

# Optimization of Student Character Education through the Pesantren Program at the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia

**Muhammad Roy Purwanto<sup>1</sup>**

Universitas Islam Indonesia, K.H.A Wahid Hasyim Ull Building, Indonesia [muhamad.roy@uii.ac.id](mailto:muhamad.roy@uii.ac.id)

**Tamyiz Mukharrom<sup>3</sup>**

Universitas Islam Indonesia, Kaliurang Street KM 14,5 Yogyakarta 55584 Indonesia, [tamyizmuharrom@uii.ac.id](mailto:tamyizmuharrom@uii.ac.id)

**Supriadi<sup>2</sup>**

Universitas Islam Indonesia, Indonesia, [20912094@students.uui.ac.id](mailto:20912094@students.uui.ac.id)

**Putri Jannatur Rahmah<sup>4</sup>**

Universitas Islam Indonesia, Kaliurang Street KM 14,5 Yogyakarta 55584 Indonesia [17421205@students.uui.ac.id](mailto:17421205@students.uui.ac.id)

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding author: Universitas Islam Indonesia, Faculty of Islamic Studies, K.H.A Wahid Hasyim Ull Building, Kaliurang Street KM 14,5 Yogyakarta 55584 Indonesia, Email : [muhamad.roy@uii.ac.id](mailto:muhamad.roy@uii.ac.id)

## Abstract

Several studies have found that character education for students through the pesantren program has been carried out optimally. This increase in student character education indicates that educational institutions in Islamic boarding schools have a great opportunity to become an antidote to juvenile delinquency today. Islamic boarding schools, through policies of religious development and their Ustadz, have a significant role in shaping the good character and religious understanding of their students to be more open and tolerant. This study aims to look at the optimal character education and religious understanding of students studying at Islamic boarding schools at the Islamic University of Indonesia. This research is qualitative-descriptive field research. The population of this study were students, Ustadz, and leaders of Islamic boarding schools at the Islamic University of Indonesia. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews and documentation. The results of the study indicate that the Islamic University of Indonesia Islamic Boarding School has carried out optimization of character education for its students, both programmed and incidentally. Programmed education is through classroom learning and religious guidance in extracurricular activities, while incidental character education is carried out through spiritual education, worship education, and extracurricular education such as lectures and community service.

## Keywords

Education, Character, Students, Islamic Boarding School

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## Preliminary

This paper discusses character education through the pesantren program at the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia. Several studies have found that character education for students through the pesantren program has been carried out optimally. This increase in student character education indicates that educational institutions in Islamic boarding schools have a great opportunity to become an antidote to today's juvenile delinquency. Islamic boarding schools through policies of religious development and their ustadz have a significant role in forming good character and students' religious understanding is wider and tolerant (Purwanto & Supriadi, 2019). Education is an agent of change for changing the nation's mentality, and pesantren is a medium for that change. As stated by the Minister of National Education Mohammad Nuh (Ministry of National Education, 2011), at the National Seminar on National Character Education through Islamic Boarding School Education Patterns at the Ministry of National Education (Huda, Jasmi, Mustari, & Basiron, 2017). He said that the patterns of character-based education that developed in Islamic boarding schools were considered successful, therefore, the Ministry of National Education wanted to incorporate the tradition of pesantren education into public schools. The Head of the Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of National Education, Mansyur Ramly, said that the boarding school activities that adopted the pesantren culture in public schools starting at the elementary school, junior high school and senior high school levels contributed to the formation of character, morals, and behavior of students (Arifah, Murwatiningsih, & Harlanu, 2019). Nowadays, educational institutions that are alleged to have implemented character education for a long time are Islamic boarding schools. Islamic boarding schools as one of the sub-systems of National Education in Indonesia have special advantages and characteristics in applying character education for their students (santri) because Islamic boarding schools use a boarding system that makes it easy to apply the values and worldviews they hold in the daily lives of students (Nata, 2021). The students are not only equipped with an understanding of Islamic teachings but also educate a better character (Zaki, Widiastuti, Yudha, Wijayanti, & Mi'raj, 2020). As' ad, Purwanto, and Rohmadi (2021) in his research explains that with his teaching system in Islamic boarding schools he has succeeded in producing future generations of the nation who are able to be role models and leaders for their people armed with religious knowledge and have good morality according to Islamic teachings (As' ad et al., 2021). Likewise with Baharun's research (2017) that the discourse of Islamic boarding schools as one type of Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, has been empirically proven to be able to develop students from various aspects, including intellectual, emotional abilities and the formation of religious character, so that the born output of. Islamic boarding schools that have knowledge and good character (Baharun, 2017). The success of the pesantren in shaping the character of the santri is due to the boarding school education of students in boarding schools under the guidance and supervision of the kiai, the existence of the kiai's authority and example as the leader of the pesantren and the religious atmosphere in learning at the pesantren (Rohaeni, Wasliman, Rostini, & Iriantara, 2021). In addition, the pesantren education process emphasizes more on aspects of aqidah, worship and morals with a distinctive educational approach, such as ukhuwah, obedience, exemplary, simplicity, independence, freedom, sincerity, and plurality (Solihin, Hasanah, & Fajrussalam, 2020). Educational institutions have a significant role in shaping the character of students, it is an integral part of educational goals (Husni, 2020). Efforts to build character must lead to curriculum renewal, and this has been practiced by the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia since its establishment until now (Baehr, 2017). Similar to the explanation above, the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia is committed to producing Muslim intellectuals who are pious, have excellence in the fields of religious thought, science and skills, research development and morality, and produce Muslim intellectuals with commendable character (Purwanto, MUKHARROM, CHOTIMAH, & Sanaky, 2020). So, in realizing these goals, good management and governance are needed. Not only from the leadership element, but also synergistic cooperation is needed

