Parental Perceptions of Islamic Religious Education in Boarding Schools and Children's Religious Character Development: A Case Study Approach

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze parents' perceptions of Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools in developing their children's religious character, using a case study of the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School in Garut. The research method used was a qualitative case study, with data collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving parents of students, the boarding school leadership, and teaching staff. The results indicate that the majority of parents have a very positive perception of the Islamic religious education system in Islamic boarding schools, particularly in terms of fostering worship, strengthening morals, and integrating religious and general education. Parents consider the religious, disciplined, and exemplary environment of Islamic boarding schools to be very effective in shaping their children's religious character. The findings also indicate that active parental involvement and intensive communication with the boarding school are important factors in maintaining the continuity of children's character development, both within the boarding school and within the family. However, maintaining the consistency of Islamic boarding school values when children return home poses challenges. This study concludes that positive parental perceptions and support for Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools significantly contribute to the successful formation of children's religious character. The results are expected to serve as a reference for developing synergy between Islamic boarding schools and families in children's character education.

Keywords: family synergy; Islamic Religious Education; Islamic Boarding Schools; parental perception; religious character.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic religious education in Indonesia plays a central role in the character formation of the younger generation, particularly in facing the challenges of globalization, which brings changes in values and lifestyles. Amidst the currents of modernization and technological advancement, public concern, especially among parents, regarding the erosion of religious and moral values in children is increasing. The development of the era, marked by modernization and rapid technological advancement, has brought about

significant changes in various aspects of life, including mindsets, behaviors, and societal value systems. The current digital era offers easy access to information, cultural globalization, and social interaction that transcends geographical boundaries. However, behind these opportunities, families and educational institutions face serious challenges, particularly in preserving religious and moral values in the younger generation.

For many parents, modernization is often synonymous with the influx of new values that do not always align with local religious and cultural teachings. Children, as digital natives, are highly vulnerable to exposure to various content that can influence their mindset, behavior, and even their religious identity. Phenomena such as individualism, consumerism, hedonism, and shifting social and ethical norms are particular concerns for parents who hope their children will continue to grow up within the framework of strong Islamic values. These concerns become even more relevant when considering data and research showing a decline in religious practice, a decline in social awareness, and an increase in deviant behavior among adolescents due to the influence of social media and uncontrolled social environments (Rozikin & Astutik, 2022).

In this context, the family, as a microenvironment (microsystem), according to Bronfenbrenner's (1981) theory, plays a central role in maintaining and instilling fundamental values in children. However, massive external challenges often make the family's role insufficient without the support of a structured educational environment. Therefore, many parents have begun to seek alternative solutions by entrusting their children's education to institutions that consistently instill religious and moral values, such as Islamic boarding schools (Bronfenbrenner, 1981).

As depicted in its profile, the Al-Qur'an Asy-Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School (PPS) exists as a response to these concerns. The pesantren offers a conducive environment for the formation of religious and moral character through the integration of religious and general education, a program for habituating worship, and the exemplary behavior of teachers and caregivers. With a vision *"Mumtaaz in Worship, Moral in Life and Performance for the Hereafter"* This Islamic boarding school strives to prepare a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also spiritually resilient and imbued with noble morals. Compulsory programs such as tahsin (recitation of the Quran), tahfidz (memorization of the Quran), Qur'an recitation, study of the yellow books, and the practice of daily practices serve as the primary bulwark in protecting children from the negative influences of modernization.

Moreover, Islamic boarding schools play a strategic role as partners for families in building synergy in character development. Parents no longer feel alone in facing the challenges of the times, because Islamic boarding schools provide a comprehensive educational system, a religious social environment, and a mutually supportive community instilling Islamic values. This synergy between families and Islamic boarding schools is key to building children's moral and religious resilience amidst the currents of global change. Therefore, concerns among society and parents about the erosion of religious and moral values in children in the modern era are not unfounded. However, through collaboration between families and Islamic boarding school-based educational institutions that have a vision and structured programs, the hope of producing a generation with noble character, broad knowledge, and preparedness to face the challenges of the times can still be realized in a concrete and sustainable manner.

Islamic boarding schools, as traditional and modern Islamic educational institutions, have now become the primary alternative for parents seeking a strong religious education while strengthening their children's religious character (Aliyah et al., 2024). The Al-Qur'an Asy-Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School in Leuwigoong, Garut, is a prime example of an educational institution that integrates Islamic religious education with general education and emphasizes the development of noble morals and religious character through various flagship programs based on the Qur'an and classical texts.

Literature reviews indicate that parental perceptions of religious education in Islamic boarding schools significantly determine the success of children's religious character education programs (Rozikin & Astutik, 2022; Saepudin & Mulyanto, 2025). Previous studies have revealed that parental involvement and support in Islamic boarding school education contribute significantly to the internalization of Islamic values and the formation of children's character (Aliyah et al., 2024; Triyono, 2019). However, these studies are generally general in nature, and few specifically examine parental perceptions of Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools in specific local contexts, especially using an in-depth case study approach in Islamic boarding schools with unique programs and long histories, such as the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School.

