Character Education Management Based on Salafiyah Pesantren Traditions: A Comparative Study

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the management of character education based on salafiyah pesantren traditions in fostering students' religiosity and entrepreneurial spirit through a comparative approach. The research was conducted at Pesantren Miftahul Huda Al-Musri' in Cianjur and Pesantren Mardhotillah in Bandung, two Islamic boarding schools that represent different orientations within the salafiyah tradition. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, using data triangulation techniques consisting of in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Data were analyzed through the interactive model of reduction, display, and conclusion drawing to obtain a comprehensive understanding of character education practices. The findings reveal that character education in salafiyah pesantren is implemented through structured managerial processes that integrate religious learning, habituation, exemplary leadership, and entrepreneurship programs. Both pesantren demonstrate that religiosity and entrepreneurship are complementary dimensions of Islamic character education. Pesantren Miftahul Huda emphasizes the preservation of classical traditions and spiritual discipline, while Pesantren Mardhotillah focuses on innovation by integrating entrepreneurship into the educational system. This comparative result indicates the flexibility of salafiyah traditions in responding to contemporary challenges without losing their Islamic identity. The study concludes that salafiyah pesantren traditions function as effective instruments of character education management capable of producing graduates who are religious, morally responsible, and economically independent. The novelty of this research lies in its formulation of an integrative model of character education management that connects religiosity and entrepreneurship within the framework of Islamic education management. Practically, the findings provide a reference for developing pesantren curricula that harmonize spiritual values with economic empowerment, contributing to the sustainability and relevance of pesantren education in the modern era.

Keywords: Character Education Management, Salafiyah Pesantren, Religiosity, Student Entrepreneurship, Islamic Education Management

INTRODUCTION

Character education has become one of the most strategic issues in the development of human resources in Indonesia. Moral degradation, social conflict, and the weakening of ethical values among the younger generation require educational institutions to play a more significant role in shaping students' character and personality. In this context, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) hold an essential position as the oldest Islamic educational institutions that are not only oriented toward the transfer of religious knowledge but also toward the moral and personal development of students (santri) (Dhofier, 1982). Pesantren have historically

functioned as centers for moral cultivation, social transformation, and community empowerment.

Among various pesantren models, the salafiyah pesantren tradition occupies a distinctive place in Indonesian Islamic education. The salafiyah pesantren tradition plays a central role in shaping students' religious character and independence through an education system rooted in spiritual, social, and economic values. This system is inherited from the classical Islamic education model, which emphasizes the study of kitab kuning (classical Islamic texts), guidance from kiai (religious teachers), and the habituation of a simple lifestyle (Azra, 1999). These elements collectively form an educational culture that prioritizes discipline, sincerity, obedience, and responsibility as the main foundations of character formation.

Historically, the spread of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago occurred peacefully through cultural and economic approaches carried out by scholars who were also merchants (Ricklefs, 2012). This historical reality illustrates that Islamic education in Indonesia has never been separated from the spirit of economic independence and social productivity. The integration between religiosity and entrepreneurship became the foundational basis for the formation of Islamic civilization in Indonesia. Therefore, pesantren education is not merely concerned with religious rituals but also with preparing students to become independent individuals capable of contributing to society.

Based on this perspective, character education in salafiyah pesantren aims not only to shape students who are religiously devout but also socially productive and economically independent individuals. Spiritual and economic values in Islam coexist harmoniously within the educational traditions of the Indonesian Islamic world (Hasan, 2004). This dual orientation shows that pesantren education embodies a holistic concept of character, integrating faith, morality, social responsibility, and economic resilience.

Theoretically, the existence and sustainability of pesantren traditions can be explained through the theory of cultural diffusion proposed by E. B. Tylor, which explains that cultural values and practices spread from one center to other communities (Tylor, 1871). This concept is relevant in the context of pesantren as a center for disseminating Islamic values that are deeply integrated into the fabric of community life. Salafiyah traditions that originated from classical Islamic scholarship have been localized and adapted to Indonesian culture, creating a distinctive model of Islamic character education.

Azyumardi Azra further emphasizes that the diffusion of Islamic education in Indonesia was greatly influenced by networks of scholars who studied in the Haramain (Mecca and Medina) and later transmitted moral values and educational traditions to the archipelago (Azra, 1999). Zamakhsyari Dhofier reinforces this view by explaining that the pesantren represents a synthesis between Middle Eastern Islamic educational institutions and Javanese local traditions, forming a distinctive educational system that instills Islamic values and independence (Dhofier, 1982).