between leaders, caregivers, managers and students (A. R. Sari, Prasetyoningrum, & Hartono, 2020). Thus, this paper tries to look at the optimization of character education in the Islamic Boarding Schools at the Universitas Islam Indonesia. This research is interesting and important to study because it will provide information about optimizing character education based on education in Islamic boarding schools by taking studies at Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia.

## Research Methods

The sources of data in this study are divided into two categories. First, primary data is obtained through interviews with several informants, namely teachers, students, and leaders of the Islamic boarding schools Universitas Islam Indonesia in Yogyakarta. Second, secondary data sources obtained from references from journals, books, research results, and other written sources related to character education and religious understanding. The population of this research is the lecturers, students, and leaders of the Islamic boarding schools Universitas Islam Indonesia, who were taken through purposive sampling. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews and documentation. After the data was collected, the data was analyzed by a descriptive-analytical method. In detail, the population and the number of samples taken from the Faculty of Islamic Studies are as follows:

No.	Population		Sample	
1.	Teacher/Ustadz	34	3 Males	3 females
2.	Students	104	5 males	5 Females
3.	Leadership Element	3	1 male	
TOTAL Population/Sample		141	17	

## Results and Discussion

### Overview and Education System at the Islamic Boarding Schools of the Universitas Islam Indonesia

The Islamic Boarding Schools of the Universitas Islam Indonesia, geographically located in Nologaten Village, Condong Catur District, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Province, precisely on Selokan Mataram street, Dabag village. The Islamic boarding schools of Universitas Islam Indonesia location is very strategic because it is located in the heart of Yogyakarta. Various campuses are located not far from Islamic boarding schools. There are several campuses that surround PP UII, including UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Sanata Dharma University, AMIKOM, YKPN, UPN, Atma Jaya University, Yogyakarta State University, Gadjah Mada University, Mercuru Buana University, and other prestigious institutions. The presence of the Islamic Boarding School of Universitas Islam Indonesia is motivated by the spirit and enthusiasm of the founding fathers of the Universitas Islam Indonesia to create a generation that upholds Indonesian and Islamic values. The Universitas Islam Indonesia, as the oldest Islamic campus in Indonesia, which was established on July 8, 1945, has a moral responsibility to accompany Indonesia's independence with a spirit that comes from Islamic values. The fundamental aspect that is preserved is how the generation born from the Islamic Boarding School of Universitas Islam Indonesia implements the principle of "scientific knowledge and practice by scientific." Students at the Universitas Islam

