

## **The Philosophy of Kuda Leupas ti Gedogan: An Analysis of the Religious Deviation of Students in Ormas-Based Islamic Boarding Schools in Garut Regency**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to determine the religious deviation that occurs in several Islamic boarding schools under the auspices of Islamic community organizations (Ormas) in Garut Regency. The focus of the study is directed at the forms of behavioral deviations of students in four Islamic boarding schools affiliated with organizations: Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam (Persis), and Syarikat Islam (SI). The method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that in the four Islamic boarding schools, similar forms of religious deviation were found, which the local community calls "horse loose from gedogan", namely deviant behavior that shows disobedience to the values of the Islamic boarding school. However, each Islamic boarding school has its own strategy in overcoming this deviant behavior. The conclusion of this study shows that religious deviation is influenced by internal factors as well as external factors in the form of a less conducive and uneducational social environment, so that it becomes a challenge in achieving the goals of Islamic boarding school education.

**Keywords:** Religious Deviations; Islamic Boarding Schools; Horses Loose from Gedogan

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## INTRODUCTION

Pesantren as an Islamic educational institution plays an important role in shaping the religious and moral character of students. To him is tethered to great hopes, regarding the central role of pesantren as a moral "workshop". It is likened to a workshop, a place where deviant characters are fostered, improved, and directed in accordance with Islamic values. In the end, of course, pesantren not only assumes that all students come in perfect condition and have good morals, but instead accept the fact that there are shortcomings and even moral damage that need to be addressed. Its role as a moral guardian institution in society, pesantren not only plays a role in forging the morals of students, but also responds to various challenges of social problems that arise around it. The ever-changing social dynamics make pesantren adaptive and play a synergistic role with local culture. This dynamic nature is the strength of pesantren as a fortress of civilization that is able to maintain tradition while answering the challenges of the times.

In the context of Sundanese culture, pesantren understand well the phenomenon of "*kuda leupas ti gedogan*", which is a metaphor for the deviant or out-of-control behavior of individuals who have lost their moral control. The term also describes someone who loses direction and control after being detached from the bonds or guidance that is supposed to keep them. In the context of Islamic education, this philosophy describes students who commit religious deviations after being released from the supervision of Islamic boarding schools or madrasas (Yusuf, 2023). The pattern of deviations in the Islamic society environment often has complex problems. This deviation can manifest in various forms, such as neglect of religious obligations such as not covering the awrah, immoral behavior, consuming illegal drugs or even criminal acts. This phenomenon often describes a person who loses direction and control after being detached from the bonds that are supposed to guide them.

The perception of CSO-based Islamic educational institutions regarding this philosophy is important to be analyzed in order to understand how they see and deal with the phenomenon of religious deviation among students. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Persis, and Syarikat Islam for example, have diverse views and approaches in overcoming this problem. Maximum religious education is one of the patterns to prevent deviant behavior of students in the community. However, this education must also be balanced with other efforts through an approach that understands the social, cultural, and psychological context. This shows the importance of a comprehensive approach from various aspects, especially in religious education that does not only focus on ritual aspects, but must also understand the social dynamics and psychology of students and their environment.

Including, the expression *loose horse ti gedogan* does not only function as a negative label for students who commit deviations. Furthermore, this term actually contains a message of criticism that functions as a social mirror for students so that they do not forget their identity as guardians of values and calls for goodness. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this philosophy is a moral reminder so that students always return to *the khittah* of the Islamic boarding school—namely their main role in fostering morals, instilling noble values, and maintaining their integrity in society. Thus, the meaning contained in the term is not only corrective, but also educational and reflective.

*The Spaniards, however, have lost their sense of social control.* This ultimately becomes a driving factor for religious deviation (Muslih, 2015). The statement still emphasized that consistent and strict supervision is needed to ensure that students remain on the right track. Before further highlighting the influence of the environment on religious deviation that occurs in society, the family should be the most highlighted of the causes of religious deviation occurring. The family is the main foundation in the formation of children's character and morals, including in terms of religiosity (Azis, 2018).

