Innovative Learning in Modern Boarding School: Evaluating Effectiveness and Embedded Character Values at PPM Surya Buana Malang

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Abstract :

The learning model implemented in modern boarding school represents a critical area of educational research, as these institutions aim not merely to develop academic competencies but also to strengthen character formation, discipline, and religious values among students. Operating as a residential educational institution, PPM Surya Buana Malang implements an integrated learning pattern that combines intracurricular activities, co-curricular programs, and the daily life experiences of students, thereby creating a comprehensive educational process. This research aims to analyze both the conceptual framework and practical implementation of the learning model developed at PPM Surya Buana by examining three primary areas: (1) the integration of the Islamic boarding school curriculum, (2) patterns of character value internalization through the residential system, and (3) the effectiveness level of the learning model in shaping student character. This study employs a qualitative approach utilizing three data collection techniques: literature review, direct observation within the boarding school environment, and interviews with administrators and educators at PPM Surya Buana. Data were collected through systematic literature examination and analyzed using a thematic model to identify dominant conceptual patterns. The research findings indicate that: (1) the boarding school curriculum is integrated into learning through strengthening Islamic material content, habituation of worship practices, and activities supporting student discipline; (2) character value internalization is constructed through role modeling, intensive mentoring, and continuous supervision; and (3) the effectiveness of character formation proves to be high because students undergo a consistent learning process both in classroom settings and within the dormitory environment. These findings demonstrate that the learning model at PPM Surya Buana Malang contributes significantly to producing students with strong character who are prepared to adapt to the demands of the modern era

Keywords: *Learning models, Islamic boarding school curriculum, character values.*

INTRODUCTION

Modern Islamic boarding school education has increasingly become one of the most sought-after educational models in society due to its capacity to integrate formal curriculum with intensive character development (Daniel & Iqbal, 2025). The educational system implemented in modern Islamic boarding schools enables a learning process that operates continuously, allowing religious values, discipline, and responsibility to be internalized consistently in daily life. This learning system positions boarding schools not merely as institutions for transmitting Islamic knowledge but as centers for character formation and sustainable lifestyle habituation for students (Jaenullah, Utama, & Setiawan, 2022).

PPM Surya Buana Malang, as one of the modern boarding schools, implements integration between intracurricular activities, co-curricular programs, and the daily life of students. The pattern of worship habituation, *Madrasah Diniyah* activities, *Tahfidz* programs, academic guidance, and mentoring based on homeroom supervision demonstrates that character formation is conducted systematically and structurally (Kohar & Asy'ari, 2024). The strengthening of the boarding school curriculum combined with full-day schooling creates a comprehensive learning atmosphere where knowledge, attitudes, and skills are developed simultaneously (Rokhman & Munir, 2022).

Despite the growing body of literature on Islamic boarding school education, several significant research gaps remain. First, while numerous studies have examined either formal curriculum implementation or character education separately (Gunio, 2021), few have comprehensively analyzed how these two dimensions are systematically integrated within a 24-hour residential learning environment. Second, existing research tends to focus on theoretical frameworks of character education without providing detailed empirical evidence of the specific mechanisms through which values are internalized in daily boarding school life (Said, Ridwan, & Sholeh, 2025). Third, most studies examine boarding schools from a single perspective—either curriculum analysis, student outcomes, or teaching methods—lacking a holistic approach that captures the interconnected nature of all educational components working simultaneously (Malisi & Sulasman, 2024).

Furthermore, there is limited documentation of how modern pesantren balance traditional Islamic teaching methods (such as sorogan and bandongan) with contemporary pedagogical approaches to meet 21st-century educational demands (Asyiah & Sari, 2025). The role of intensive mentoring systems, particularly the homeroom guardian *(wali dampingan)* model in facilitating personalized character development, remains underexplored in the existing literature (Osman, 2024). Additionally, while research acknowledges the importance of continuous supervision in boarding schools, few studies have empirically examined how 24-hour monitoring translates into measurable character transformation outcomes

(Rasyid, Suhardan, & Huliatunisa, 2021).

