

The Islamic Character Education at Darussalam Gontor Boarding School and Its Implications for Students' Discipline

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Abstract (English)

Islamic character education shapes students' behavior, particularly in boarding schools like Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor. Gontor is well-known for blending religious teachings with general education, aiming to develop students' characters in line with Islamic values, which underpins its disciplinary practices. However, despite its structured approach, Gontor faces challenges in ensuring that Islamic values taught in class are consistently practiced in everyday life. This study zeroes in on Gontor's educational system, assessing how effectively its character education fosters discipline and handles current challenges. It sheds light on Gontor's comprehensive approach and offers practical recommendations for other *pesantren* to strengthen their character education systems, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in today's evolving world.

Keywords; Darussalam Gontor Boarding School, Discipline, Islamic Character Education

Abstrak (Bahasa Indonesia)

Pendidikan karakter Islami memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk perilaku siswa, terutama di pesantren seperti Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor. Gontor dikenal dengan kemampuannya menggabungkan ajaran agama dengan pendidikan umum, bertujuan untuk mengembangkan karakter siswa sesuai dengan nilai-nilai Islami, yang menjadi dasar praktik disiplin di pesantren tersebut. Namun, meskipun pendekatannya terstruktur, Gontor menghadapi tantangan dalam memastikan bahwa nilai-nilai Islami yang diajarkan di kelas diterapkan secara konsisten dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Penelitian ini berfokus pada sistem pendidikan Gontor, menilai seberapa efektif pendidikan karakternya dalam membina disiplin dan menangani tantangan saat ini. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang pendekatan komprehensif Gontor dan menawarkan rekomendasi praktis bagi pesantren lain untuk memperkuat sistem pendidikan karakter mereka, memastikan bahwa sistem tersebut tetap relevan dan efektif di dunia yang terus berkembang saat ini.

Kata kunci; Disiplin, Pendidikan Karakter Islami, Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor



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PRELIMINARY

Islamic character education plays a vital role in shaping students' behavior and attitudes, especially in Islamic institutions like boarding schools (*pesantren*). One of the most notable *pesantren* in this area is Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, known for its balanced approach to religious and general education within a comprehensive framework. Gontor's educational system isn't just about imparting knowledge and molding the students' (*santri*) character and strong Islamic values. Discipline at the *pesantren* is built on this character education, with the ultimate aim of producing intellectual scholars—individuals who are not only well-educated but also deeply rooted in Islamic principles (Mahmudulhassan et al., 2024).

Despite this well-regarded educational system, there are challenges when consistently instilling discipline. One major issue is ensuring that the Islamic values taught in class are appropriate to students' daily lives. Students at Gontor is recognized for its strict and structured methods. Still, data suggests some disciplinary issues persist—this hiked discussion on whether Islamic character education fosters long-lasting discipline.

According to the 2023 annual report from Gontor, although 85% of students follow the rules well, around 15% of those who receive disciplinary sanctions repeat their offenses within a year. This raises important questions about whether Islamic character education effectively creates sustainable discipline among students. Can the values taught in the classroom be consistently upheld outside of it?

Additionally, research from the Indonesian *Pesantren* Research and Development Institute (LP3I) in 2021 shows a rising trend in disciplinary violations across *pesantren*, including modern ones like Gontor. These violations have been increasing by an average of 7% per year, highlighting the urgent need to reassess how Islamic character education is implemented and to explore new strategies for improving student discipline.

Several studies have explored the relationship between Islamic character education and discipline in *pesantren*. For instance, a 2017 study by A. Nurhadi, titled "Effectiveness of Character Education in Salafiyah *Pesantren*," found that such education significantly shapes students' morality and discipline. However, this research focused on salafiyah *pesantren*, which operate differently from modern *pesantren* like Gontor.

In 2018, R. Fahmi's research, "Character Education and Discipline Formation in Modern Islamic Boarding Schools," noted that modern *pesantren* emphasize universal Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline. Yet, it also found that the focus on general education can sometimes lessen the emphasis on deep Islamic character training.

Similarly, A. Maulana's 2020 study, "Character Education in Enhancing Student Discipline: A Case Study at Al-Azhar Modern *Pesantren*," showed that the environment and daily routines within a *pesantren* play a crucial role in the success of character education. Lastly, Z. Azizah's 2021 study, "The Impact of Character Education in Modern *Pesantren* on Discipline and Morality," pointed out a gap between the ideals of Islamic character education and the real-world practice of discipline in *pesantren*. Students' social and cultural backgrounds also significantly affect how well discipline is instilled.