Effective religious education not only teaches religious values, but must also instill discipline and self-control in students (Hidayat, 2020). Based on this, it can be seen how the role of pesantren education intervenes to form a character and avoid religious deviations. Another influence is peer and peer pressure can cause adolescents in pesantren to deviate from the religious values taught (Wahyudi, 2017). If supervision from all these elements is not effective, students risk falling into behavior that is not in accordance with religious values. Therefore, a comprehensive prevention approach is needed, including character development, stricter supervision, and a psychological approach to avoid behavioral deviations.

In essence, the phenomenon of religious deviation in the pesantren environment can be read through the lens of the Sundanese philosophy *of kuda leupas ti gedogan*, which describes a person who is out of control of the bonds of values and norms that form his identity. Students who engage in behaviors such as smoking, skipping school, brawling, immorality, or other immoral acts reflect a condition in which they not only get out of the supervision of the Islamic boarding school, but also from the social control of their family, society, and religious values that should be their life. In this context, religious deviation is not only a form of violation of rules, but also a symptom of disconnection from the value building system as a whole. Therefore, instilling discipline and strengthening self-control is an important aspect in preventing deviations, as well as reaffirming the role of pesantren as a space for character formation and guardians of the moral dignity of students.

Various sources of research on the main role of pesantren in fostering morals have been widely carried out (Anam, etc., 2019; Badrudin, 2022; Jubba, 2022), but research that focuses on religious deviations based on CSO-based pesantren is still very minimal. In fact, generally Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia have a color that is inseparable from the background of the community organizations (CSOs) that formed them, such as: NU, Muhammadiyah, Persis, and SII. These four mass organizations are present in harmony, especially in Garut regency, West Java, as a multicultural religious area (Tohari, 2019). Departing from all of that, this research was carried out.

Therefore, the urgency of this research lies in its relevance and uniqueness in raising a phenomenon that reflects the tension between the ideality of pesantren values and the reality of student behavior outside its formal environment. The local term *kuda leupas ti gedogan* is not only a mirror of Sundanese culture, but also represents a pattern of religious deviation that occurs when students are outside the institutional control of Islamic boarding schools that are members of Islamic organizations such as: Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Islamic Unity, and Islamic Company, both in the family environment, the general public, and community organizations. The uniqueness of this research lies in its efforts to connect the phenomenon of student behavior with local wisdom as an analytical approach, which has rarely been touched in educational and religious studies.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of understanding the phenomenon of religious deviation of students in the context of *the Sundanese philosophy of kuda lupas ti gedogan*, which is under the auspices of four Islamic community organizations (CSOs), namely Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Islamic Association (Persis), and Syarikat Islam (SI) in Garut Regency. The research subjects include students, alumni of students, caregivers of Islamic boarding schools (*mudir* and teachers), parents of students, and local community leaders (RW). The total number of respondents was 146 people. The selection of pesantren is carried out based on different approaches in fostering students. Data collection techniques were carried out with questionnaires, in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation to get a holistic picture of student behavior and deviations that occurred inside and outside the pesantren. Data were obtained using questionnaire guidelines, interviews, and observation sheets that have been adjusted to the focus of the research. Data analysis is carried out by following the stages of qualitative analysis, which include data reduction, data preparation, and conclusion drawn. This research was conducted in the period November 2024 to February 2025 at selected Islamic boarding schools in Garut

Regency. In maintaining research ethics, researchers are obliged to maintain the privacy of respondents (Hidayat, Tohari, and Kardipah, 2025), so that the identities of the pesantren and the individuals involved are not named in the report of this research journal.

