

Examining the Model for Forming Religious Character Education through *Santri* Behavior Traditions in Islamic Boarding Schools

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ABSTRACT

Islamic boarding schools (IBS) are unique Islamic educational institutions that play a significant role in shaping the character and behavior of *santri* (students). This study aims to explore the perspectives of *kiai* (Islamic leaders) in internalizing a character education model within *santri* traditions amidst the challenges of modernity. This qualitative research employs a phenomenological approach, focusing on field studies conducted at the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School in Sumenep, East Java. Data collection involved interviews with 10 *kiai*, providing insights into traditional practices that influence *santri* character formation. The findings reveal several traditional models that foster character development in *santri*. These include showing respect to *kiai* through specific customs like handshaking, communal meals, polite communication, simple attire, maintaining cleanliness, fulfilling worship obligations, respecting guests, displaying diligence in learning, and engaging in unique rituals such as "bersampetan" (communal bathing). These practices strengthen relationships among *kiai*, *ustadz* (teachers), *santri*, and other residents within the IBS environment, creating a harmonious and conducive learning atmosphere. These traditions are integral to character education in IBS, reinforcing values of integrity, ethics, and responsibility. They not only preserve the cultural heritage of Islamic boarding schools but also offer a sustainable model for character building relevant to the modern era. The findings suggest that IBS traditions can serve as an effective framework for character education, addressing contemporary challenges while fostering the development of ethical, responsible, and well-rounded individuals in Islamic education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Indonesia's hospitality and manners culture has been fading. This can be seen in the younger generation, which tends to lose ethics or manners towards peers, parents, or even teachers (Remiswal et al., 2021). In the context of Islamic boarding schools (IBS), as a traditional Islamic educational institution, this plays an important role in instilling deep and sustainable religious values in students (*santri*) (Karim et al., 2023). The traditions that develop in IBS, such as discipline in carrying out worship, manners towards teachers (*ustadz*) and *Kiai* (caregivers of *Pesantren*), and other simple life habits, are effective means of forming religious character (Serliyani & Siregar, 2023). On the other hand, the religious character formed through the tradition of student behavior is not only limited to the scientific aspect but also includes morality and ethics of daily life. IBS's efforts in shaping students' character to learn to integrate Islamic religious values as a foundation in forming a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also moral and has a strong character (Hastasari et al., 2022).

The facts that can be seen today, various cases of promiscuity, violence, brawls between students, and increasing cases of violence in Islamic educational institutions, are bad news for the world of education in Indonesia (Apriliana et al., 2023). On the other hand, problems in IBS, such as manners or politeness of students (*santri*) have decreased significantly. They seem to forget the manners or ethics towards the Teacher (*ustadz*) and even the *Kiai*, who must be respected and glorified (Anirah et al., 2024). In addition, many students no longer consider teachers to be role models, even though they provide knowledge and deserve to be respected to obtain the blessings of knowledge. This problem arises as a moral and character crisis between *Santri* and Teachers and *Santri* and *Kiai* (Pasi et al., 2020). So, this change reflects the tension between the traditional values of IBS and the influence of modernity, which can reduce the effectiveness of IBS in forming students with noble character and adhering to the teachings of Islam (Shiddiq et al., 2024).

Several relevant research studies on religious character education (RCE) in Islamic boarding schools have three different characteristics. *First*, traditionalist studies emphasize maintaining classical religious traditions and practices in IBS. Where, there is a positive relationship between traditions such as *ta'lim* (teaching Islam) and *ta'dzim* (respect for *Kiai* and *Ustadz*), in the practice of shaping the religious character of *Santri* (Aprillia et al., 2023; Aziz et al., 2024; Rosyidin et al., 2023). *Second*, sociocultural studies see the formation of the *Santri* RCE due to the interaction between the *pesantren* environment and social influences. This discussion observed the religious values instilled in IBS to survive and maintain traditional identities amid modern developments (Muhdi et al., 2023; Muid et al., 2024; Sudrajat et al., 2021). *Third*, reformist studies discussions that emphasize innovation in RCE often propose new methods or more dialogical and contextual approaches to educating *Santri* (Huda, 2024; Rahmatiah & Isa, 2023; Suhendar & Rahman, 2020). The entire study addresses RCE in IBS. However, it specifically examines the role of *Kiai* in the internalization of RCE in *Santri's* behavior. Therefore, this research can contribute to previous research because it finds a new concept about how traditions in IBS can shape the character behavior of *Santri*. This study also has differences and novelty from several relevant studies to fill the gap regarding character formation in IBS, Indonesia, and worldwide, especially in the Islamic education environment.

Seeing the various complex problems faced in Islamic boarding school educational institutions. This research aims to identify and analyze how the behavioral traditions of *Santri* at IBS shape RCE holistically. Apart from that, this article focuses on *Kiai's* views regarding the internalization of religious character models in the behavioral traditions of *Santri* amidst the challenges of modernity. This study examines how traditional practices in Islamic boarding schools can be preserved and adapted to develop religious character education in facing the challenges of modernity. Specifically investigating the role of *Kiai* in the internalization of RCE in *Santri* behavior. Therefore, this study can provide a solution to find a relevant model for integrating Islamic boarding school traditions, which are increasingly influenced by technological developments, without reducing the essence of RCE. Thus, it is hoped that this research can strengthen the role of IBS in Islamic education, forming a religious generation with noble character and integrity.