These perspectives confirm that pesantren traditions are not merely cultural heritage but also structured educational systems that shape students' character.

In contemporary educational discourse, pesantren traditions can be understood from the perspective of Islamic education management. Character education in pesantren does not occur spontaneously but is organized through leadership patterns, institutional culture, learning systems, and daily habituation. This managerial dimension is essential because the success of character formation depends largely on how values are planned, implemented, supervised, and evaluated within the educational process.

Several recent studies have highlighted the importance of management aspects in pesantren-based education. Fauzi (2023) revealed that the development of teachers' competence, commitment, and motivation in pesantren is strongly influenced by value-based leadership and institutional management. This finding indicates that pesantren possess a unique managerial system that supports sustainable character formation. In another study, Fauzi (2019) demonstrated that integrative leadership in pesantren-based madrasah plays a crucial role in harmonizing religious learning with character building, suggesting that effective management is a key factor in the success of Islamic educational institutions. Moreover, Fauzi (2024) emphasized that curriculum management in pesantren-based schools can optimize the quality of graduates by integrating vocational skills with Islamic values. These studies confirm that pesantren traditions need to be examined not only as religious practices but also as managed educational processes.

From the perspective of modern character education theory, Thomas Lickona asserts that character education must encompass three dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Lickona, 1991). These dimensions are also reflected in the educational practices of pesantren, where cognitive understanding of religious values is combined with emotional attachment and practical habituation. Pesantren traditions such as khidmah (service) to the kiai, the study of kitab kuning (classical Islamic texts), and disciplined daily routines serve as concrete forms of character education that instill Islamic moral values holistically and practically (Al-Ghazali, n.d.).

Classical Islamic scholars also provide strong philosophical foundations for character education. Imam al-Ghazali emphasized that character formation must occur through spiritual training and teacher exemplarity. Good character does not emerge spontaneously but results from a continuous educational process (Al-Ghazali, n.d.). Ibn Miskawaih also stated that noble character (akhlaq) is developed through habituation and the control of desires under the guidance of reason and moral will (Miskawaih, 1994). Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas added the concept of ta'dib, an education oriented toward the cultivation of adab (proper conduct) as the essence of forming individuals with Islamic character (Al-Attas, 1991). These views underline that character education requires systematic guidance and structured management.

The integration between religiosity and entrepreneurship is also emphasized in the Qur'an and Hadith. Allah commands Muslims to balance worldly and spiritual affairs (Qur'an, Al-Qashash [28]:77), and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) honored honest and trustworthy traders (Tirmidhi). In the context of pesantren, these values are actualized through skill training, student business management, and the habituation of hard work. Economic activities are regarded as part of worship and social responsibility (Tamalla & Fauzi, 2021). Ahmad Tafsir argues that the ideal Islamic education is one that produces individuals who are independent, productive, and dignified members of society (Tafsir, 2013). This concept reinforces the relevance of integrating religiosity and entrepreneurship within pesantren education.

Despite the richness of studies on pesantren and character education, several academic gaps remain. First, most previous studies tend to examine pesantren traditions from sociological, cultural, or pedagogical perspectives, while limited attention has been given to the managerial dimension of character education in pesantren. Second, research on entrepreneurship in pesantren often stands separately from studies on religiosity, even though both are inherently integrated within salafiyah traditions. Third, comparative studies that analyze differences in character education management between pesantren with different orientations are still relatively rare.

Furthermore, many existing studies discuss character education in general Islamic schools, while specific studies on how salafiyah pesantren traditions are systematically managed as instruments of character education are still limited. There is a need for research that conceptualizes pesantren traditions as part of educational management processes involving planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling character education programs.

Responding to these gaps, this study positions character education in salafiyah pesantren within the framework of Islamic education management. The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to formulate a managerial model of character education based on salafiyah pesantren traditions through a comparative approach. Unlike previous studies that view pesantren traditions merely as cultural or religious practices, this research analyzes them as structured managerial strategies aimed at fostering students' religiosity and entrepreneurial spirit.