## **RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION**

Religious deviation has the meaning of deviation from religious norms or teachings embraced by individuals in a certain social context. This behavior can include various actions that are not in accordance with the moral and worship principles regulated by religion, both in personal and social life (Damanik and Rustyawaty, 2023). This can be influenced by various factors, both internal factors, namely from themselves, and external factors, such as the family, school and community environment. Internal, or genetic factors can contribute to deviant behavior, although their influence is often amplified by the surrounding environment (Kusuma, 2019). This innate factor refers to the biological or genetic characteristics that a person carries from birth that can affect his behavior during growth.

External factors also affect the deviation that a person does is one of the things that can be used as the basis for the beginning of deviation. An environment that is not conducive, such as an unharmonious family or a poor social environment, can be the main trigger for deviant behavior (Santoso, 2018). The environment plays an important role in shaping a person's behavior. A less supportive or negative environment can encourage individuals to commit deviant actions. In addition to these two factors, understanding values, norms and culture is also a trigger for deviation. Individuals who fail to understand and appreciate cultural norms and values tend to fall more easily into deviant behavior (Aminah, 2020).

Several types of deviations occur among the community, including systemic, situational, and individual deviations. Systemic deviation is a type of deviation that is carried out systematically through the organization. Usually, this type of deviation applies in an organization that influences its members in action. Deviations committed by one of the members are actually justified by all members. As a result, irregularities become neatly organized within the organization. The situational deviation is caused by external influences. A person becomes a transgressive personality due to coercion or external factors. For example, the surrounding environment factors are not good. An example of this type of situational deviation is a group of students who like to spoil and make trouble. The influence of the outside environment on student behavior, including how the pressure from an unconducive environment can encourage students to commit deviant actions. Meanwhile, individual deviation refers to

deviations made by a person from existing laws or norms. The factors that trigger this deviation are more related to internal or psychological aspects. Psychological and biological aspects of a person can affect individual behavior, as well as being the main cause of deviations in their behavior (Rahmawati, 2015).

Religious deviation behavior in students is usually interpreted by Sundanese philosophy by using the term: "*Kuda leupas ti gedogan*". This philosophy is a symbol of the transition or dependence towards independence. This philosophy teaches the importance of breaking free from the limitations and attachments that hinder individual development. This emphasizes that this transition is important for individual development, both in social, economic, and spiritual aspects (Supriyatna, 2021).

The saying *of the horse is free from the gedogan* symbolically also reflects a person's freedom after successfully escaping from all obstacles or obstacles that previously limited him. This indicates that the individual has reached a level of independence that allows him to determine the direction of his or her own life without being hindered by other inhibiting factors. More broadly, this saying can be assumed in situations where a person manages to overcome existing limitations. Then achieve positive changes in his life, having gained new freedom and opportunities. As such, this saying contains a very deep meaning about self-liberation and the opportunity to take control of one's own destiny. Of course, this assumption reflects the philosophical wisdom that inspires as part of the discussion of human existentialism.

In philosophical discussions, it is very relevant to describe the concept *of the free horse from the gedogan* with the concept of self-liberation. It also has the meaning of the relationship between freedom, responsibility, and moral challenges (Elijah, 2023). Freedom or emancipation refers to the process or condition by which a person or group breaks free from limitations, oppressions, and constraints that prevent them from achieving their full potential or individual freedom.

The idea *of a loose horse from gedogan*, is a concept of emancipation describing the importance of freeing oneself from dependency or attachment that hinders individual development. This saying highlights the process of liberation from restrictive social norms, cultural expectations that affect the individual, and a narrow view of the self and the world around them. In other words, this concept teaches the values of self-liberation to achieve independence and freedom in determining the direction of one's own life.

However, on the other hand, the behavior *of the free horse from the gedogan* is a behavior that is mostly contrary to and rejected from the applicable norms. Which in him still negates all his behavior that is contrary to the applicable rules of wisdom. Of course, the act *of a horse is free from the gedogan* does not

necessarily justify negative behavior in the name of an existentialist self-liberation. These are the two sides of the discussion gap that are interesting to research.

