



**INNOVATIONS IN STUDENT MANAGEMENT IN
CHARACTER BUILDING FOR STUDENTS AT THE
ASKHABUL KAHFI ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL IN
SEMARANG**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine in depth the innovation of student management in the formation of student character at the Askhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School Semarang. This study is based on the increasing challenges of character education in Islamic boarding schools due to the influence of globalization, changes in parental orientation, and the demands of social competence of students in the contemporary era. The method used is a qualitative method with a type of case study because it is to understand the process, meaning, and dynamics of student management practices in Islamic boarding schools. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving administrators, ustadz/ustadzah, and students at the MTs/junior high school level. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn, with data validity through triangulation of sources and methods as well as member checking. The results of the study show that the formation of the character of students at the Askhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School is carried out through the integration of three main programs, namely Muhasabah wa Tarbiyah, Muhadharah, and a persuasive approach in discipline. The Muhasabah wa Tarbiyah program functions as a means of reflection and self-evaluation that fosters discipline and responsibility of students. The Muhadharah program plays a role in developing students' courage, confidence, and communication and social skills. Meanwhile, a persuasive approach is applied in discipline coaching by placing sanctions as an educational consequence aimed at fostering moral awareness, not as a form of repressive punishment. The relationship between the three programs reflects humanistic, participatory, and exemplary-based student management practices. This research contributes scientifically by enriching the study of Islamic education management through mapping the innovation model of pesantren student management with character education, as well as providing practical implications for pesantren



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managers and policy makers in designing an adaptive, systematic, and sustainable student character development strategy in the midst of contemporary Islamic education challenges.

Keywords: *Student management, Character education, Islamic boarding schools, Innovation*

INTRODUCTION

Character education is the main foundation in building a nation's civilization. In the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools have an important role as the oldest educational institution that consistently instills moral, spiritual and social values in its students¹. Character can be defined as a system that aims to instill character values in students, which includes components of awareness, understanding, care, and high commitment to apply these values in daily life². Pesantren not only functions as an institution for the teaching of religious science, but also as a center for character formation through the habit of a disciplined, simple life with the value of togetherness. However, the development of the times presents complex new challenges, both in terms of the influence of globalization, the penetration of digital culture, and the shift in parental orientation towards pesantren education. If in the past the guardians of the students handed over their children completely to the boarding school with the intention of *lillahita'ala*, now not a few see the pesantren as a place to "entrust children".

However, the practice of character development between Islamic boarding schools still shows significant variation and in many cases tends to be specific and has not been systematically managed³.

In the global and national context, pesantren are seen as alternative educational institutions that play a strategic role in shaping the nation's character and strengthening *moral education*. Pesantren not only functions as a space for learning religious science, but also as a social environment that shapes the *attitude, habitus*, and *moral action* of students in a sustainable manner. Through boarding life, intensive interaction between students and administrators, and habituation of

¹ Fifi Nofiaturrahmah, "Character Education Methods in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 11, no. 2 (2017): 201–16, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2014.112-04>.

² Cut Zahri Harun, "Character Education Management," *Journal of Character Educators*, 2013, 302–8.

³ N Ummah, "The Role of Islamic Boarding Schools in Shaping Student Character," *International Journal of Islamic and Social Education Research*, 2025.



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values in daily activities, pesantren has pedagogical peculiarities that are difficult to find in other formal educational institutions⁴.

A number of studies on character education in Islamic boarding schools have been conducted, but most of them still focus on aspects of the curriculum, certain character values, or partial coaching strategies. Studies on discipline-based character education management, for example, highlight the practice of nurturing or instilling certain values without comprehensively linking them to the functions of student management as a unit of educational organizational systems⁵. As a result, the dimensions of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling in student management have not been studied in depth in relation to the effectiveness of character formation.

Previous research has extensively discussed character education in a variety of contexts, but most of it is still focused on formal educational institutions. Such as research by Zaenul Luthoifi⁶ which discusses character values in the da'wah material of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and its implementation at MTs NU 10 Penawaja, Kendal, which emphasizes the aspect of religious learning as a means of forming students' character. Meanwhile, research by Erina Nur Mufattakhatin⁷ highlights the cultivation of nationalist-religious character values at MI Hasyim Asy'ari Bangsri Jepara to form the profile of Pancasila students. The research by Siska Julia Melani⁸ examines the formation of religious character based on religious activities in SMP 1 Gunungjati Purwokerto through the approach of Albert Bandura's social learning theory. Then research conducted by Hermawan⁹ shows that the insynchronization between parents' expectations and character development models in pesantren can affect the effectiveness of internalizing values in students.