This study focuses on two pesantren with different characteristics: Pesantren Miftahul Huda Al-Musri' in Cianjur and Pesantren Mardhotillah in Bandung. Both institutions represent the continuity between traditional practices and modern innovations within the pesantren education system (Dissertation Proposal Document, 2025). Pesantren Miftahul Huda Al-Musri' maintains strong salafiyah roots, whereas Pesantren Mardhotillah demonstrates reform efforts by integrating salafiyah values into modern entrepreneurial education (Dissertation Proposal Document, 2025). The comparative setting of these two institutions provides an appropriate context for analyzing variations in character education management.

Therefore, the main objective of this study is to analyze in depth the management of character education based on salafiyah pesantren traditions in shaping students' religious attitudes and entrepreneurial spirit. Specifically, this study seeks to explore how salafiyah traditions are transformed into structured educational management practices, how leadership strategies support character formation, and how different pesantren implement integrative models of religiosity and entrepreneurship.

This research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic character education based on local traditions while offering an integrative model of character education management that harmonizes religious and entrepreneurial values. Thus, salafiyah pesantren are expected to remain centers for nurturing generations who are pious, independent, and adaptive to the challenges of modern times (Hasan, 2019).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytic design, as its primary objective is to understand comprehensively the management of character education based on salafiyah pesantren traditions in shaping students' religiosity and entrepreneurial spirit. The qualitative approach was selected because it enables the exploration of social meanings and educational phenomena holistically in their natural contexts without manipulating variables (Moleong, 2009). In this approach, the researcher functions as the main instrument who interacts directly with participants and field data, allowing for in-depth interpretation of educational practices within pesantren environments.

The type of research applied in this study is field research with a comparative case study orientation. The research was conducted at two pesantren, namely Pesantren Miftahul Huda Al-Musri' in Cianjur and Pesantren Mardhotillah in Bandung. These two institutions were purposively selected because they represent different orientations of salafiyah pesantren traditions. Pesantren Miftahul Huda Al-Musri' is known for its strong commitment to classical traditions, while Pesantren Mardhotillah has developed innovative programs that integrate entrepreneurship with salafiyah values. The comparative setting allows the researcher to analyze similarities and differences in the implementation of character education management in both institutions.

This research applies a naturalistic inquiry approach, which studies educational phenomena in their authentic settings without external intervention. As emphasized by Lincoln and Guba in their qualitative research paradigm, naturalistic inquiry requires direct involvement of the researcher in the social context being studied (as cited in Moleong, 2009). In this study, the researcher acted as a participant observer who directly interacted with kiai, ustadz, and santri to obtain a contextual understanding of character education practices and managerial processes in pesantren.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and direct documentation at the two research sites. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including kiai, pesantren administrators, teachers, and selected students, to explore their perspectives on the management of religious and entrepreneurial character education. Secondary data were collected from books, scholarly journals, institutional archives, and relevant policy documents to support and strengthen empirical findings. The use of multiple data sources is intended to enhance the accuracy and credibility of research results through triangulation (Sugiyono, 2016).

Data collection techniques were implemented through methodological triangulation, combining interviews, observations, and documentation (Arifin, 2009). Interviews were designed in a semi-structured format to allow flexibility while maintaining focus on research objectives. Observation was carried out to examine directly the daily educational activities in pesantren, including the study of kitab kuning, khidmah traditions, leadership practices, and student economic programs. Documentation involved collecting institutional records, program guidelines, activity schedules, and photographs as authentic evidence supporting the field data.

Unlike a purely conceptual or literature-based study, this research emphasizes empirical investigation of real educational practices. The inclusion of literature analysis in this study functions as a theoretical framework to interpret field findings rather than as the main research method. Previous studies on character education and pesantren entrepreneurship (Latipah et al., 2024; Murni et al., 2025) were used as comparative references to identify research gaps and to strengthen the positioning of this study within the broader academic discourse.

The data analysis procedure follows the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted continuously from the beginning of data collection by selecting, focusing, and simplifying information relevant to the research questions. Data display was organized in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic categorizations to reveal patterns of character education management in both pesantren. Conclusion drawing was carried out iteratively through verification processes to ensure that interpretations were grounded in valid and reliable data.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings, this study applies four criteria of qualitative validity, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba as cited in Sugiyono, 2016). Credibility was achieved through prolonged engagement, triangulation of sources and techniques, and member checking with informants. Transferability was addressed by providing rich and detailed descriptions of research contexts. Dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of research procedures, while confirmability was maintained by keeping audit trails and reflective notes. Through these procedures, the study aims to produce findings that are empirically credible and theoretically

meaningful for the development of Islamic education management based on salafiyah pesantren traditions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that character education in salafiyah pesantren plays a strategic role in shaping students' religious and independent personalities. This process takes place through a non-formal education system grounded in Islamic traditions, where the kiai serves as a central figure acting as an educator, role model, and spiritual guide. The authority and charisma of the kiai function as the primary managerial instrument that directs educational activities, institutional culture, and students' behavior. This tradition establishes pesantren as institutions capable of instilling moral values and social ethics in students' daily lives (Dhofier, 1982). From the perspective of Islamic education management, this pattern illustrates that leadership and institutional culture are inseparable components in the success of character education.