Religious deviation as a form of deviation from religious norms and teachings often arises due to internal and external influences that disturb one's spiritual stability. The meaning of deviance is often interpreted narrowly as the encroachment of freedom. Usually this expression of freedom is felt to be more and more so, when the students have cleaned up all the routines at the *pesantren*, and returned to the community. From the previous feeling of being very constrained by various rules in Islamic boarding schools, it became very loose from the norms in society. Therefore, the term *loose horse from gedogan*, has the meaning of a horse that is so *euphoric that it is* very free because it comes out of its stable.

However, when the spirit of liberation is not accompanied by a wise understanding of religious values and norms, then the freedom has the potential to give birth to deviation. Thus, although the *horse is free from the gedogan* reflects the courage to take control of life, it is still necessary to be careful so that this freedom does not shift into legitimacy for deviant behavior that negates the true moral and religious principles.

The main reasons parents send their children to Islamic boarding schools ( $x^1$ ,  $x^2$ ,  $x^3$ , and  $x^4$ ), are generally rooted in the hope for a better moral formation and understanding of religion. This was revealed in the results of a questionnaire distributed to parents of students at four research locations, which showed that even though the targeted *pesantren* were different, the motivation of parents was relatively similar. *Pesantren* is considered a place that is able to shape children's character, especially in aspects of religion, discipline, and independence. This expectation reflects parents' concerns about promiscuity and the moral crisis that is rampant among today's teenagers. Amazingly, there was not a single respondent from among parents who had a motive to *pesantren* their children in the hope of reviving the economy in the future.

The expectations of these parents are more oriented towards the moral and spiritual formation of children, not on material achievements. *Pesantren* is seen as a place that is able to instill religious values and discipline in life, which will later be the main provision in living life. So, this motivation is certainly very contrary to the reality of religious deviation. This becomes ironic, there is a contradiction between the values instilled and the actual behavior that occurs.

In *pesantren* respondents  $x^1$  and  $x^4$ , most parents send their children to school for the reason of continuity of early education from *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*. They hope that *pesantren* education will be able to protect

children from the negative influence of the outside environment. However, challenges remain, including deviations that occur both inside and outside the pesantren environment. Even so, schools still strive to address the deviation through graded sanctions and educational approaches involving parents, teachers, and community leaders. This shows that there is synergy between institutions and families in maintaining children's morality and character.

In the  $x^2$  environment, parents view that this pesantren-based education system provides a comprehensive learning space. Not only formal education is obtained, but also the habit of daily worship rituals such as congregational prayers, reciting the Quran, and living independently. These parents hope that with a controlled environment and strong spiritual habits, their children will grow up to be disciplined and religious individuals. Despite this, some of them admit that children's behavior does not always last when returning home and society. This phenomenon indicates that the influence of the outside environment remains strong and needs continued supervision from parents.

Meanwhile, various confessions of parents in pesantren  $x^3$  that their motivation to send their children to school includes the child's own desire, economic conditions (free education), and the reputation of the pesantren as a comfortable and religious institution. Parents consider that the pesantren environment has a positive effect and supports the development of children's character. In addition, character development through strengthening discipline and strict regulations is considered effective to limit the potential for juvenile delinquency.

In general, most parents still consider Islamic boarding schools to be the main choice space that wants an integrated education between science and religion, as well as the development of children's character as a whole. Although in reality in the field there are still behavioral deviations that occur, parents still believe that pesantren have a system pattern that is able to direct their children to a better path. This motivation and hope is strengthened by the positive experiences felt during the child's education at the pesantren, both in terms of independence, discipline, or spirituality. The following is a summary of the general overview of the respondents' parents' confessions regarding the motivation to enter their children in the pesantren and the intensity of their motivation, including:

Table 1. Parents' Motivation to Enroll Children in Islamic Boarding Schools

Motivation	Intensity
Integrated education (religious & general)	90,4%
Deepening of religious knowledge	89,1%
Character building and discipline	88.9%
Worship habits	87.6%



Safety and comfort	85.3%
Child independence	75.8%
Positive and rewarding activities	72.4%
Pleasant atmosphere	70.2%
Light/free fee	65.7%

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews that have been analyzed, the general overview of the profiles of the four pesantren ( $x^1$ ,  $x^2$ ,  $x^3$ , and  $x^4$ ) based on religious organizations shows the complex and challenging dynamics of religious education. These four educational institutions have unique characteristics in education management, character development, and handling deviant behavior among students.

