

# Character Formation through the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* Curriculum

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## Abstract

Character education is a fundamental element of Islamic education that aims to shape morally grounded individuals through the integration of knowledge, Islamic values, and habitual practices. In the context of modern Islamic boarding schools, the curriculum of *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* plays a crucial role in students' character development. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the impact of implementing the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum on students' character development in a modern Islamic boarding school that adopts this educational system. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with a field research approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving school leaders, curriculum administrators, educators, and students. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data organization, and conclusion drawing, with data validity ensured through source and method triangulation. The findings indicate that the implementation of the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum is carried out in an integrated manner through formal instruction, boarding school activities, and residential life. This implementation has a positive impact on students' character development, particularly in terms of discipline, responsibility, independence, sincerity, and leadership, which are grounded in the values of the *Panca Jiwa*. These findings affirm that the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum represents an effective and relevant model of Islamic character education for application in modern Islamic boarding schools across diverse socio-cultural contexts.

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## INTRODUCTION

Character education from an Islamic perspective constitutes the fundamental foundation of the educational process, aiming to shape individuals who possess noble character, sound knowledge, and a strong sense of responsibility as stewards (*khalfah*) on earth (Saihu, 2022). The essence of Islamic education is not solely focused on intellectual mastery, but also on the cultivation of morality and character, as emphasized in the Quran, which describes the Prophet Muhammad as the foremost exemplar of noble character (Quran, Al-Qalam: 4). This perspective

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underscores that the success of education should be assessed based on the harmony between knowledge and moral values (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019) (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025). Within the framework of national education policy, the importance of character education is further reinforced through Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 20 of 2018 on Strengthening Character Education, which identifies religious values, integrity, independence, nationalism, and mutual cooperation as the core pillars of education (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018) (Sarbaitinil et al., 2023).

Islamic boarding schools serve as centers of Islamic education and play a crucial role in character formation through educational systems grounded in values, role modeling, and habituation. Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, through the educational system of *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah*, has developed an integrated curriculum that balances religious sciences and general knowledge while internalizing character education through a twenty-four-hour residential learning environment (Musayyidi & Rudi, 2020). The curriculum of *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* is not only implemented in formal classroom instruction but is also manifested in religious practices, student organizational activities, institutional regulations, and daily life culture rooted in the values of the *Panca Jawa*, including sincerity, simplicity, self-reliance, Islamic brotherhood, and freedom (Hidayat et al., 2025). Within this total education system, the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum functions as a comprehensive and sustainable model of Islamic character education.

From a theoretical perspective, several previous studies have explored the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum as a model for integrating religious and general education, as well as a strategy for shaping students' character, particularly within the central campus of Pondok Modern Gontor in Ponorogo (Idawati et al., 2024; Rohmah & Roqib, 2024). However, many of these studies remain conceptual in nature or are limited to the context of the central campus, resulting in a lack of empirical evidence regarding the actual impact of the curriculum's implementation in branch campuses with distinct social, cultural, and geographical characteristics. In fact, local context plays a significant role in determining the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and the internalization of character values in students' daily lives (Pitriani et al., 2024).

Based on these research gaps, the present study is essential for strengthening the theoretical framework of Islamic character education grounded in an integrated curriculum through contextually rich empirical data. This study is expected to contribute scholarly insights toward the development of a modern Islamic boarding school education model that is responsive to contemporary challenges and relevant to the future advancement of Islamic education. Unlike previous research, this study specifically evaluates the influence of implementing the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum on students' character development at a branch campus of a modern Islamic boarding school using a qualitative field research approach, thereby offering innovation in terms of research context, objectives, and empirical contribution.

## METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach through a case study method, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum and its impact on students' character development within a natural and context-specific setting. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to reveal meanings, processes, and social dynamics that cannot be measured quantitatively, but rather are understood through in-depth interpretation of the experiences and perspectives of the research participants (E. Engkizar et al.,

2023, 2024; Rashid et al., 2019; Takona, 2024). The case study method was applied because the research focuses on a single specific setting, namely a branch campus of a modern Islamic boarding school, which is characterized by social and cultural conditions distinct from those of the central campus (Engkizar et al., 2025; Qomari et al., 2022; Savin-Baden & Major, 2025).

Data were collected using three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with school leaders, educators, and students to obtain information regarding the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum, while also exploring their perspectives and experiences related to students' character development. Participant observation involved the researcher's direct engagement in instructional activities and daily life within the residential boarding school environment to observe students' behavior, interaction patterns, disciplinary practices, and the concrete internalization of the values of the *Panca Jiwa* (Az-Zahra et al., 2025; Kalsum et al., 2025). In addition, document analysis was conducted by examining official institutional documents, such as curriculum structures, lesson schedules, student life guidelines, and records of character development programs, in order to strengthen and validate the data obtained from interviews and observations (Htay et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2025).

Data analysis in this study employed the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction was carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw data obtained from the field to align with the research objectives. The data were presented in the form of narrative descriptions and thematic matrices to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships among categories. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn progressively and continuously throughout the research process by validating findings based on data consistency and the results of source and method triangulation (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2002). Through this approach, the trustworthiness and credibility of the research findings were systematically maintained.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Implementation of the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* Curriculum

The implementation of the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum in a modern Islamic boarding school is conducted in a comprehensive and sustainable manner through the integration of academic and non-academic activities. In the academic domain, the curriculum is designed to balance religious sciences and general knowledge, enabling students to develop both intellectual competence and a strong foundation of Islamic values (Mujahid, 2021; Rohmah & Roqib, 2024; Soleman et al., 2020). Classroom learning is oriented not only toward cognitive achievement but also toward the cultivation of learning discipline, responsibility, and positive academic attitudes.

