The Kalimantan Social Studies Journal, Vol. 7, (2), April 2026: 208-228
DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.20527
Available at online at website: https://ppjp.ulm.ac.id/journals/index.php/kss/index

The Role of Ustaz and Ustazah in Student Character Building at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Jazaul Ihsan Jombang

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Article History

Received: 03/13/26 Review: 03/22/26 Revision: 03/23/26 Available Online: 04/01/26

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran ustaz dan ustazah dalam proses transfer pembelajaran untuk pembentukan karakter siswa di pesantren. Meskipun penelitian sebelumnya sebagian besar berfokus pada hasil pendidikan karakter, hanya sedikit penelitian yang menyelidiki bagaimana transfer pembelajaran berfungsi sebagai mekanisme untuk menginternalisasi nilai-nilai dalam kehidupan sehari-hari siswa. Penelitian ini menjawab kesenjangan tersebut dengan menganalisis bagaimana pendidik memfasilitasi transformasi pengetahuan menjadi perilaku. Pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif digunakan, dengan data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi di Pesantren Muhammadiyah Jazaul Ihsan Jombang. Informan terdiri dari ustaz, ustazah, siswa, pengawas pesantren, dan alumni, yang dipilih menggunakan sampling purposif. Data dianalisis menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman, yang mencakup reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa ustaz dan ustazah memainkan peran sentral sebagai perancang, pelaksana, dan evaluator pendidikan karakter. Nilai-nilai karakter seperti kejujuran, ketulusan, disiplin, dan tanggung jawab secara sistematis diintegrasikan ke dalam perencanaan pelajaran, rutinitas harian, dan program institusional. Transfer pembelajaran diimplementasikan melalui pengajaran kontekstual, pembiasaan, teladan, dan bimbingan berkelanjutan, didukung oleh sistem evaluasi terstruktur. Akibatnya, siswa menunjukkan peningkatan yang dapat diamati dalam disiplin spiritual, keterampilan sosial, kemandirian, dan perilaku moral. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur dengan menyoroti transfer pembelajaran sebagai proses kunci yang menghubungkan praktik pengajaran dan hasil karakter, serta menekankan bahwa pembentukan karakter yang efektif memerlukan integrasi yang konsisten antara pembelajaran kognitif dan pengalaman hidup dalam lingkungan pendidikan 24 jam.

***Kata Kunci**: Pendidikan karakter, peran ustaz dan ustazah, penerapan ilmu*

Abstract

This study examines the role of *ustaz* and *ustazah* in the transfer of learning for student character building in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). While previous studies have predominantly focused on the outcomes of character education, limited research has investigated how the transfer of learning functions as a mechanism for internalizing values in students' daily lives. This study addresses this gap by analyzing how educators facilitate the transformation of knowledge into behavior. A qualitative case study approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Jazaul Ihsan Jombang. The informants consisted of *ustaz*, *ustazah*, students, boarding school supervisors, and alumni, who were selected using purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data display, and drawing a conclusion. The findings indicate that *ustaz* and *ustazah* play central roles as designers, implementers, and evaluators of character education. Character values such as sincerity, honesty, discipline, and responsibility are systematically integrated into lesson planning, daily routines, and institutional programs. The transfer of learning is implemented through contextual

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teaching, habituation, role modeling, and continuous mentoring, supported by structured evaluation systems. As a result, students demonstrate observable improvements in spiritual discipline, social skills, independence, and moral behavior. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the transfer of learning as a key process linking instructional practices and character outcomes, emphasizing that effective character formation requires the consistent integration of cognitive learning and lived experiences within a 24-hour educational environment.
Keywords: Character education, the role of ustaz and ustazah, transfer of learning

Preliminary

Character education is a fundamental element in shaping students' personalities and moral integrity. In the Indonesian Islamic education context, pesantren play a strategic role not only as institutions for religious instruction but also as centers for value internalization. This aligns with global perspectives that position character education as a core component of holistic education systems (Oldham & McLoughlin, 2025).