This research gap lies in the limited studies examining how parents' perceptions, expectations, and experiences regarding Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools can influence the effectiveness of children's religious character formation. This research gap lies in the limited studies that in-depth examine how parents' perceptions, expectations, and experiences regarding Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools actually influence the effectiveness of children's religious character formation. Most previous studies have focused more on the effectiveness of the curriculum, learning methods, or the Islamic boarding school environment itself in shaping the character of students (Rozikin & Astutik, 2022; Triyono, 2019). Meanwhile, psychosocial aspects originating from the family—particularly parental perceptions and participation—are often only briefly mentioned as supporting factors, without being explored systematically and contextually.

According to Bronfenbrenner's (1981) theory of developmental ecology, the family is a microenvironment that significantly determines the direction of a child's development of values and character. Parents' perceptions of Islamic boarding schools, their expectations for educational outcomes, and their experiences interacting with educational institutions will significantly influence a child's attitudes, motivation, and acceptance of the religious values taught. If parents have positive perceptions and high expectations, and are actively involved in their child's educational process, the values of the Islamic boarding school will be more easily internalized and practiced by the child, both within the Islamic boarding school environment and at home (Bronfenbrenner, 1981).

To date, there has been little research specifically examining the dynamics of parental perceptions—from their motivations for choosing an Islamic boarding school, their expectations for religious education, to their children's actual experiences during their time at the school—and how all of these interact to shape their children's religious character. Furthermore, each Islamic boarding school has its own unique programs, culture, and history that distinguish it from others, such as the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School, which emphasizes the integration of religious and general knowledge, and emphasizes the habituation of worship and character building through its mandatory programs.

Existing studies often generalize parental experiences without considering local contexts, Islamic boarding school traditions, and the diverse expectations that may differ from one community to another. Consequently, understanding how the synergy between parental perceptions and expectations and Islamic boarding school educational programs contributes to the effectiveness of children's religious character formation remains partial and incomplete. This study aims to fill this gap by delving deeply into the perceptions, expectations, and experiences of parents at the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School and analyzing how all three influence the success of children's religious character formation.

With a contextual case study approach, this research is expected to provide new contributions to the literature on Islamic education, particularly in formulating an effective collaboration model between Islamic boarding schools and families in developing a generation with noble character, broad knowledge, and readiness to face the challenges of the times. This research offers novelty by delving deeply into the perceptions of parents at the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School, which not only assesses the formal aspects of education, but also pays attention to the integration between Islamic boarding school traditions, family values, and the implemented character education program. Thus, this article is expected to provide a more contextual and applicable scientific contribution in the development of a model of Islamic boarding school-based religious character education.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to deeply understand parents' perceptions of Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools in building children's religious character. In line with the opinion of Creswell & Poth (2018), qualitative research focuses on exploring the meanings given by participants to a phenomenon, and allows researchers to explore richer data through direct interaction with research subjects (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Meanwhile, the case study was chosen because it provides an opportunity to examine educational phenomena in a real and specific context, namely the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School, with the aim of gaining a comprehensive understanding (Yin, 2018).

The location of this research was determined to be the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School. The location was chosen based on the consideration that this Islamic boarding school implements an integrated education system between the formal curriculum and Islamic boarding school-based religious education,

making it relevant for research in the context of children's religious character formation. The research subjects consisted of parents or guardians of students whose children were studying at the Islamic boarding school. They were chosen as the main informants because parental perceptions are considered an important factor in assessing the success of Islamic religious education implemented by the Islamic boarding school. According to Stake (1995), the selection of informants in a case study must be purposive, that is, determined based on their involvement and relevance to the phenomenon being studied (Stake, 1995).

Data collection techniques were carried out through several methods, namely: In-depth interviews, used to explore parents' perceptions, expectations, and experiences regarding Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools. This method allows researchers to obtain more personal and detailed data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Observations, both participatory and non-participatory, were conducted to see directly how Islamic religious education practices are implemented in Islamic boarding schools and how children live their daily lives in a religious environment, and documentation, in the form of school records, activity books, daily student schedules, and policy documents, were used as supporting data to validate the information from interviews and observations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The data analysis technique in this study uses an interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2018), which includes three main stages: first, data reduction, which is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting raw data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Second, data presentation *(data display)*, carried out in the form of matrices, descriptive narratives, and charts to facilitate understanding of the relationship patterns between data. Third, drawing conclusions and verification, namely the process of formulating meaning based on systematically collected data and rechecking to ensure the consistency of the findings (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, 2018).

