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## The Urgency of Education in Islamic Boarding Schools in Improving The Quality of Islamic-Based Character Education

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to determine the importance of education at the Miftahul Mubtadiin Ar-Ridlo Islamic Boarding School, Nganjuk, in increasing the quality of Islamic character education. A qualitative approach is used in this study. Researchers employed observation techniques, interviews, and documentation to obtain data. According to the findings of this study, character education at the Miftahul Mubtadiin Ar-Ridlo Islamic Boarding School, Nganjuk, is well maintained and operational. It is demonstrated by alumni who have good personalities, noble character, and the ability to live independently. Supporting variables include students, caregivers and caregivers who persevere, and families that consistently provide good direction and habituation to students during vacations (in particular). The problems found are personal factors, environmental factors and the rapid development of science and technology. So it can be concluded the character education in pesantren can be effective with the coaching, mentoring, and unique approaches by ustaz and administrators, parents and banning electronic devices. According to the existing description, education at the Miftahul Mubtadiin Ar-Ridlo Islamic Boarding School, Nganjuk, substantially boosts the quality of Islamic character education.

**Keywords:** *Urgency of Education; Quality of Education; Islamic Character; Santri*

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat urgensi pendidikan di Pondok Pesantren Putra-Putri Miftahul Mubtadiin Ar-Ridlo Nganjuk dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan karakter keislaman. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data, menggunakan teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa, pendidikan karakter di Pondok Pesantren Putra-Putri Miftahul Mubtadiin Ar-Ridlo Nganjuk terjaga dan berjalan dengan baik. Sebab input yang ada dibina melalui proses yang efektif dan efisien serta output yang sesuai dengan dasar dan tujuan pendidikan yang ada, hal ini dibuktikan dengan alumni/lulusan yang memiliki kepribadian baik, akhlak mulia serta keterampilan untuk hidup mandiri. Faktor-faktor pendukungnya pribadi santri, pengasuh dan pengurus yang tekun serta keluarga yang senantiasa memberikan pengarahan dan pembiasaan baik pada santri saat liburan (khususnya). Sedangkan kendalanya adalah faktor personal dari santri, lingkungan, serta perkembangan teknologi yang sangat pesat. Sehingga peneliti simpulkan bahwa pendidikan karakter dipesantren berjalan efektif dengan menggunakan pembinaan, pendampingan dan pendekatan personal oleh ustaz dan pengurus, orangtua serta larangan membawa alat elektronik hal ini terbukti memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap peningkatan mutu pendidikan karakter keislaman pada santri.

**Kata kunci:** urgensi pendidikan, mutu pendidikan, karakter keislaman, santri

## INTRODUCTION

Education is crucial in human life because it is a form of human effort to glorify humanity (Zelhendri, 2017). Besides, education plays an essential role in preparing the younger generation to develop human civilization in a better direction. Seeing the importance of education, Islamic teachings oblige all adherents to study. According to the hadith of the prophet, which reads:

لِبِ الْعِلْمِ عَلَيْهِ لَمْ لَمَّةٌ

*Meaning: Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim and Muslimah*  
(Asy'ari, 2017).

Islamic education aims to build a complete Muslim individual by increasing and developing the fundamental potential (innate) and teaching components (environment). Indonesia is home to the world's fifth-largest Muslim population. As a result, the rapid development of Islamic education in Indonesia is not ruled out (Oktari & Kosasih, 2019).

However, Indonesia has recently experienced a concerning multidimensional crisis, which is thought to be the result of a moral crisis in the community, causing their mentality to become fragile and resulting in bad attitudes (Maimun, 2017). One of the catalysts is the rapid advancement of information and communication technology (ICT), which significantly impacts community life. Many of them have used information and communication media for bad purposes. As a result, moral ideals are often overlooked. Moral values shifts in people's lives can become social problems and lead to criminality (Putri et al., 2016). Islamic educational institutions, particularly student mentors, must play a larger role in avoiding young people's moral degradation. The most important thing to do is educate students on moral principles to establish a character that can impact their mentality and behaviour.

Regarding Islamic education in Indonesia, it cannot be separated from the so-called pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). Pesantren is an institution for the santri (students) community to learn about Islam. As an Islamic educational institution, Pesantren has two meanings: the meaning of Islam and the authenticity

of Indonesia (Aziz, 2017). Pesantren has been known throughout the archipelago for a long time (13-17 AD) and in Java since the 15-16 century AD (Syaekhotin, 2016).