Let's call it pesantren  $x^1$  established with the spirit of locality and community service, built on waqf land to continue the education of MTs graduates. The deviations that occur include minor internal discipline violations, such as: daytime and not following rules, as well as external violations such as smoking and dating. However, a gradual sanction system and an educational and personal approach are the main strategies implemented to maintain order and character development.

Meanwhile, pesantren  $x^2$  carries an integrated education system between formal schools and boarding schools. The main advantage of this pesantren is discipline in worship and fostering student independence. However, the main challenge arises when students return home, where the routine and habits of the pesantren are difficult to maintain. In addition, the issue of *bullying* and minor offenses is a concern for parents and the community, although the deviation is considered to be within the limits of reasonableness. Criticism and expectations of the alumni development system are also important notes, considering that post-pesantren behavior is often not in line with parents' expectations.

On the other hand, the  $x^3$  and  $x^4$  pesantren display a relatively stable and positive image. A comfortable learning atmosphere, clear rules, and good relations between teachers and students are the main strengths of this Islamic boarding school. Although there were still some minor violations such as smoking and not following *sunnah worship*, the management of deviations was considered quite effective with a combination of light sanctions, education, and a spiritual approach. Interestingly, the response of alumni to their experiences during the montok was very positive, and many still maintained the values of the pesantren even though they were outside the dormitory environment.

Overall, the four Islamic boarding schools faced similar problems related to juvenile delinquency or religious deviation. Further to explain the map of violations due to religious deviation that occurred is:

Table 2. Types and Intensity of Religious Deviation of Students

Types of Religious Deviation	Intensity
Smoke	70.3%
Illegal drug abuse	60.8%
Dating	46.2%
Bullying/bullying	44.7%
No prayer/fasting	26.1%
Not wearing a hijab	18.4%
Pregnancy out of wedlock	1.3%

From the analysis of the questionnaire, the rules regarding cigarettes are different. The admission of the results of interviews with the caregivers of the boarding school in the three Islamic boarding schools studied considered smoking as something that should not be done by students inside or outside the Islamic boarding school. So, students who carry out this activity are declared as students who violate the rules. One pesantren emphasized that smoking is allowed inside and outside the pesantren, as long as it is not allowed in front of the school and in the classroom when studying.

All Islamic boarding schools that were studied expressly prohibited the use of illegal drugs, dating, *bullying*, adultery, and other violations of Islamic law. Violations of this, both inside and outside the pesantren as a form of violation that must be addressed. The ethical process for violators is completed by a typical mechanism of the lodge, the type of punishment involving various elements of the Islamic boarding school.

The mechanism for handling problems from the pesantren towards students who commit violations or religious deviations is generally very diverse. *First*, verbal reprimands. This stage is the initial stage of sanctions that are light in nature. *Second*, the penal system still adopts physical and non-physical punishment for violators. Usually this physical punishment is enforced by seniors, *murabbi/murobiah*, or the village head of the cottage. Examples of physical punishment also vary, namely cleaning the bathroom, *push ups*, duck walks, or if the violation is severe, someone is soaked in the bathtub. Non-physical punishment is usually in the form of scientific strengthening activities, such as: copying books by handwriting, or adding certain memorization.