To ensure data validity, this study employed triangulation techniques, including source triangulation, technical triangulation, and time triangulation (Patton, 2002). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from various informants. Technical triangulation was conducted by combining interviews, observations, and documentation. Meanwhile, time triangulation was conducted by collecting data at different times to avoid situational bias. With this research design, it is hoped that the results of the study will provide an accurate, in-depth, and valid picture of parents' perceptions of Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools in shaping children's religious character (Patton, 2002).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Parental Perceptions and Religious Character Education

Parents' perceptions of Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools are a key factor in developing a child's religious character. Bronfenbrenner's theory of the ecology of child development asserts that the family, especially parents, is a microenvironment that greatly influences the formation of a child's values and character (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1981) ecological theory of human development is one of the most influential foundations for understanding how the environment shapes a child's growth and development. Bronfenbrenner views child development as the result of dynamic interactions between individuals and various interrelated and hierarchical environmental systems, starting from the closest *(microsystem)* to the widest *(macrosystem)* (Bronfenbrenner, 1981).

At the core of the theory, the microsystem is the environment closest to and most directly influencing a child's development, namely family, school, peers, and the neighborhood. Among all elements of the microsystem, the family—especially parents—is the primary actor in shaping the foundation of a child's values, norms, and character from an early age. Through daily interactions, parenting, role models, communication, and instilling values, parents provide not only physical needs, but also spiritual, emotional, and moral needs of the child. A supportive, harmonious, and religious family environment will provide optimal space for the internalization of positive values, including Islamic values and religious character.

Bronfenbrenner asserted that the quality of interaction in the microsystem greatly determines the direction of the child's development. Parents who are actively involved in their children's education, set an example in worship, maintain open communication, and instill discipline and responsibility, will form children

with strong, resilient, and religious characters. On the other hand, a family that neglects, lacks attention, or even sets a negative example, has the potential to give birth to children who are morally fragile and easily influenced by the outside environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1981).

In the context of Islamic boarding school education, such as at the Al-Qur'an Asy-Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School, the role of the family as a microsystem is highly strategic. While Islamic boarding schools do provide a religious environment, programs to cultivate religious habits, and character development, the success of internalizing these values is greatly influenced by parental perception, support, and involvement. When parents have a positive perception of religious education at the Islamic boarding school and actively collaborate with the school, children will more easily absorb and practice the religious values taught. Conversely, if there is a disconnect between the values taught at the Islamic boarding school and the parenting style at home, children will experience value confusion *(value confusion)* which can hinder the formation of a complete religious character.

Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner's theory also highlights the importance of the mesosystem, namely the relationship between two or more microsystems, for example the interaction between the family and the Islamic boarding school. Strong synergy between the family and the Islamic boarding school will strengthen the consistency of values received by children, so that the character formation process runs more effectively and sustainably. In practice, intensive communication, parental involvement in Islamic boarding school programs, and the existence of Islamic parenting and friendship forums, become important bridges in building a harmonious and productive mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1981).

Thus, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory not only describes but also explains in depth how the family/parents as a micro-environment have a fundamental influence on the formation of children's values and character. In the context of Islamic boarding school-based education, this theory emphasizes that the success of a child's religious character formation is highly dependent on the quality of interaction and synergy between the family and the educational institution. Further exploration of this theory opens up space for collaborative innovation in character education, where families and Islamic boarding schools become strategic partners in developing a generation with noble character, knowledge, and readiness to face the challenges of the times. In the context of Islamic boarding school education, parents' positive perceptions of the integration of religious and general education will strengthen children's motivation to participate in the entire learning process and the instilling of religious values. Furthermore, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory also emphasizes that children learn from their immediate environment, including parental role models and support for the values taught in Islamic boarding schools (Bandura, 1997).

A Case Study: Parents' Perceptions at Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School

The research results show that the majority of parents of students at the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School have a very positive perception of the Islamic religious education implemented at the boarding school. This positive perception is rooted in the belief that the boarding school-based education system, which integrates learning *Al-Quran*, yellow books, and daily practices have proven effective in shaping children's religious character. This aligns with Zarkasyi's (2015) research, which states that Islamic boarding schools, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, have long served as centers for moral development, spirituality, and role models for the younger generation in Indonesia (Zarkasyi, 2015).

According to parents, one of the main factors strengthening their positive perceptions is the disciplined, religious, and exemplary environment of the Islamic boarding school teachers and dormitory administrators. This educational environment is considered to have a significant influence on children's religious habits and daily behavior. This is consistent with Nurcholish Madjid's (1997) view that Islamic boarding schools are not merely educational institutions, but also *cultural and moral agent* which instills religious values and an Islamic ethos of life (Majid, 1997).

In addition, parents also appreciate the mandatory boarding school programs such as *tahsin*, *memorization*, *recitation of the Qur'an*, Dhuha prayer, *Qiyamul Lail*, as well as the habituation of prayer and daily practices. They believe these programs not only improve children's religious competence but also foster soft skills such as discipline, responsibility, and independence. This view is supported by research by Dani (2023), who found that Islamic boarding school-based education contributes significantly to instilling religious values while developing students' social skills through worship routines and the habituation of collective life (Dani, 2023).