⁴ Thoyyibin, Syed Ahmad Ali Shah, and Nur Khamim, "Management of Character Education Curriculum in Islamic Boarding School," *Andragogi: Journal of Education and Learning*, 2024, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31538/adrg.v3i1.1281> View Article on Andragogi Journal.

⁵ Sutiono, "Character Education Management Based on Five Disciplines of the Nurturing Unit of the Al-Mukmin Ngruki Putra Sukoharjo Islamic Boarding School 2024/2025," *Sanaamul Quran: Journal of Islamic Insight*, 2025, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62096/sq.v5i2.96> View Article on Sanaamul Quran Journal.

⁶ Zaenul Lutoifi, *The Value of Character Education in the Da'wah Material of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in the Makkah Period and Its Implementation on Educational Practices at MTs NU 10 Penawaja Pageruyung, Kendal, Central Java*, 2023.

⁷ Erina Nur Mufattakhatin, "Instilling Nationalist-Religious Character Values in Shaping the Profile of Pancasila Students at MI Hasyim Asy'ari Bangsri Jepara," *Thesis*, 2023, 4.

⁸ Siska Julia Melani, "The Formation of Religious Character Based on Religious Activities at SMP 1 Gunungjati Purwokerto: A Study of Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory," 2016, 1–23.

⁹ Hermawan, "Parents' Expectations and Their Relevance to the Character Education Model in Pesantren," *TIJIE: Journal of Islamic Education*, 2025.



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Based on the analysis of previous studies, it can be concluded that a lot of character education studies have been conducted, but it is still dominated by a focus on formal educational institutions, curriculum aspects, certain character values, or partial coaching strategies. These studies have not specifically examined the student management of pesantren as an integrated and dynamic system in the formation of student character. Managerial dimensions such as coaching planning, student management organization, mentoring patterns, and character supervision and evaluation mechanisms are still relatively underappreciated.

Thus, the research gap of this research lies in the lack of studies that position pesantren student management as a strategic instrument in shaping the character of students, not just as an administrative function or supporting educational activities. This research not only looks at the results or character values formed, but also examines the managerial processes that support the success of sustainable character development in boarding life.

This urgency is in line with the words of Allah SWT in QS. Al-Hasyr: 18, "O you who have believed, fear Allah and let everyone pay attention to what he has done for tomorrow (the Hereafter). Fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Thorough in what you do." This verse emphasizes that the essence of character formation is continuous self-evaluation, so that the discipline and responsibility of the students grow from spiritual awareness, not just mechanical submission to discipline. Thus, the coaching approach in Islamic boarding schools has a strong theological foundation, especially in shaping the discipline, courage, morals, and moral awareness of students in the daily life of the dormitory.

To analyze this phenomenon, this study uses several complementary theoretical foundations. According to Henry Fayol, management theory, which includes the functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling, is a framework to understand how student management in pesantren is carried out systematically¹⁰. Thomas Lickona's theory of character education that emphasizes the moral dimension of knowling. Moral feeling, and moral action are used to see how moral values are internalized in the lives of students¹¹. In addition, transformational leadership theory from Bernard M. Bass explains how administrators and ustazd play a role as role models who motivate students through

¹⁰ Muhammad Yusuf et al., *Management Theory* (West Sumatra: Muslim Scholars, 2023).

¹¹ Salamah Eka Susanti, "The Concept of Character Education in Thomas Lickona's Thought 'Good Character Building Strategies,'" *Yasin* 2, no. 5 (2022): 719–34, <https://doi.org/10.58578/yasin.v2i5.896>.



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a constructive approach ¹², while Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory emphasizes the importance of a varied approach in coaching because students have diverse potentials ¹³. The integration of the four theories allows for a comprehensive analysis of student management innovations in Islamic boarding schools.

Islamic Boarding School Ashabul Kahfi Semarang was chosen as the research location because it has a structured management system and relevant character development programs for MTs/Junior High School students. At this level, students are in the early adolescent development phase which requires intensive guidance related to discipline, responsibility, and moral formation. The Pondok implements a pattern of direct assistance through administrators who live on each floor of the dormitory, so that interaction and supervision can take place more intensely. Programs such as Muhasabah wa Tarbiyah and Muhadharah are the main means of fostering discipline, increasing independence, and developing communication skills of MTs/junior high school students.

