gradual learning process, in which students are guided from mastering basic skills to being able to perform a complete performance.

In addition to *hadroh*, Luthfun Najah (LN) also organizes *padus* (paduan suara/choir) activities as part of students' vocal arts development. As choir performances require a large number of participants, *padus* involves students from various other OSMA activities. *Padus* rehearsals are typically conducted in preparation for specific occasions, such as Independence Day and Santri Day, giving these activities both national and religious significance. The rehearsal process begins with learning musical notes, followed by practicing the selected songs, thereby providing students with gradual guidance in vocal techniques, voice harmony, and musical expression.

With this organized training system, LN is not only a place to express artistic talent, but also a place of learning that shapes values of discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and aesthetic sense. The *hadroh* and *padus* activities in LN show how religious art is used as a means of character and spirituality education for santri. This shows that LN has an important role in supporting comprehensive PAI learning, as it is able to combine the spiritual, psychomotor, social, and emotional aspects of santri in a series of influential and meaningful activities.

An Najah Arabic Javanese English Community (AARJEC)

An Najah Arabic Javanese English Community (AARJEC) serves as an important forum for improving students' language skills, especially Arabic, English, and Javanese, which are closely related to the tradition of knowledge in Islamic boarding schools and the need for communication in a global world. The existence of AARJEC shows that pesantren do not separate religious language, international languages, and regional languages, but rather combine them as complementary skills.

In terms of learning methods, AARJEC implements a weekly language rotation system, where each week students focus on a specific language, for example, the first week is for learning Arabic, the next week is for English, and the following week is for Javanese. This method reflects a structured and focused learning approach, so that students do not

experience overlapping material, but can still develop evenly in all three languages. Each stage of learning has a minimum target that must be achieved, such as mastery of certain syllables or vocabulary, which students must master that week. This approach shows that learning is carried out based on expected achievements.

From a pedagogical point of view, the approach used by AARJEC is in line with the principles of communicative and multisensory language learning. Students do not only learn language as a set of grammatical rules, but also as a tool for communicating in everyday life and real situations. For example, the use of songs in listening helps to create a fun learning atmosphere and improves students' ability to remember vocabulary and language structures.

In the context of comprehensive Islamic education, AARJEC makes a significant contribution in combining the aspects of students' thinking, culture, and social interaction. Arabic helps students understand classical Islamic scholarship, English broadens their horizons to the global and academic world, while Javanese helps preserve local values and the unique way of communicating in Islamic boarding schools. Thus, the language skills mastered through AARJEC are not limited to language skills, but also become a means of shaping the identity of santri rooted in Islamic values and local culture, while still being able to adapt to changes in the international world.

This shows that AARJEC is an important part of the comprehensive implementation of PAI, because it not only develops the language skills of santri, but also shapes an open, confident attitude and readiness to play a role in a wider social environment.

This is in accordance with the findings of Sujiono et.al (2024) which emphasize that holistic PAI learning must integrate Islamic values into all basic competencies and learning indicators. In this way, religious values are not only understood at the level of comprehension, but are also present in the daily lives of students. This integration can be achieved through contextually relevant and applicable learning, where religious material is directly linked to real experiences, habits, and examples that are repeatedly encountered in daily activities .

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, habits of worship, time discipline, cleanliness, and santri manners are concrete forms of the internalization of PAI values that occur naturally and continuously. Thus, habits are not just ordinary routines, but also effective teaching strategies for shaping the moral and religious awareness of santri in a comprehensive and stable manner (Sujiono et al., 2024)

PAI Learning Methods in a Holistic-Integrative Approach

Islamic Religious Education in this pesantren is not carried out separately or fragmented, but is integrated through lectures, examples, and practices that form a complete religious education system. These three methods do not stand alone but support each other in developing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of the students. This pattern shows that Islamic boarding schools not only provide knowledge about religion but also shape students to become people of faith and good character in their daily lives.