Islamic Boarding School (IBS) is an Islamic educational institution with distinctive characteristics, where its students live together in an Islamic boarding school environment called a dormitory (Samsuni et al., 2019). In the Islamic Boarding School, the role of Kiai and *Santri* cannot be separated. Kiai is the term "scholar" who has knowledge of Islam and at the same time, is a leader. Meanwhile, the term *Santri* refers to an individual who attends education at IBS; this meaning is more common among students who study Islamic religious knowledge and live in a dormitory (Ma'ruf et al., 2024). Along with social changes, the role of Islamic boarding schools is no longer limited to a place of transmission in disseminating Islamic knowledge, preserving Islamic traditions, and reproducing ulama. Rather, it must also be able to play a role in the social aspect and activate better community empowerment (Aisyah et al., 2022). IBS demands to respond to the changing times, especially in this technological era; it must have an important role in terms of responsibility to produce better future generations of *Santri* (Abdul et al., 2020).

Religious Character Education (RCE) is the process of forming students' morals, ethics, and spirituality (*santri*), which is based on the teachings of Islam. Education focuses on mastering religious science and emphasizes the formation of attitudes and behaviors that reflect religious values, such as simplicity, discipline, honesty, and respect for others (Komariah & Nihayah, 2023). In Pesantren, RCE is integrated with students' daily lives, from worship activities and learning *the yellow book*, to other social relationships in the Pesantren environment (Listiana et al., 2023). On the other hand, the main goal of RCE is to produce individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have good morals based on Islamic religious values. The students are expected to be individuals with character, able to face various challenges and uphold religious teachings in daily life (Lestari et al., 2023). In addition, the benefits of RCE in Islamic boarding schools can shape students' behavior by Islamic values, strengthening faith, piety, and instilling an attitude of responsibility and social concern to create an example in the community in maintaining their moral and spiritual integrity (Susanto et al., 2023).

2. METHODS

This study employs a field research design with a phenomenological approach, as outlined by Moustakas (1994). The phenomenological design seeks to uncover the true meaning of social phenomena experienced within the behavioral traditions of *santri* at the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School. The research aims to deeply understand the role of *kiai* in shaping *santri* character education through traditional practices, such as showing respect to *kiai*, maintaining cleanliness, practicing polite communication, and engaging in worship. This approach allows for an exploration of how these traditions contribute to the moral and spiritual development of *santri* within the IBS context.

Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were gathered through direct observation, in-depth interviews with participants, and documentation of practices at the Islamic boarding school. Secondary data were sourced from relevant literature, including scientific articles, books, IBS regulations, and other materials that provide context and background on the research topic. By combining these data sources, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of how behavioral traditions in IBS contribute to the development of religious character education.

Then, this research started from December 2023 to March 2024. The main data in this study was obtained through interviews, which were conducted twice. The focus of the participants from all informants was 10 Kiai. This was done to find out the efforts made in shaping RCE education through the tradition of *Santri* behavior from the perspective of Kiai. The selection of each informant is based on their understanding of the credibility of students' behavior at IBS. On the same day, the researcher conducted a separate interview with the Kiai, which lasted approximately 1-2 hours, and each informant was allowed to express his opinion. Not only that, the researcher also made observations in the IBS environment, which were carried out both during the learning process in the classroom, outside the classroom, and during student activity activities while in the dormitory, and corroborated data findings with relevant Islamic boarding school documents. The following is the distribution of informants.

Table 1. Distribution of Informant Identities

No	Initials	Position
1	KH. AY	Caregiver of Annuqayah Latee Islamic Boarding School
2	Ky. Fi	Caregiver of Annuqayah Sawajarin Islamic Boarding School
3	KH. MH	Rector of Annuqayah University
4	KH. MNH	Caregiver of the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School in the North Lubangsa area
5	Ky. Sm	Caregiver of Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School in North Latte area
6	Ky. Al	Caregiver of Annuqayah Latee Islamic Boarding School
7	KH. A.M	Annuqayah Latee Caregiver Al-Idrisi District
8	KH. SA	Annuqayah Caregiver of East Latee district
9	KH. MS-Aw	Annuqayah caregiver of Lubangsa Raya district
10	KH. Al-s	Chairman of the Annuqayah Foundation
Total: 10 informants		
Source: processed by researchers (2024)		

Then, this study uses a data analysis model (Whiting, 2002). There are four stages in the data analysis of this model. First, *The epoche process*. The researcher conducted a careful reading process of the transcript of the interview text repeatedly to select “significant statements to gain a deep understanding of the formation of religious character through the tradition of *Santri* behavior. Second, *Phenomenological reduction*. This review stage is related to coding, theme development, and categories. The writer can develop a provisional code that is based on the foundation of previous research, a relevant theoretical framework, some questions that have been established, and topics that often arise during the interview process. Third, *Imaginative variation*. This is a crucial stage in the data analysis; the researcher carefully disseminates the interview data into parts related to the research topic. Keempat, *Synthesis meanings, and essences*. In the final stage, the researcher wrote an in-depth field record about the efforts that have been made by Kiai at IBS in a religious character through the tradition of *Santri* behavior; this is a whole series of interviews with informants, field observations, relevant documents that have been collected, compiled, and analyzed systematically.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