With the characteristics of students who are still in the stage of finding their identity, the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School provides a conducive environment to cultivate religious, social, and moral values that are important foundations in adolescent development. Therefore, this pond is representative as a model of student management innovation that focuses on the formation of the character of MTs/Junior High School students in the context of contemporary Islamic education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to examine in depth the practice of student management in the formation of student character at the Askhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School in Semarang. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to understand the processes, meanings, and social dynamics that occur in the natural context of Islamic boarding schools, especially how managerial practices are carried out and interpreted by education actors. Case studies are used because they allow researchers to examine phenomena holistically and contextually in one specific location, so that the

¹² Roni Harsoyo, "Bernard M. Bass' Transformational Leadership Theory and Its Application in Improving the Quality of Islamic Education Institutions," *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education Management* 3, no. 2 (2022): 247–62.

¹³ Resa Julianti Putri, Taopik Rahman, and Qonita Qonita, "The Application of the Multiple Intelligences Learning Model to Prepare Students in the Super Smart Society 5.0 Era," *Educational : Journal of Educational Science* 3, no. 3 (2021): 871–79, <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v3i3.415>.



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interaction between the student management system, pesantren culture, and the process of character formation of students can be analyzed in depth and ¹⁴thoroughly.

This research was carried out at the Askhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School in Semarang, which was chosen purposively because it has a structured student management system and an active and sustainable character development program for MTs/Junior High School students. Data collection was carried out in the period from June to August 2025, when all student activities were running normally so that researchers could observe and explore the practice of character development in a natural situation. The location and time of this research are considered representative to reveal the reality of pesantren student management in the context of contemporary Islamic education.

The research subjects consist of student administrators, ustadz/ustadzah, and students who are directly involved in the character development process. The selection of informants was carried out using purposive sampling techniques, with the criteria that informants have direct experience in student management or have lived the life of an Islamic boarding school for at least one year. In addition, snowball sampling is used to reach additional informants based on the initial informant's recommendations, especially when the information obtained still requires deepening of other relevant perspectives. This technique allows researchers to obtain rich and in-depth data from various complementary points of view ¹⁵.

Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the experiences, perceptions, and views of informants regarding student management practices, forms of character development, implementation challenges, and student supervision and discipline mechanisms. Participatory observation was carried out with the direct presence of researchers in pesantren activities to observe the interaction of administrators and students, the implementation of discipline, and the process of character habituation in daily life. Meanwhile, the documentation study was carried out by examining the archives of activities, the rules of the lodge, the organizational structure, and other relevant

¹⁴ Qi L. Lim, W.M. and B Zhang, "What Is Qualitative Research? An Overview and Guidelines," *Qualitative Research Journal*, 2025, 1–15, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582241264619>.

¹⁵ A. Y Siregar and S Murhayati, "Case Study Methodology in Qualitative Research: A Study of Concepts, Design, and Benefits," *Tambusai Education Journal*, 2024, 1234–45, <https://doi.org/https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/21801>.



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documents to strengthen and complete the data from interviews and observations¹⁶.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied source triangulation techniques and triangulation methods. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing information obtained from administrators, ustaz, and students to assess the consistency and credibility of the data. The triangulation method is carried out by juxtaposing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation so that the research findings have a strong empirical basis. In addition, member checking is carried out by confirming a summary of provisional findings to key informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretation is in accordance with their experiences and realities¹⁷.

The data analysis in this study refers to the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction is carried out by selecting, classifying, and focusing data that is relevant to the research objective. The presentation of data is carried out in the form of a thematic narrative to facilitate the identification of patterns, relationships, and meanings that emerge from the data. The conclusion drawing stage is carried out through a continuous process of interpretation and verification of all research findings, so that valid, systematic, and meaningful conclusions are obtained regarding student management practices in the formation of student character at the Askhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School Semarang.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Character Development as an Instrument for Santri Management

The Askhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School is a dormitory-based educational institution that consciously places the development of student character as the core of the management system. Character is not positioned as a by-product of the learning process, but rather as a strategic goal that is integrated into student governance. From the perspective of Islamic education management, this practice reflects the organizing function as stated by Henri Fayol, namely the division of

¹⁶ A. Rustamana, P. M Adillah, and N. K. Maharani, "Qualitative Research Methods," *Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Science and Technology*, 2025, 455–68, <https://doi.org/https://journal.formosapublisher.org/index.php/marcopolo/article/view/9907>.

¹⁷ A. W. Suryani and H Utami, "Rigour in Qualitative Studies: Are We on Track?," *Journal of Accounting and Finance* 22 (2) (2025): 47–58, <https://doi.org/https://jurnalakuntansi.petra.ac.id/index.php/aku/article/view/22802>.



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labor, the placement of responsibilities, and systematic coordination to achieve the goals of the educational organization effectively¹⁸.