Lecturing Method

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, lectures serve as the basis for students' understanding of Islamic thought. However, lectures are not intended to be a one-way transfer of knowledge, but rather a means of raising awareness of values. By connecting the material in the books with current social situations, students are guided to understand religion as a system of values that is still relevant and alive today. The source emphasized that when teaching, ustadz do not stop at normative explanations, but always provide context, as stated, "When delivering material, they don't just say 'this is the law', and then finish. But there is always contextualization, connecting it to current conditions—how it is applied and its relevance in everyday life." This practice is evident in the field, for example when discussions of fiqh are linked to student habits in the dormitory, social media ethics, and even environmental and student social issues, given that most students are also university students.

From an educational perspective, these contextual lectures help santri understand religious texts more deeply and reflectively. Santri are not only asked "what is the law," but are also required to understand "why" and "how" the law is applied in their daily lives. This is reinforced by the source's explanation, "Usually after the material is presented, there is a

discussion, even discussing current issues, which are then linked to the recitation material." The reality in the field shows that after the lecture, santri are often given space to ask questions, discuss in small groups, or respond to actual cases relevant to the book material. This pattern encourages students to think critically and not accept religious teachings dogmatically, thus helping to avoid a rigid and textualistic approach to religion. This is important to avoid a rigid and text-based approach to religion, while encouraging a moderate and adaptable understanding of religion.

From an Islamic education perspective, this method of lecturing is in line with the concept of *tafaqquh fi al-din*, which is a deep and comprehensive understanding of religion. Lectures not only reveal the material, but also serve as a means to instill the values of faith, morals, and *fiqh*, as well as to shape a strong moral consciousness in students. The source emphasized that the main objective of learning is not merely cognitive understanding. "Students do not only learn the theory, but they actually apply what is called living text, which is to bring to life the teachings in the book." This reality is evident in the changes in the santri's attitudes in their daily lives, such as increased awareness of manners towards teachers, caution in their behavior, and the ability to relate the teachings of the scriptures to worship practices and social interactions. Thus, the lecture method in this pesantren does not stand alone but serves as a foundation that guides the santri towards a meaningful understanding of religion and the formation of moral awareness.

The Method of Exemplary Behavior (Uswah Hasanah)

The method of exemplary role models or *uswah hasanah* is at the core of the religious learning process at this pesantren. Exemplary role models in education is a way of educating through providing real examples, so that students can imitate values and behaviors, both in speech, actions, and ways of thinking (Budiyono et al., 2017)

When teachers (*ustadz*) and Islamic boarding school leaders (*kiai*) are directly involved in various pesantren activities such as congregational prayers, time management, and maintaining cleanliness—students learn Islamic values through direct lived experiences. This experiential learning enables students to internalize religious values not only conceptually but also practically in their daily lives. This finding is reinforced by a

participant who stated, "The pesantren leader does not merely give instructions or ask students to maintain cleanliness; he is directly involved. Despite his busy schedule, he still takes the time to work alongside the students in organizing the environment and ensuring that the pesantren remains clean."

From a psychopedagogical perspective, the exemplary method works through social learning, where students learn by observing the behavior of respected figures. According to Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, learning occurs through individual interaction with the environment and observed models so that new behaviors can be formed through observation of consistent real-life examples (Nelly & Yusdiana, 2023).

The use of role modeling in Islamic education demonstrates that teachers (ustadz) and Islamic boarding school leaders (kiai) play a crucial role in motivating students and shaping their behavior through the exemplary conduct they display within the educational environment (Ahmad et al., 2025)

Students not only receive verbal instruction about discipline, cleanliness, and proper conduct, but also directly observe how these values are practiced in daily life. This process makes values education more effective, as learning is gained through lived experience rather than solely through lectures. Within the pesantren context, teachers (ustadz) and Islamic boarding school leaders (kyai) function as moral and spiritual role models whose actions have a significant influence on students' character development.

In addition, role modeling also acts as a form of social and moral control that comes from within. This is reinforced by the source's explanation emphasizing the importance of consistency in setting examples from all elements of the pesantren, "The formation of positive habits must begin with all stakeholders. Islamic boarding school leaders (kyai) provide the initial example, which is then reinforced by teachers, and ultimately internalized by the students."

