

RESEARCH

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Internalization of Akhlakul Karimah Values Education at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyze the implementation of strategies and methods in instilling the values of akhlakul karimah, analyzing the process of internalization of the values of akhlakul karimah at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan. The research method uses a case study. Researchers collected data through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation from informants from the kiai, administrators, and students. The results of the study indicate that the tradition of knowledge at the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School is based on the principle of learning originating from the guardian or kiai. The instillation of the values of akhlakul karimah involves administrators and educators. This instillation of values is carried out both formally and informally which are integrated vertically and horizontally in the governance of the Islamic boarding school through socialization, assignments and habituation. The findings of this research strengthen Peter L. Berger's theory in the process of stimulating values which includes value transformation, value transactions and internalization

Keywords: Akhlakul Karimah, Education, Internalization, Morals

Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in shaping individual personality, especially in today's globalized world (Aminudin, 2025; Minan et al., 2025). Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are not only oriented toward cognitive development but also emphasize the formation of attitudes and behaviors based on Islamic moral values (Jannah & Usriyah, 2023). One of the fundamental principles of Islamic boarding school education is akhlakul karimah, which upholds moral integrity, social ethics, and spiritual bonds. (Ulum & Mun'im, 2024). Embracing akhlakul karimah is an important process in education and signifies the success of an Islamic boarding school. Likewise, Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan has a significant role in integrating akhlakul karimah values. This study is relevant to understand the strategies, dynamics, and implications for the character formation of students.

The background of this article is the uniqueness of Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan. The name of the Islamic boarding school is historically inseparable from the greatness of one of the nine saints, Kanjeng Sunan Drajat (Damayanti, 2023; Fournié, 2019). The philosophy of Kanjeng Sunan Drajat's teachings, termed Catur Piwulang, has inspired the implementation of education at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan (Husna, 2022; Is' ad Al Muzakki et al., 2024). In addition to spiritual value, the teachings of Kanjeng Sunan Drajat also have social life values. (Meyer, 2021; Ur

Rehman, 2022) The values of Kanjeng Sunan Drajat's social and spiritual teachings have become a source of inspiration for Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan in realizing its vision and mission. The uniqueness of this Islamic boarding school is also supported by the strength of independence in building economic independence. This independence is realized by the establishment of various industrial business units such as industrial salt companies, shops, restaurants, hotels and other business networks. The uniqueness of the Islamic boarding school also supports the presence of the Islamic boarding school's caretaker, a charismatic figure, Prof. Dr. KH Abdul Ghofur. Caregivers with spiritual powers in healing illnesses are able to realize the development of Islamic boarding schools that are quite large in Lamongan district.

The power of Kanjeng Sunan Drajat's teachings is a force in shaping the personalities of students. Social and spiritual values are instilled in daily life at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan. According to Peter L. Berger, instilling character values can be done through internalization. This process becomes part of a person's personality, which is seen in consistent attitudes, behavior, and ways of thinking. This idea is also strengthened by Émile Durkheim's thinking, which states that the realization of character values in life can be achieved through habituation. (Jayaram, 2024; Ritzer & Goodman, 2004)

Internalization of values education is understood here as the process of instilling Islamic values, norms, and teachings so that they become part of the personality and guide behavior. (Heide, 2018; Hidayat et al., 2022; Pangastuti et al., 2025) Peter L. Berger's thinking, if understood, is that social construction in society occurs through social interaction. This aligns with the management of education in Islamic boarding schools, which is formed within a conditioned environment. Communication between the kiai (Islamic cleric), students, and educational administrators is integrated within the established structure. The vertical transfer of moral values is built within a hierarchical structure. The process of understanding values is implemented in daily life. (Aramavičiute & Martišauskiene, 2009; Friedman, 2016)

The internalization of character values in Islamic boarding schools is the core of values education. This process involves absorbing, internalizing, and practicing them, ensuring they become permanent within an individual. (Bulkani et al., 2025; Odari, 2020; Sahid et al., 2019) The educational approach in Islamic boarding schools can be understood, implemented, and practiced using several approaches. These approaches to value transfer are implemented in a conditioned environment. (Bulkani et al., 2025; Muhammad et al., 2025; Pathmu et al., 2025) Value transfer in Islamic boarding schools is based on consistent awareness and supervision. Value transfer begins with an introduction to the environment, followed by the implementation and appreciation of values within a structured learning process.

From the above study, the research is expected to provide an overview of the strategies and methods for instilling noble moral values, analyzing the process of internalizing noble moral values, analyzing the implications of noble moral values, and analyzing the supporting and inhibiting factors of the internalization process of noble moral values at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan. In addition, the research is expected to contribute to the study of educational science in shaping students who have noble moral values.