The management structure of students at the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School is designed in a planned manner by placing eighteen administrators spread across each floor of the dormitory, where each floor is taken care of by two administrators. This arrangement allows for closer supervision, more personal relationships, and continuous assistance to students. This pattern is in line with Anggraini's findings¹⁹ which affirm that the management of pesantren based students will be more effective when management is carried out in a close, structured, and contextual manner with the daily lives of students.

The results of the interviews show that character development is not carried out through a rigid administrative approach, but through direct assistance and moral example. The management not only functions as a supervisor, but also as a reference figure in attitudes, behaviors, and ways of interacting. One of the administrators, ARM, emphasized that coaching will be effective when students see firsthand real examples from their administrators. These findings reinforce Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership theory which emphasizes that changes in subordinate behavior occur through example, individual attention, and intrinsic motivation, not through mere structural²⁰ pressures.

From the perspective of students, management assistance has a significant influence on the formation of discipline and responsibility. RZK, a student of grade IX, revealed that the reprimand given consistently, accompanied by explanations, slowly formed his awareness to obey the rules of the pesantren. This experience shows that character formation takes place through a continuous process of habituation. This is in line with Lickona's view that character grows through moral habits that are practiced consistently in daily life, not through normative lectures alone²¹.

Interestingly, the discipline development at the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School does not rely on harsh punishment or a persuasive approach. BND

¹⁸ Supriyadi, Siti Alvina Febriyani, and Siti Nur Anisa, "Principles of Classical Organization Theory According to Henry Fayol," *Journal of Strategic Management* 1, no. 1 (2023): 33–42.

¹⁹ Helda Yusfarina Anggraini, Sultan Aji, and Muhammad Idris, "Pesantren Based Student Management in Realizing Character," *El-Idare: Journal of Islamic Education Management* 10, no. 1 (2024): 72–77, <https://doi.org/10.19109/elidare.v10i1.17488>.

²⁰ Bernard. M Bass, *Transformational Leadership*, Second Ed. (Taylor: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410617095>.

²¹ Salamah Eka Susanti, "MORAL INTELLIGENCE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PERSPECTIVE THOMAS LICKONA," *Journal of Technology, Health, and Humanities* 3, no. April (2022): 10–17, <https://doi.org/10.33650/trilogi.v3i1.3396>.



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students explained that every violation is first addressed through dialogue and clarification before sanctions are given. This approach reflects the principle of *positive discipline*, where consequences are positioned as a means of learning and responsibility, rather than as a tool of intimidation²². This pattern is also in line with the findings of Arfah²³ and Berkah & Zamroni²⁴ who emphasized that the strategy of character development of students will be more sustainable when discipline is built from internal awareness, not fear.

Overall, these findings show that character development at the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School takes place through intense, consistent, and meaningful social interaction between administrators and students. Character education is not treated as a temporary program, but as a life culture that is internalized in the daily routine of students. A structured management system allows coaching to run effectively, sustainably, and oriented towards the formation of the character of students as a whole, both in moral, social, and spiritual aspects.

Through a structured coaching system, a humanist approach, and a strong management example, the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School creates an environment conducive to the formation of disciplined, responsible, and noble character of students. Character development is a living and ongoing process, not just a formal program or activity, but a culture inherent in the daily life of students.

This pattern is in line with the organizing function in management theory, namely the division of labor, the grouping of activities, and the proportional placement of responsibilities to achieve organizational goals²⁵. By placing administrators on each floor, the pesantren not only creates efficiency in supervision, but also provides character education through direct leadership practices.

In addition, this practice shows the application of participatory management, where students are actively involved in the management of the

²² Nunung Nurlaela, Sri Pujianti, and Any M Ahdirotul Khoiriyah, "Principles of Classroom Discipline: A Positive Approach," *Integrated Multidisciplinary Scientific Journal* 9, no. 6 (2025): 154–61.

²³ Muh Arfah et al., "Strategic Management of Islamic Boarding School In Building Student Character," *Nidhomul Haq: Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 2022, 167–73, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31538/ndh.v7i1.2237>.

²⁴ Dian Berkah and Afif Zamroni, "Management of Islamic Boarding School Shapes the Character of Santri Discipline," *Chalim Journal of Teaching and Learning* 3 (2024): 147–59, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31538/cjotl.v3i2.1109>.

²⁵ Firdaus Jeka et al., "The Application of Management Functions in the Development of Islamic Institutions," *Journal Genta Mulia* 15, no. 1 (2024): 189–97, <https://ejournal.stkipbbm.ac.id/index.php/gm>.