Islamic boarding schools integrate intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions in a continuous learning environment (Hidayati & Subiyakto, 2025). Students are not only expected to understand religious teachings cognitively but also to practice them in daily life through discipline, responsibility, and independence. Such integration reflects the concept of social-emotional and character development as foundational to education (Elias, 2025).

The success of character education is closely linked to the role of teachers as role models. Teachers do not merely deliver knowledge but demonstrate values through daily behavior, allowing students to internalize them through observation and imitation. This reflects social learning theory, which emphasizes that behavior is learned through modeling and interaction with credible figures (Biyikoglu Alkan & Cavusoglu, 2024).

Character building for students is the primary goal of Islamic boarding school education. However, in practice, not all of the values taught in the classroom are consistently internalized in the students' daily behavior. The challenge of character development arises when learning stops at mastering material without being followed by the application of moral values, discipline, responsibility, and social attitudes in Islamic boarding school life. This situation demonstrates the importance of the transfer of learning process, namely the transfer of knowledge and values from learning to the students' actual lives (Amaliah & Suriansyah, 2025).

The concept of transfer of learning in Islamic boarding schools is not only understood as a process of transferring knowledge, but also as the internalization of values and behavior through role models and habituation (Ansari, 2025). The practice of spiritual education in Islamic boarding schools can foster positive behavioral changes in students because the values

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learned are directly applied in their daily lives. Thus, transfer of learning in Islamic boarding schools has strong affective and moral dimensions (Triyono, 2025).

Empirically, we still find that students possess good academic abilities but do not fully demonstrate discipline and noble morals. This indicates that the process of transferring values from the ustaz and ustazah (teacher) has not been optimal in all aspects of Islamic boarding school life. Challenges such as low discipline and a lack of awareness of regulations are important factors that require serious attention (Ilhami & Handy, 2025).

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, ustaz and ustazah play a strategic role not only as educators but also as role models and mentors who determine the successful implementation of transfer of learning. Therefore, studying the role of ustaz and ustazah in transferring learning values to the character formation of students is important and relevant to improving the quality of character education in Islamic boarding schools. Character formation in students is influenced by various factors, such as the leadership of the ustaz, the Islamic boarding school's guidance system, and the religious environment (Ishomuddin & M. Husni, 2025).

Islamic boarding school education can shape the character of students through transformative learning. However, most of this research still focuses on the results of character formation, while studies specifically examining the transfer of learning by ustaz and ustazah as a mechanism for internalizing values are still limited.

This research study is also supported by previous research conducted by Ishomuddin & M. Husni, (2025) regarding "The Role of Administrators and Ustadz as Mentors in the Character Education of Students at the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Ganjaran Gondanglegi Malan Islamic Boarding School" which examines the role of administrators and ustadz at the Raudlatul Ulum 1 Islamic Boarding School which is very crucial in shaping the character of students. Through teaching methods based on Islamic religious values, administrators and ustadz not only teach religious knowledge, but also act as role models who provide direct guidance in the daily lives of students.

This research study is also supported by previous research conducted by Agus & Denis, (2025) regarding "Integration of Anger Management in Improving Student Discipline: Solutions to Discipline Challenges" which examines the implementation of anger management which plays an important role in creating a conducive Islamic boarding school environment and improving student discipline through stages of continuous development.

Despite the importance of this process, previous studies have predominantly focused on the outcomes of character education rather than examining how transfer of learning operates

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as a mechanism for value internalization. Recent global studies also highlight that research on character education continues to grow, yet still requires deeper exploration in contextual educational environments such as boarding schools (Muhtar dkk., 2021).

This research study explores the importance of the role of ustaz and ustazah in implementing transfer of learning in Islamic boarding schools as a character building for students. The learning process is not only implemented through the delivery of religious material but also involves transforming and internalizing these values in daily life. This study also examines the development approach implemented by ustaz and ustazah in fostering character values in accordance with Islamic faith. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of ustaz and ustazah in the transfer of learning for the character building of students in Islamic boarding schools, including the design of character values, their implementation in learning and development, and their impact on students' behavior.