Demographically, the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School was founded by Kiai Moh. Syarqawi, in 1887. The name “Annuqayah” was born when this Islamic boarding school implemented a classical system around 1933. It was taken from the name of a book written by Assuyuthi that contained 14 branches of science. This pesantren is in Guluk-Guluk village, Guluk-Guluk District, Sumenep Regency, or the easternmost on the island of Madura. Furthermore, the tradition of *Santri* behavior at the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School is a series of habits and values that have taken root in the students' lives. This tradition reflects a unique way of life-based on Islamic religious teachings and local culture that has evolved over the centuries. The following are some models of behavioral traditions of students at the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School, which are the main studies from the data that have been found.

3.1.1 Tradition of Honoring Kiai

The model of respect is one of the ways *Santri* Annuqayah respects Kiai, teachers (ustadz), community leaders, and students' guardians. Students will spontaneously behave respectfully when they meet Kiai, Teachers (Ustadz), and Community Leaders. This was conveyed by (KH. MH, 2024)

caretaker of the South Lubangsa Islamic Boarding School and the rector of Annuqayah University. Here's what was conveyed.

"...Students have a model of respect by standing and bowing their heads down and with their right hand upon their hearts so that they will always be gentle to others. In the Madurese language, "Tak Jhenggel". It is not intended for Kiai's desire to be respected, not to make Kiai proud, but to train Santri so that their hearts are soft and they are not easily emotional and always tawadu', (andep ashor)."

This respect is not only a series of external actions but also part of the formation of the character and spirituality of the students. This shows that the relationship between *Santri* and Kiai in Islamic Boarding Schools is not just an ordinary relationship but a deep bond that combines aspects of education, spirituality, and character formation in a complete unit; this is conveyed by (Ky. Sm, 2024). The following arguments are presented.

"There are several types of respect for Kiai; some are zahir (visible) and inner (invisible). The zahir for example, kissed their hands, bowed their heads, or stood up when Kiai passed. The inner ones such as praying for Kiai, practicing his advice, and maintaining the good name of the Pesantren."

Therefore, the model of respect carried out by *Santri* Annuqayah is one of the models of manners that has a sense of coolness in the eyes of the community. The following observations about the behavior of *Santri* are related to respect for Kiai.

"...At the Annuqayah IBS, the tradition of respecting Kiai is an important aspect of students' daily life. This respectful behavior reflects the values of manners and ethics that have long been embedded in the culture of Islamic boarding schools. When a student meets Kiai as a sign of respect, they also often say sentences such as "Enggi" or "Enggi Ka'dintoh" as a form of approval and respect."



Figure 1. Kiai respect tradition

This description confirms that the *Santri's* behavior when meeting the Kiai is to bow their heads as a typical tradition in Islamic boarding schools. This is a form of "*keta'dziman*" (This is an effort and obligation for *Santri* as a form of respect for Kiai and Teachers in studying and seeking knowledge) for the *Santri* when they meet with Kiai, Teachers, Parents, and even the community around the IBS.

3.1.2 Handshake Tradition with Kiai

At the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School, the tradition of shaking hands between *Santri* and Kiai is not just a formal routine but a moment full of meaning and religious values. When the *Santri* shook hands with their Kiai, it was clear that their obedience to the hereditary ordinances was inherited by the founder of the Islamic Boarding School and passed on by the Kiai. As conveyed (Ky. Fi, 2024) Traditional Model of Shaking Hands caregiver of the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School in the Sawajarin area said that.

"...This tradition of shaking hands teaches students to appreciate knowledge and teachers sincerely and deeply. They learn to be humble and respect science and the people who guide them. This is an important

foundation in the formation of the character and personality of the students at the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School."

As the observation of the behavior of the students is related to shaking hands with Kiai. The researcher underlines the findings below.

"...Shaking hands at the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School is not only a form of respect but also a form of deep respect for the science and spirituality taught by Kiai. Where, the Santri have a religious character in the form of humility, gratitude, and other spiritual bonds. In addition, this tradition also builds a strong emotional connection between Santri and Kiai. Through shaking hands it can create a deep inner bond; the students feel the closeness and affection of the teacher, while the teacher feels the respect and trust from the students, which reflects the close relationship between the teacher and the student in their journey to seek knowledge and explore religion."



Figure 2. Tradition of shaking hands

Shaking hands with Kiai in IBS is a form of respect as an elder and respected person. Through the tradition of shaking hands by kissing like this image, it is a form of respect. In religion, kissing the hands of scholars, teachers, pious people, and people who are respected for their religion is an act that is recommended to obtain a special blessing.