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institution²⁶. Students who become administrators not only carry out administrative functions, but also learn about social responsibility, leadership, and decision-making. From the interview, it was revealed that the administrators felt more careful in their actions because they were aware that they were a role model for other students. This strengthens the view that the student management system is a strategic means for character building.

B. Character Building Courage through the Muadharoh Program

The Muadharoh program at the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School is one of the strategic instruments in shaping the character of the courage of students. Muadharoh is carried out regularly in the form of public speaking exercises which include speeches, short lectures, poetry readings, and discussions. This activity is designed as a safe space for students to learn to perform, convey ideas, and manage fear²⁷.

Field findings show that most students in the early stages experience anxiety, embarrassment, and self-doubt. However, through consistent training frequency and the support of the management, the students experienced a gradual increase in courage. The experience of LTF, a grade IX student, shows that courage does not appear instantly, but is formed through a repetitive training process that allows students to adapt to psychological pressure. These findings reinforce the concept of *moral action* in Lickona's theory of character education, where the value of courage is not sufficiently understood, but must be experienced and practiced in real²⁸ terms.

In addition to building personal courage, Muadharoh also trains students' abilities in managing emotions and social pressure. ALN said that the turn system appears to demand the mental readiness of each student, so that they learn to control their nervousness and take responsibility for their roles. These findings show that Muadharoh functions as a psychosocial learning medium that is relevant to the developmental needs of adolescents of MTs/junior high school age.

From the perspective of Howard Gardner's *Multiple Intelligences* theory, Muadharoh has contributed significantly to developing the linguistic,

²⁶ Basri, "The Implementation of Participatory Management in Increasing Junior High School Citizen Participation," *Voice of the Teacher: Journal of Social Education, Science and Humanities* 4, no. 2 (2018): 363–69.

²⁷ Achmad Taufiqurrohman, "Muadharah as a Strategy for the Development of Public Speaking Skills of Students at the Roudlotut Tholibin Probolinggo Islamic Boarding School," *M A S A L I Q Journal of Education and Science* 5 (2024): 271–84.

²⁸ Damariswara Rian et al., "COUNSELING FOR THOMAS LICKONA'S ADAPTATION CHARACTER EDUCATION," *Journal of Community Service in Basic Education* 1, no. 1 (2021): 33–39, [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.29407/dedikasi.v1i1.16057](https://doi.org/10.29407/dedikasi.v1i1.16057).



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interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence of students²⁹. Linguistic intelligence grows when students practice composing words, processing language, and conveying content in a structured manner. Meanwhile, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence develops through social interaction with the audience, self-understanding, and the ability to manage fear. This process makes Muadharah not just a routine activity, but an educational intervention that stimulates the development of students' potential as a whole³⁰.

The role of the management in the success of this program is very prominent. ARF, one of the administrators, emphasized that Muadharah is designed to train students to dare to perform without fear of making mistakes. In the framework of transformational leadership, administrators act as motivators who provide encouragement, feedback, and psychological reinforcement³¹. This finding is in line with Az-Zahra's research³² which shows that Muadharah activities directly contribute to increasing the confidence and leadership potential of students.

Thus, Muadharah not only forms the character of courage, but also prepares students as communicative, confident, and ready to interact in a broader social context.

C. Disciplined Character Development through a Persuasive Approach

The formation of social skills at the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School takes place through daily activities that require cooperation, communication, and interaction between students. One of the activities that contributes greatly to the growth of social skills is Muadharah. In addition to serving as an exercise in courage, Muadharah is a space for students to learn to understand the role of others, appreciate friends who perform, and create an atmosphere of togetherness in the implementation of activities. This process is in line with the concept of interpersonal intelligence in Howard Gardner's theory of

²⁹ Hamid Sakti Wibowo, *HOWARD GARDNER: The Originator of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, ed. Yuanita (Semarang: Tiram Media, 2024), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=5bkIEQAAQBAJ&lpg=PP3&ots=FrYwsBFIXl&dq=teori%20multiple%20intelligences%20howard%20gardner&lr&pg=PP1#v=twopage&q=theory%20of%20multiple%20intelligences%20howard%20gardner&f=false>.

³⁰ Dimas Bintang Pamungkas, Abubakar Umar, and Yadi Fahmi Aripudin, "Management of Student Activities (Muadhoroh) in Increasing Confidence at Al Ikhlas Karawang Islamic Boarding School," *INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research* 3 (2023): 414–23, <https://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative/issue/view/9>.

³¹ Bass, *Transformational Leadership*.