Indonesia are constantly indoctrinated with the significance of these two things. In addition to these essential factors, the Islamic University of Indonesia has Catur Dharma as a core concept, which also puts forward Islamic da'wah as an inseparable part of the statutes of the Universitas Islam Indonesia. This mission then requires that the Universitas Islam Indonesia give birth to a generation that has high integrity towards science as well as an Islamic personality rooted in monotheism. The moral responsibility to give birth to a generation that is beneficial to society is reflected in the vision, mission and goals of the Islamic Boarding School of Universitas Islam Indonesia. The vision of the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia is the realization of the rahmatan lil 'alamin concept, has scientific, Islamic and excellence da'wah and competence. The mission of the Islamic Boarding Schools Universitas Islam Indonesia is to produce cadres of people who have excellence and competence in the fields of religious thought, science, skills, research development, and morality. Meanwhile, the goal of the Islamic Boarding Schools at Universitas Islam Indonesia is to produce Muslim intellectuals who are pious, have advantages in the fields of religious thought, science and skills, research development and morality, and produce Muslim intellectuals with commendable character. On that ground, the Universitas Islam Indonesia initiated a scholarship program for Islamic boarding schools, with the Universitas Islam Indonesia supporting and financing the entire program. The selection of students in Islamic Boarding School is strict and fostered, which is combined with regular bachelor degree education at the faculties at the Universitas Islam Indonesia according to the field of interest, so that graduate students can eventually be in accordance with what the Islamic University of Indonesia aspires to. Originally (in 1996), this curriculum was exclusively designed for the Faculty of Tarbiyah and the Faculty of Sharia (now called the Faculty of Islamic Studies or FIAI). However, in its current form, the flagship scholarship program of the Islamic Boarding School Universitas Islam Indonesia is available to all faculties except the Faculty of Medicine. Previously, the Islamic Boarding School of Universitas Islam Indonesia was primarily for males, but in 2011, the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia officially opened to female students. Initially, graduates of the Islamic Boarding Schools of Universitas Islam Indonesia were expected to return to serve in their hometowns. This is due to the fact that the recruiting process is also based on local suggestions and preferences. This goal is to encourage and expand the role of the Universitas Islam Indonesia students in the community. This is a program initiated by the Universitas Islam Indonesia in which alumni of the Islamic Boarding School are obliged to serve as a process of forging and "halalizing" the scholarships that have been received after completing their studies. However, over time, this cannot be implemented properly due to various factors. One of them is because the bureaucracy is quite complicated, the placement process and so on. Based on this problem, the Universitas Islam Indonesia took the policy that the service of the post-graduate students is on the campus of the Universitas Islam Indonesia in accordance with the placement instructions from the rector. The length of this service is for one year. Formatively, the Islamic Boarding School of Universitas Islam Indonesia has three leadership components, namely the Chancellor, Tanfidziyah Council and Kiai, or caregivers. The first element is the Chancellor, the highest leader who carries out the duties and functions of the Universitas Islam Indonesia, including the Islamic Boarding School of UII. Therefore, every important decision must be approved by the Chancellor. The second element is the tanfidziyah board, which is a structural official within the Universitas Islam Indonesia, in this case, the dean of each faculty and vice chancellor III. The Tanfidziyah Council is in charge of overseeing the continuity of the learning system and process at the Islamic Boarding School of Universitas Islam Indonesia. The third element is a caregiver who serves as a daily administrator who lives with the students in the Islamic Boarding School environment. In addition to these three elements, the Islamic Boarding School also recruits administrative and management personnel who are directly mandated through a Work Order (SPK) signed by the Chancellor. In addition, there are also service students who also help with carrying out activities at the pesantren. The leadership responsibility is heavy on the daily leader, so the Kiai is assisted by several administrators and daily staff. The Chancellor's Letter on Guidelines for the

