

## Research article

# Character-based Prophetic Education in Pondok Pesantren Wali Songo Ponorogo Indonesia

ST. Noer Farida Laila\*, Prim Masrokan Mutohar, and Anissatul Mufarokah

The Faculty of Tabiya and Teacher Education, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN), Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah, Tulungagung, Indonesia

**ORCID**

ST. Noer Farida Laila: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9773-6716>

**Abstract.**

*Pondok pesantren* as an Islamic educational institution is unique in imparting character education. The character education takes place in accordance with Islamic teachings exemplified by Prophet Muhammad SAW. The formation of *pesantren* culture based on prophetic values is imperative for an effective character education. Prophetic-based character education in *pesantren* is conducted through intervention and habituation processes. The process of intervention is implemented and developed through various structured learning activities carried out within *pesantren* boarding schools. The process of habituation on the other hand is created and developed through various situations and conditions accompanied by enforcement that enable *santri* (students) to apply prophetic values in their daily activities – an important element for shaping their character.

**Keywords:** *pondok pesantren*, character education, *santri*, Prophetic

Corresponding Author: ST. Noer Farida Laila; email: [farida.laila72@gmail.com](mailto:farida.laila72@gmail.com)

Published 20 June 2022

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ICIGR 2021 Conference Committee.

## 1. Introduction

Character education in the global era is very important to be implemented by all developed and developing countries around the world. Public schools in the United States have now carried out character education in classrooms and schools. Initially, character education was only used as an explicit goal of education. However, at this time, character education continues to be well implemented. [1] In Singapore, character education is conducted in schools with curriculum designed by CCR (Center for Curriculum Redesign). CCR seeks a holistic approach to redesigning the curriculum, by offering a complete framework across four dimensions of education: knowledge, skills, character, and metacognition. Knowledge must produce a better balance between traditional and modern subjects, as well as interdisciplinary subjects. Skills related to the use of knowledge and feedback. Character qualities describe how a person engages in social life and behaves in everyday life. Metacognition promotes self-healing and learning processes, and builds three other dimensions.[2] Character education in Japan

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is closely linked to elements comprising of civic education that derived from three areas - moral education, social studies, and specific education.[3]

Character education in Indonesia is implemented in schools and reinforced by the implementation of the 2013 curriculum which emphasizes on the establishment of competence and character of the nation [4]. Competence-based education emphasizes on the ability that must be owned by graduates of every educational level and grade. The competence of graduates must be adjusted to national education objectives, including knowledge, skills, independence, creativity, health, moral, piety and citizenship. Character-based education should be organized systematically on the basis of good quality management of learning. The development of competence, attitudes and character of learners gained enormous attention, especially in internalizing character values in the whole process of learning [4]

Research results explained that the success of a person is not solely determined by the knowledge and technical skills (hard skills), but determined also by the ability to manage themselves and others (soft skills). Success is determined only about 20 percent by hard skills and the remaining 80 percent by soft skills. Even the most successful people in the world can succeed because they are supported more by soft skills than by hard skills [5]. Therefore, the quality of competency-based education and the character of learners should be strengthened, so that the national education goals can be achieved well in preparing qualified human resources and character.

The problems faced by Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia at this time is how to improve the quality of education and added values so that Islamic education in Indonesia can have bargaining power and high competitiveness at regional, national, and even international level. Pondok pesantren as an Islamic educational institution has a uniqueness in accordance with the core business run in the learning process, namely the values of teachings that have been exemplified by the prophet Muhammad SAW. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the strategy of proper learning quality in the development of competence and character of santri. This is also reinforced by Deal and Peterson who explain that: *"An atmosphere or environment that nurtures the motivation to learn can be cultivated in the home, in the classroom, or at a broader level, throughout an entire school"*. [6]

Since the 1980s, educational experts have firmly placed the principal's responsibility as a creator of a dynamic school culture and an effective school trait.[7] DeRoche affirms that the principal has a great responsibility in the context of the establishment and structuring of a characteristic school culture. It shows that the leader has a very

big role and responsibility in shaping the quality of student culture and character in the school or boarding school. [8]

It is interesting, therefore, to study the uniqueness of pesantren in implementing character education exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The study was carried out at pondok pesantren Wali Songo Ponorogo. The discussion will theoretically and practically contribute to the implementation of character-based prophetic education in Islamic educational institutions of Indonesia.