3.1.3 Tradition of Eating Together

The tradition of eating together at the Islamic Boarding School is one of the important aspects that reflects the values of togetherness, simplicity, and character education for the students. This tradition is usually carried out in the pesantren dining room or public kitchen, where all students gather to enjoy the dishes prepared together. This is by what was conveyed (KH. SA, 2024), here are the gains obtained.

"We want to instill several values through the tradition of eating together. First, the value of togetherness and brotherhood. By eating together, Santri is taught to share and respect each other. Second, simplicity and gratitude. We always remind students to be grateful for the blessings given, even if it is in a simple form. Third, manners and ethics. According to Islamic teachings, students are taught good eating manners during meals."

At the IBS, students come from various backgrounds and regions. The tradition of eating together is a place to get to know and understand each other's cultural diversity and customs. This forms an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect among the students. This tradition is a dining activity and a means of creating character, learning manners, and strengthening brotherly ties among students. This tradition also helps to form the personality of *Santri*, who has morals, discipline, and a high sense of togetherness.



Figure 3. Form a tradition of eating together at IBS

The form of eating together at IBS is a tradition that aims to build togetherness and cohesiveness between students. This tradition is carried out in various ways, such as (1) eating together in one large container with a tray or tray. This tradition is carried out as an expression of gratitude to Allah SWT, as a form of simple living. (2) The tradition of eating together using a large tray or wide plate that can accommodate 8-10 people. The food served in the tray varies, such as white rice, typical Islamic boarding school dishes, etc.

3.1.4 Traditions of Polite Communication

One of the things that needs to be considered in communicating is about the values or norms embraced and applied in society, known as communication ethics. Seeing that the change in *manners* in communication is done by getting used to it, this must certainly be done in a way that takes a long time. Because the backgrounds of the students are different, the ethics of speaking communication are also different. As conveyed (Ky. Fi, 2024), the following he displayed.

"...The environment that forms Santri has a good language-speaking attitude. Where is the student you asked from? He would answer while looking at his person; this was the new Santri character. After the student has been in the Islamic boarding school for 3 months, he will answer "mboten" while bowing his head. So when you are new to Mondok and those who have been in Mondok for a long time, the body language is also different."

In addition, one of the ways that Kiai does it is by using subtle language, even with the students themselves. As conveyed (KH. MS-Aw, 2024), the arguments are presented.

"...There are several Kiai who always use the subtle Madurese language. They spoke a fine language to their students. So, the habit of speaking subtle language was passed down from Ky. Ilyas to his students to speak a smooth language. So it was imitated by his sons, like Ky. Warits and others follow what has been taught."

3.1.5 Tradition of Wearing Simple Clothes

Students at the Islamic Boarding School are taught to dress neatly. This simplicity reflects Islamic values that avoid arrogance and exaggeration in appearance. On the other hand, the selection of colors and motifs for *Santri* clothes is usually based on simplicity and uniformity. As the argument conveyed (KH. AY, 2024), the following data was obtained.

"There are several key values that we instill. First, simplicity. We teach students to dress simply, not excessively, and not flashy. Second, politeness. Clothing must cover the aurat and be by the ethics of dressing in Islam. Third, religious identity. The clothes of the students must reflect their identity as religious students. We teach dress code through formal education and exemplary teachers and administrators in Islamic boarding schools. In addition, we also provide regular briefings and supervision. If students violate the dress code, we provide warnings and guidance so that they understand the importance of dressing according to the rules."

In addition, clothing motifs tend to be simple and inconspicuous, reflecting the simplicity of life in Islamic boarding schools. The following observations on the behavior of students related to dress manners.

*"...At the Annuqayah Islamic boarding school, dress etiquette is highly emphasized. The tradition of dressing in pesantren also serves as a means of forming the students' character. Through dressing politely and simply, students are expected to develop an attitude of *tawadhu'* (humility), and discipline and maintain their *santri* identity. The clothes they wear every day remind them to always behave by the religious teachings and moral values taught in the Islamic Boarding School."*

3.1.6 Tradition of Maintaining Cleanliness

The model of tradition of maintaining cleanliness in IBS is one of the important aspects in which it reflects the values of purity, discipline, and responsibility. This tradition not only aims to keep the pesantren environment clean and healthy but also to shape the students' character so that they always care about cleanliness wherever they are. Through this tradition, *Santri* is expected to become a clean, healthy, and noble individual. In this case, (KH. MN-h, 2024), said that.

*"...There are several key aspects that we teach. First, personal hygiene, such as regular showers, washing hands before and after eating, and maintaining clean clothes. Second is the dormitory's cleanliness, where *Santri* is responsible for cleaning the bedrooms, halls, and bathrooms. Third, environmental cleanliness includes cooperation activities to clean the yard and tidy the park. Fourth is waste management, separating organic and inorganic waste and recycling practices. Even in the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School, there are already waste bins for organic and inorganic waste management, and in Annuqayah it has been prohibited to use plastic waste."*

Students are required to keep their clothes clean. They are taught to wash their clothes and ensure that the clothes they wear are always in clean and tidy condition. Clean clothes reflect the discipline and responsibility of students in maintaining personal hygiene. The following are observations about the tradition of *Santri's* behavior regarding cleanliness.