METHOD

The approach used in this research is a qualitative one, employing a case study method. According to Assyakurrohim,et al., (2022) a case study is an in-depth study of an individual, a group, an organization, a program, and so on over a specific period of time. The goal is to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth description of an entity by generating data that is then analyzed to generate theory. The object of this research is the transfer of learning process carried out by religious teachers (ustaz) and female teachers (ustazah) in developing the character of students in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren).

The subjects in this study were ustaz, ustazah and students as the main informants, while the Islamic boarding school supervisors and alumni of students were the supporting informants. Informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques with the criteria of direct involvement in learning and developing students.

This study uses secondary and primary data sources. Primary data sources were obtained directly from the Muhammadiyah Boarding School Islamic Boarding School located on Jl. Sawunggaling Gg. V, Mojoanyar, Mojotengah, Bareng District, Jombang Regency, East Java. Meanwhile, secondary data sources were obtained indirectly, providing information to support the research findings, such as observation and documentation. There are several informant criteria in this study, as follows: (a) Islamic boarding school caretakers; (b) ustaz; (c) ustazah; (d) students; (e) alumni.

Table 1. List of Research Informants

Nama	Posisi

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UST N	Islamic Boarding School Caretaker
UST H	Teaching Fiqh
UST Y	Teaching Nahwu
USTH F	Teaching Arabic
USTH A	Teaching Quran and Hadith
SNT T	Grade XI Students
SNT M	Grade XI Students
SNT F	Grade XI Students
SNT K	Grade XI Students
SNT R	Grade XI Students
SNT I	Grade XI Students
SNT A	Grade XI Students
SNT F	Grade XI Students
ALMN Y	Mushrif

Data collection was conducted through various sources, including ustaz, ustazah, and students, to obtain a comprehensive and objective picture of the phenomenon being studied. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. (a) In-depth interviews are a communication process aimed at obtaining relevant data through questions asked by the interviewer to obtain meaningful information regarding the role of ustaz, ustazah, and students in the transfer of learning through direct conversation (Rahmawati,et al., 2024). (b) Observation is a data collection technique carried out by directly observing the situation, activities, and interactions relevant to the research focus. (c) Documentation is a data collection technique carried out by reviewing, collecting, and analyzing various documents or archives relevant to the research object.

The data analysis technique used was Miles and Huberman's analysis, which consists of several stages, including:

1. Data collection is the process of gathering information through interviews, observations, and documentation in the form of detailed notes.
2. Data reduction or data condensation is the stage used by researchers to compile a summary of the data obtained, categorize the data results by assigning codes according to their placement so that the data becomes detailed according to their categories. Then, data selection is carried out to simplify the results and exclude data that is not relevant to the research context.
   a. F1 : The Role of Ustaz and Ustazah in Designing and Integrating Character Values in Learning
   b. F2 : Implementation of Transfer of Learning carried out by Ustaz and Ustazah in Learning Activities and Student Development at Islamic Boarding Schools
   c. F3 : Results and Impact of Transfer of Learning on Student Character Formation at Islamic Boarding Schools

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3. Data presentation is the process of compiling information in the form of narrative descriptions, tables, charts, relationships between categories, or a matrix of findings through a systematic presentation of the data. Data displays typically transform field findings into charts or matrices, which are then processed into narrative text.

Data verification or drawing conclusions is carried out after the researcher has interpreted all the data and tested the findings based on strong evidence in the field. Conclusions are tentative in the initial stage, and are then verified through comparisons of data from interviews, observations, and documentation (Ubol & Henschke, 2015; Leko,et al., 2021)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Ustaz and Ustazah in Designing Character-Based Learning

Islamic boarding schools play a strategic role in shaping students' moral character through integrated religious education. At Muhammadiyah Boarding School (MBS), character education is not positioned as a separate subject but serves as the philosophical foundation underlying all educational practices. This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing that character formation in pesantren is inherently embedded within the institutional system (Mujahid, 2021; Rusydiyah & Matrapi, 2020).