In the non-academic domain, curriculum implementation is realized through various boarding school activities within a twenty-four-hour residential education system. Congregational worship, student organizations, leadership training, and daily disciplinary practices function as primary mechanisms for character development. These activities are intentionally structured as integral components of the curriculum, ensuring that both formal and informal student experiences contribute to character formation (Djollong et al., 2019; Putri et al., 2021; Ridwan et al., 2020; Rokhmah, 2021). Through this system, students are trained to manage time effectively, comply with institutional regulations, collaborate with peers, and gradually develop leadership capacity and independence.

## Character Development Outcomes

The findings indicate that the implementation of the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum has a positive impact on students' character development. Observable improvements are evident particularly in the areas of discipline, responsibility, sincerity, and independence. Students demonstrate stronger adherence to institutional rules, increased accountability in academic and organizational responsibilities, and more active participation in boarding school programs.

In addition, the character development outcomes are reflected in students' daily behavioral patterns within both academic and residential settings. Students show increased consistency in fulfilling scheduled duties, greater initiative in carrying out collective responsibilities, and improved self-regulation in managing time and personal conduct (Daniela, 2015; Sabrina et al., 2023; Tinajero et al., 2024). These behavioral changes indicate that character values are not only understood at a conceptual level but are also internalized and manifested in routine practices, suggesting the effectiveness of continuous character formation within the boarding school environment.

## Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Several factors support the successful implementation of the curriculum, most notably the role of educators as *Ruh al-Mudarris*, who serve as moral exemplars through their attitudes, behavior, and commitment to institutional values. This role modeling is reinforced by a disciplined and consistently regulated boarding school culture, creating a supportive educational environment for character development (Engkizar et al., 2019).

However, the study also identifies inhibiting factors, including limited learning facilities and challenges related to students' adaptation to diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. Despite these constraints, the effectiveness of curriculum implementation remains largely intact due to the presence of a structured and resilient character development system (Ibrahim et al., 2013; Sakban et al., 2019).

## Integrated Curriculum as a Model of Islamic Character Education

The findings demonstrate that the integration of academic instruction and non-academic boarding school activities enables the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum to function not merely as an instructional framework, but as a holistic system of Islamic character education. The twenty-four-hour residential model facilitates continuous internalization of values through habituation, supervision, and experiential learning.

This integrated curriculum model reflects the core principle of Islamic education, which views character formation as an inseparable component of the learning process rather than an auxiliary outcome (Rohmah & Roqib, 2024; Supaat & Muslim, 2023; Yanti et al., 2020). By embedding character education across academic subjects, institutional regulations, and daily routines, the curriculum ensures coherence between knowledge acquisition and moral development. Such integration strengthens the alignment between educational objectives and lived experiences, allowing students to consistently translate cognitive understanding into ethical practice.

## Internalization of *Panca Jiwa* Values

The consistent internalization of the *Panca Jiwa* values sincerity, simplicity, self-reliance, Islamic brotherhood, and responsible freedom highlights the effectiveness of value-based education grounded in daily practice and role modeling. These values are not transmitted solely through formal instruction, but are embedded in students' lived experiences within the boarding school environment.

The internalization process is further reinforced through repetitive engagement in structured activities that require students to embody these values in concrete situations. Through sustained exposure to role models, peer interactions, and

institutional expectations, the *Panca Jiwa* values gradually shift from normative ideals to habitual dispositions (Shodikin et al., 2024). This process indicates that character education is most effective when values are consistently practiced, monitored, and reflected upon within a supportive communal environment.

### Implications for Modern Islamic Boarding Schools

Despite contextual challenges such as facility limitations and socio-cultural diversity, the curriculum demonstrates adaptability and relevance across different settings. This suggests that the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum holds strong potential as a transferable model of Islamic character education for modern Islamic boarding schools facing contemporary educational challenges (Alam, 2017; Johar et al., 2024; Yunus, 2018).

The findings imply that modern Islamic boarding schools seeking to strengthen character education should prioritize curriculum integration, educator role modeling, and residential-based learning systems. Rather than relying solely on formal instruction, character education should be designed as a comprehensive institutional culture that encompasses academic learning, extracurricular activities, and daily social interactions (Huda et al., 2016). This approach allows Islamic boarding schools to remain responsive to contemporary demands while preserving their foundational values and educational identity.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum in a modern Islamic boarding school is carried out in a comprehensive and sustainable manner through the integration of academic and non-academic activities within a residential education system. The curriculum functions not only as a formal instructional framework that balances religious and general knowledge, but also as a comprehensive system for character formation and development through consistent value internalization, role modeling, and supervision.

The implementation of the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum has been shown to have a positive impact on students' character development, particularly in fostering discipline, responsibility, sincerity, independence, and leadership grounded in the values of the *Panca Jiwa*. These values are effectively internalized through classroom learning, boarding school activities, and a disciplined institutional culture that supports character education. This success is strongly supported by the role of educators as *Ruh al-Mudarris*, who serve as moral and spiritual exemplars, as well as by the pesantren education system that positions all institutional activities as integral components of the educational process.

Nevertheless, this study also identifies several challenges in curriculum implementation, particularly those related to limited educational facilities and socio-cultural adaptation. However, these challenges do not substantially hinder the achievement of character education objectives, as they are mitigated by a strong character development system, the dedication of educators, and deeply rooted pesantren traditions. Therefore, the *Kulliyatu-l-Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* curriculum can be regarded as an effective, relevant, and responsive model of Islamic character education for application in modern Islamic boarding schools, including branch campuses operating within diverse social and cultural contexts.

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