Method

The research on values education is a qualitative study. The focus of this study is the process of internalization of values at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan which is still ongoing. The researcher's presence in this study is as an observer, participating, mingling, and interacting directly in the ongoing process of moral value transformation. The researcher's presence is absolutely

necessary to directly establish good relationships with the informants. These informants include the guardian's family, students, boarding school administrators, dormitory administrators, institutional administrators, teachers, students, and alumni. A total of 42 informants are directly involved in the implementation of education at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan

Research data collection includes library data and field data. Library data collection techniques to ensure that the required library data is in accordance with the research focus. Literature review serves to position the relationship between this research and previous research. Researchers observed the process of value education and the internalization process carried out by educational managers in Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan. In addition to direct observation, interviews were also conducted. The focus of the material in the interviews included; 1). Moral values conveyed by educational organizers at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan. 2). The process of internalizing moral values carried out by educational managers at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan. 3) Educational institution managers in moral awareness can strengthen the scientific network and institutional solidarity of Islamic boarding schools. 4). Matters related to obstacles and drivers of internalization of values in Islamic boarding schools.

Data analysis was conducted from the beginning of data collection until its completion (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The collected data was organized and classified based on its source, then transcribed for systematic analysis. Researchers interpreted the data by explaining the meaning contained in the themes identified. Interpretations were made within the context of the theory used, the sociocultural context, and previous findings. The results of the data analysis were presented in the form of descriptive and thematic narratives accompanied by direct quotes from informants.

Results

Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan is geographically located in the north coast area 35 km from the city of Lamongan, precisely in Banjaranyar, Banjarwati Village, Paciran District, Lamongan Regency. Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan was founded on September 7 1977. This Islamic boarding school has historical value with the existence of Kanjeng Sunan Drajat. Philosophically. There is the *catur piwulang* teaching of Sunan Drajat which has become a motto for the surrounding community as a way of life for the community. The *catur piwulang* are *Wenhono Teken Marang Wong Kang Wuto*, *Wenhono Mangan Marang Wong Kang Luwe*, *Wenhono Busono Marang Wong Wudo* and *Wenhono Umbrella Marang Wong Kang Kaudanan*. (Monumen Prasasti Catur Piwulang Kanjeng Sunan Drajat, 2025) The values of Catur Piwulang are an inspiration for Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan in realizing its vision, namely to become an Islamic boarding school that is able to prepare cadres of leaders who have the personality of santri, have an entrepreneurial mentality of rahmatal li'alamin, have a global perspective and have noble morals.

Examining the sources of information on this vision, it can be explained that Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan in developing educational values, emphasizes the development of leaders with the personality of santri (Islamic students). Having the personality of santri means that all attitudes, mindsets, and behaviors that form the foundation of a leader must be based on Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamah (the Sunni tradition). The values of the santri soul serve as capital in realizing a leader in the future. The santri are prepared by the Islamic boarding school to become future leaders on earth, starting with the habituation of daily life at the Islamic boarding school.

One of the emphases on the santri spirit, as stated in the Islamic boarding school's vision, is for students to have an entrepreneurial mindset, rahmatal li'alamin (a blessing for all the worlds). This concrete manifestation of achieving independence in the field of economic activities has been widely applied in the establishment of several economic business units. Islamic boarding schools instill these

values so that students will become entrepreneurs in their future lives. Islamic boarding schools instill the values of independence and a resilient mentality in facing life while always prioritizing the interests and benefits of others. Islamic boarding schools that emphasize students with a global perspective provide a space for students to move in accordance with current developments. The instillation of Islamic boarding school values is not only focused on the daily activities of the Islamic boarding school, but students must also be able to adapt to current developments.

Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that the strategy for instilling noble moral values is carried out through socialization, both verbally and through the dissemination of written materials within the Islamic boarding school environment. Strengthening socialization is carried out in the development of teachers, employees, administrators, and all actors in the foundation, with the theme of development for teachers and employees. This strengthening of socialization reinforces the principles of learning and is based on the teachings of Kanjeng Sunan Drajat and the Islamic boarding school's scientific tradition. Methods for instilling values can be carried out by giving responsibilities in the form of assignments, providing role models, and habituation under strict control.

The values of *akhlakul karimah* are socialized vertically through the transfer of knowledge and values from the mentors to all students in the traditional life of the Islamic boarding school. Horizontal socialization is carried out through a system of coordination and communication among students. Assignments for administrators and educators represent a form of responsibility in building self-awareness in the appreciation of noble morals. They will be able to participate in adapting the values that have become traditional in the Islamic boarding school.