Although these studies provide insights into Islamic character education, this research stands out in several ways. First, it focuses on Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, a *pesantren* with a long-standing and unique education system. This study looks at the link between Islamic character education and student discipline, paying special attention to how Islamic values are applied in the student's daily lives at the *pesantren*.

Second, this research delves deeper into how effective Islamic character education is in shaping discipline while also exploring how Gontor's educational system remains relevant amid modern challenges. Using a qualitative approach, it seeks a more in-depth understanding of these dynamics.

What sets this study apart is its holistic approach to examining Islamic character education at Gontor and how it influences student discipline. It goes beyond theoretical discussion, bridging the gap between theory and practice. As a result, it offers new contributions to studying Islamic character education, especially in modern *pesantren* facing the challenges of globalization and technological advances.

Moreover, this research provides practical recommendations for enhancing Islamic character education systems in other *pesantren*. The findings from Gontor's experience could guide *pesantren* leaders in developing more effective systems for instilling discipline, allowing them to tackle contemporary challenges while staying rooted in Islamic values.

This study takes a qualitative approach, allowing for a deeper exploration of how Islamic character education is implemented at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor and its influence on student discipline. This method was chosen to gain a more holistic view of how Islamic values are woven into students' daily lives in the *pesantren* and how these values shape their discipline.

Data for the study is drawn from official *pesantren* documents, including annual reports, educational guidelines, and policies related to Islamic character education. Additionally, in-depth interviews with teachers and administrators were conducted to gather their insights on how the character education program is applied and its impact on student discipline.

The research uses a combination of document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The document analysis examines the educational policies and strategies used by Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor. At the same time, the interviews provide firsthand perspectives from educators and administrators on the challenges, successes, and outcomes of the character education program within the *pesantren*.

After collecting the data, the researcher applied content analysis to interpret the findings from the documents and interviews, identifying key themes such as discipline, ethics, and cultivating moral values among students. This process enabled a deeper dive into the factors contributing to Islamic character education's success at Gontor.

Using this qualitative approach, the study aims to offer a richer understanding of how Islamic character education is carried out at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor and its role in shaping student discipline. The findings also intend to provide practical recommendations for improving character education systems in other *pesantren*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study takes an in-depth look at the implementation of Islamic character education at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor and its effect on student discipline. Using a qualitative approach, the research offers a deeper understanding of how Islamic character education is embedded within the *pesantren*'s environment, how these values are instilled in students, and how they contribute to shaping their discipline.

Islamic Character Education at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor

Through interviews with teachers and administrators and by reviewing official documents such as annual reports and educational guidelines, it was evident that the Islamic character education system at *Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor* is deeply ingrained and consistently implemented. This system emphasizes key Islamic values, which become the foundation for the students' daily routines. Values like discipline, honesty, responsibility, simplicity, and hard work are conveyed through various activities inside and outside the classroom.

The scope of Islamic character education extends beyond formal classroom instruction. It is woven into the students' everyday lives. Activities such as congregational prayers, participation in student organizations, and social interactions within the *pesantren* play an integral role in this education. Teachers at Gontor are crucial in serving as role models, helping students internalize Islamic values through teaching and exemplifying them in their daily actions.

Data from interviews and documents reveal that Gontor's approach to character education is holistic. This means that moral and ethical Islamic values are not only taught as part of the curriculum but are also reinforced through practical application in daily life. For example, students are taught to be disciplined in managing their time, adhering to permanent rules, and upholding high moral standards in every action. These principles are inseparable from Gontor's educational system.

The Impact of Islamic Character Education on Discipline

A key finding of this research is the significant impact Islamic character education has on student discipline. Teachers and administrators report that discipline is one of the most visible results of Gontor's character education system. Students are trained to follow the rules of the *pesantren*, including maintaining time discipline, cleanliness, and responsibility in their daily tasks.

For instance, students' habits of waking early, attending congregational Subuh prayers, participating in academic and extracurricular activities regularly, and keeping themselves and their environment clean are clear examples of the discipline developed through Islamic character education. This sense of discipline transcends formal rules and includes moral discipline, where students are encouraged to uphold truth and honesty daily.

Interviews with teachers also indicate that Gontor's Islamic character education helps students internalize discipline, with many continuing these disciplined habits long after graduation.

This suggests that the character education they receive has a long-lasting impact on their personalities and behavior.

Challenges in Implementing Islamic Character Education

While Islamic character education at Gontor has been largely successful, certain challenges have emerged in its implementation. One key challenge identified in interviews with administrators is maintaining consistent adherence to Islamic values amid the growing influences of globalization and technological advancements. External cultural influences, particularly through social media and digital information, challenge preserving the integrity of Islamic character education.