Implementation of Islamic Boarding Schools at the Islamic University of Indonesia runs daily programs. So, the leadership model that is applied is collective leadership. A leadership system that does not make Kiai the central actor in running the learning wheel, but leadership that is mutually beneficial. As for the learning process, Kiai is not the only one teaching the students. The learning process is carried out at the end of every maghrib and Isha is forgiven by each lecturer, both from the Indonesian Islamic University and from outside the Indonesian Islamic University campus, with certain qualifications, such as scientific linearity and master's degree. The education system applies to pesantren in general. In traditional Islamic boarding schools, the learning process is dominated by the centrality of the Kiai or Ustadz. Likewise, in some modern cottages, they apply a similar learning model. This is different from the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia system, which carries out its educational program by combining the traditional pesantren system with higher education. The adoption of the higher education system can be seen in the use of Grade Point Average (GPA). The traditional pesantren system that is applied in this Islamic Boarding School is the continued use of classical and contemporary books in their studies. The learning at the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia is not only taught, but there is also standardization of specific knowledge or competence. For example, teaching personnel with a minimum grade 2 or with character and competence in a certain subject. The teaching team is recruited from a variety of institutions and Islamic boarding schools, including Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Krapyak Islamic Boarding School, and Wahid Hasyim Islamic Boarding School Yogyakarta. Academically, all students have a minimum standard to remain as students who receive excellent scholarships. For students who take non-exact majors or faculties, they are required to achieve a minimum GPA campus score of 3.25 and a minimum GPA pesantren of 3.00. Meanwhile, for students who are students of the exact faculty, they must achieve a minimum GPA Campus of 3.00 and GPA pesantren is 3.00. If the student does not reach the minimum standard for the first time, then the student concerned will be given a warning letter, but if it happens for the second time, then the student will be dismissed as the recipient of the flagship scholarship of the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia. The applied curriculum in Islamic Boarding School of the UII is divided into several groups of scientific fields during the learning process, such as academic expertise, talents, life skills, and social skills. The three groups are separated into 20 courses totaling 42 credits spread through seven semesters. The Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia also applies lessons to other students with various activities, which in education are called hidden curriculum. Some of these activities include routine Friday night activities (sharing session). This activity is a forum for various ideas, input suggestions for pesantren and even criticism of the pesantren system and leadership. Other activities, such as fostering students' talents through internal organizations such as Arabic and English debate exercises, as well as other arts.

## **Character Education at the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia**

Character education is the process of guiding students toward becoming fully human beings with character in dimensions such as thoughts, hearts, bodies, sentiments, and intents (Novianti, 2017). In this study, the following measures of character development were identified:

### **Spiritual Education**

Spiritual education is a part of education that has a strong influence on a person's personality, making him inclined to goodness, decorated with noble qualities, holding fast in personal and behavior to noble character firmly and consistently, happy to help others and loving to help, having a calm and optimistic soul, facing life with a positive spirit and unwavering determination, even though obstacles and problems hinder his efforts to keep going by asking Allah for help, taking refuge in Him in difficult, dangerous, narrow

situations, and trusting in His help (Khaidir & Suud, 2020). The Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia is not merely an educational institution, but since its emergence, the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia has emerged as an institution that has strong roots in the essence of spiritual education, thus upholding character values that are practiced in everyday life. Externally, the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia appears as a living community that has the spiritual ability to engage in creative activities that use alternative education by combining education and teaching with community building. The purpose of the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia is basically to build and develop the personalities of its students who are obedient to Allah S.W.T in a condition of faith and piety. The Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia's education system is a dormitory system, namely traditional Islamic education, where students live together and study under the guidance of a kyai. In the dormitory, students can study all day long and this is very supportive for personality formation. Inside the dormitory, it is possible to practice what has been learned. Religious values are normatively learned in class. They can be trained to be socialized in everyday life so that it is possible for them not only to be "having" but "being" (Mazaya & Ainisyifa, 2018). Besides that, the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia is also an institution that educates students to become human beings who uphold religious ethical values and socialization. Therefore, in humans, there are several elements that can be used as a spiritual education process that have been taught by the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia caregivers to their students, namely; heart, mind, and soul. To be able to achieve spiritual education, it is necessary to know in advance the places that affect human spirituality.

### **Worship Education**

Worship education is character education that forms one's personality, the effects of which could be seen in one's real activities, such as excellent behavior, honest responsibility, respect for the rights of others, hard work, and so on (Baharun & Ummah, 2018). Because this can be observed in the practice of performing worship in accordance with the fundamental teachings of Islam, it will create a character, tolerance, and inclusive attitude (Baharun, 2017). This is undeniable since the Islamic Boarding School of the UII holds prayers five times a day, in the prayer room located in the Islamic Boarding School of the UII facility, with activities beginning at *subuh*, *dzuhur*, *asar*, *maghrib*, and *isya*. Throughout the *Maghrib* prayer, the Islamic Boarding School of the UII students conducted religious studies, which were followed by a religious conversation with the *kiai*. And, in addition to religious studies, the required activities in the Islamic Boarding School of the UII include religious learning in class and worship, which takes place after the morning and evening prayer. Nevertheless, PP UII students realize it in the form of discipline of worship, discipline of time, discipline of obeying rules, discipline of study, discipline of attitude and responsibility towards oneself, family, community, nation, and state, and God Almighty, which is based on the concept of learning in all aspects of learning. Moral knowledge, moral feelings, moral action.