³² Aisyah Hilwa Az-Zahra et al., "The Effect of Muadharah Activities on Improving Public Speaking Skills of Alumni of As-Sa'adah Modern Islamic Boarding School Batch 32," *IJEDR: Indonesian Journal of Education and Development Research* 2, no. 1 (2024): 632–38, <https://doi.org/10.57235/ijedr.v2i1.1920>.



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Multiple Intelligences, in which students learn to read social situations, establish positive interactions, and work together in a group context ³³.

In the interview, RZK students described how Muadharah built the habit of interacting and supporting each other. He said, "During Muadharah, we learned to appreciate friends who performed and worked together so that the event ran smoothly." This experience shows that Muadharah not only builds the ability to speak in public, but also teaches the value of solidarity and empathy. Students learn to position themselves as a good audience, pay attention to friends who are performing, and help the smooth running of activities by preparing equipment, regulating the atmosphere, and providing moral support. This kind of interaction is a strong foundation for the formation of students' social skills.

Another collective activity that contributes to the formation of social skills is the shared hygiene picket. In this activity, students must work in groups that have been divided according to the schedule. Each group is responsible for cleaning certain areas, ranging from rooms, hallways, to the courtyard of the Islamic boarding school. RKA, a 9th grade student, expressed the experience by saying, "I like the cleaning activities of one batch because we learn to work together and help each other." This statement illustrates that the cooperation that occurs in picketing activities is not just a routine task, but a means to build the ability to work in a team. By coordinating and helping each other, students learn effective communication patterns, division of roles, and collective responsibility.

From the point of view of character education, the social interaction that takes place in these activities is a process of internalizing moral values. Lickona mentioned that character is formed when a person is used to performing moral actions in a social context. Muadharah, cleanliness pickets, congregational activities, and other activities at the pesantren are spaces that allow students to practice moral behaviors such as respecting others, cooperating, being responsible, and understanding their social role in the group.

The management of the pesantren also strengthens the formation of these social skills through dialogical coaching and intensive mentoring. ARF, one of the administrators, emphasized that a positive social environment is an important foundation for the development of students' personalities. He said, "Students need a positive social environment. In Muadharah activities, they learn cooperation and solidarity." The explanation shows that the administrators deliberately create a

³³ Handal Pratama Putra and M Hajar Dewantoro, "The Application of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory in Islamic Religious Education Learning," *Journal of Islamic Sciences*, no. 12 (2022): 95–113.



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supportive interaction atmosphere so that students feel comfortable, appreciated, and easily interact with their friends. In transformational leadership theory, the role of this kind of management is included in individualized consideration, namely attention to the social and emotional development of each student.

In addition, the process of training and group work that occurs repeatedly makes students accustomed to communicating in various situations, both formal and informal. Students learn to express their opinions, accept criticism, and respond to friends politely. Activities such as small discussions, group exercises, Muadharah preparations, and room deliberations are part of the social experience that shapes their interpersonal sensitivity. This process not only trains verbal communication skills, but also forms emotional awareness, the ability to solve problems together, and how to manage disagreements.

Overall, the formation of social skills at the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School is not a stand-alone process, but inherent in the daily educational routine. Through Muadharah activities that require coordination and mutual support, as well as cleanliness and congregational worship activities that involve cooperation, students learn to develop interpersonal skills naturally. Supported by administrators who provide persuasive guidance and social example, students grow into individuals who are not only brave, but also able to interact well, work in groups, and build harmonious social relationships. This process shows that the social skills development carried out by pesantren takes place comprehensively, continuously, and based on direct experience, so that social values are not only understood theoretically, but also practiced in real life.

This approach is in line with Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership principles, which view leaders not only as enforcers, but also as role models and motivators. The pesantren administrators who are in charge of fostering students try to foster moral awareness, not just enforce rigid discipline. This is also in line with the concept of positive discipline, which emphasizes the importance of improving behavior through constructive consequences, not degrading consequences³⁴.

This humanistic persuasive strategy is an integral part of student management innovation at Pondok Ashhabul Kahfi. If in many traditional Islamic boarding schools the coaching pattern tends to emphasize control with harsh punishment, then in this Islamic boarding school, the coaching is more directed at the growth of awareness from within the students. Sanctions are not the end of the educational process, but rather a bridge to behavior change.

³⁴ Nurlaela, Pujiyanti, and Khoiriyah, "Principles of Classroom Discipline: A Positive Approach."



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This innovation does not stand alone, but is combined with a structured student management system, the Muhasabah wa Tarbiyah forum that instills reflective discipline, and the Muhadharah program that develops communication and leadership skills. This overall strategy shows a more integrative pattern of student management, which not only emphasizes supervision, but also provides space for the development of student character.