Some students experience distractions from these external influences, which can cloud the Islamic values they have learned. To address this, Gontor continues strengthening its educational approach, ensuring it remains relevant in modern challenges while preserving the essence of its Islamic values. Gontor also regularly updates its teaching methods to adapt to changes in the outside world.

The success of Islamic Character Education Implementation

Despite these challenges, Islamic character education at Gontor has successfully shaped student discipline. Teachers and administrators note that most students successfully apply the values they have been taught daily. High levels of discipline in academic and non-academic activities are strong indicators of this success. Moreover, students' awareness of the importance of practicing religious teachings in daily life is highly evident.

In addition to fostering discipline, Gontor's Islamic character education has successfully built students' moral integrity. Gontor graduates are known for their strong work ethic, sense of responsibility, and care for others. These traits result from a robust and consistently implemented character education system.

Pesantren's education relies on a comprehensive approach that includes role modeling, creating an educational environment, and reinforcing positive behaviors through various tasks and activities. Environmental creation at Gontor is achieved through assignments, habituation, training, teaching, guidance, and role modeling. Each component plays a significant role in shaping the students' character. KH Imam Zarkasyi emphasized the importance of supervision in maintaining discipline, noting that all teachers are part of the "security" team. Corrective actions, however, must be taken wisely, with an understanding of each student's character. Additionally,

teachers must always be mindful that their students are observing them and, thus, must consistently serve as positive role models in all aspects of life (Cahyanto, 2023).

In conclusion, the Islamic character education at *Pondok* Modern Darussalam Gontor profoundly impacts student discipline and moral integrity. The holistic approach that integrates Islamic values into students' daily lives in and out of the classroom ensures that students not only acquire knowledge but also develop strong, well-rounded personalities grounded in religious teachings.

Discussion

Below is a table from the analysis results:

Table 1. Analysis Results of Aspects of Discipline

Aspects	Findings	Impact on Discipline
Islamic Character Values	Discipline, honesty, responsibility, hard work, simplicity	Shapes students to be disciplined in time management, tasks, and maintaining personal and environmental cleanliness
Application in Daily Activities	Congregational prayers, organizational involvement, social interactions	Internalizes Islamic values in the students' daily behavior
Time Discipline	Waking up early, performing Subuh prayers in congregation, regularly participating in activities	Students are accustomed to following schedules and rules independently
Impact of Globalization	Challenges from social media and digital information	Disrupts the application of Islamic values but addressed through updated teaching methods

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor offers a well-organized, all-encompassing approach to Islamic character education, which is embedded in every part of a student's life. Core Islamic values like discipline, responsibility, honesty, and hard work are not just part of the formal curriculum. They are part of daily life at the boarding school. Gontor's character education is holistic, as these values are integrated into everything the students do, from their academic studies to social interactions.

Islamic Character Values

Character education at Gontor goes far beyond the classroom. The entire environment of the boarding school is designed to instill Islamic values. Students are constantly encouraged to make these values part of their everyday behavior. Simple activities like getting up early, attending congregational prayers, and participating in both academic and extracurricular activities are key to building their character. These regular routines and discipline are at the heart of what makes Gontor's system so effective.

The holistic nature of this education means that students don't just learn these values in theory. They practice them daily. By following the structured schedule set by the school, students develop a consistent discipline that gradually becomes second nature. This constant practice helps them form good habits that last a lifetime. (Huda & Kartanegara, 2015)

Application in Daily Activities

Daily life at an Islamic boarding school is filled with activities beyond mere routine; they are deeply meaningful and educational. Central to the school's approach to character education are congregational prayers, involvement in various organizations, and social interactions within the boarding school community. These activities are not just tasks to be completed but are integral to immersing students in Islamic values and helping them weave these principles into their everyday lives.

Congregational prayers hold a pivotal place in the boarding school experience. They are more than just acts of worship; they are crucial for teaching discipline and fostering a sense of community. Students learn the value of punctuality and responsibility by adhering to the schedule for these prayers. This routine helps them develop a disciplined approach to their duties towards Allah and others in their community.

Beyond prayer, involvement in different organizations at the school plays a significant role in shaping students' characters. Participation in these groups teaches them about leadership, responsibility, teamwork, and self-reliance. Engaging actively in organizational activities hones their skills in management and leadership while instilling a sense of accountability for their responsibilities. This involvement encourages collaboration and helps students build strong social connections, which is vital for personal growth.