The findings indicate that ustaz and ustazah function as central agents in designing character-oriented learning by integrating core principles such as sincerity, simplicity, independence, Islamic brotherhood, and responsibility into both instructional planning and daily activities. These principles are translated into observable behavioral standards framed within the institutional concept of "good" and "strong" character. As expressed by one teacher:

> *"At MBS yes, at MBS, the standard is like our slogan, which is two characters that a student must have. Two characters that a student must have: good and strong. Good character, sincere, honest, and humble, strong, disciplined, brave, disciplined, and tough. That's the standard, just like the slogan."* (W/UST N/29-12-25).

This finding demonstrates that moral values are operationalized into concrete behavioral indicators rather than remaining abstract ideals. Conceptually, this supports the argument that character education should encompass cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in an integrated manner (Alhamuddin dkk., 2022; Sari dkk., 2024).

In practice, educators integrate these values through the combination of formal, diniyah, and pesantren curricula. The instructional process extends beyond cognitive achievement to emphasize affective and behavioral development. For instance, Qur'an memorization serves not only as an academic activity but also as a medium for cultivating discipline, consistency, and responsibility. As stated by a teacher:

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"So, we have two curricula: the religious curriculum and the formal curriculum. The formal curriculum is under the guidance of the education office. The religious curriculum is our own, and our flagship program is Quran memorization." (W/UST N/29-12-25)

This reflects an embedded curriculum model in which moral principles are reinforced across multiple learning contexts, thereby strengthening the potential for meaningful application in real-life situations. Within classroom settings, values are integrated through subject content, case-based discussions, and reflective approaches. Outside the classroom, value formation occurs through habituation, mentoring, and direct supervision. In this context, teachers act as facilitators of life skills learning by linking instructional content with students' daily experiences.

The value of discipline, for example, is not only taught theoretically but is practiced through a strict daily schedule, including tahajud prayers, congregational prayers, study activities, and break times.

Based on this finding indicates that, it is also supported by the results of documentation with Islamic boarding school teachers.

Figure 1. *Public speaking learning*

According to Prayoga & Rusyd, 2024 the existence of ustaz and ustazah always emphasizes to students that by developing superior morals, it can facilitate students to continue to develop into better individuals and noble morals for themselves and in their social environment. Such is the implementation of disciplined behavior in the Islamic boarding school environment that upholds a commitment to humanity.

Furthermore, character values are reinforced through contextual and experience-based learning strategies. Teachers connect learning material with students' real-life experiences and emphasize the importance of role modeling. One informant highlighted:

"So, for me those are the two things I hold as my educational philosophy, educating is to provide them with role models, and then giving them life experiences, whatever life experiences they have to experience at the boarding school, it is a teaser. At first, they get to know life first, what if when they leave, they are ready because I have experienced it before." (W/USTH F/29-12-25)

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This highlights the role of experiential learning and social modeling, where students internalize values through observation and lived experiences. From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with social learning theory, indicating that character building is significantly influenced by the behavior of educators as role models. Analytically, these findings indicate that ustaz and ustazah function as *architects of character education*, designing structured learning environments that facilitate value internalization, supported by both instructional strategies and lived experiences. The role of teachers as role models plays a crucial part in shaping students' character. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering knowledge, but also for demonstrating how values are practiced in daily life. However, further exploration is still needed to understand how teachers can model these values effectively for students (Christina Turner dkk., 2024).

The MBS Islamic boarding school environment is also supported by awarding points to female students who have given their best as a form of implementing character values in learning. According to Said et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2024 the implementation of character values is taught as responsible behavior regarding the students' behavioral patterns, so they are trained to take responsibility for mistakes as a real experience in everyday life.

This statement is also supported by the results of an interview with UST N, the Islamic boarding school caretaker.

> *"Every month there is an evaluation meeting. Each mushrif reports on the progress of their students, including any problems. This process is reinforced by documentation of student monitoring and the Islamic boarding school's rules and regulations, which serve as character evaluation instruments at MBS." (W/UST N/29-12-25)*

The above statement is also supported by research results (Ikhwan,et al., 2019) that the programs that have been implemented are evaluated periodically by the Blitar Regency Education Office to measure success and identify deficiencies as material for program improvement and enhancement.