The modern boarding school learning model is compelling to investigate because its effectiveness lies not only in material delivery but in the process of value internalization through role modeling, discipline, social interaction, and continuous supervision (Mau, 2024). This study addresses these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of the integrated learning model at PPM Surya Buana Malang, offering empirical insights into the interconnected mechanisms of curriculum integration, habituation systems, and mentoring frameworks. The novelty of this research lies in its holistic examination of how formal academic learning, religious education, worship habituation, and residential life experiences converge to create a unified character education system. By documenting the specific practices, challenges, and outcomes of this integration, this study contributes to understanding how modern Islamic boarding schools can serve as effective models for comprehensive character education in contemporary contexts. Therefore, research on the integrated learning model at PPM Surya Buana Malang is essential to understand how curriculum integration, habituation systems, and mentoring mechanisms can holistically shape student character, and to what extent this model can serve as a reference for other educational institutions (Azizah, Muchtar, & Putra, 2023; Putra, Mank, Juniarni, & Husni, 2024)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study employs data collection methods through observation and interviews to obtain direct and in-depth information regarding the research object. Observation is conducted by utilizing the five senses to observe activities, events, conditions, and behaviors related to research subjects. The observation methods used consist of unstructured observation, which allows researchers to adjust their findings to field dynamics, and group observation, which enriches data perspectives. This research also utilizes interview methods or question-and-answer processes conducted between researchers and informants directly. The purpose of interviews is to obtain more in-depth information about what has been observed and to ensure that the resulting findings can support or refine previous findings. (Rahardjo, 2011)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
A. Concept and Integration of Curriculum at PPM Surya Buana

Learning represents a dynamic and interactive process that occurs through the involvement of students, educators, and various educational resources within a structured learning environment. This process encompasses knowledge development, acquisition of practical skills, and development of positive attitudes and character. Educators play an essential role in designing learning strategies and curricula that encourage active participation, critical thinking, and meaningful understanding (Mau, 2024). Such intentional learning design enhances the overall effectiveness of the learning experience, ensuring that learners are

motivated, engaged, and able to implement their knowledge in real-world contexts.

As stipulated in the Law on Teachers and Lecturers Number 14 of 2005 Article 8, it is stated that teachers must possess academic qualifications, competencies, educator certification, physical and spiritual health, and have the ability to realize national education goals (Sari, Komarudin, Badrujaman, & Tola, 2023). Teacher competencies as referred to in the law include pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence obtained through professional education

Learning management encompasses a comprehensive approach to organizing and overseeing classroom activities to optimize student engagement and achievement. This approach involves careful planning of teaching strategies, establishment of clear expectations, and implementation of procedures that encourage positive behavior. At the core of effective learning management is building mutually respectful and collaborative relationships between students and teachers, which fosters a sense of community. Creating a supportive environment encourages motivation and active participation (Rokhman & Munir, 2022). Ultimately, successful learning management depends on planned communication and well-structured interactions that facilitate meaningful student learning experiences and promote an inclusive and conducive classroom climate.

Modern Islamic boarding schools are Islamic educational institutions that have adapted to the times and implement a more inclusive, diverse, and relevant educational approach to the demands of modern society (Muhajir, 2022). Historically and culturally, boarding schools can be viewed as training centers as well as centers of Islamic culture whose existence is institutionalized by society, especially the Moslem community, so their position is recognized de facto even by the government (Roqib, 2021). In its development, boarding schools have a non-classical learning model. This system uses the *bandongan* method, where *Kiai* reads a book at a certain time while students listen to the reading while holding the same book. Additionally, there is the *sorogan* method, where students who already have more advanced abilities submit book readings directly to *Kiai*, who will then correct any errors (Asyrofiyah, Ibrahim, & Choiriyah, 2024)

Initially, boarding school education originated from simple study sessions. However, over time, boarding schools have developed into regular educational institutions favored by society. The learning provided encompasses both material and immaterial aspects. Materially, students are required to complete classical Islamic texts written by medieval scholars according to established targets. Immaterially, boarding school education is directed toward character formation and behavioral change in students so they can become strong individuals in daily life (Abdullah, 2020; Solihin, Hasanah, & Fajrussalam, 2020). In other words, boarding schools play a role in helping students achieve psychological maturity.

The boarding school curriculum at PPM Surya Buana is built based on the characteristics of boarding schools that combine formal education with non-formal religious learning. The existence of boarding school operational permits and the *Madrasah Diniyah* under government supervision makes this boarding school curriculum have a clear structure while remaining flexible to be adjusted to internal institutional conditions (Rasyid et al., 2021). This demonstrates that boarding schools do not merely add religious activities outside school hours but design learning spaces that integrate with student development needs.