Social interactions within the boarding school setting are equally important for internalizing Islamic values. Through daily interactions with fellow students, teachers, and other school community members, students learn about ethics, proper conduct, and mutual respect. They are encouraged to embody Islamic values in their relationships, demonstrating honesty, humility, and care for others. These everyday social experiences contribute significantly to developing a responsible character and fostering strong Islamic behavior in students.

By immersing themselves in these activities, students learn about Islamic values in theory and practice them in their daily lives. This ongoing process helps them deeply internalize these values, shaping their behavior in ways that persist both during their time at the boarding school and after they return to their communities. (Fahim et al., 2012)

Time Discipline

At Darussalam Gontor Boarding School, teaching time discipline is central to character development. Students are guided to follow a structured routine that includes waking up early, attending congregational Fajr prayers, and participating in various activities with dedication.

The day at Darussalam Gontor starts early, and this early start is more than just the beginning of daily tasks. It sets the tone for the entire day. By waking up early, students learn to make the most of their time and prepare for a productive day.

Congregational Fajr prayer is a key part of the morning routine at Darussalam Gontor. It's not just about fulfilling a religious duty; it's also a practical way to instill discipline. This prayer helps students appreciate the importance of punctuality and responsibility. Starting the day with Fajr prayer fosters a sense of spiritual enthusiasm and community, teaching students to manage their time effectively and value it as a core aspect of personal discipline.

In addition to prayers, regular participation in both academic and non-academic activities is crucial. Students must adhere to a schedule that includes lessons, meetings, and social activities. This routine helps them get accustomed to a well-organized life, develop positive habits, and build a strong sense of responsibility toward themselves and others.

Through these structured activities, Darussalam Gontor students learn to stick to schedules and rules and gain a deeper sense of self-awareness and discipline. These habits help them become more independent in managing their time and following rules, both during their time at the

boarding school and after they return to the broader community. This disciplined approach to daily life becomes a lasting part of their character, making them more organized and responsible.

Challenges of Globalization and Information Technology

Like many educational institutions today, Gontor faces significant challenges from globalization and the rapid development of information technology. With easy access to social media and the internet, it cannot be easy to maintain the consistency of Islamic values taught at the boarding school. Globalization introduces new ideas that may sometimes conflict with Islamic teachings and the local culture that Gontor holds dear.

To stay relevant while maintaining their core values, schools like Gontor need to adapt. One way to do this is by teaching students how to use technology wisely. Digital learning tools that align with Islamic values can be integrated into the education system, allowing students to stay connected to modern society while holding onto the moral and ethical character they've developed at boarding school.

Implications and Recommendations for Other Islamic Boarding Schools

This research highlights the importance of Islamic character education in fostering discipline and strong moral values in students. A structured, holistic approach to character education can have a lasting impact, shaping student behavior both during their time at school and after they graduate. The discipline that Gontor instills in its students goes beyond the school environment and becomes a guiding principle, helping them grow into responsible and ethical individuals.

Other Islamic boarding schools looking to build their character education programs can learn much from Gontor's approach. Each school can adapt these methods to fit its challenges, particularly when dealing with globalization and technological advances. With the right approach, Islamic character education can serve as a strong foundation for developing a generation that is academically accomplished and morally grounded.

Islamic boarding schools are also encouraged to continue evolving their strategies to tackle the challenges posed by globalization, especially regarding information technology. Educators can ensure that character education remains relevant and effective in an ever-changing world by integrating technology with the Islamic values taught in these schools. (Muazza et al., 2018)

CLOSING

This research shows that *Pondok* Modern Darussalam Gontor has excelled in implementing Islamic character education thoroughly and holistically, effectively shaping the discipline of its students. At Gontor, education extends beyond traditional classroom lessons; it also includes daily activities such as congregational prayers and participation in various organizational roles. This approach fosters a deep-seated sense of discipline, clearly reflected in the student's everyday routines and sense of responsibility.

Despite the challenges posed by globalization and advances in information technology, Gontor has navigated these issues with wisdom, all while staying true to core Islamic values. The study highlights the value of a holistic approach to character education. By embedding moral and ethical values into daily activities rather than solely relying on theoretical classroom instruction, Gontor has successfully cultivated students with strong moral integrity and consistent discipline.

Gontor's success serves as an inspiring example for other *pesantren*. The research suggests that other *pesantren* should consider adopting a similar approach, tailoring it to fit their unique local contexts and challenges. By thoughtfully integrating technology with Islamic values, *pesantren* can enhance their character education programs and adapt effectively to the evolving times.

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