Furthermore, parents' positive perceptions were reinforced by their real-life experiences of witnessing changes in their children's behavior after some time at the boarding school. Many parents reported increased awareness of religious practices, polite behavior, and social awareness in their children. This transformation aligns with the concept of "boarding school" (in Indonesian) *character building* as put forward by Lickona (1991), who emphasized that character formation is not only done through formal instruction, but also through life experiences that are internalized in daily routines (Lickona, 1991).

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that parents' perceptions of Islamic religious education at the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School are very positive, as they see a strong integration between formal education, religious instruction, and the practice of worship. The Islamic boarding school is viewed not only as a place for children to acquire religious knowledge but also as an effective institution for developing religious character, discipline, and an Islamic personality. Thus, these parental perceptions demonstrate a strong belief in Islamic boarding schools as relevant educational institutions in addressing the moral and spiritual challenges of the modern era.

The Relationship between Parental Perception and the Effectiveness of Character Education

The research results show a significant relationship between parents' positive perceptions of Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools and the effectiveness of their children's religious character education. Parents who strongly believe in the importance of religious education and trust the Islamic boarding school's guidance system generally provide full support, both morally and materially, and through communication. This support manifests itself in active parental participation in Islamic boarding school activities, open communication with the ustadz (Islamic teachers) and administrators, and consistent instilling religious values in their children at home.

Research findings show that students whose parents actively communicate with the Islamic boarding school, for example through guardian forums, monthly progress reports, or social gatherings, tend to adapt more quickly to the Islamic boarding school culture. These children more easily adapt to the daily discipline of the Islamic boarding school, participate in religious activities with full awareness, and demonstrate the development of religious character traits such as devotion, politeness, responsibility, and independence.

Conversely, students whose parents are less directly involved, either due to time constraints or a lack of understanding of the importance of collaboration with the Islamic boarding school, often face obstacles in the process of internalizing religious values. These obstacles become more apparent when students return to their families during the holidays, where a lack of parental support in maintaining the religious customs of the Islamic boarding school can lead to behavioral regression. This phenomenon demonstrates that consistent religious character education requires continuity between the Islamic boarding school and the family environment.

These findings align with Rozikin & Astutik (2022), who emphasized the importance of parental involvement in Islamic boarding school education programs to strengthen the internalization of religious values in children (Rozikin & Astutik, 2022). Similarly, Triyono (2019) stated that intensive communication and collaboration between Islamic boarding schools and parents are among the determining factors in the success of character education (Triyono, 2019). Furthermore, Lickona (1991) in his theory of character education, also emphasized that effective character education cannot be separated from the involvement of the family as the primary educational agent outside of school (Lickona, 1991). At the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School, communication patterns established through student progress reports, parent-guardian meetings, and regular social gatherings have proven to be an effective strategy for ensuring the continuity of children's character development. With this collaborative pattern, the religious values acquired by children at the Islamic boarding school can be maintained when they return to their family environment.

The Contribution of Islamic Boarding Schools to Children's Religious Character
a.   *Improving discipline in worship*
The routine of Islamic boarding schools is to pray five times a day in congregation, recite the Koran/recitation ḥsīn Al-Qur'an, and study of the book, develop *habit formation* Consistent worship. Field studies in Islamic educational settings found that religious discipline was strengthened through structured practices (daily schedules, exemplary behavior by religious teachers, and dormitory supervision). This finding aligns with research on fostering religious discipline in adolescents through scheduled religious

programs, as well as research on student discipline in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), which emphasizes the role of collective rules and positive social control (Ramadhani & Jinan, 2025).

Islamic boarding school-based education is known to be effective in fostering deep religious discipline, particularly through daily routines such as the five daily congregational prayers, Quranic recitation or *tahsin*, and study of the yellow books. This pattern applies the principle *habit formation* This means consistently cultivating the habit of worship, instilled through daily scheduling, exemplary behavior by caregivers, and dormitory supervision. A field study at the An-Nur Putri Islamic Boarding School in Malang found that performing congregational Taqwiyatul Hifdzi prayers helped students who had memorized the Quran strengthen their memorization and foster daily spiritual discipline (Charisma et al., 2022). In Islamic boarding schools, congregational prayer is often not only ritually obligatory but also supported by collective rules and positive social control within the dormitory. For example, at the An-Nur Putri Islamic Boarding School and MTs Al-Khoiriyyah, student supervision is carried out through a system of care and room grouping. This creates an atmosphere where religious discipline is not only personal but also a social obligation within the Islamic boarding school community.

b.   *Strengthening morals and manners*

In Islamic boarding schools, there is a term, "adab before knowledge." This is not an ordinary term, but rather an ethical framework that animates the entire educational process. From the first day, students are accustomed to organizing their intentions, guarding their speech, and respecting scientific authorities (kiai/ustadz) before entering the "class" of knowledge. This practice is concretely manifested in the pattern of the relationship of obedience between students and kiai, the culture of greeting and permission, politeness in assemblies (sitting, listening, not interrupting), and the ethics of interaction between students in the dormitory. The emphasis on adab leads students to view knowledge as a trust, that intellectual ability must go hand in hand with moral maturity. Classical and modern Islamic boarding school literature consistently shows that this ethos fosters students' habits of tawadhu' (humble), respect for teachers, trustworthy, and measured in their actions (Munzillah & Anshory, 2024).