In the boarding school context, worship habituation becomes the main part of the curriculum. At PPM Surya Buana, this habituation begins early in the morning when all students wake up at three in the morning to perform *salat tahajud* (voluntary night prayer). This routine is not only practice of voluntary worship but also a character formation strategy because it demands discipline, physical toughness, and self-control (Aziz & Zaman, 2023). After *Salat Subuh* (dawn prayer), activities do not stop. Boarding school supervisors have arranged a series of activities that differ each day, such as Quran memorization submission (*setoran hafalan*), worship guidance, moral development (*akhlak*), mentoring regarding problems faced by students at school, and formation of Arabic and English language environments. This pattern shows that religious learning and self-development are implemented through systematic routines, not just theoretical class sessions

Students attend formal school until the afternoon because the school education system uses a full-day pattern. This condition makes boarding schools arrange activity patterns that adjust to school schedules ((Lucañas, 2025). Therefore, in-depth religious activities are placed early in the morning and at night. After *Salat Maghrib* (sunset prayer), students participate in listening (*sima'an*) and religious study (*mengaji*), then continue with *Madrasah Diniyah* learning sessions after *salat isya* (night prayer). At night, students also receive study assistance for general subjects delivered by *ustadz* (a teacher). The presence of this assistance helps students keep up with school lessons despite a fairly packed boarding school schedule

Madrasah Diniyah becomes an important element in the boarding school curriculum. Structurally, *Madin* at PPM Surya Buana follows the basic curriculum compiled by the East Java *Diniyah Takmiliyah Communication Forum* (FKDT). This forum provides guidelines in the form of syllabi, content standards, and reference books for each level. However, implementation is not rigid. Each institution is given space to adjust teaching to internal boarding school conditions, student character, and the creativity of each teacher (*ustadz*) (Alfiyah, Kawakib, & Sholeh, 2025). Therefore, although the curriculum is uniform in general outline, each student's learning experience is greatly influenced by the culture and learning design at their respective boarding schools.

Material in Madin is delivered using basic books commonly used in

diniyah education, such as *Ta'lim al-Muta'alim* for learning etiquette, *Taisir al-Khalaq* for strengthening morals, *Arba'in Nawawi* for deepening hadith knowledge, and basic *nahwu* (syntax) and *shorof* (morphology) books for strengthening Arabic. There is also material about Islamic history, social etiquette, and basic knowledge of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). These books are divided according to grade levels so students are not burdened by overly heavy material, and in practice, only one subject is used per night so students can focus on understanding the material content more deeply.

The teaching method in *Madrasah Diniyah* becomes the most prominent aspect because each teacher has the freedom to choose the most effective approach. One commonly used method is *sorogan* (individual recitation), where students read books or present memorization individually before the ustadz. This method helps ustadz check students' abilities directly and correct reading or meaning errors. Besides *sorogan*, the *bandongan* (group study) method is also applied, where ustadz reads the book, translates, and explains its contents while students listen and note important points. There are also interactive lectures that combine material delivery with question-and-answer sessions, class discussions that encourage students to think critically, and educational games to maintain student focus because activities are conducted at night when students begin to feel tired. These methods ensure that *diniyah* learning is not monotonous and its benefits can still be felt by students despite being conducted at physically demanding times.

Outside *diniyah* activities, students also participate in *tahfidz* development which is a flagship boarding school program. Interestingly, this *tahfidz* program is not only a boarding school program but also part of the formal school program. This integration allows students to have more optimal memorization achievements because development is conducted regularly from morning, afternoon, to night (Kohar & Asy'ari, 2024). The presence of this tahfidz program increasingly affirms the boarding school's identity that wants to balance academic capabilities with Quran reading and memorization abilities.

Although the curriculum has been structured in such a way, its implementation still has challenges, especially fatigue experienced by students. School schedules from morning to afternoon absorb much of students' energy, while nights are used for diniyah activities and reviewing lesson material. This condition often leaves students exhausted, especially at the junior high school level (SMP and MTs) who are still in the early stages of physical development (Hasanah & Haris, 2023). However, varied teaching methods and intensive mentoring from ustadz help reduce boredom, so students can still follow boarding school activities well.

Overall, the boarding school curriculum at PPM Surya Buana is an integrative and holistic curriculum. Worship habituation, book study, academic mentoring, language development, and *tahfidz* programs are

arranged into one unified educational system that not only instills knowledge but also shapes character, spirituality, and student personality (Gunio, 2021)). This curriculum proves that boarding schools are capable of presenting an adaptive, comprehensive educational system that remains rooted in the Islamic scholarly tradition.

B. Effectiveness of the Learning Model on Student Character Formation

Character formation is one of the most important aspects for young generations to continue discussing because it greatly influences a nation's future (Faisol, Padil, & Barizi, 2024). Therefore, every group needs to instill mental toughness, maintain unwavering spirit and perseverance, be able to endure difficulties, demonstrate creativity and self-discipline, and consistently strive to build strong character (Habibah & Amirudin, 2023).