At Pesantren Miftahul Huda Al-Musri', character education is implemented through the study of kitab kuning, the practice of adab toward teachers, and khidmah to the kiai. These three activities function as systematic media for moral cultivation. The study of classical texts strengthens students' cognitive understanding of Islamic ethics, the practice of adab nurtures emotional attachment to moral norms, and khidmah trains students to transform values into real actions. This process aligns with Thomas Lickona's (1991) theory of character education, which emphasizes the integration of moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action. In managerial terms, these traditions represent structured educational programs that are organized, supervised, and evaluated continuously within the pesantren system.

Pesantren Mardhotillah Bandung, although relatively new, demonstrates innovation in developing entrepreneurial values based on salafiyah principles. Students engage in productive economic activities such as agriculture, culinary businesses, and the management of a pesantren cooperative. These activities serve not merely economic purposes but also as training for character development, fostering independence, responsibility, discipline, and diligence (Tamalla & Fauzi, 2021). The pesantren management integrates economic programs into the educational process, showing that entrepreneurship is not positioned as an external activity but as part of character education itself.

In general, both pesantren share a similar orientation toward religiosity but differ in their approaches to strengthening economic self-reliance. Pesantren Miftahul Huda emphasizes spiritual discipline, moral exemplarity, and the preservation of classical traditions, while Pesantren Mardhotillah focuses on applying religious values within modern entrepreneurial practices. This demonstrates that salafiyah traditions are capable of adapting to modernity without losing their Islamic identity (Azra, 1999). These findings indicate that character education management in

pesantren can be implemented through different strategies depending on institutional orientation and leadership vision.

To clarify the main empirical differences and similarities between the two pesantren, the comparative findings are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Comparative Findings of Character Education Management

Aspect	Pesantren Miftahul Huda Al-Musri'	Pesantren Mardhotillah Bandung
Main Educational Orientation	Preservation of classical salafiyah traditions	Integration of salafiyah values with entrepreneurship
Dominant Character Focus	Religiosity, obedience, adab, discipline	Independence, responsibility, creativity, work ethic
Primary Learning Media	Kitab kuning, khidmah, daily religious routines	Kitab kuning combined with economic programs
Managerial Emphasis	Spiritual leadership and moral supervision	Programmatic management and economic empowerment
Economic Activities	Limited and supportive in nature	Systematic cooperatives and business units
Strengths	Strong religious identity and moral discipline	High economic self-reliance and innovation
Main Challenges	Limited structured entrepreneurship	Need for deeper reinforcement of classical tradition

This comparative analysis confirms that both pesantren apply the same salafiyah foundation but translate it into different managerial strategies according to their institutional contexts. The flexibility of salafiyah traditions enables pesantren to respond to contemporary challenges while maintaining their essential Islamic values.

Observations reveal that the implementation of character education in salafiyah pesantren is carried out through three main strategies: role modeling, habituation, and the teaching of kitab kuning. Role modeling functions as moral action, habituation nurtures moral feeling, and classical learning develops moral knowing. These strategies are interrelated in shaping students' behavior patterns based on religiosity and a strong work ethic. This aligns with al-Ghazali's perspective that noble character is developed through training, habituation, and spiritual supervision (Al-Ghazali, n.d.). The process shows that character education in pesantren is managed through systematic and continuous mechanisms.

The main values identified in pesantren character education include honesty (ṣidq), trustworthiness (amanah), discipline, responsibility, and hard work. These values are not only taught verbally but are internalized through the pesantren's communal living system. Daily interactions, collective worship, shared responsibilities, and simple lifestyles become practical instruments for shaping students' morality. Thus, the pesantren environment functions as an effective social laboratory for shaping students' morals and spirituality (Miskawaih, 1994). This confirms that institutional culture in pesantren serves as an important medium of character education management.