Maintaining and nurturing the network of knowledge in Islamic boarding schools between the *kiai* and the students as a result of the internalization of the values of *akhlakul karimah*. In maintaining the traditions of Islamic boarding school knowledge, it is necessary to habituate, appreciate, and apply them in everyday life. Likewise, supporting factors in the internalization of values, where the education of values in Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan is still rooted in the values of the *catur piwulang* Kanjeng Sunan Drajat where the *kiai* is a symbol of the authority of religious knowledge as a reference for students. In addition, the founders and the next generation remain dedicated in the struggle to maintain the values of the Islamic boarding school. In addition, there are also inhibiting factors in internalization that are influenced by individual factors if outside the discipline in actualizing the values of *akhlakul karimah*. Managers who have an interest in Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan need higher authority in carrying out their duties.

Examining the findings above, it can be explained that the internalization approach refers to the thinking of The Social Construction of Reality by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. (Greedharry, 2010; Heide, 2018; Knoblauch, 2025) Internalization of values is the process of making certain values part of a person's personality, which is seen in attitudes, behavior, and ways of thinking consistently. These values are not only known, but also believed and lived. He adapted and refined the classical approach to educational values with an emphasis on three stages: (1) value transformation, (2) value transaction, and (3) value transinternalization.

The reinforcement of values through socialization also reinforces the view of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who emphasized that the process of value formation in education, especially in Islamic boarding schools, is a dialectical process involving the externalization of values by figures or institutions. These values are objectified into a social system and ultimately internalized by individuals as part of noble character. This view reinforces the importance of the social environment and role models in values education, not merely as cognitive instruction but as a holistic and ongoing

social process.

According to Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, externalization is the process by which individuals express ideas, values, or norms within themselves into concrete actions in the social world. Externalization occurs when a person's internally held values are manifested in behavior, social interactions, or educational systems. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, externalization can be seen in how kiai (Islamic scholars), ustadz (Islamic teachers), or students (students) display Islamic values in their daily lives, whether through teaching, parenting, or social life.

The strengthening of values through socialization in Islamic boarding schools, such as simplicity in life, obedience to teachers, or a culture of deliberation, becomes a social structure and tradition that is not only owned by individuals, but by the entire Islamic boarding school community. This strengthening, according to Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, is called objectivation, where the process of externalization results into a social reality that is considered objective by society. Values that initially originate from individuals, through repeated habits and practices, become an established and generally accepted social system.

This research also aligns with Émile Durkheim's thoughts on habituation in his work, *Education and Sociology*. (George Ritzer & Douglas J. Goodman, 2004) Durkheim emphasized that education plays a fundamental role as a means of habituation. The educational process not only transfers knowledge but also instills social values and norms through repeated practice, discipline, and the reinforcement of positive habits. Durkheim also linked habituation to the concept of social solidarity. In traditional societies, habituation is manifested through collectively repeated rituals, customs, and traditions.

Assigning assignments can encourage students to develop habits. Habitual practices for students are activities carried out repeatedly, thus forming habits. Habitual practices for students are activities that are not limited by time, place, or conditions without pressure. Habitual practices are carried out spontaneously without pressure, thus fostering awareness. Internalized habituation is also in line with the thinking of Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, who made profound contributions to the fields of education, morality, and spirituality. (Rambe, 2021) In his works, especially *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, al-Ghazali emphasized that the primary goal of education is to develop noble morals and draw closer to Allah SWT. This process is carried out through early habituation, role models, spiritual training, and the integration of knowledge and good deeds. Islamic values are not only understood cognitively but also internalized and manifested in concrete behavior. The ultimate goal is the formation of a complete human being (*insan kamil*) who is knowledgeable, faithful, and has noble morals.

Abraham Maslow's thoughts on Human Nature and Human Motivation. Abraham Maslow, a leading figure in humanistic psychology, developed a theory of human needs known as Maslow's hierarchy of needs. (Koltko-Rivera, 2006; Maslow, 1968; Papaleontiou-Louca et al., 2022) Internalization, according to Maslow's perspective, is a psychological mechanism by which values, norms, and motivations from outside an individual are integrated into an internal need system, thus becoming part of an individual's consciousness and intrinsic drive. In the context of the hierarchy of needs, internalization allows a person to act not only because of external factors (e.g., rewards or social pressure), but also because of internal drives that align with their values.

At the level of self-actualization, internalization plays the most significant role. Maslow argued that individuals who achieve self-actualization not only fulfill material or social needs but also internalize higher values, such as truth, beauty, justice, and the meaning of life. These values, Maslow called being values, guide individuals to act consistently with the moral and spiritual principles that have become an integral part of their being.