Character linguistically means psychological traits, morals, or manners that distinguish one person from another; temperament; and disposition. Character is defined as a unique way of thinking and behaving for each person to live and work together in family, society, nation, and state. Character education is a deliberate effort to cultivate good character based on core virtues that are objectively good for both individuals and society (Besari, 2022; Islamic, Ishaq, & Dayati, 2024)

PPM Surya Buana Modern Islamic Boarding School has fulfilled the role of boarding schools in forming more disciplined students by instilling values of morals, discipline, independence, and strong spirituality. In this context, various routine activities such as congregational worship, diniyah studies, guardian mentoring, and habituation-based learning play important roles in the character value internalization process.

The learning model in boarding schools proves to be highly effective in shaping student character because it combines worship habits, intensive mentoring, various learning methods, high-quality diniyah materials, and a supportive social environment (Jaenullah et al., 2022; Muslim, Nasrul, & Alfiah, 2025). Structured worship habituation encourages the formation of discipline and religious commitment, while mentoring by homeroom guardians and ustadz/ustadzah ensures the learning process proceeds in a directed, dialogical manner responsive to student needs (Supriyandi, Chandra, & Marhayati, 2025). Various learning methods in diniyah activities make the learning process more attractive and adaptive, so students not only gain understanding of religious material but also develop critical thinking abilities. Diniyah materials centered on morals, etiquette, and role modeling further strengthen the internalization of Islamic character values

This effectiveness is clearly visible through changes in student behavior, such as increased ability to lead prayers, lead *dzikr*, or become imams in family environments. Additionally, the boarding school environment that demands independence and adaptability accelerates the character formation process through daily life experiences (Mau, 2024; Sharma, 2024). Thus, the combination of habituation, mentoring, learning

methods, diniyah materials, and the boarding school ecosystem creates a comprehensive character education process that successfully shapes student personalities significantly

C. Internalization of Character Values Through the Residential System

Character education in boarding school environments becomes highly effective because the learning system operates 24 hours a day (Mahmud, Hanif, & Hidayatullah, 2022). The integrated learning model applied integrates academic curriculum with moral development, social activities, and life skills development. In this system, students not only learn character values theoretically in class but also practice them in daily life. Boarding schools function as social laboratories that allow students to habituate themselves to discipline, togetherness, and responsibility through intensive interaction and repeated habituation. Role modeling by educators, caregivers, and strong school culture reinforce the value internalization process (Maula, Jazilurrahman, & Suhermanto, 2022).

Observation results show that this theoretical concept is truly implemented in residential life. Student routines from post-Fajr activities, full-day school, madin activities, to evening study create consistent and continuous habituation. The homeroom system implemented facilitates intensive mentoring for each student, including those with minimal basic religious knowledge. Additionally, caregivers and teachers not only carry out teaching functions but also become role models in worship, ethics, interaction, and discipline. These structured activities make every activity, both formal and non-formal, part of the character education process

The integration of academic and religious curricula, along with 24-hour supervision at PPM Surya Buana, proves comprehensive character value cultivation. Learning materials such as *fiqh* (Islamic Juriprudence), *Arba'in Nawawi* (Hadith book), or *Taisirul Kholaq* (moral book) are strengthened through worship practices and social interaction in dormitories. Habituation of orderly living, cooperation, and social care are built through group activities and senior guidance, so character values are not only taught but also experienced and practiced directly. Thus, observation findings support the theory that boarding schools are highly conducive environments for forming students with character, independence, and discipline.

Integrated Learning Model Forms Character:

1. Habituation in Routine: Residential life is full of fixed schedules, such as waking up early, congregational worship, evening study, to cleaning duties. This pattern trains discipline, responsibility, and student independence. Habits done repeatedly in social contexts make values easier to internalize. Consistent structured schedules (*salat tahajud* (voluntary night prayer), *Salat Fajr* (dawn morning), morning activities, full day school, afternoon activities, *madi,* self-stud or evening mentoring) form discipline, responsibility, and independence. For examples: post *Salat Subuh* (dawn Prayer) activities, *muroja'ah*

(repeating Quran), Saturday sermons, Sunday development, self-study with ustadz/ustadzah mentoring.

2. Role Models and Social Environment: Boarding schools provide intensive interaction spaces between students and supervisors and peers. Role modeling shown by teachers or caregivers becomes an important factor because students tend to imitate consistently displayed behavior (Abdullah et al., 2023). Supervisors, teachers, and caregivers act as consistent role models whose daily actions (worship, interaction ethics, cooperation) become direct examples imitated by students. Boarding schools provide high observation frequency so role modeling more quickly influences habits. At PPM Surya Buana, activities led even by students (e.g., leading prayers, *dzikr*) are visible, indicating internalization of positive behavior from examples. The prayer/*dzikr* guidebook system facilitates transfer of these habits.