The integration of religious and entrepreneurial values in pesantren reflects the Islamic concept of balance between worship and worldly activity, as stated in the Qur'an (Al-Qashash [28]:77). Spiritual values do not hinder economic productivity but instead serve as motivation to work honestly and contribute positively to society. This principle forms the foundation of Islamic business ethics (Tafsir, 2013). Consequently, economic programs in pesantren are framed as part of religious devotion rather than purely material activities.

The study also finds that salafiyah traditions hold significant potential for developing students' entrepreneurial character. Activities such as managing cooperative shops, cultivating farmland, and producing goods for pesantren needs serve as practical applications of Islamic economic education. These activities function not only as economic exercises but also as means of instilling social and moral responsibility (Murni et al., 2025). The involvement of students in real economic practices strengthens their problem-solving abilities, leadership skills, and sense of responsibility.

Theoretically, these findings strengthen Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's (1991) concept of ta'dib, or education rooted in adab. Within pesantren traditions, adab is understood not merely as politeness but as an awareness of ethical responsibility in performing social and economic roles. This concept highlights that religiosity and entrepreneurship share a moral foundation, namely integrity, honesty, and accountability. Therefore, the integration of both dimensions in pesantren education is philosophically coherent with Islamic educational thought.

The research also identifies several supporting factors in implementing character education in pesantren, including the kiai's role as a moral exemplar, a disciplined caregiving system, and a conducive religious environment. Inhibiting factors include limited economic resources and the lack of structured entrepreneurship training. However, pesantren have sought to overcome these challenges through collaboration with communities and partner institutions (Latipah et al., 2024). These collaborative efforts indicate that pesantren are able to develop adaptive strategies within their managerial limitations.

From a methodological standpoint, the integration of character education and entrepreneurship demonstrates the effectiveness of salafiyah traditions as a contextual educational model. Traditional learning methods such as bandongan,

sorogan, and khidmah serve as mechanisms for internalizing values that nurture religiosity and a strong work ethic. These findings confirm Dhofier's (1982) assertion that pesantren represent a living and dynamic educational system capable of responding to social change while preserving their core identity.

In light of E.B. Tylor's (1871) theory of cultural diffusion, the values of salafiyah pesantren education can be understood as the result of the transmission and adaptation of Islamic cultural elements from the Middle East to the Indonesian archipelago. However, pesantren did not merely adopt these values; they localized and transformed them into an educational system suited to their social context (Azra, 1999). This localization process explains why pesantren traditions remain relevant in contemporary Indonesian society.

The results of this study provide practical contributions to pesantren curriculum development. Character education models rooted in salafiyah traditions can serve as a reference for designing integrative curricula that harmoniously combine spiritual and economic dimensions. This approach is crucial for nurturing students who are not only intellectually knowledgeable but also economically resilient (Hasan, 2004). The comparative findings between the two pesantren offer practical insights for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to develop similar programs.

Socially, the implementation of integrative character education in pesantren enhances students' participation in productive, Sharia-based economic activities. Consequently, pesantren function not only as religious institutions but also as centers of community empowerment. These findings are consistent with Ahmad Tafsir's (2013) view that Islamic education should produce individuals who are beneficial to their environment.

Overall, these results affirm that salafiyah pesantren traditions possess great potential to cultivate a generation that is both religious and self-reliant, capable of responding to contemporary challenges. Pesantren do not merely preserve classical values but also develop educational innovations that balance spirituality and economics. By integrating religiosity and entrepreneurship through effective management, pesantren can continue to serve as moral strongholds and agents of social transformation in the modern era (Hasan, 2019).

The novelty of this research lies in its conceptual repositioning of salafiyah pesantren traditions as structured instruments of character education management. Previous studies on pesantren generally focused on sociological, cultural, or pedagogical dimensions, while this study places pesantren traditions within the framework of Islamic education management. By analyzing how religious traditions are planned, organized, implemented, and supervised, this research offers a new perspective that views character education in pesantren as a systematic managerial process rather than merely a set of inherited religious practices. This conceptual shift provides a more comprehensive understanding of how moral and entrepreneurial values are intentionally cultivated through institutional mechanisms.