Figure 2**.** *Evaluation activities*

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Based on figure 2 above, it can be seen that the students sit in a circle in the hall in an orderly and conducive atmosphere. This seating pattern demonstrates collective interaction that emphasizes togetherness, deliberation, and two-way communication. This activity is a participatory and ongoing process of character development and evaluation, in which the ustaz or teacher provides direction, reinforces values, and clarifies rules in an open and educational manner.

The results of research on the role of ustaz and ustazah in designing and integrating character values in learning are also supported by the results of a preliminary study conducted by (Winanjar Rahayu,et al., 2023) that the ethics of teachers as role models are shown from their speech, attitudes, and personalities, such as being polite, disciplined, responsible, tolerant, honest, and caring towards students and others have been implemented by teachers and have a good influence on students' character through habituation.

According to Tafonao et al., (2024) the lecture method is effective for delivering factual and descriptive material systematically and efficiently, but it has limitations in increasing student participation and reflective understanding. Conversely, the discussion method encourages active engagement, critical thinking, and the development of social skills and a deep understanding of historical material. Discussions have also been shown to significantly increase student learning interest.

Based on the results of research on the role of ustaz and ustazah in designing and integrating character values in learning, it can be concluded that teachers act as architects of character education who consciously formulate "good" values (sincerity, honesty, humility) and "strong" (discipline, courage, resilience) into an integrated curriculum. Value integration is carried out from the planning stage, implementation, to evaluation of learning through a contextual approach, habituation, and exemplary behavior. Thus, character education in Islamic boarding schools is not incidental, but rather structured, systematic, and based on a clear institutional philosophy.

Implementation of Transfer of Learning in Islamic Boarding Schools

In the Islamic boarding school environment, transfer of learning is understood as the ability of students to apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills in a real-life learning context. At MBS Islamic boarding school, ustaz and ustazah consciously place transfer of learning as the primary orientation of learning and development. This is evident in the emphasis that the material taught, both religious and formal, must have direct implications for the student’s religious practices, social attitudes, and personal responsibilities. Thus, the learning process is designed to be not inert knowledge, but rather living and internalized knowledge.

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Based on this statement, it is also supported by the results of an interview with UST Y as a ustaz at the Islamic boarding school,

> *"I teach about fiqh, there is a chapter on prayer, there is a chapter on fasting, of course it is very relevant to everyday life, it is easier compared to other lessons."(W/UST Y/29-12-25)*

This demonstrates a high level of contextual relevance, which is essential for facilitating near transfer, where knowledge is applied in similar contexts (Hajian, 2019). This statement aligns with the explanation by Mukhlas et al., (2025) who stated that the transfer-based teacher assignment program is a hybrid model of Islamic character education and practical teaching experience implemented through structured management that includes planning, training, placement, and field evaluation. In Islam, the concept of character is synonymous with behavior, morals, and ethics, which are based on the Quran and Hadith as their normative basis (Alhamuddin,et al., 2022).

The implementation of transfer of learning at the MBS Islamic boarding school is clearly evident in its contextual classroom learning strategy. The teachers do not simply convey material textually, but always relate it to the students' life experiences. The material on prohibitions, commands, and moral values is conveyed through concrete examples that are close to the daily reality of students, thus facilitating the internalization process. In diniyah learning, the material on fiqh, ushul fiqh, and morals is consistently linked to the practice of worship and the social behavior of students. This approach strengthens near transfer, namely the application of knowledge in a relatively similar context, such as implementing prayer procedures after studying the prayer chapter in class.

This statement is also supported by the results of an interview with UST H, the Islamic boarding school's religious teacher.

> *"When delivering material, we relate it to the children's experiences. For example, when we're prohibited from smoking or approaching adultery, we explain why it's prohibited." (W/UST Y/29-12-25)*

Analytically, this reflects a constructivist learning approach, where meaning is constructed through students' lived experiences. This enhances meaningful transfer by connecting abstract concepts with real-life situations. The most dominant form of implementation of transfer of learning at the MBS Islamic boarding school is through the habituation of daily activities. The students' activity schedule is systematically designed, starting with waking up, congregational prayer, studying, and even rest time. This activity functions as a means of far transfer, namely the application of values and skills in a broader

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life context. This habituation not only instills discipline, but also forms the internal awareness of the students.