3. Integration of Academic Curriculum with Character: Subjects do not stand alone but are combined with value learning. For example, cross-subject group work teaches collaboration, while community service-based projects cultivate care. Each student has a homeroom guardian/supervisor who conducts personal development including memorization submission, counseling, progress evaluation strengthened with group sessions (sermons, religious teachings). This intensity enables handling of each student's moral/emotional needs. Post *Salat Subuh* (dawn prayer) activities at PPM Surya Buana, alternating memorization submission, and presence of ustadz/ustadzah during self-study demonstrate real and structured mentoring.

4. Monitoring and Feedback: Because students live in dormitories, character supervision and assessment can be conducted continuously. Every student behavior can immediately receive appreciation or correction, so the character formation process proceeds more effectively. Because students live in a residential environment, schools can conduct continuous supervision providing immediate feedback, quick behavior correction, and educational rewards or sanctions. Monitoring also maintains habituation consistency. The full-day model accompanied by evening activities (Quran study, *madin*) and monitoring mechanisms through supervisors show all-day supervision. This system helps transform habits that initially make students "shocked" into routine.

5. Environmental Control: Boarding schools limit students' exposure to negative external influences. Thus, focus on value learning is more maintained, although it must be balanced with digital literacy and social skills provision.

6. Comprehensive (Holistic) Approach: Integrated learning in boarding schools usually emphasizes balance between spiritual education, academics, and life skills. This makes character formation more complete because it covers intellectual, emotional, and moral domains

(Mau, 2024).

Various studies, both in Indonesia and abroad, show that residential education systems contribute greatly to character formation. Studies on *Tahfidz* boarding schools, for example, found internal strategies (planning, teaching, implementation, reward and punishment, evaluation) and external strategies (supervision and parental cooperation) that effectively increase student independence (Kohar & Asy'ari, 2024). Other research in modern boarding schools found that integration of moral values in formal and non-formal curricula strengthens students' religious and social character (Islamic et al., 2024). Furthermore, effective organizational leadership and positive school culture have been shown to significantly enhance the overall educational experience in *pesantren* settings (Musaddad, 2024). The involvement of parents in the educational process also plays a crucial role in student development and academic success.

Effective Practices in Integrated Learning at PPM Surya Buana:

a. Morning Routine: *Salat Tahajud Tahajud*, *Salat Subuh*, Post *Salat Subuh* activities (mentoring/memorization submission or bilingual material). These activities strengthen spiritual discipline and learning habits.

b. Full Day School & Boarding: Formal learning until afternoon (15:45) continued with boarding activities (*murojaah, madin*, self-study) so character values are honed in academic and non-academic contexts.

c. Madin & Non-Formal Curriculum: *Madin* materials are arranged according to FKDT folder/standards but adjusted to boarding school conditions important for student level adaptation.

d. Role of Homeroom Guardians & Seniors: Homeroom guardians conduct personal mentoring; senior mentoring strengthens leadership and responsibility aspects.

The residential life system model provides an ideal context for character value internalization when managed with role modeling patterns, intensive mentoring, and 24-hour supervision (Mahmud et al., 2022). Integration between formal curriculum and *madin*, consistent daily routines, and active roles of supervisors/homeroom guardians form sustainable habits from worship behavior to academic and social independence. Strengthening evaluation instruments and supervisor capacity becomes key so achieved results can be measured and improved ((Iksal, Hayani, & Aslan, 2024; Maula et al., 2022)

CONCLUSIONS

Research results show that PPM Surya Buana successfully implements an integrated curriculum combining formal education, diniyah learning, worship practices, and residential life programs. Through this integration, the education system becomes broad, flexible, and focused on character formation rather than merely achieving academic achievements. Flexible curriculum and support for learning methods such as *bandongan, sorogan*, and personal mentoring are crucial for educational success.

Through the combination of habits, examples, intensive mentoring, and good social environment, the boarding school learning model has proven effective in building student character. Discipline, independence, responsibility, and strong spirituality can be instilled through daily worship practices, *diniyah* materials focusing on morals and etiquette, and continuous relationships between students and supervisors. Changes in increasingly positive student behavior in worship, ethics, and social abilities serve as indicators of success.

Additionally, the 24-hour residential life system accelerates value internalization because every daily activity is structured as part of character education. Continuous supervision, strengthening boarding school culture, and integration of academic and religious curricula make the boarding school environment a highly effective space for forming individuals with character. Thus, the integrated learning model at PPM Surya Buana can be viewed as a comprehensive educational practice in systematically and comprehensively building student character.

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