"...Every student has a responsibility to keep their dormitory clean. A daily picket schedule is usually made to ensure that each student participates in cleaning bedrooms, halls, bathrooms, and other common areas. This activity taught them about the importance of cooperation and shared responsibility. In addition to maintaining cleanliness in the dormitory, students are also taught to maintain the cleanliness of the permanent environment. Gotong-royong activities such as cleaning the yard, tidying up the park, and disposing of garbage in its place are part of the routine that is carried out regularly. This helps create a clean and comfortable environment for all in the Pesantren environment."

3.1.7 Tradition in the Matter of Worship

The tradition of *Santri* manners during worship at Islamic boarding schools is one of the most important forms of RCE. Worship in Islam is not just about performing rituals but also involves good attitudes, intentions, and manners. Manners in carrying out worship in Islamic boarding schools also include how students apply worship values in daily life. He explained the following are the arguments submitted (KH. AY, 2024).

"...We strongly emphasize manners in worship here. Students are taught to maintain purity before worship through correct ablution and ensuring their clothes are clean. They are also taught to be solemn in every worship, focus on Allah SWT., and avoid unnecessary distractions of thought or movement. We also teach the importance of coming early to places of worship, following etiquette in congregational prayers, and showing respect to the Imam."

The Ustadz and Kiai in the Islamic Boarding School carry out the development of worship manners. Through teaching and example, *Santri* is guided to understand the meaning and importance of manners in every worship, as an observation about the tradition of *Santri* behavior regarding the 5-time congregation prayer.

"...Students are trained to always come early to places of worship, such as mosques or prayer rooms before prayer time arrives. This shows a disciplined attitude and respect for the time of worship. They sit quietly, often filling their time by reading the Qur'an, dzikir, or praying before the implementation of worship begins. Early attendance also allows students to calm down and prepare their hearts well before worship."

3.1.8 Tradition of Respect when Meeting Guests

The tradition of *Santri* when meeting guests at the Islamic Boarding School is an important part of the manners and ethics education taught to the students. This tradition reflects Islamic values of hospitality, respect, and sincerity in serving others. As conveyed (Ky. Al, 2024), as he presented.

"...When a guest comes, the Santri on duty will usually immediately welcome the guest by greeting and smiling. They will escort guests to the living room or space that has been prepared while making sure guests feel comfortable. Furthermore, Santri offers drinks or other necessities that guests may need. The students maintain a polite and friendly attitude throughout the meeting and ensure that guests get the best service."

Santri's attitude when meeting guests is based on the value of sincerity and the intention to serve. They were taught that serving guests was part of worship and, therefore, should be done with a sincere heart. Sincerity in serving is a value firmly held by students and applied in every interaction with guests. The following are the achievements presented (KH. MH, 2024), as he argued.

"...We always emphasize that sincerity is the key in serving guests. Students are taught that serving guests is a social obligation and part of worship to Allah. Therefore, every action in welcoming and serving guests must be done with sincere intentions and hope for Allah SWT pleasure. We instill this spiritual approach through continuous recitation and advice."

In the tradition of the Islamic Boarding School, guests are always prioritized. *Santri* is taught to prioritize guests' needs over their personal needs. This tradition also creates a harmonious and respectful atmosphere in the pesantren environment, making guests feel appreciated and warmly welcomed. In the acquisition of observations about the behavior of *Santri* regarding the manners of *Santri* when meeting Kiai guests. As follows.

"...Students are tasked with providing the best service to guests, for example, by providing drinks, snacks, or other necessities that may be needed. This service is carried out with sincerity and intention to honor guests. Students are also taught always to ask if other needs can be met. Suppose guests hold a dialogue or discussion, for example, in a lecture or question and answer. In that case, Santri is taught to listen actively and, if asked, participate in the discussion politely and respectfully."

3.1.9 Tradition of Seriousness in Seeking Knowledge

The tradition of *Santri's* behavior in seeking knowledge in Islamic boarding schools is a heritage full of adab and ethical values. In Islamic boarding schools, one of the main manners is respecting Kiai, Guru (ustadz). *Santri* views Kiai as a figure who plays an important role in conveying knowledge. They are taught to be polite, listen well, and follow the teacher's directions without arguing. As argued (KH. Al-s, 2024), the following was conveyed.

"...We always remind Santri to renew their intentions, which is to study solely for the sake of Allah SWT. Every learning activity begins with prayer and self-introspection so that sincere intentions are maintained. In addition, through advice and lectures, we teach that knowledge should be learned to improve oneself and

do good, not for pride or worldly interests alone. In addition, we teach students to behave well, not be arrogant, and always be humble even though they have much knowledge. Students are also taught to apply the knowledge they learn daily, because knowledge without morals and charity is useless."



Figure 4. Forms the seriousness of *Santri* when seeking knowledge

Seriousness in seeking knowledge at Islamic boarding schools is an attitude to use every opportunity and chance to learn best. This seriousness must be carried out with maximum and effective effort without wasting time and other opportunities. By being serious about learning, *Santri* is expected to be able to realize his dreams by his parents' hopes to achieve success in a better future.