Historically, the primary means of transmitting these values were the tradition of studying "yellow books" and the dormitory culture *sorogan*, *bandongan*, and *halaqah*, students practice intellectual patience (patiently reading/reciting texts), while simultaneously learning morals from the exemplary behavior of the kiai/ustadz, a co-curricular process that unites the content of the text and the ethos of its inheritors. Classical studies of Islamic boarding schools emphasize this continuity: Dhofier portrays how the moral authority of the kiai and the culture of obedience of the students maintain "tradition" (not just ritual), while van Bruinessen shows the continuity of the curriculum *yellow book* as a medium for the formation of orthopraxis, orderly and civilized religious practices. Both position Islamic boarding schools as "learning communities" that produce and reproduce morals through shared discipline and positive social control in the dormitory (Bruinessen, 1994; Dhofier, 1980).

In daily practice, exemplary behavior (uswah) is the key, a shared schedule (congregational prayer, (*muhadhara*) speech practice, cleaning duty, *halaqah* night), the room/dormitory care mechanism, and enforcement of rules present a combination *soft control* (example and advice) with *firm control* (consistent rules). Field research on student etiquette guidance shows a clear shift in behavior: from a tendency toward less discipline to adherence to standards of courtesy and responsibility after going through a cycle of guidance, indicating that etiquette is formed through habituation, supervision, and positive reinforcement (Mahmudi & Zuhri, 2021).

Recent findings also position Islamic boarding schools as an effective space for the formation of moderate religious character (*moderate*). Through a textual curriculum, communal living practices, and accountable scholarly authority, Islamic boarding schools foster attitudes of tolerance, balance, and justice in religion. Research on several Islamic boarding schools in Central Java, as well as a conceptual-empirical review of religious moderation, documents how teaching, supported by the example of kiai/ustadz, produces a moderate habitus in cross-group relations. This means that the adab instilled is not only micro-ethics (politeness) but also social ethics (the ability to interact peacefully amidst diversity)(Umiarso & Qorib, 2022).

Thus, the strengthening of morals and manners in Islamic boarding schools occurs through three interlocking axes: (1) the ethos of adab before knowledge, which structures how students approach knowledge and authority; (2) the tradition of yellow books and dormitory culture, which combine intellectual

discipline and moral habituation; and (3) the exemplary behavior of kiai/ustadz who transform norms into practice. At the macro level, this configuration contributes to a moderate and civilized religious character, relevant to a pluralistic society and the currents of globalization (Bruinessen, 1994; Dhofier, 1980; Umiarso & Qorib, 2022).

c. *The habit of living simply, working together, and independently*

One of the unique characteristics of Islamic boarding schools is the internalization of the values of simple living, independence, brotherhood, and constructive freedom, encapsulated in the Panca Jiwa Pesantren philosophy. These values are not mere discourse, but rather operational principles that structure the daily lives of students in the dormitory. The concept of al-basāṭah (simplicity), for example, is evident in the students' lifestyle, which is accustomed to eating together with simple menus, dressing simply, and avoiding consumptive behavior. This simplicity fosters a thrifty mentality, resilience, and readiness to face life's challenges. Independence is instilled through the habit of students taking care of their own needs, from washing clothes and cleaning their rooms to managing study schedules without relying too much on parents or guardians. Meanwhile, the ukhuwah (shared spirit) in the dormitory trains students to respect differences, share space, and collaborate in various collective activities such as community service (cleanliness), living together, and managing student organizations (OSIS/OPPM) (W et al., 2023).

These Panca Jiwa values are not only passed down from generation to generation but are also documented in the institutional traditions of modern Islamic boarding schools. Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School, for example, explicitly formulates Panca Jiwa as a basic educational philosophy encompassing sincerity, simplicity, self-reliance, Islamic brotherhood, and freedom. Research by Faruq et al. (2025) confirms that this philosophy successfully shapes the character of students who are self-reliant, highly solidary, and adaptive in social life (Faruq et al., 2025).

The practice of dormitory life reinforces these values. Routine activities such as cleaning duty, mass community service, and student business units (cooperatives, canteens, or small economic activities) serve as vehicles for experiential character education. Students not only learn the theory of brotherhood and mutual cooperation but also experience firsthand the dynamics of collective work that demand responsibility, discipline, and social empathy. Research by Arifin (2024) shows that Islamic boarding schools are effective in fostering social values and independence through an activity-packed, habit-building boarding system (Arifin, 2024).

The culture of mutual cooperation is also internalized in religious practices. Daily alms programs, social solidarity, and Islamic boarding school social actions shape a habitus of social concern among students. Research by Nurul Fitriyah A.W. (2023) found that students' involvement in social activities such as community service, orphanage assistance, and alms management not only fosters solidarity but also builds a collective awareness of giving before receiving (W et al., 2023).