The internalization process is also marked by the transfer of knowledge. This transfer of knowledge is provided directly by the tutor through daily Javanese recitation of Salaf books, adapted to the level of education. Students receive a stream of values through recitation using the same methods and methods as the Islamic boarding school's scholarly tradition. The kiai (Islamic scholars) not only transfer knowledge but also inspire the journey of the Islamic boarding school, as Mua'amar stated, making the kiai the most dominant element in Islamic boarding school life. This echoes Martin van Bruinessen's assertion that kiai are not merely ordinary teachers but also spiritual guides and advisors in one's personal life, ritual leaders, and prayer readers in traditional customs. (Cetin et al., 2020; Van Bruinessen, 1994)

The horizontal transfer of knowledge at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan is carried out by the administrators and educators within a mutually agreed-upon governance structure. Learning activities at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan are planned from bedtime to waking. The values conveyed are structured in the form of standards, rules, laws, and norms that have become established traditions. In the socialization process, the roles of administrators and educators are influential factors in transforming values.

Findings at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan indicate that maintaining and nurturing the network of knowledge between the kiai and the students is a result of the internalization of the values of akhlakul karimah (good morals). Maintaining the traditions of Islamic boarding school knowledge requires habituation, appreciation, and implementation in daily life. Internalization of the values of akhlakul karimah at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan begins when educators and administrators receive a transfer of values from their mentors. They then engage in a series of assignments. This habituation becomes a value accepted by the administrators and educators as objective because it is believed to be in accordance with the mentors' teachings.

The process of internalizing values that culminate in the self-identification of administrators and educators initiated by the guardians in the form of the value of sincerity, namely by carrying out tasks selflessly according to applicable regulations. The value of simplicity by using everything according to needs and general compliance with the parameters of the Islamic boarding school standard. The value of independence, namely prioritizing needs according to what is needed to support the independence of the Islamic boarding school through the development of creativity. The value of uhuwah Islamiya, namely the effort to build unity and oneness in solidarity eliminating group and class barriers. The value of freedom, namely developing self-potential that can be accounted for. This thinking is also in line with the thinking of Gordon Graham through his work *Eight Theories of Ethics*. (Firmansyah, 2025; Graham, 2004; Kumar et al., 2025) He made an important contribution to understanding how moral values can be internalized in the lives of individuals and society. Graham showed that the internalization of values is not a single process, but involves habituation, rationalization, appreciation, and practical awareness.

The findings state that the values of Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan are still rooted in the values of the four pillars of Kanjeng Sunan Drajat as a supporting factor in the internalization of the values of akhlakul karimah. Biologically, Prof. Dr. KH. Abdul Ghofur is also one of the 14th descendants of Kanjeng Sunan Drajat. The figure of KH Abdul Ghofur in the development of Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan is beyond doubt with a wealth of experience in education. A kiai with an entrepreneurial spirit, a social spirit and an educational spirit who is very consistent in maintaining the traditions of Islamic boarding school knowledge. Kiai is also a symbol of authority in religious knowledge so that it becomes a reference for students, guardians of students and the community. (Hakam & Nurdin, 2016)

In preserving the tradition of Islamic boarding school scholarship, Peter L. Berger and Thomas

Luckmann believe that the values in Islamic boarding schools stem from an integrated value system that operates within a tightly knit community. Kiai, as public figures, support spiritual activities and are responsible for educational services.(Berger & Luckmann, 2016) The educational system is based on dialogues about Islamic teachings, which possess both absolute truth and relative social reality.(Samaun Bakry, 2005) The holistic education fostered in Islamic boarding schools demonstrates their consistent commitment to developing individuals with character.

The findings indicate that inhibiting factors in internalization are influenced by individual factors if they are outside the discipline in actualizing the values of akhlakul karimah. In addition, the managers who are interested in Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan need higher authority in carrying out their duties. The process of identifying the internalization of akhlakul karimah values at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan is difficult if individual factors outside the discipline and strict control are not implemented properly. The administrators and educators at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan need high authority in carrying out their duties. In addition to higher authority, obstacles to the internalization process occur due to the turnover of new and old students which occurs almost every year. As well as the different age levels of the student participants, which gives rise to different understandings and awareness.

This condition is related to the value education approach by Douglas P Superka with the Cognitive Moral Development Approach where a person's moral development occurs gradually and systematically, from a low level to a higher level based on their thinking ability.(Superka, 1976) The cognitive moral development approach is driven by the level of thinking, which means that the development of students' understanding based on age greatly influences students in accepting the internalization of akhlakul karimah values.

Conclusion

The tradition of scholarship at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan is based on the principle of learning from the teacher or kiai. Likewise, the instillation of noble moral values involves administrators and educators. This instillation of values is carried out both formally and informally, integrated vertically and horizontally within the boarding school's governance through simultaneous socialization, both verbally and in writing. This method of instilling values is actualized by becoming administrators and educators. Modeling is carried out by carrying out duties and responsibilities. Actualization of understanding of values is manifested in habits and awareness in carrying them out. The values conveyed to students to this day remain rooted in the teachings of Kanjeng Sunan Drajat. This research also supports the thinking of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality*, explaining that social reality is the result of construction built through human interaction, which occurs through three stages: externalization, objectivation, and internalization.

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