3.1.10 Model of the "Bersampetan" Bathing Tradition

One of the traditions of *Santri* behavior at the Annuqayah Islamic boarding school namely bathing using "Sampetan" or a cloth covering from the navel to the knee as a covering for the awrah. The word "Sampetan" is a cloth or sarong used to cover the *aurat* when bathing. This practice reflects the awareness and obedience of students to religious values, as well as efforts to maintain purity in every aspect of life, including in daily activities such as bathing. As argued (KH. AY, 2024), the board of caregivers of the Pesantren said.

"...Of course, using "Sampetan" or covering cloth when bathing in Islamic boarding schools has a very deep meaning in the context of Islamic religious teachings. This sarong or covering cloth is used to maintain the aurat from the navel to the knees, by the principle of modesty in dressing regulated by Sharia. This is a form of Santri's obedience to the teachings of Islam, where every aspect of life, including bathing, must reflect purity and modesty."



Figure 5. "bersampetan" bathing tradition

In addition, the researcher also found documents that can corroborate the data findings, as stated above. This processing is an effort made by the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School to form an RCE for students. The following is a table of classic books (*kitab kuning*) taught in Islamic Boarding Schools.

Table 2. The Book of Adab Taught at the Annuqayah IBS

No	Book Name	Author	Levels	Information
1	Akhlak Lil Banin	Syaikh Umar bin Ahmad Baraja	Basic Level (Ibtida'iyah)	Basic book of morals for children.
2	Durusul Akhlak	K. Ilyas Syarqawi	Basic Level (Ibtida'iyah)	Basic book of morals for children.
3	Bidayatul Hidayah	Imam Al-Ghazali	Intermediate Level (Tsanawiyah)	Manners in worship and muamalah.
4	Sullam Taufiq	Syaikh Abdullah bin Husain Ba'alawi	Intermediate Level (Tsanawiyah)	A small book that teaches basic morals and fiqh.
5	Ta'limul Muta'allim	Syaikh Az-Zarnuji	Upper Intermediate Level (Aliyah)	Manners and ethics in studying.
6	Riyadhus Shalihin	Imam An-Nawawi	Upper Intermediate Level (Aliyah)	A book of hadith that contains commendable deeds and morals.
7	Minhajul Abidin	Imam Al-Ghazali	Upper Intermediate Level (Aliyah)	Guidelines in following the path to God with good morals.
8	Ihya Ulumuddin	Imam Al-Ghazali	College Level	In-depth discussion on Morals, Worship, and Sufism.
9	Al-Hikam	Ibn Atha'illah As-Sakandari	College Level	Wisdom about Sufism and Morals.

As has been obtained from the findings above, there are ten models of *Santri* traditions in forming RCEs in the Annuqayah Pesantren. Researchers can highlight the data findings in the table below for more clarity.

Table 3. Model of RCE Formation through the Tradition of *Santri* Behavior

No	Formation of RCE	Models of Student <i>Santri</i> in IBS
1	Tradition of <i>Santri</i> Behavior	Tradition of Honoring Kiai
2		Tradition of Handshaking
3		Tradition of Eating Together
4		Tradition of polite communication
5		Tradition of Wearing Simple Clothes
6		Tradition of Maintaining Cleanliness
7		Tradition of Discipline in Worship
8		Tradition of Respect when Meeting Guests
9		Tradition of Seriousness in Seeking Knowledge
10		Traditional Model of Bathing "Bersampetan"

3.2 Discussion

The model of forming RCE in the tradition of *Santri* behavior has a uniqueness that is characteristic of the Annuqayah IBS; some of these models have ten characteristics, which include. First, Kiai respectful tradition model. Respecting Kiai by standing up when meeting teaches students to appreciate people who are more knowledgeable and experienced, especially regarding religion. This reflects the adherence to the religious teachings conveyed by Kiai and builds a sense of responsibility in practicing them in daily life (Dhofier, 2011). This respectful attitude can be seen in the way they speak and act and in their attitude when they are in front of Kiai. For *Santri*, the figure of Kiai is a figure who dedicates his life to spreading religious knowledge and guiding the people to the right path (Azra, 2013). On the other hand, this respect is rooted in the belief that when Kiai speaks, the students listen carefully, absorbing every piece of advice. In this atmosphere, *Santri's* obedience develops naturally as

a form of sincere devotion (Aprillia et al., 2023). In addition, this behavior fosters a deep sense of admiration and love, encouraging *Santri* to follow in Kiai's footsteps wholeheartedly. The students feel proud to carry out the Kiai commands, because they know that every order is based on deep knowledge and sincere intentions for their good (Asy'arie & Aziz, 2023). So, every task given is seen as an opportunity to learn and get closer to Allah SWT., with Kiai's guidance as a guide.