*Third*, sanctions in the form of monetary fines. The nominal amount of this fine is determined based on the severity of the form of violation. Minor violations are fined in the amount of Rp.2,000. Moderate violations, pegged from Rp.5,000 to Rp.10,000, while serious offenses, such as smoking, are required to pay Rp.10,000 to Rp.15,000. These figures have a cumulative value. There was even one of the Islamic boarding schools that was researched, the total fine reached Rp.1,500,000/month/student. The proceeds from this sanction

collection are collected into cottage or dormitory cash, which is used for the activities of the students.

*Fourth*, the summoning of parents. All the pesantren studied agreed, if the students committed repeated violations, then this had consequences for the parents being called to face the pesantren. This is done so that parents also know and think about the condition of their children who have repeatedly committed violations. *Fifth*, if the violation is too severe, the pesantren conducts disclosure by means of a communicative approach with the parents of the students. This approach is absolutely necessary in finding the best solution, for students, Islamic boarding schools, and student families. In fact, this approach sometimes gives rise to various options even the most bitter, namely rehabilitation, *treatment*, returning students to their families, or even coming into contact with legal matters.

Below is a bar chart that maps the types of sanctions applied and the intensity of the frequency of their implementation in dealing with religious deviations of students in the pesantren environment, including:

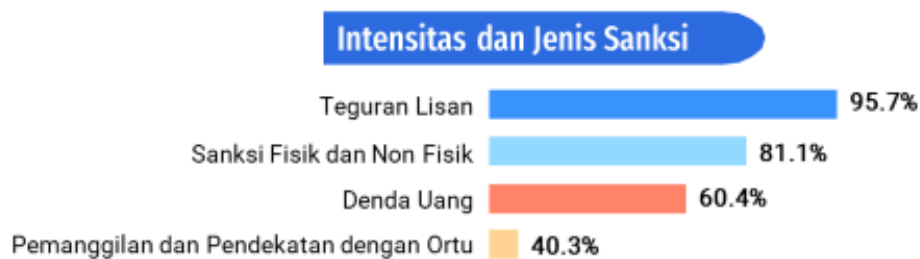


Figure 1. Intensity of Implementation of Various Types of Sanctions

The approach and handling of the problem of religious deviation in each pesantren is indeed different. Each pesantren studied ( $x^1$ ,  $x^2$ ,  $x^3$ , and  $x^4$ ), has a specific strategy in dealing with this problem in a patterned and systematic manner. The approach taken is not only punitive, but also educational and fostering. This proves that pesantren does not only instill discipline, but also prioritizes the value of compassion and shared responsibility. One of the handling patterns applied is a tiered sanction system. In Islamic boarding schools ( $x^1$ ,  $x^2$ , and  $x^3$ ), each violation is assessed based on its severity. In the initial stage, the violator will receive a reprimand. If there is no change in behavior, then light physical sanctions that have been mutually agreed upon are applied, such as cleaning the bathroom. When violations continue to be repeated, the madrasah does not hesitate to call parents to dialogue and find the

best solution for the development of students. This approach makes the disciplinary process a means of character education, not just punishment.

Another important step is parental involvement in child supervision and mentoring. The pesantren ( $x^1$ ,  $x^2$ ,  $x^3$ , and  $x^4$ ), realize that moral and spiritual development is not only the responsibility of the ustadz and caregivers in the boarding school. However, it also requires active contributions from the family. Therefore, pesantren routinely involve parents in pesantren activities and provide an open communication space between guardians of students and the institution. This synergy and communication is believed to be able to strengthen the influence of religious education both in the school and home environment.

Some of the Islamic boarding schools in this study also adopted a preventive approach by organizing routine education. This activity aims to foster awareness among students about the dangers of deviant behavior and instill moral values as a fortress of self-defense. Education is carried out in a variety of ways, ranging from religious lectures, group discussions, to personal approaches by kyai, ustad, *murobi*, or pesantren caregivers to students with problems. Through this method, pesantren not only focus on corrective actions, but also develop preventive strategies or preventive vigilance from an early age.