## 2. Method

This study aims to get an in-depth picture of the implementation of prophetic-based character education in Pondok Pesantren by using a qualitative approach. Data were collected from natural setting as direct data source, so it was appropriate to use case study design. [9][10] Data collected can be grouped into two, namely primary and secondary data. The primary data were in the form of words and actions performed by informants. The data in the form of documents were used as secondary data to strengthen the main data so that the validity and reliability of data can be fulfilled. The main data sources were the leaders of pesantren. A snowball sampling technique was used further, by which key informants pointed to people who know the problem and the designated person pointed someone else to give the next information, and so on until the research was done or the data became saturated.

Data analysis was carried out by systematically managing field notes, interview transcripts, and other collected materials. The data analysis process followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Hubberman that consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Data reduction was a form of analysis that sharpens, classifies, discards unnecessary data, and organizes the data so that the final conclusion and verification are obtained. Data reduction was carried out continuously during the study. Data reduction was intended to find meaningful patterns and provide the possibility of drawing conclusions and taking action.[11]

## 3. Result and discussion

### 3.1. Result

Pondok Pesantren has a responsibility to teach religion and science in shaping the competence and character of santri. The design of character education is developed based

on the teachings and example of the Prophet Muhammad SAW which can be grouped into the following four character values: *shidiq* (spiritual and emotional development), *fathonah* (intellectual development), *amanah* (Physical and kinesthetic development), as well as *tabligh* (affective and creativity development). These four prophetic characters become the sources of character values developed in pesantren. Pesantren Wali Songo Ngabar Ponorogo for example, formulates the five pillars of pesantren education based on these four prophetic values. The five pillars are: sincerity, simplicity, self-reliance, Islamic brotherhood, and freedom. Sincerity means doing something not because of the desire to gain certain benefits. All done for the sake of Allah. Simplicity does not mean passive (*nrimo* in Javanese), poor or destitute, but it is in accordance with one's needs and fairness. Self-reliance is the ability to help oneself. Islamic brotherhood means a fraternity of fellow Muslims built on the basis of religious beliefs. Freedom means free in determining the future and choosing the way of life.

Character education at pesantren Wali Songo is designed to make students devout to Allah SWT, do good deeds, develop noble mind, have a healthy body, have extensive knowledge, develop freedom in thinking, have self-employed soul, and love homeland. The curriculum of prophetic-based character education is implemented with a high discipline and supported by the environment and culture of boarding schools. Overall learning activities are implemented with the Service-Learning system. The values of character education developed in the pesantren can be seen in the following table:

TABLE 1: Values of character-based prophetic education at Pesantren.

Prophetic values			Indicators
Amanah	Shidiq	Fathonah	Clean and healthy, disciplined, sportive, tough, reliable, resilient, friendly, cooperative, determinative, competitive, cheerful and persistent Faithful and devoted, honest, fair, responsible, empathetic, risk-taking, unyielding, willing to sacrifice, and patriotic Smart, critical, creative, innovative, curious, open minded, productive, science-oriented, and reflective Friendly, respectful, caring, helpful, gotong royong, nationalist, cosmopolit, giving priority to public interest, dynamic, hard working and has an ethical work
Tabligh			

The objectives of the use of boarding school system in implementing character-based prophetic education at pesantren Wali Songo are: first, to provide good living habits; second, to seek or deepen pesantren learning materials; third, to integrate Islamic materials with other fields of study which must be mastered by santri as life provision; and fourth, to nurture the soul, mental and moral students in order to balance their spiritual and physical needs.

Mastery of knowledge and skills developed at pesanten Wali Songo is based on life skill. Life skills consist of personal skills and social skills. Personal skills' components are adaptability skill, cape ability, motivation, self-awareness, independence, and responsibility. Social skills components are communication skills, cooperative and collaborative skills (working in groups), solidarity, and nationalism.