In the context of independence, research by Khoiruddin et al. (2022) emphasizes that the Islamic boarding school system has long taught the value of independence through self-management of internal needs at the economic, administrative, and academic levels. Islamic boarding schools encourage students to become not only consumers of knowledge, but also producers of ideas and agents of social change (Khoirudin et al., 2022). This is reinforced by Kholifah's (2022) study which documented how students who are accustomed to being independent in Islamic boarding schools tend to be better prepared to face global challenges when they return to society (Kholifah, 2022).

Thus, cultivating a simple lifestyle, mutual cooperation, and independence in Islamic boarding schools is not merely a daily routine, but rather a systematic character development process. Through the Panca Jiwa philosophy, dormitory activities, social programs, and economic independence, Islamic boarding schools successfully shape students with simple morals, solidarity, resilience, and readiness to live in society. These values are relevant in developing a young generation that is not only spiritually strong but also resilient in facing social challenges and globalization.

Challenges and Hopes of Parents

Although the majority of parents of students at the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School have a very positive perception of Islamic religious education based on Islamic boarding schools, this study also found a number of challenges faced in implementing religious character education for children. One of the main challenges is the influence of the environment outside the Islamic boarding school when children

return home, especially during long holidays. Parents realize that the religious values that have been firmly embedded in the Islamic boarding school sometimes experience regression due to interaction in a more heterogeneous society, where not all environments support a religious lifestyle. This is in line with the findings of Sukriyah et al. (2024) who emphasized that the success of character education is greatly influenced by the consistency of the family environment and the community outside the educational institution (Sukriyah et al., 2024).

Furthermore, limited time for parental guidance is a factor that also impacts the continuity of character education. Many parents are busy with work and economic activities, making it impossible to optimally supervise or assist their children in maintaining the religious habits established at Islamic boarding schools. This condition aligns with research by Mulyasa (2013), which shows that parents' role in children's religious education is often hampered by busy schedules, even though family involvement is a fundamental aspect in the formation of religious character (Mulyasa, 2013).

On the other hand, this study also noted a number of parents' hopes for Islamic boarding schools to strengthen their role as religious educational institutions and family partners in developing children's character. Some parents hoped that Islamic boarding schools would improve the quality of their religious development programs by expanding the variety of religious activities, including integrating the curriculum of yellow books, Quran memorization, and Islamic life skills.*(life skills)*This expectation aligns with the idea of Ridwan et al. (2025) who emphasized the importance of innovation in Islamic boarding school curriculum to remain relevant to the needs of the times without neglecting traditional values (Ridwan et al., 2025).

Furthermore, parents also proposed that Islamic boarding schools strengthen synergy with families through programs involving students' guardians, such as Islamic parenting training, family harmony seminars, and fostering Islamic boarding school values within the household. This collaboration is considered crucial for establishing continuity between the values taught in Islamic boarding schools and daily practices at home. This is supported by research by Syarifah et al. (2021), which states that children's character education will be more effective if there is a partnership between educational institutions, families, and the community in consistently implementing religious values (Syarifah et al., 2021).

Another hope is that Islamic boarding schools will continue to innovate in learning methods and character education so that students not only possess spiritual resilience but also social and cultural competencies relevant to global challenges. Parents recognize that in addition to religious mastery, children also need to be equipped with critical thinking, communication, and adaptation skills to technological developments. This perspective aligns with the view of Bassar et al. (2021), who emphasize that contemporary Islamic education must integrate the religious dimension with 21st-century competencies so that students are able to face social change and globalization without losing their religious identity (Bassar et al., 2021).

Thus, the challenges and hopes of parents at Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School reflect a collective awareness of the importance of collaboration between the Islamic boarding school, family, and community in developing children's religious character. Their hopes extend beyond strengthening religious values to developing a holistic, adaptive, and sustainable educational model that meets the demands of the times.

The Relevance of Islamic Boarding School Education in the Digital Era

Islamic boarding schools now face a new challenge: how to maintain the moral skills of their students while equipping them with digital literacy. This literacy extends beyond technical skills to include analyzing, filtering, and using digital messages in accordance with Islamic values. A study at the Alfathaniyah Islamic Boarding School in Serang City showed that training in digital media ethics, information filtering skills, and intellectually conscious use of technology successfully improved students' digital skills for critical thinking and creativity while maintaining Islamic norms (Ahmad et al., 2024). Similarly, a training program at the Taqi Setu Al-Qur'an Tahfidz Islamic Boarding School in Bekasi showed that 87% of participants achieved significant improvements in technology utilization and the creation of blog-based digital learning media, an achievement that demonstrates the potential of Islamic boarding schools as adaptive institutions in the digital era (Lutfiyana et al., 2023).