Field observations indicate that when role modeling is consistently practiced by Islamic boarding school leaders (kiai) and teachers, students tend to maintain proper attitudes and manners even in the absence of direct supervision. For example, students remain clean in maintaining their rooms, neat in worship, and respectful to teachers and

fellow students in their daily interactions. This shows that the values taught have become part of the students' self-awareness.

Thus, the role model method not only shapes temporary behavior but also instills a relatively stable and sustainable character. When students are accustomed to observing and imitating Islamic behavior from figures they respect, these values are internalized and remain ingrained even when they are outside the pesantren environment. Therefore, exemplary behavior is a key strategy in the holistic implementation of PAI, as it is able to integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects into a single, comprehensive learning process.

Practical Methods

Practical methods are one of the main strategies in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in this pesantren so that religious teachings are not only studied in theory but also applied in daily life. Various worship practices such as wudu, salat, manasik haji, and funeral arrangements are designed as part of the learning process so that students not only understand the concept of worship in their minds, but can also carry it out correctly and consciously. This was stated by the Director of Madrasah Diniyah (Madin), who explained that, "In addition, there are also hands-on practices here. Once a year, there is a Manasik Haji activity in the boarding school field. There are practices such as wudhu (ablution), prayer, and others. It is a kind of reinforcement of the material that the students receive."

From an educational perspective, the application of this practical method reinforces the process of meaningful learning. Students learn through direct experience, making PAI material easier to understand, remember, and apply in everyday life. Practical experience also has a deeper emotional impact than learning by just listening to lectures. Mas Irkham emphasized that the learning method at this pesantren is not one-way, but involves the active participation of the santri. "Here, the method is not puno. Lectures still exist, but they are not the only method. Usually, after the material is presented, there is practice, discussion, and debate." In addition to strengthening understanding, practical methods also play an important role in shaping the religious habits of santri. Repeated worship practices make santri accustomed to practicing religious teachings in a disciplined and conscious manner,

rather than simply fulfilling their obligations. Thus, practice becomes an effective means of habit formation in building the religious character of santri.

Furthermore, the practical method removes the barrier between learning and doing good deeds. Students are not only assessed on their ability to memorize the contents of religious texts or arguments, but also on their ability to apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives. This is in line with the concept of living text applied in Islamic boarding schools. The source said, "Students don't just learn the theory, but actually apply what is called living text, which is bringing the teachings in the scriptures to life." Thus, practical learning reflects the main principle of Islamic education, namely the close relationship between knowledge and practice. PAI learning not only shapes santri who understand religious teachings intellectually, but also santri who can apply religious teachings in practice in worship, polite behavior, and daily conduct.

Challenges and Strategies for Strengthening Holistic PAI Learning in Islamic Boarding Schools

The implementation of holistic-oriented Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Islamic boarding schools is not without challenges related to the dynamics of students, institutional systems, and the readiness of educators. These challenges arise as a consequence of Islamic boarding schools' efforts to integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in a balanced manner amid the diverse conditions of students and rapid changes of the times. Therefore, the process of strengthening holistic learning needs to be carried out through planned and adaptive strategies (Hardiansyah & Sriyanti, 2025)

Some of the challenges and strategies found in Islamic boarding schools

Time Management for Students Who Are Also University Students

The academic burden at university often makes it difficult for santri to manage their time to participate in all pesantren programs. This situation causes an imbalance in participation; some santri actively participate in pesantren activities but are less than optimal at university, while others are more focused on their studies and are less involved in pesantren learning. This condition requires pesantren to design a more flexible system of activities so that holistic learning can continue.

Differences in Educational Background and Student Abilities

Variations in the ability to read religious texts, understanding of fiqh or akhlak material, and levels of discipline mean that the process of internalizing the values of " " (Islamic values) is not always uniform. A holistic approach requires full involvement in the aspects of knowledge, attitude, and skills, so educators need to have strategies that can accommodate the different needs of students. Without adequate guidance, some students may fall behind in the process of internalizing manners and worship practices (Eko & Kuncoro, 2024)

Student Habits and Culture

Internal factors such as student habits and certain pesantren traditions also influence the acceptance of diversity values in religious learning practices. Therefore, improvements are needed in terms of the conceptual curriculum, increasing the competence of educators, and providing learning facilities that can support a more comprehensive and socially relevant religious education process.