Second, the traditional model of shaking hands. In Pesantren, the tradition of shaking hands with Kiai is a form of respect and recognition of the position and knowledge possessed. *Santri* is taught to respect and appreciate older people, especially those with higher religious knowledge. This teaches students to always respect teachers and scholars as a source of knowledge and role models (Dhofier, 2011). In addition, this attitude reflects the *ketakziman* of the students towards the Kiai, becoming a noble tradition in the culture of the pesantren, which is not only a form of respect but also a reflection of obedience, devotion, and recognition of the knowledge and wisdom possessed by the Kiai. This form of *ketakziman* can foster discipline and moral awareness in students, making them more sensitive to good values and responsible for their societal role (Fitria & Atqia, 2024). In the IBS tradition, shaking hands with Kiai is also considered a form of taking blessings (*tabarruk*) from Kiai. This fosters a spiritual bond between the students and the kiai, where the students feel emotional and spiritual closeness with their teachers. In the end, it forms the character of *Santri* as an individual with noble character and contributes positively to social life in the Pesantren environment and the surrounding community (Chotimah et al., 2023).

Third, model of the tradition of eating together. Eating together among *Santri* is a long-developed custom in Islamic boarding schools, where students gather to enjoy food collectively. This tradition fulfills physical needs and contains social, spiritual, and educational values important in forming the *Santri* character (Dhofier, 2011). In this activity, they usually sit on a mat or floor in a circle or neat row. The food is placed in the middle, and they take it in turn in an orderly, joint prayer led by senior students or Ustadz (Mas'ud, 2004). On the other hand, this tradition teaches important values such as simplicity, togetherness, and gratitude. Students are taught not to overdo it in eating, sharing with others, and appreciating food as sustenance from Allah SWT. Through eating together, students learn to share, respect each other, and maintain manners when interacting (Khoidah, 2023). Thus, this tradition of eating together contributes greatly to forming the *Santri* character because it can make individuals more sensitive to human values and togetherness in daily life surrounded by the Pesantren.

Fourth, the traditional model of communication. The traditional communication model is a certain pattern or way groups interact with each other through language, symbols, or actions passed down from generation to generation. These traditions reflect the community's cultural values, social norms, and beliefs (Trenholm, 2020). In certain contexts, such as IBS or traditional educational settings, the traditional communication model can include respectful speaking manners, maintaining manners when communicating with older or knowledgeable people, and maintaining politeness in choosing words (Hasan, 2009). On the other hand, traditions in Islamic boarding schools generally use soft (subtle) and polite language, the teachings that encourage students to keep their mouths and speak respectfully. The use of soft language among students aims to instill a humble attitude so that they are trained to be *tawadhu'*, not to feel superior to others, and to respect the position of others. Therefore, students used to speaking in subtle language tend to establish good relationships with others, avoid conflicts, and strengthen friendships (Pamungkas, 2023). This can create harmony, crucial in maintaining harmony in the pesantren environment and the community.

Fifth, the dress tradition model. The way students dress when they are in the Islamic Boarding School is usually simple and inconspicuous. Through this tradition, the students are educated to live a simple life and not exaggerate in appearance (Abd. Halim et al., 2020). This simplicity shows an attitude of *qona'ah*, or feeling satisfied with what is available, and emphasizes how important it is not to be attached to worldly luxuries. This aims to increase their awareness of the importance of maintaining the aura and dressing modestly on various occasions. On the other hand, this form of Islamic boarding school rules is very important in life which is shown in the habit of dressing neatly and regularly (Triana

et al., 2023). Where, neatness in dressing *Santri* refers to the standards of politeness, cleanliness, and regularity in dressing that have been established and practiced. In addition, this is also an Islamic identity that has its characteristics of an identity as a Muslim who is committed to the teachings of Islam and creates the tradition of Pesantren (Pamungkas, 2023). So, the rules on how to dress that are allowed can become the habits of *Santri* as an example of an environment that supports dress manners and supports them in forming good habits through religious teachings in daily life.

Sixth, the traditional model for maintaining cleanliness. Environmental awareness includes knowledge of the impact of human behavior on ecosystems, understanding of issues such as pollution, deforestation, climate change, biodiversity, and commitment to sustainable action (Murniningsih, 2024). In the context of Pesantren, being clean is not only seen as a physical obligation but also part of Islamic religious teachings emphasizing that cleanliness is part of the faith. By maintaining cleanliness, students are trained to be disciplined, responsible, and care for the surrounding environment (Yakin et al., 2024). A clean Islamic boarding school environment creates a comfortable atmosphere for learning, worship, and daily activities. In addition, cleanliness also plays a role in maintaining health; students can carry out their learning and worship obligations without being disturbed by diseases caused by a dirty environment (Adibusholih et al., 2023). Through this tradition, *Santri* is taught to understand the importance of cleanliness in personal life and social relationships. For example, they clean dormitories, mosques, study rooms, and other Pesantren areas to train them to work together (Solihin et al., 2020). Therefore, maintaining cleanliness is very important to *Santri*, who has the character of social concern, a clean soul, and a sense of comfort in carrying out life activities while in the Islamic boarding school environment.