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) not only teach technology skills, but also integrate Islamic-based digital ethics, such as good manners in interacting, trustworthiness in sharing information, and maintaining social harmony. Thus, Islamic boarding schools become moral guardians while developing digital skills. A study at the Al-Muslim Islamic Boarding School in Bireun showed that a media literacy program successfully strengthened students' insight into the healthy and Islamic use of social media (Nazaruddin et al., 2025). In the digital era, Islamic boarding schools have the potential to become literacy guardians, enabling students to become not just content consumers but also critical and creative producers of Islamic content. The At-Ta'dib study identified best practices in Islamic boarding schools such as Nurul Jadid and Darunnajah that have integrated *digital literacy* in the curriculum, teacher training, technology use policies, and cross-institutional collaboration into an adaptive model without sacrificing values (Arizqi et al., 2025).

Supporting Factors
a.   Religious Islamic Boarding School Environment
The Islamic boarding school environment is a key factor in the formation of religious character because it functions as an educational microsystem that intensively instills Islamic values. From the moment they wake up until bedtime, students are bound by a daily schedule consisting of worship, learning, and social activities. This pattern results in what is known as habitual learning, namely the process of internalizing values through repetition, role modeling, and supervision (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). Another study at MTs Al-Mahrusiyyah Lirboyo Kediri confirmed that a consistent religious atmosphere supported by routine activities such as congregational prayer, wirid (recitation of Islamic texts), and religious study positively influences emotional control and character development in adolescents (Muslimah & Latifah, 2022). Thus, a religious environment not only strengthens spirituality but also provides an ethical foundation for students' social lives.

b.   Commitment of Nanny and Ustadz
The commitment of the teachers, ustadz, and kyai is another dimension that greatly determines the success of character education in Islamic boarding schools. From the perspective of moral education theory, teachers act as significant others who serve as references for the morals and behavior of students (Lickona, 1991). The ustadz's exemplary behavior in worship, discipline, and daily social interactions strengthens the process of developing students' morals. Research at the Raudlatul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Malang shows that the ustadz's commitment to fostering students is not limited to academic aspects, but also to moral-spiritual aspects, including through fostering discipline, responsibility, and communication ethics (Ishomuddin & Husni, 2025). In line with this, research at the Mambaul Hikmah Sarpon Ponorogo Islamic Boarding School proved that the exemplary behavior of the kyai contributed 82% to the character formation of students, while the overall Islamic boarding school environment contributed 76%. This data shows that moral leadership and the commitment of the caregivers are key variables in the religious character education of Islamic boarding schools (Wulandari, 2022).

c.   Support from Parents and the Surrounding Community
Religious character education does not stop within the Islamic boarding school environment but requires continuity at home and in the community. Parental support in the form of prayer, intensive communication with the Islamic boarding school, and a willingness to continue practicing religious practices at home are crucial for the success of internalizing values. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological systems theory perspective explains that the interaction between the microsystem (Islamic boarding school), mesosystem (family), and exosystem (society) contributes to the formation of a child's overall personality (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). Research at the Al Ikhlas Islamic Boarding School in Karang Sempu (2024) shows that community involvement around the Islamic boarding school, whether through collaboration in social programs, participation in Islamic boarding school activities, or moral support, contributes significantly to the success of developing the students' character. This demonstrates that collaboration between the Islamic boarding school, parents, and the community forms a solid character education ecosystem (Aziz, 2024).

Inhibiting Factors

a.   Differences in Parenting Styles between Families and Islamic Boarding Schools

One significant obstacle is the inconsistency between family parenting styles and Islamic boarding school culture. Families that adopt a more permissive parenting style, for example, allowing freedom without structured worship, have the potential to reduce the effectiveness of the discipline and religious values developed in Islamic boarding schools. A study by Indah et al. (2018) found that *Tarbiyah Wa Ta'lim Journal*noted that students who returned home often found differences in rituals and norms, resulting in value dissonance which resulted in a tendency for a decline in orderly worship (Indah et al., 2018).

b.   Lack of Communication between Islamic Boarding Schools and Parents

Limited communication between Islamic boarding schools and parents limits the continuity of character education. In many cases, Islamic boarding schools do not regularly report on students' progress, do not hold regular social gatherings, or do not involve parents in educational activities. This results in weak continuity of character values when students return to their families. A study by Indah et al. (2018) presented data that Islamic boarding schools and madrasas that actively communicate with parents have higher levels of student character strengthening than those that do not (Indah et al., 2018).

c.   Challenges of Globalization and the Impact of Digital Media

The digital era presents serious challenges for Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in maintaining the religious concentration of their students. Easy access to the internet, social media, and digital devices without strict supervision can reduce the quality of focus on worship and learning. A survey conducted by Karomani et al. (2021) in the KOMUNIKA Journal found that most students still lack digital literacy and are vulnerable to content that does not support Islamic boarding school values, potentially eroding their character. (Karomani et al., 2021). Furthermore, Jauhari (2016) described how Islamic boarding schools face the pressures of the era of massive communication as a test of maintaining their institutional existence and identity (Jauhari, 2016).