Pesantren is a portion of the history of the country that is today known as Indonesia (Tamam, 2015). The contribution of pesantren is not only during this period of independence; pesantren, in particular, contribute a lot during times of struggle. This fact demonstrates that, besides being an Islamic educational institution, pesantren may be used as a space for genuine creativity to achieve higher development good. In other words, a pesantren is not just a place to seek information but may also be used to accomplish good deeds. In essence, Islamic boarding schools, as Islamic institutions, prepare students (santri) to be ready for anything and to face numerous life challenges by adhering to the Islamic teachings (Tamam, 2015).

Even now, the role of Islamic boarding schools in restoring our national identity is critical. In the past, Indonesia was known as a cultured country. However, with the growth of an increasingly advanced era, technology is swiftly evolving, resulting in the lack of boundaries between countries, allowing alien cultures to easily enter, and degrading Indonesia's noble cultures (Hamid, 2017). Pesantren is a place where good character is taught. Since the commencement of its formation, pesantren has integrated character education into the instruction of students (Maimun, 2017).

Character education is critical because a nation's goals can be realized because of an abundance of natural resources and quality human resources. Some even argue that "the quality/character of the nation (people) itself can reveal a great nation" (Hosna, 2018). Furthermore, proper character education can encourage people to worship God and participate in the realization of God's word, which reads:

الْجِنَّةِ إِنَّمَا يَعْبُدُونَ

*Meaning: "And I (Allah) did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me"*

Islamic boarding schools are required to generate students or graduates of high quality who can serve the local community as an Islamic institution that develops alumni who comprehend the religion. This means that pesantren graduates must be able to implement their knowledge for themselves and preach it in their communities. The consequences of these implications can bring significant benefits to the surrounding environment, including benefits for cultural, learning, and social aspects (Ramin, 2020).

Based on the preceding, the author intends to explain and analyze the importance of education in the Miftahul Mubtadiin Ar-Ridlo Nganjuk Islamic Boarding School in increasing the quality of Islamic character education in this study.

The research on character education in Islamic boarding schools or pesantren has been widely studied, beginning with Umar's research on character building via education at Wahid Hasyim Islamic Boarding Schools in Yogyakarta (AB Umar, 2013). The second is a study of the character education model in al-Ittihad Islamic boarding school and Al-Ittihad Vocational High School Bringin in Semarang district (Choliyah, 2017). Third, research is being conducted at the Fadlillah Islamic Boarding School Sidoarjo to investigate the internalization of character values in moral learning (Usman, 2018). However, the importance of Islamic boarding school education in improving the quality of Islamic character education has received little attention, making this study unique.

## METHOD

A qualitative technique is used in this study. The researcher served as an instrument in this study because the research was qualitative. The data for this study came from informants, including the head and deputy administrator of the male Islamic boarding school of Miftahul Mubtadiin Ar-Ridlo, the board secretary of the male students, the education department, and students. Purposive sampling, a sampling approach with particular considerations, was implemented in this study to determine the data and data sources (Sugiyono, 2016). In this study, the researcher

collected data through interviews, observation, and documentation techniques (Arikunto, 2016). The researchers performed data analysis techniques, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Sugiyono, 2016). In testing the validity of the research data, the researcher used several methods, namely the extended observations, external audits, extended participation, and triangulation.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation at the Miftahul Mubtadiin Ar-Ridlo Islamic Boarding School, Nganjuk, also known as Krempyang Islamic Boarding School, plays an essential role in increasing the quality of Islamic character education. Quality is extremely important and must be maintained by all educational institutions because high-quality education produces students with superior knowledge, skills, and talents (Suprayitno & Wahyudi, 2020). As a result, if an educational institution fails to maintain its quality, its clients will desert it.

Quality education is defined as the conformity of educational resources, educational processes, and educational outcomes. Following this, Umar proposed a theory in which quality in education must refer to three things: input, process, and output. The input is considered substantial if the sub-subs are met, which can be determined by whether or not it is conditional, the current circumstance, and the state of the input human resources. Second, whether or not the educational qualifications are met. Third, whether or not the required facilities are met. Fourth is to meet the standard input, which desires (Y. Umar, 2016).

Based on the data gathered in the field, it can be stated that the educational input at Krempyang Islamic Boarding School is good and of high quality, as evidenced by the fulfilment of the aspects contained in the input, which include:

1. The educational goals established at this boarding school and used as a guide for learning are to enhance intelligence, knowledge, personality, noble character, and the ability to live independently.
2. The input of students at this boarding school can be stated to be good because the number of students who register each year increases. There are roughly 1700

male students who live in residence. Because the registration procedure does not employ quotas or restrictions, everyone who registers and meets the qualifications will be accepted.