The evaluation system of prophetic-based character education implemented at pesantren Wali Songo is authentic assessment. Authentic assessment is used by ustadz (teacher) in order to provide the evaluation of the actual competencies that santri have in learning. Knowing the real ability of santri is very important because it can show the attainment of learning mastery, so that ustadz can take an appropriate action to help santri who have not reached learning mastery criteria yet.

### 3.2. Discussion

Pondok Pesantren as a typical Islamic educational institution in Indonesia is established in order to teach the prophetic values that have been taught by Prophet Muhammad SAW.[12] In its development, pesantren also respond positively to the development of science in the global era. In order for pesantren can maintain its existence properly and improve the quality of its education, it is necessary to have good and proper management. This management process must be well implemented so that the quality of education can be controlled. To achieve this, pesantren needs managerial capability in developing qualified planning, organizing, mobilizing, and performing control functions on its all activities.[13]

The design of character education should pay attention to the commitment and good example of kyai and ustadz. Romanowski explains that character education becomes more effective for students if it is implemented through good examples, modeling, and reinforcement by schools and teachers.[14] Furthermore, Revell and Arthur argue that teachers' attitudes toward moral education also have an important role in character education process.[17] On the other hand, O'Sullivan, Sanchez & Stewart explain that the easiest way to promote character education is by using literature studies, because the story serves as a role model linking experience and morals.[15][16] This is also done in Pondok Pesantren Wali Songo. The example of Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions serve as a source of learning character.

The design of character education implemented by pondok pesantren is very essential to prepare a strong young generation who can continue future nation's development. Character education is a vital tool for preparing students to be able to deal with political

issues and challenges in their own lives.[1] Character education becomes important for every country because it is a deliberate developmental discipline to optimize the ethical behavior of students.[18][19][20] The main principles of good character are respect, truth, justice, and responsibility.[21]

Service-learning system is implemented in the whole process of education at Pondok Pesantren. Service learning is a teaching strategy in which students learn part of curriculum by providing services needed in people's lives, such as service-learning undertaken by Bhaerman, Cordell & Gomez [22], Billig & Waterman, Eyer & Giles[23], Kielsmeier [24], and Wade [25] Character education oriented directly to provide services to the community is very important to be implemented by students. It can take place in the form of cooperation, collaboration, mutual help, and handling social ethics problems. [26][27]

Approaches in the implementation of character education at schools may be based on religion. This is often referred to as a traditional approach which is different from the modern approach that emphasizes more on the development of science. The implementation of traditional character education is supported by Bennett [28], Kilpatrick [29], Lickona [30], and Ryan and Bohlin [31]. This shows that character-based religious education can serve as a core value in implementing character education at schools. The tradition of praying together for example, is a part of character education [32]. Character education conducted at pesantren Wali Songo is based on religious teachings and best practices carried out by other pesantren, especially pesantren modern Gontor Ponorogo Indonesia.

Romanowski provides some suggestions in the implementation of character education at schools. First, teachers should be involved in planning character education program in order they have good commitment to improve the effectiveness of the program. Second, the curriculum should be relevant to students' development and the intellectual, emotional and social challenges. Third, the administration should support and provide sufficient space for teachers to flexibly teach certain characters. Fourth, class discussions should be able to effectively engage students in character education programs which are then accompanied by reflection activities; and the last, schools are responsible for developing environments that reinforce the positive side of students' learning and behavior in implementing good values they learn from character education program.[14] Cooley explains that the foundation in implementing character education is learning empathy and social sympathy as well as good action in the overall learning activities in class.[33]

The character-based education at pondok pesantren is implemented through active learning system, exemplary, habituation, environment, pesantren culture, assignment, direction and guidance. Active learning is created in order students be able to play an active role in the entire learning process. In this case, O'Sullivan and Burce explain that competency-based education is characterized by the involvement and activity of learners in all aspects of learning so that students can acquire the knowledge, skills and professional behavior practically needed in a particular discipline.[34] Tompkins, Laslovich, and Greene argue that competency-based education will produce a balanced ability between conceptual knowledge (theory) and skill acquisition (practice). Competence can be owned by students in the overall learning conducted at schools or boarding schools if they actively participate in the learning process.