### **Extracurricular Education**

Extracurricular education is any activity that takes place outside of class hours with the goal of building students' interests and talents (Latifah & Hani, 2017). The Chancellor of the Universitas Islam Indonesia, in collaboration with the Islamic Boarding School caretakers, establishes policies and guidelines for the execution of extracurricular activities at the Islamic Boarding School of the UII. In accordance with this, the UII Chancellor has such a policy with the Islamic Boarding School of the UII Supervisors on the financing of facilities and infrastructure for extracurricular activities that focuses on the following activities:

### **Da'wah**

Da'wah has two meanings, namely the meaning of coaching and development. Da'wah, which means coaching, is something that seeks to perfect something that has already

existed before (Chang et al., 2017). While da'wah, which has the meaning of development, is a form of activity carried out in order to obtain a new result that did not exist before. Da'wah is a continuous process carried out by someone (da'i) to change or invite someone to the right path, which is in accordance with the guidance of Islam (C. P. Sari, Zainiyati, & Al Hana, 2020). The purpose of da'wah itself is to invite and change behavior to carry out and accept Islamic teachings and apply them in everyday life. After the implementation of the da'wah with the lecture method, the Islamic Boarding School of the Ull caregivers also conducted an evaluation of the implementation of the da'wah safari, which was carried out when the activity was finished. This evaluation was carried out to assess and justify all the Islamic Boarding School students if there are deficiencies and errors. With the hope that the next activity will provide an even better presentation. The Da'wah safari is a form of the Islamic Boarding School of the Ull program of activities to help develop talents and interests as well as form character for the Islamic Boarding School students. Character education is the first of eight missions as a manifestation of the national development vision. Improvement and development in character building can be seen when students are able to convey a mandate or message in an activity. It must be realized that delivering a message and an action taken is a benchmark in the process of character building. One of the things that is being done is the existence of a da'wah safari. With the implementation of the da'wah safari, it is concluded that the da'wah safari has several aspects or influences on its character, namely religion, honesty, discipline, enthusiasm, and responsibility.

### **Community dedication**

Community service is an activity that aims to help certain communities with several activities without expecting any form of reward. In general, this program is designed by various universities, institutes, or Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia to make a real contribution to the Indonesian nation, especially in developing the welfare and progress of the Indonesian nation. Community Service Activities are one part of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. The forms of Community Service activities are Social Service and Teaching (Kouyoumdjian, Guzmán, Garcia, & Talavera-Bustillos, 2017). Students with the santri status, as the next generation, are required to maximize their roles by possessing the ability, talents, and noble character to become ready-to-use leaders. Not only that, but students with santri status should be able to be change agents for the community, as well as students who are not only the initiators of change, but also the objects or actors of the change (Quirk, Strokoff, Owen, France, & Bergen, 2014). When the Islamic Boarding School students have finished carrying out their service, they are picked up by the Islamic Boarding School caregivers directly or by teachers who represent them. During the pick-up, various appreciations are given by the community. There are even students who are asked by the local village head to stay alive to revive existing educational institutions. This is where the social changes in society towards education are seen as explained by the following: 1) In the community, the Islamic Boarding School of the Ull can develop a universal attitude, not a particularist attitude; b) The Islamic Boarding School of the Ull can unite and strengthen community culture; c) the Islamic Boarding School of the Ull, as a high moral formation with full attention, seeks to instill noble character, absorb virtues in the souls of its students who are part of the community, gets them used to holding on to high morals and avoiding despicable things, thinking spiritually and insaniah, and using the time to study worldly sciences and religious sciences; d) can cultivate communication and sociable attitudes, as well as a desire to understand and learn from other community members.

### **Conclusion**

The Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia is one of the religious education institutes whose education system is a dormitory and whose students are solely studies in Universitas Islam Indonesia. The existence of the Islamic Boarding School of the

Ull is to achieve Ull's vision and mission for the community as rahmatan lil'alamin. Nonetheless, the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia is dedicated to creating Muslim intellectuals who are pious, have advantages in the domains of religious thinking, science and skills, research development, and morals, and who have praiseworthy character. As for the program to realize the vision and mission, the Islamic Boarding School of the Ull has implemented the optimization of character education for its students, either programmatically or incidentally. Programmed education is through classroom learning and religious guidance in extracurricular activities, while incidental character education is carried out through spiritual education, worship education, and extracurricular education such as lectures and community dedication.

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