3. The Islamic boarding school and madrasa are interconnected. The curriculum is local (salafiyah) and approved by the Ministry of Religion.
4. Priority is given to competent alumni and experts in their fields, as well as students who are already senior (graduated). This action is done to ensure that the traditions and characteristics are preserved. Besides, it also serves as teaching training for senior (graduated) students.
5. Operational finances are received from *i'anah* santri or students, non-binding contributions from student guardians, officials, and a group of people who care about the pesantren. The Islamic boarding school also has agricultural products, cattle, tofu, and tempeh businesses.
6. Input Existing facilities, such as student dorms for both adult and young students, mosques and prayer rooms, classrooms, office room, teacher room, living room, library, and so on, are complete.

According to Yusuf Umar, the educational process is of high quality if the many inputs and current situations can be appropriately handled to provide added value to students (Y. Umar, 2016). Based on the findings in the field, the educational process that runs at Krempyang Islamic Boarding School is as follows:

1. The policy is made through deliberation or democratically.
2. Providing educational services is to improve services and be open in administration.
3. The facilities are complete, which consist of adult and students' dormitories, mosques and prayer rooms, study/classroom, office/leadership room, teacher's room, living room, library room, and so on.
4. The alumni are hired as teachers who are experts in their subjects. It is done to preserve the authenticity of the Krempyang Islamic Boarding School. Nevertheless, not all teaching staff are hired from alumni; some are hired from graduate students who are considered capable.

5. One strategy for developing human resources for educators is to provide training (training of trainers), such as giving *tilawati* training for instructors who teach *tilawati*. Another aim is to include capable alumni with more experience than teaching staff chosen from graduating students.
6. Work rules serve as a reference for management in carrying out their separate obligations. A management meeting is held every Friday morning to develop and review the results of the management's work.

The educational process's output is regarded to be of excellent quality if it can deliver achievements for the school at any given time (Y. Umar, 2016). Based on field results, the educational output of Krempyang Islamic Boarding School can be described as good, as indicated by the numerous achievements won by students in competitions such as qori, speeches, khot, and reading books either at the sub-district, district, and provincial levels. The boarding school was crowned national champion in the Ih'ya Ulumudin book reading competition. Krempyang Islamic Boarding School graduates and alumni are well-known in the community for their personality, noble character, and ability to live freely.

Krempyang Islamic Boarding School instils religion, disciplined, unity, hard work, simplicity, patience, environmental stewardship, responsibility, independence, and creativity in its students. The character values are integrated into the Kempyang Islamic Boarding School through six methods: learning, habituation, training, example, assignment, and direction. Krempyang Islamic Boarding School continues to aim for three educational centres, namely families, schools, and the pesantren community, to work together to keep character education functioning smoothly and successfully.

Meanwhile, Krempyang Islamic Boarding School's evaluation of the success rate of integrating character values employs two ways: directly and indirectly. Direct evaluation occurs when something does not fit while on duty, and the employee is instantly reminded and directed. In terms of what is done indirectly during deliberation, which is held every Friday and examines the evaluation of existing operations,

## **Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Character Education at Miftul Mubtadiin Ar-Ridho Islamic Boarding School, Nganjuk**

Supportive factors, challenges, and solutions have been used to overcome problems in the educational process. The following are some of the aspects that contribute to the process of Islamic character education in Krempyang Islamic Boarding School: (1) The students' personalities are very willing to pursue knowledge; (2) Caregivers and administrators take great care in managing students by instilling numerous excellent habits in them, such as sitting while eating and drinking and attending *tirakat* and *riyadlah*; and (3) The students' families provide guidance and good parental habits to students throughout vacations (in particular).

Meanwhile, one of the challenges Krempyang Islamic Boarding School faces in implementing character education is the influence of modernization. A. malik Fadjar discovered various phenomena about the implications of modernism (Haedari et al., 2004). First, the influence of technical improvements on the growth of mass culture, which leads information to circulate swiftly and even causes the elimination of boundaries between countries, allowing foreign cultures to easily enter and have an impact on the disintegration of religious values that exist in society. Second is the rise of non-fanatical religious attitudes. The third is the development of a reasonable perspective toward life; even religious teachings remain reasoned. Fourth, life is becoming more materialistic. Fifth, the urbanization process is accelerating. Sixth is the development of an autonomous living attitude. Seventh is a tendency to be gloomy or an attitude that underestimates deviations, even in religious concerns. The phenomenon of modernity has an impact on Islamic boarding school culture as well. According to the research findings, various barriers were encountered along with the solutions implemented in the implementation of character education at Krempyang Islamic Boarding School, including the following:

1. Private students are forced to seek knowledge at the boarding school, resulting in a lack of passion for activities and infractions of the Islamic boarding school's norms. The aid and direction provided by caregivers, teachers, and

administrators is the technique used to overcome these challenges. This is done to study the problems that exist in the students themselves and use a personal approach in its execution.