Exemplary in character education is very important to familiarize good behavior in accordance with the values developed in educational institutions. Teachers are the most influential factor in the implementation and realization of educational change.[35][36][37][38][39][40] Teachers are also exemplary in the whole process of education and learning.[41] Exemplary of teachers and pesantren leaders have a very important role in character education, because santri will easily imitate the behavior of teachers or leaders.

Habituation in the whole learning process is a real practice in character education. The initial goal of character education is to model and familiarize good character for students.[21] Habituation in character education is a step taken to establish a good school culture and to support the achievement of noble character of students. Numerous studies have shown that character education programs implemented in schools can support higher academic achievement, avoid risky student behavior, and reduce the number of dropping out students.[42][18][19][43][21]

The environment and culture of an educational institution is very influential in the development of student character. A good environment can contribute positively, and vice versa, bad environments will influence students' behavior. In this case, Gallien & Jackson explain that character development is a dynamic interaction between internal determinants and external influences for positive growth to occur.[44] Meanwhile Romanowski explains that the character of students can also be shaped by a social environment which is beyond the reach of educational settings.[14] This suggests that external environmental factors also influence the education of student character.

Assignment, direction, and guidance are also implemented in character education at pesantren. Santri are given learning tasks to have competence, discipline, and responsibility. Learning in pesantren has actually carried out four pillars of education

from UNESCO, namely: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be.[45] Santri are taught to know the various values that exist in pesantren. Santri are taught to run good values and to use these values in everyday life. Furthermore, santri become creatively able to develop their potential well.

Character education in pesantren is not just teaching what is right and what is wrong. Character education instills habituation of what is good so that santri understand about what is right and wrong, are capable of feeling good value, and are accustomed to doing it. In other words, character education should involve not only the aspect of "good knowledge (moral knowing), but also the aspect of "good feeling or loving good (moral feeling) and good behavior (moral action)." Character education emphasizes the habits that are continually practiced and performed.[1]

The implementation of character education requires an evaluation system in order to know its success. The evaluation is conducted by assessing the process through observation and reflection aiming at improving the learning program and the quality of service.[46] Assessment in pesantren character education is implemented by using authentic assessments. Authentic assessments focus on defined competencies to know the real capabilities possessed by students.[47][48] Authentic assessment is expected to maximize the skills or competencies of students. Furthermore, authentic assessment can be carried out simultaneously with learning process assessment that can be done through observation, task settlement, and portfolio. The literature on authentic learning [48][49] as well as on the professional development and assessment [50] explains that schools need to provide students with authentic real learning. Learning experiences can stimulate students toward higher original thinking processes and active learning.

The implications of this study are that schools and Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions should be able to design character education based on the curriculum they developed to achieve the vision and mission of the institutions. Principals, teachers, and administrative personnel should be highly committed to providing good examples, creating a learning environment in accordance with curriculum planning, and shaping school culture in accordance with the core values to be achieved in the overall learning and teaching process. In character education, core value must be formulated, designed its implementation, and prepared its measuring tool.

## 4. Conclusion

Prophetic-based character education held in pesantren essentially must be implemented systematically so that character education goals can be achieved. Prophetic



values are the best learning tools that Prophet Muhammad SAW has taught to form the characters of santri, namely noble, creative, innovative, tough, competitive, ethical, moral and polite. The development of attitudes and character of santri in pesantren must be taken seriously in order to internalize the character values that have been exemplified by Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Prophetic-based character education in pesantren is conducted through intervention and habituation process. The process of intervention is implemented and developed through various structured learning activities carried out within pesantren boarding schools. The process of habituation is created and developed through various situations and conditions accompanied by enforcement which enables students to apply and implement the prophetic values in their daily activities. This is very important because the habit of applying these prophetic values will form the noble character of santri in everyday life.

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