Another important novelty of this study is the formulation of an integrative model that connects religiosity and entrepreneurship as two inseparable dimensions of character education in salafiyah pesantren. While many previous studies examined religiosity and entrepreneurship separately, this research demonstrates that both aspects are organically integrated within pesantren educational practices. The findings reveal that entrepreneurship programs in pesantren are not positioned as purely economic activities but as extensions of religious values and ethical responsibility. This integrated perspective contributes to the development of a more holistic model of Islamic character education that balances spiritual piety with economic independence.

The comparative approach employed in this study also represents a significant methodological novelty. By examining two pesantren with different orientations, namely Pesantren Miftahul Huda Al-Musri' and Pesantren Mardhotillah Bandung, this research uncovers variations in character education management strategies within the same salafiyah tradition. This comparative analysis shows that pesantren can adopt diverse managerial models while remaining faithful to their core religious values. Such findings enrich academic discourse by demonstrating that salafiyah pesantren traditions are flexible and adaptive, capable of responding to contemporary social and economic challenges without losing their Islamic identity.

In terms of theoretical contributions, this study strengthens the discourse of Islamic education management by integrating classical Islamic educational philosophy with modern character education theory. The findings confirm the relevance of al-Attas's concept of ta'dib, al-Ghazali's theory of moral habituation, and Lickona's framework of character education within the pesantren context. By linking these theoretical perspectives with empirical evidence, the study contributes to the development of a contextualized theory of character education management rooted in Islamic traditions. This integration offers a conceptual bridge between Western theories of character education and indigenous Islamic educational practices.

Practically, this research provides concrete contributions for the management and development of pesantren education. The study offers an applicable reference for pesantren leaders in designing structured character education programs that integrate religious learning with entrepreneurial training. The comparative findings between the two pesantren present practical models that can be adopted or adapted by other Islamic educational institutions according to their respective contexts. Furthermore, the research results can serve as a policy reference for government and stakeholders in formulating programs aimed at strengthening pesantren as centers of character building and economic empowerment.

Socially, the contributions of this study extend beyond the academic sphere. The research affirms the strategic role of pesantren in preparing a generation that is religiously devout, socially responsible, and economically independent. By highlighting the effectiveness of integrating religiosity and entrepreneurship, this

study supports the idea that pesantren can function not only as religious institutions but also as agents of community development. The findings encourage the empowerment of pesantren as institutions capable of producing graduates who possess strong moral character as well as practical life skills needed to face contemporary challenges.

Overall, this study contributes to enriching the understanding of salafiyah pesantren as dynamic educational institutions that are able to harmonize tradition and innovation. Through its conceptual, methodological, practical, and social contributions, the research offers a comprehensive framework for developing character education management in Islamic boarding schools. These contributions are expected to inspire further studies and practical initiatives aimed at strengthening the role of pesantren in shaping morally upright and economically resilient Muslim generations.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that character education management based on salafiyah pesantren traditions is effective in shaping students' religiosity and entrepreneurial spirit. The internalization of Islamic values through structured religious learning, daily habituation, and the exemplary leadership of the kiai has successfully developed students' moral integrity, discipline, responsibility, and independence. These processes demonstrate that character education in pesantren is implemented through systematic and sustainable managerial practices.

The findings also confirm that salafiyah pesantren are able to integrate spiritual education with economic empowerment. Through entrepreneurship programs and productive economic activities, students are trained to apply Islamic values in real-life contexts while developing practical skills and economic self-reliance. This integration proves that religiosity and entrepreneurship are not contradictory, but complementary dimensions of Islamic character education.

The comparative analysis between the two pesantren shows that different managerial approaches can be applied within the same salafiyah tradition. One pesantren emphasizes the preservation of classical religious traditions, while the other focuses on innovation through entrepreneurship programs. These differences illustrate the flexibility of salafiyah pesantren in responding to contemporary educational needs without losing their core Islamic identity.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Islamic education management by positioning pesantren traditions as structured instruments of character formation. Practically, the research provides a reference model for pesantren leaders in designing integrative character education programs that combine moral development and economic empowerment.

This study recommends that pesantren continue to strengthen character education through the integration of religiosity and entrepreneurship. Educational innovations should be developed while maintaining the essential values of salafiyah traditions. Collaboration with external institutions and the utilization of digital-based economic initiatives are also necessary to enhance students' competitiveness in the modern era.

Future research is encouraged to explore more diverse pesantren contexts and to examine the long-term impact of entrepreneurship-based character education. Overall, this study affirms that salafiyah pesantren remain highly relevant as centers for nurturing generations who are religious, independent, and adaptive to the challenges of contemporary society.

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