2. Negative environmental impacts from family members and classmates. To address this, the pesantren encourage student guardians to provide extra monitoring for their children when they are on vacation at home.
3. Science and technology are advancing at an increasing rate. To address this, the Islamic boarding school enacted a regulation stating that students were prohibited from bringing any electronic goods. However, when the students return home, they cannot escape the influence of science and technology, so the pesantren provides guidelines for the responsible use of internet media.

### **The urgency of Education at the Miftahul Mubtadiin Ar-Ridlo Islamic Boarding School, Nganjuk, to improve the Quality of Islamic Character Education**

Education is an agent of change that must be capable of improving the nation's character. Pesantren is one of the institutions that has significantly contributed to the construction of Islamic character in Indonesia because the fundamental purpose of pesantren education is the cultivation of religious values. The Islamic boarding school in Indonesia's oldest educational institution and the original work of the nation's members are suited to the nation's culture. Krempyang Islamic Boarding School plays an important role in improving the quality of Islamic character education because research shows that current education is of high quality, and the teaching system is aimed not only at increasing intelligence (reason) but also at producing perfect human beings (having faith and noble character). The character can also refer to personality or morals. Both activities occur without coercion because they are ingrained in the mind or are a habit (S. Anwar, 2018). According to field research, Krempyang Islamic Boarding School is noted for its morals because moral education (character) is the most focused in this pesantren. Morality in this boarding school is used to decide the graduating students.

Based on the description above, noble character or morals are the consequence of the process of applying sharia (worship and converts) which is based on a firm *aqidah* that relies on the Qur'an and Sunnah (Musrifah, 2016).

Educational institutions must attempt to teach students noble characteristics, such as respect and caring for others, responsibility, integrity, and high discipline through character education. On the other hand, character education is meant to keep students from negative attitudes and behaviours (Abidin, 2021). Religious, disciplined, togetherness, hard work, simplicity, patience, environmental care, responsibility, independence, and creativity are the character values developed in Krempyang Islamic Boarding School. The curriculum centre emphasizes and objectively studies these values, focusing on religion, Pancasila, culture, and national education goals. Religious, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard effort, creative, independent, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love for the homeland, respect for achievement, friendly/communicative, love of peace, love to read, environmental care, social care, and responsibility are some of these values.

There are numerous ways to integrate character values into character education. According to E. Mulyasa, there are six methods for integrating character values: assignment, habituation, training, learning, direction, and example (Mulyasa, 2014). Following this principle, Krempyang Islamic Boarding School incorporates character education through these six forms. The character to be produced will be truly implanted in each learner if the integration is done through these six forms. Character values can be instilled in general as part of the curriculum structure in Islamic boarding schools. The success of character formation is determined by three environmental factors: the first is the home, the second is the school, and the third is the community, also known as the three education centres (Rohmah, 2021). This effort is made at Krempyang Islamic Boarding School to always go hand in hand because if one of the three parts does not work, then character education in the pesantren will not run smoothly. As a result, guardians of students are always encouraged to oversee their sons during holidays, even

though they are directly supervised by kyai and ustaz in the school environment and the boarding school community.

Character education in pesantren is a relationship process between santri and the pesantren environment. It is difficult to measure the level of success if it is not coupled with the evaluation of the results. Evaluation is useful in character education for determining and quantifying the success or failure of integrated character ideals (K. Anwar, 2018). According to data acquired by field researchers, character education in Krempyang Islamic Boarding School is evaluated in two ways, namely directly and indirectly. When on duty, if something does not fit, it is promptly reminded and instructed in terms of what is done indirectly during deliberation, which is convened every Friday and examines the evaluation of each present activity.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Miftahul Mubtadiin Ar-Ridlo Islamic Boarding School, also known as Krempyang Islamic Boarding School, is a school that aims to instil character values in all of its programs and activities. The planting is done entirely within the framework of the pesantren in three educational facilities: the dormitory, school, and boarding school community. All routine and non-routine activities have been planned in such a way that alumni are not only academically capable but also of excellent character in society. At Krempyang Islamic Boarding School, character development is comprised of numerous values. These values are religion, discipline, togetherness, hard work, simplicity, patience, environmental stewardship, responsibility, independence, and creativity. The students themselves and a family who always provides good direction and habituation to students during holidays are supportive aspects of character education at Krempyang Islamic Boarding School. At the same time, the difficulties are personal elements from the students themselves, environmental factors, and the rapid advancement of science and technology.

Based on the findings of the research on the importance of education at Krempyang Islamic Boarding School, it is suggested that future researchers examine other objects to confirm whether Islamic boarding schools play a significant role in improving the quality of Islamic character education, as this study only focused on the male section of Krempyang Islamic Boarding School.

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