In the face of modern challenges such as the negative influence of technology, a number of Islamic boarding schools have implemented a policy prohibiting the use of *gadgets* in the cottage environment. Alternatively, internet access is facilitated in a limited manner and closely supervised by the Islamic boarding school. This policy aims to maintain a balance between the value of faith (IMTAK) and technological progress (IPTEK) so that there is no moral degradation among students. Although the ban seems strict, it actually provides a wider space for students to focus on learning and character development.

In general, the decisive steps taken by Islamic boarding schools show their seriousness in creating a disciplined, religious, and conducive educational environment. Handling the religious deviation of the students is not only carried out with sanctions, but also accompanied by continuous coaching, family involvement, and community cooperation. This pattern reflects the distinctive character of pesantren as an educational institution that not only instills knowledge, but also shapes morals and personality. The success of the resolution of handling the problem of religious deviation of students can be a model of character education policies that are relevant and adaptive for other institutions.

There is a uniqueness that occurs in the pesantren environment  $x^4$ , efforts to overcome religious deviation are carried out through synergy between the

pesantren and the local community. This is because the students tend to commit deviant behavior outside the pesantren and mingle with other community members. Thus, the handling actively involves local religious leaders, RT/RW chairmen, and local community leaders. Especially in handling cases such as juvenile delinquency, cigarette consumption, or drug abuse involving students who are outside the pesantren. Strict action in the form of statements and direct coaching is given to violators, which is proven to be able to reduce the number of violations. This approach shows that handling deviations cannot be done individually, but must be collective with *key community stakeholders*.

In essence, the religious deviation that occurs among students in this study often cannot be separated from the influence of two main factors, namely internal and external (Kusuma, 2019). Internally, many students are still in the stage of unstable psychological development, so they are easily driven by emotions, curiosity, or momentary influences without considering the impact on the religious values that have been instilled in the pesantren. This student, who is in a young adult condition, ultimately strengthens Yildiz and Guler's (2024) idea of the interesting attraction between the relationship of belief in free will, the existence of the meaning of life, and self-awareness with their authenticity. This research was able to show that belief in free will and a clear meaning in life contribute positively to self-authenticity. This finding is particularly relevant in the context of students facing challenges in maintaining their religious identity amid social pressure in society. Immaturity in managing stress, pesantren education pressure, or personal conflicts also contribute to the emergence of this deviant behavior.

Meanwhile, external factors such as the social environment of the community that is less conducive and does not support the formation of religious character also aggravates this condition. The environment that lacks exemplary behavior at home and in the community, is open to negative information access, and weak supervision from family and the community makes students vulnerable to falling into this deviant behavior. Of course, the combination of these two factors will be a serious challenge to achieve the goals of Islamic boarding school education that is oriented towards the formation of Islamic personality, spiritual mental discipline, and moral integrity. Therefore, pesantren are required to need to design an educational strategy that touches the psychological aspects of students while building synergy with the outside environment in order to form a strong religious fortress from the inside and outside.

From the results of this study, it turns out that various phenomena of religious deviation among students are more commonly found when they are outside the pesantren environment. That is, when students are no longer under

strict control and supervision in the boarding school. Many of them tend to exhibit behavior that deviates from previously instilled religious values. This is not only due to the weak internalization of religious values. However, it is more because of the outside environment that provides unlimited free space. In the context of Sundanese culture, this behavior can be analogous to the philosophy of *the free horse ti gedogan* or the horse that breathes free air because it is free from the mooring of the cage, which describes freedom without control and direction.

This problem is a big challenge for Islamic boarding schools in continuing the process of character education outside their formal zone. If the *pesantren* turns out to only focus on coaching in the pond fence, then the problems that arise in the community will not be solved directly. Therefore, the problem-solving pattern cannot only be internal, but must also reach external areas, namely the community where the students interact after they return home or even after they complete their education at the Islamic boarding school.