Seventh, model of worship tradition. Various activities of *Santri* in Islamic Boarding Schools are educated to be disciplined in carrying out five-time congregational worship. This discipline focuses on prayer and shapes their religious character and daily routine (Fahham, 2020). In Pesantren, the discipline of worship teaches the importance of punctuality and commitment to their obligations in terms of worship. *Santri* gather daily to pray in congregation, build regular habits in istiqomah, and strengthen religious values for them. In addition to improving the religious aspect, this practice instills an attitude of discipline and responsibility towards *Santri* (Anirah et al., 2024). This discipline also helps students manage their time well, which can benefit their professional and personal lives. In addition, the traditional habit of worship in Pesantren is very important to build religious character. The form of worship carried out is not just a ritual obligation but a tool to form disciplined, obedient students with good morals (Abidin, 2020). For example, activities such as congregational prayers, reading the Qur'an, dhikr, and other religious activities are able to teach *Santri* to prioritize their relationship with Allah SWT. So, that this tradition can foster discipline, patience, and perseverance who are expected to become individuals who can be role models for others and maintain religious values (Achadah & Rohmah, 2022).

Eighth, model of the tradition of meeting guests. By interacting with guests from various backgrounds, students can learn to be more sensitive and care about the needs of others. They are taught to pay attention to guests' comfort and respond well to their needs, which fosters empathy in them (Akhmad, 2023). On the other hand, students who often interact with guests, can develop social skills such as communication, friendliness, and sociability. This helps *Santri* become a more confident individual and can interact with various levels of society (Noorjutstiatini et al., 2022). In the pesantren environment, students are also taught to communicate effectively in speaking and listening. This helps them in learning, discussing, and interacting with fellow students (Syarifah et al., 2023). The benefits of this communication can be to pay attention to and understand the needs, feelings, or situations of others. This form of communication can encourage students to sincerely help the desires of others in alleviating the burden or difficulties they are facing. In addition, students also learn the correct ethics for interacting, especially those who are older or have a position (Hastasari et al., 2022). Thus, students are trained to pay attention to how to speak, sit, and behave in front of guests to maintain their honor in Islamic boarding schools.

Ninth, the traditional model of seeking knowledge. When students are looking for knowledge or learning, it is a typical Islamic education pattern of Islamic boarding schools that has lasted for centuries. This tradition combines spiritual, intellectual, and moral aspects in the learning process, to holistically shape students' character and science (Usman, 2020). In this tradition, students pursue education through various methods, which include (1) *Sorogan*. This is an individual learning method where students face the teacher individually to read and explain the book's contents, while the teacher listens and corrects. (2) *Bandongan atau Wetonan*. This is a group learning method, where Kiai or Ustadz reads and explains the contents of the Classic Book (*kitab kuning*), while the students listen and took notes (Ma'ruf et al., 2024). (3) *Muhafazhah*. This is a method, especially for students who memorize the Qur'an, Hadith, and certain books (Hasanah, 2021). (4) *Mudzakarah*. This is a scientific discussion called (*bahtsul masail*) students to discuss a problem so that they can train them in solving problems by using references such as in certain books (Rumania et al., 2023). (5) *Majlis Ta'lim*. This is a public recitation (*recital*) activity that *Santri* and the surrounding community in the IBS environment usually attend (Asy'arie et al., 2024).

Tenth, the traditional model of bathing "Bersampetan". In this context, the *Santri* commitment is tested by consistently maintaining the manners and traditions taught by the IBS. This reflects the discipline of the students in carrying out the Pesantren tradition, even in small things such as how to bathe. According to (Amin, 2022), commitment is an attitude that shows likes or dislikes towards other people, groups, organizations, or certain things. Where a person becomes bound by his or her actions due to encouraging beliefs in activities and involvement in activities of daily life. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the habit of bathing together also fosters a commitment to live in togetherness and equality (Dhofier, 2011). When the *Santri* bathes together using the term "*sampetan*", they are no longer distinguished by their status or background. All stand on par, respect each other, and share the space with the full awareness that they are part of brotherhood and togetherness. In addition, this commitment is reflected in how they maintain each other's privacy and support each other in all aspects of life at the IBS. In this process, the *Santri* commitment is further strengthened by the understanding that the tradition of bathing "*sampetan*" is a heritage that must be preserved. Thus, this tradition can make *Santri* committed to always being disciplined in maintaining cleanliness and obedience in their worldly and spiritual affairs.

4. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant role of kiai in shaping *santri* character through behavioral traditions at the Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School (IBS). Ten traditional models were identified, including respecting kiai, shaking hands, communal meals, polite communication, wearing simple attire, maintaining cleanliness, disciplined worship, showing respect to guests, dedication to learning, and the unique tradition of communal bathing (*bersampetan*). These traditions not only strengthen relationships among kiai, ustadz, *santri*, and the wider IBS community but also foster a harmonious and conducive environment for character formation. The findings suggest that these practices offer a relevant character education model for the modern era, emphasizing integrity, ethics, and responsibility while preserving cultural heritage. This research underscores the importance of adapting such traditional models in both Islamic and general educational contexts to shape generations with strong moral foundations from an early age.

However, the study was limited by a small sample size and a short research duration, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Future research should expand the scope of study objects, incorporate diverse IBS contexts, and adopt longitudinal approaches to uncover more comprehensive and innovative insights. Such efforts would enhance the understanding of traditional education models and their applicability in broader educational frameworks.

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