In addition, transfer of learning is strongly supported by habituation within the pesantren's daily system. Ustaz Hisyam, stated :

> *"Character education is more about daily activities. From Tahajud prayer, the five daily prayers, to going to bed, everything has a schedule." (W/UST H/29-12-25)*

This indicates the implementation of habit formation as a mechanism of far transfer, where values are embedded into students' daily routines. The 24-hour boarding system functions as a powerful hidden curriculum that reinforces discipline, responsibility, and religiosity through repetition and consistency.

Figure 3. *Student character leadership activities and implementation of knowledge gained at the Islamic boarding school*

The existence of ustaz and ustazah is an effective means of transferring learning, because students learn not only from the material taught, but also from real behavior in daily interactions. This exemplary behavior is reflected in attitudes, ways of communicating, conflict resolution, and consistency between words and actions, which implicitly shape the character of students. This approach is relevant to the 24-hour Islamic boarding school education system which combines tradition and modernity proportionally to form a moderate character, in line with the vision and involving all stakeholders (Mujahid, 2021; Roihatul Jannah, 2023).

This statement is also supported by observation results showing that the ustaz and ustazah adjust their communication style to the students' conditions:

> *"The ustaz and ustazah speak according to the situation, sometimes firmly, sometimes softly. The students see this example and imitate it." (O/29-12-25).*

This suggests that value transfer also occurs through implicit modeling, particularly in communication styles and emotional regulation. Students learn not only from formal instruction but also from teachers' behavior in everyday interactions.

The implementation of transfer of learning at the MBS Islamic boarding school is also strengthened through a continuous mentoring and evaluation system. Each student is under the supervision of a homeroom teacher, a mushrif, and a mushrifah who monitor academic

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development as well as behavior. Evaluations are carried out routinely through monthly meetings to discuss the achievements and problems of students. This evaluation process ensures that the material and values taught are truly transferred into student's actual behavior. If discrepancies are found, follow-up action is taken in the form of coaching, mentoring, or communication with parents.

The implementation is strengthened by a structured mentoring and evaluation system:

> *"Actually, we have a monthly evaluation meeting. Every month, we gather and evaluate each class. So, each mushrif will report. So if there are students who are having problems, they will report it in the forum. Then, that's where we will discuss the solution, what the follow-up is, what it looks like, and so on." (W/UST N/29-12-25).*

This statement shows that the transfer of learning is not allowed to occur naturally, but is monitored through a structured evaluation system.

This research is also supported by previous research conducted by Lutfiyah & Basri (2020) which revealed that the learning strategy at the Mamba'us Sholihin Roudlotul Muta'allimin Islamic Boarding School is implemented through supervision of students' external activities, regular discussions, prohibition of gadget use, provision of continuous motivation, enforcement of discipline, and strengthening of educational facilities and infrastructure.

This research is also supported by a preliminary study conducted by Poondej & Lerdpornkulrat (2016) which showed that the implementation of innovative approaches such as gamification significantly increased student engagement compared to the control group. Overall, these findings confirm that structured, disciplined, and innovative learning strategies contribute positively to increasing student participation and engagement in the learning process.

The successful implementation of transfer of learning at the MBS Islamic boarding school is reflected in the behavioral changes recognized by the ustaz, ustazah, and the students themselves. These changes include improved religious discipline, social skills, independence, and courage in public speaking. These changes do not occur instantly, but rather through a long process involving repeated learning, habituation, and reflection.

Based on this statement, it is also supported by the results of an interview with SNT I, a student who said:

> *"At first I was forced, but after a while I got used to it. Now I'm not nervous anymore when I speak in front of others." (W/STN I/07-01-26).*

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This illustrates a shift from external regulation to internalization, indicating successful transfer from repeated practice to autonomous behavior, particularly in developing public speaking skills.