It is important for Islamic boarding schools to understand that how the surrounding community is part of the social system that determines the success of student development. Thus, it is not enough to approach religious deviation only with a normative or punitive approach, but must go through an approach that is grounded in local wisdom. Local wisdom in Sundanese culture, such as the values of *mutual honing*, *mutual love*, and *mutual nurturing*, can be the basis for building social relations that educate and foster, not just act.

The position of the existence of Islamic boarding schools in the midst of Sundanese society has a great opportunity to make local cultural values an instrument for conflict resolution. The problem of the community is related to multidimensional problems (Tohari and Julianto, 2016), so it is important that the role of *pesantren* is to find solutions to these problems that pay attention to all aspects of life or *integrated solutions*.

The active involvement of *pesantren* in various dimensions of society such as: economic, political, and social is part of the strategy of cultural blending. *Pesantren* no longer stands as a closed institution, but rather as part of a cultural network of people who care about the morals and behavior of the younger generation. In this way, *pesantren* are not only centers of knowledge, but also agents of social change based on the reality of society.

If the *pesantren* is not able to adapt its approach to the surrounding community, then the problem of deviation that occurs outside the *pesantren* fence will never be completely solved. Instead, there will be various other gaps between the idealism built in the cottage and the wild reality faced by the students outside. The philosophy of *kuda leupas ti gedogan* is a warning that *pesantren* not only forms character in the control room, but also prepares

students to be able to bring religious values into a free but challenging social space.

The behavior of loose horses from *gedogan* is indeed factually an acute problem in the world of Islamic boarding schools and society. But strangely, his behavior is very rampant, but many young students do not understand the philosophy of this loose horse from this *gedogan*. As with the results of this study, most students do not know the meaning and purpose of this philosophy. Naïve indeed, the students have been kept away from their own culture. The Spaniards did not *give up*.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

### Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, although each *pesantren* has a different background of mass organizations, systems, and approaches, the main motivation of parents to give their children trust to the *pesantren* is to form morals and instill strong religious values. Not solely for economic purposes or material achievements. Thus, the motivation of these parents shows a relatively uniform pattern, namely *pesantren* as a solution for children's moral and spiritual education. This motivation is based on concerns about moral degradation for their own children and the belief that *pesantren* is a safer and supportive environment in the formation of religious, disciplined, and independent character.

However, the reality phenomenon in the field shows that religious deviations of students still occur, both inside and outside the Islamic boarding school. This is a serious challenge for Islamic boarding school educational institutions that have basically tried to carry out comprehensive character development. These deviations come in many forms, ranging from minor disciplinary violations to more severe juvenile delinquency. In solving this problem, *pesantren* apply a tiered sanction approach combined with educational coaching and parental involvement. This strategy emphasizes that *pesantren* are not only repressive, but also educate holistically.

The focus of *pesantren* seriousness in dealing with deviations can also be seen from the involvement of the community, the collaboration of parents and community leaders. This collective approach is the key in overcoming external influences that often trigger student deviation, especially when they are outside the cottage environment. Islamic boarding schools not only rely on the punishment system, but also prioritize the value of compassion, continuous supervision, and preventive education to foster the moral awareness of students. Thus, *pesantren* remain a strategic institution in religious character education that is relevant to the challenges of the times, while offering an

alternative educational model based on collaboration between institutions, families, and communities.

### **Implication**

The findings imply that Islamic education, both in Indonesia and globally, should view pesantren not only as religious institutions but as comprehensive moral ecosystems. Parents' consistent motivation shows that moral and spiritual formation remains the core expectation of Islamic education. However, the persistence of student deviations indicates that moral education must be adaptive, realistic, and continuous. This suggests that Islamic institutions need to strengthen holistic approaches that combine discipline, guidance, compassion, and collaboration with families and communities. Globally, this study implies that effective Islamic character education cannot rely solely on internal institutional control but must involve shared responsibility across social environments. Therefore, pesantren offer an important model of collaborative, value-based education that remains relevant in responding to contemporary moral challenges.

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