Implications and Development Suggestions

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that positive parental perceptions of Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools significantly contribute to the successful formation of children's religious character. The synergy between a structured Islamic boarding school education program and active parental involvement is the main foundation for developing a generation with noble character, broad knowledge, and prepared to become future leaders.

The synergy between a structured Islamic boarding school education program and active parental involvement is a strategic pillar that determines the success of character development for the younger generation. From an Islamic educational perspective, Islamic boarding schools function not only as centers for the transmission of religious and general knowledge, but also as laboratories for character building that instill Islamic values, discipline, and leadership. Structured, mandatory programs—such as tahsin (recitation of the Koran), tahfidz (memorization of the Koran), Qur'an recitation (tilawatil), learning of yellow books (kitab kuning), and practicing daily worship—serve as a systemic framework that ensures the internalization of core values in the daily lives of students (Aliyah et al., 2024; Triyono, 2019).

However, the effectiveness of the program is largely determined by the active involvement of parents as primary educational partners. Bronfenbrenner's (1981) developmental ecology theory asserts that the family, particularly parents, is the microenvironment that most strongly influences the formation of a child's values, attitudes, and behavior. When parents have a positive perception, support, and are actively involved in their child's educational process at the Islamic boarding school—whether through intensive communication, participation in Islamic boarding school activities, or reinforcement of Islamic boarding school values at home—continuity and consistency of values occur between the family and Islamic boarding school environments. This synergy creates a harmonious mesosystem, where the religious values and noble character instilled at the Islamic boarding school are reinforced and validated within the family environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1981).

Furthermore, this synergy also serves as a protective mechanism against the negative influences of the increasingly complex external environment in the era of globalization. Children who grow up in an integrated educational ecosystem between Islamic boarding schools and families will develop moral

resilience *(moral resilience)*, the ability to adapt, as well as self-confidence to be a moral and knowledgeable leader. This is in line with the vision of Pondok Pesantren Al-Qur'an Ash-Syafi'iyah, which is "Mumtaaz In Worship, Moral In Life And Performance For The Hereafter," which places the formation of rabbinic people, with extensive experience, and a spirit of leadership as the main purpose of education.

Empirically, various studies have shown that the success of Islamic boarding schools in producing a generation with noble character and broad knowledge depends heavily on the quality of the synergy between systematic educational programs and parental involvement (Muhamadi & Hasanah, 2019; Rozikin & Astutik, 2022). Without parental involvement, the values instilled in Islamic boarding schools often fail or are even eroded when children return home. Conversely, when parents actively support and serve as role models, the process of internalizing values becomes stronger, deeper, and more sustainable.

Thus, the synergy between a structured Islamic boarding school education program and active parental involvement is not only the foundation but also the main catalyst in developing a generation that is not only noble and knowledgeable, but also ready to become future leaders who are visionary, inclusive, and possess high integrity. This is a model of character education that is relevant and adaptive to the challenges of the times, and is an important legacy of the Islamic boarding school education tradition in Indonesia. For future development, it is recommended that the Asy Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School continue to strengthen communication and collaboration with parents, develop Islamic parenting programs, and innovate in learning and character development. In this way, the Islamic boarding school can increasingly optimize its efforts to realize its vision of "Mumtaaz in Worship, Morals in Life, and Achievement for the Hereafter," and become a model of religious character education that is relevant and inspiring in the modern era.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that parents' perceptions of Islamic religious education in Islamic boarding schools, particularly at the Al-Qur'an Asy-Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School, are very positive and constructive in supporting the formation of children's religious character. Parents view Islamic boarding schools as an ideal environment for instilling Islamic values, discipline, and noble morals in their children. The integrated educational system of religious and general knowledge, supported by excellent programs such as tahsin (recitation of holy texts), tahfidz (memorization of Islamic texts), yellow books (kitab kuning), and the practice of daily worship, is believed to be able to shape a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also spiritually mature and virtuous.

The findings of this study also indicate that intensive involvement and communication between Islamic boarding schools and parents are crucial factors in maintaining the continuity of children's character development, both during their time at the boarding school and upon their return to their families. Parents who actively participate in and support the boarding school program tend to have children who adapt more quickly and demonstrate significant development in religious character. However, challenges remain, particularly in maintaining the consistency of Islamic boarding school values within the family and broader community.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that the Asy-Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School continue to enhance its synergy with parents through Islamic parenting programs, communication forums, and family training based on the school's values. Innovation in learning methods and character development also needs to be continuously developed to ensure the school remains relevant and able to meet the challenges of the times. Further research can be directed at exploring more in-depth strategies for collaboration between the boarding school and families, as well as the influence of the broader social environment on the success of children's religious character education.

In the end, the Al-Qur'an Asy-Syafi'iyah Islamic Boarding School, with its long history and the dedication of its founders, has proven itself as an educational institution capable of producing generations who are knowledgeable, moral, and ready to become leaders who provide examples *(uswatun hasanah)* for society. The spirit and values inherited from KH. Raden Mama Syafe'i and his successors serve as an eternal inspiration in building a religious, dignified, and competitive national civilization in the modern era.

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