Positive Habits Not Yet Formed Equally

Although Islamic boarding schools have built a good culture of cleanliness, discipline in worship, and respect for teachers, some santri still need time and guidance for these habits to become part of their daily character. In holistic learning, the success of behavioral transformation is highly dependent on consistent habituation and examples set by the environment.

Strategy

Adjusting Schedules and Strengthening Coordination

Adjusting the scheduling of activities between Islamic boarding schools and campuses is an important strategy, given that most students are also university students. Better coordination is needed so that academic and boarding school activities do not conflict with each other, so that students can continue to participate in PAI learning consistently and optimally. With flexible and planned time management, students are expected to be able to balance their academic and religious obligations.

Application of Differentiated Learning

A differentiated learning approach is applied by considering the differences in students' abilities, readiness, and learning needs. Grouping students based on their level of understanding and competence allows the learning process to run more proportionally. This strategy helps students obtain appropriate guidance, so that the internalization of PAI values in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects can take place more effectively and meaningfully.

Strengthening Habit Formation and Role Models

Strengthening positive habits must also be done gradually and continuously. Role modeling by Islamic boarding school leaders (kiai), teachers, and senior students plays a significant role in accelerating the formation of students' character. An environment that consistently applies the values of cleanliness, discipline, and manners will help students internalize these values through the process of habit formation.

Strengthening holistic Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a strategic Effort to optimize the educational process, which is not only oriented towards achieving cognitive aspects, but also includes the balanced development of the affective and psychomotor aspects of students. This strengthening is carried out through the integration of the values of faith, worship, and morals in all learning activities, both in the classroom and through religious habituation activities in the educational environment. A holistic approach requires PAI teachers to apply contextual, participatory, and applicative learning methods so that students are able to internalize Islamic values in their daily lives.

In addition, holistic PAI strengthening also requires the support of an adaptive curriculum, the use of media and learning technology, and the exemplary behavior of educators as moral and spiritual figures. Synergy between educational institutions, educators, families, and the social environment is an important factor in ensuring the success of holistic PAI strengthening as a means of forming a complete and sustainable religious character (Jenuri, 2013)

Thus, the success of holistic PAI learning is largely determined by the ability of Islamic boarding schools to overcome these challenges and implement appropriate strengthening

strategies. Holistic implementation is not only the responsibility of teachers but also a collaborative effort of all elements of the Islamic boarding school to shape the character of students comprehensively and sustainably.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine and analyze the implementation and strengthening of holistic-integrative Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at Pesantren Mahasiswa An-Najah. The findings confirm that holistic PAI learning in a student-based pesantren context can be effectively realized through the integration of structured Madrasah Diniyah instruction, systematic assessment mechanisms (menaftis kitab and imtihān), consistent role modeling by caregivers and teachers, and student-centered pesantren activities. These elements function cohesively to ensure that Islamic education is not limited to cognitive transmission but is internalized through daily practices and lived experiences.

This research advances the field of Islamic education by providing empirical evidence that holistic-integrative PAI is not only applicable in traditional pesantren settings but can also be adapted to pesantren for university students with distinct academic and social challenges. The study contributes a contextual model of PAI learning that combines classical pesantren traditions with contemporary educational principles such as assessment for learning, mastery-based progression, and character-oriented pedagogy. Practically, the model presented in this study can serve as a reference for other Islamic boarding schools and educational institutions seeking to strengthen value internalization and character formation through integrated learning systems.

Future research is recommended to explore the long-term impact of holistic PAI learning on students' academic performance, leadership development, and social engagement, as well as to examine its applicability in different pesantren typologies and higher education-linked religious institutions. Such studies would further enrich the development of sustainable and adaptive models of Islamic education.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Universitas Islam Negeri Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto for academic support during the completion of this research. Sincere

appreciation is extended to the caregivers and administrators of Pesantren Mahasiswa An-Najah, especially the Director of Madrasah Diniyah (Madin), for their cooperation and valuable contributions. The author also acknowledges all participants involved in this study and the anonymous reviewers whose insightful feedback helped strengthen this manuscript.

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