The implications of this strategy are quite broad. First, for the world of Islamic boarding schools, this kind of innovation can be an example that student management does not have to rely on a repressive approach. Pesantren can maintain discipline without sacrificing the psychological aspect of students. Second, for Islamic education in general, this model shows how the deep-rooted tradition of pesantren can be combined with a modern managerial approach that emphasizes humanization. Pesantren do not lose their salafiyah identity, but at the same time appear adaptive to the demands of the times.

Further reflection shows that this innovation also has relevance to contemporary character education theory. Lickona (2012) emphasizes the importance of fostering moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action³⁵. The educational persuasive strategies and student development programs at Pondok Ashhabul Kahfi are proven to touch on these three aspects: students know the applicable rules, feel the consequences of violations, and are ultimately directed to improve themselves through concrete actions.

From a practical perspective, this study provides recommendations so that other educational institutions, including Islamic boarding schools and schools, can adopt a more humane sanctions strategy. In this way, the formation of students' character not only runs formally, but also touches the deeper affective realm. The Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School has shown that discipline education can be carried out without violence, but with awareness, dialogue, and educational consequences.

Thus, the application of persuasive and educational sanctions at the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School is not only part of the coaching strategy, but also a significant student management innovation. The implications of these findings show that pesantren can be a laboratory of character education that integrates traditional values with modern approaches, as well as a relevant coaching model for Islamic education in the future.

³⁵ Leonie Francisca and Clara R P Ajisuksmo, "The Correlations Among Moral Knowing, Moral Feeling, and Moral Behavior on Four Basic Competencies of Teachers," *Educational Journal* 45, no. 2 (2015): 211–21, <https://journal.uny.ac.id/index.php/jk/article/view/7500>.



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Thus, the three coaching programs at the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School: Muhasabah wa Tarbiyah, Muhadharah, and a persuasive approach, form a unity of student management strategies that complement each other in the process of forming the character of students. The Muhasabah wa Tarbiyah program provides space for students to reflect on their mistakes, evaluate their development, and renew their commitment to discipline and responsibility. This activity instills a culture of introspection and moral awareness, which is very important for MTs/Junior High School age students who are in the stage of forming their own identity. Meanwhile, the Muhadharah program not only trains courage and speaking skills, but also encourages students to develop confidence, cooperative skills, and the ability to understand the audience. Public performance training forms the social skills needed to meet the communication demands of the modern era³⁶.

The persuasive approach in fostering discipline complements the two programs by instilling the value of responsibility through providing educational consequences. Through dialogue between administrators and students, the coaching process is not only the enforcement of rules, but also the process of internalizing moral values more deeply. The combination of self-reflection, social skills development, and awareness-based discipline development makes student management innovation at the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School run holistically. The three programs are interconnected and contribute to the formation of the character of students who are religious, have noble character, discipline, and have adequate social skills to face educational and life challenges in the future.

D. Formation of Social Character through Muhadhoroh Activities and Collective Activities of Santri

The formation of discipline character at the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School is carried out through a persuasive approach that emphasizes dialogue, understanding, and moral awareness. This approach differs from the harsh punishment model of coaching or the coercive approach often used in boarding systems³⁷. In this Islamic boarding school, the management carries out coaching by asking reasons, giving directions, and motivating students before any sanctions are imposed. This reflects the application of positive discipline, which is a coaching model that uses educational consequences to foster responsibility, not fear. Such an approach is in line with Thomas Lickona's concept of character education which

³⁶ Wahyu Hidayat and Nur Hidayat, "Islamic Boarding School Management : A Comprehensive Analysis of a Special Program for Fostering Students' Disciplinary Character in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," *Islamic Journal of Education* 3, no. 2 (2023): 225–36, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/hjie.2023.32-07>.

³⁷ Arfah et al., "Strategic Management of Islamic Boarding School In Building Student Character."



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emphasizes the importance of developing moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action in an integrated manner through the process of habituation and example ³⁸.

Field data shows that the discipline coaching carried out by the management is really rooted in humanistic communication. ARF, one of Ahmad Kahfi's administrators interviewed, described this coaching process very clearly. He said, "If there are students who violate, we ask carefully first. We give them space to be honest before being sanctioned. The sanction is not a harsh punishment, but a form of responsibility." This statement shows that the management does not place the student as an object that must be suppressed, but as an individual who needs to be understood and guided. In the framework of Bass's theory of transformational leadership, the actions of the administrators are included in individualized consideration, which is to pay attention to the needs and emotional condition of each student before taking coaching actions ³⁹.

This kind of coaching model is felt directly by the students. ALN, one of the 9th grade students, revealed his experience when he was late to join the congregation. He explained that the management did not immediately sanction, but first reprimanded and asked the cause of the delay. He said, "If the congregation is late, the management reprimands first and motivates before sanctioning. From there I learned responsibility." This quote shows that the reprimand given by the management is not intended to embarrass or assert power, but rather as an effort to build awareness and a responsible attitude. Reprimands delivered persuasively help students realize mistakes and correct behavior without feeling pressured or forced.

Discipline development is also carried out through Muhasabah wa Tarbiyah activities which take place regularly every week. In this activity, students are directed to conduct self-evaluation and realize the mistakes that have been made, especially related to cleanliness, compliance with room rules, punctuality, and attendance at worship ⁴⁰. RKA, a 9th grade student, described this experience by saying, "In Muhasabah wa Tarbiyah we were reminded of our cleanliness and mistakes. From there, I became self-aware." This Muhasabah activity shows a reflective approach in coaching, where students are invited to understand the consequences of their actions through a process of introspection. This approach is in accordance with Lickona's theory which emphasizes the importance of self-

³⁸ Muhammad Sabli and Ahmad Husein Ritonga, "Transformation of Educational Management in Shaping the Character of Santri at the Purba Baru Musthofawiyah Traditional Islamic Boarding School," *Journal of Social Work and Science Education* 4, no. 3 (2023): 1053–64, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52690/jswse.v4i3.553>.

³⁹ Bass, *Transformational Leadership*.

⁴⁰ Anggraini, Aji, and Idris, "Pesantren Based Student Management in Realizing Character."



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reflection in building character, because through reflection one learns to recognize mistakes and cultivate a deeper moral awareness ⁴¹.

In the context of education management, this coaching pattern is in line with the controlling function according to Fayol, but it is carried out in a humane and communicative way ⁴². The management does not give sanctions just to enforce the rules, but to instill a moral message to students. Such an approach not only strengthens formal discipline, but also fosters intrinsic discipline, which is discipline that arises from self-awareness, not coercion. When students are given the opportunity to explain the situation, understand their mistakes, and improve themselves, they learn the meaning of responsibility in real life ⁴³.

This persuasive approach also has a long-term impact on the character of students. The sense of being appreciated and heard makes students more open to receiving direction, so that the relationship between the management and the students becomes more positive and respectful of each other. They are not only obedient for fear of being punished, but because they understand the reasoning behind the rules. This pattern of interaction creates a culture of discipline that is stable, consistent, and voluntarily accepted by students. Thus, discipline is no longer a pressure, but turns into a moral habit that grows from within the students ⁴⁴.

Overall, the formation of discipline character at the Ashhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School takes place through a series of educational processes that combine the example of the administrator, persuasive communication, reflection through Muhasabah, and the habit of carrying out daily rules. This humanistic and dialogical approach is not only effective in forming discipline, but also fostering moral responsibility, independence, and self-awareness ⁴⁵. A coaching model like this proves that character education carried out through positive interpersonal

⁴¹ Rian et al., "COUNSELING FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION ADAPTATION THOMAS LICKONA."

⁴² Siti Mariyah et al., "Perspectives on Management Education Management Management Functions (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling)," *Instructional Development Journal*, 2021, 268–81, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.24014/idj.v4i3.18911>.

⁴³ Berkah and Zamroni, "Management of Islamic Boarding School Shapes the Character of Santri Discipline."

⁴⁴ Tri Rahayu and Husnul Bahri, "Strategies for Building Independent Character and Discipline of Students in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Indonesian Journal of Character Education Studies* 2, no. 2 (2025): 83–92, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.64420/ijces.v2i2.329>.

⁴⁵ Andi Anirah et al., "Strengthening the Disciplinary Character Education of Santri through Discipline Development in Islamic Boarding Schools," *QALAMUNA: Journal of Education, Social, and Religion* 16, no. 1 (2024): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.37680/qalamuna.v16i1.4041>.



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relationships and constructive communication is able to produce strong, deep, and sustainable disciplinary characters.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that student management innovation at the Askhabul Kahfi Islamic Boarding School in Semarang is able to strengthen the process of character formation of students through the integration of three main programs, namely Muhasabah wa Tarbiyah, Muhadharah, and a persuasive approach. The three programs contribute to strengthening discipline, increasing courage, and developing students' social responsibility and skills. Coaching that is carried out in a humanistic, dialogical, and exemplary-based manner makes the process of internalizing character values effective and sustainable. Thus, the innovation of student management applied by this pesantren can be a relevant character development model for Islamic educational institutions in the modern era.

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