Overall, the findings show that transfer of learning at MBS is facilitated through contextual learning, habituation, modeling, and systematic evaluation, forming a comprehensive and continuous process. This statement shows the transfer of learning from the cultum and sermon program into the students' social skills, and is supported by the following documentation results.

Figure 4**.** *Kultum activities*

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that the transfer of learning at the MBS Islamic boarding school is carried out through contextual learning, daily habits, exemplary behavior of ustaz and ustazah, as well as Islamic boarding school activities supported by routine evaluations. This process does not only take place in class, but in the lives of students 24 hours a day. A mentoring system and monthly evaluations strengthen the continuity of value internalization, thus ensuring that the transfer of learning is structured and oriented towards changes in students' actual behavior.

Impact of Transfer of Learning on Students' Character Development

The implementation of transfer of learning in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) has shown significant results in the character development of students. When ustaz and ustazah (teacher) not only deliver learning materials theoretically but also instill values through role models, habituation, and consistent supervision, the knowledge gained does not stop at the cognitive realm but is internalized in the students' daily attitudes and behaviors (Ilyasin, 2020; Yamin, 2023). At the MBS Islamic boarding school, the transfer of learning does not stop in the classroom, but is transformed into character that is reflected in the students' thought patterns, attitudes, and actions in their daily lives.

The research results show that the systematic transfer of learning by the ustaz and ustazah (teacher) results in significant character changes in the students, although not

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instantaneous and uniform across all individuals. This change occurs through a continuous process of habituation, role modeling, supervision, and reflection. Thus, Islamic boarding schools function as social learning spaces that enable gradual and contextual character transformation.

This statement is also supported by the results of an interview with USTH F, a female Islamic boarding school teacher.

> *"Success has short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes. What we can see is when students begin to apply what they understand in their daily behavior." (W/USTH F/298-12-25).*

The most dominant impact of the transfer of learning at the MBS Islamic boarding school is the formation of the students' spiritual character. The religious values learned in diniyah (Islamic religious studies) and tahfidz (memorization of the Qur'an) are not limited to cognitive aspects but are transferred into awareness of worship and spiritual discipline. Students showed improvement in the implementation of congregational prayers, punctuality in worship times, and awareness to carry out sunnah worship without coercion.

Islamic boarding schools use basic values as guidelines in assessing the development of students, both in the educational environment and in social life. This process demonstrates the internalization of spiritual values, where students begin to practice their religious duties not solely due to external supervision, but rather due to the emergence of an internal awareness (Ni’am & Arafah, 2024) .

This statement is also supported by an interview with SNT K, a student

> *"I used to often miss prayers, but now I'm more punctual. From the habits at the boarding school, my manners and morals have gradually changed." (W/SNT K/07-01-26)*

This statement demonstrates the transfer of values from learning to daily worship practices. This statement is also supported by observations showing that students consistently attend congregational prayers without constant reminders, and have begun to engage in disciplined dhikr and daily religious activities, which previously required close supervision. The following documentation demonstrates the results.

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Figure 5. *Activity of reading Al-Kahfi letter*

Transfer of learning also has a significant impact on the development of students' discipline and responsibility. The material on morals, Islamic jurisprudence, and disciplinary values taught in class is transferred into students' habits of adhering to activity schedules, maintaining cleanliness, and being responsible for their duties and personal belongings. The habituation of structured life in Islamic boarding schools is the main medium in this process, the students learn that lateness, negligence or violations have educational consequences.

Character education encourages students to cultivate empathy and understanding for others. Activities such as role-playing, community service projects, and peer mentoring opportunities provide students with opportunities to understand different perspectives, appreciate cultural diversity, and develop compassion for those experiencing hardship. These experiences broaden students' worldviews and enhance their ability to empathize with peers, teachers, and community members (Aijat Mau, 2024).

This statement is also supported by the results of an interview with UST Y, a religious teacher at the Islamic boarding school

> *"Children who initially had to be forced, eventually got used to it. Once they were used to it, discipline emerged naturally." (W/UST Y/29-12-25).*

The research also shows that transfer of learning has an impact on improving the social character and interpersonal skills of students. Material on manners, politeness, cooperation, and leadership delivered in learning and coaching is transferred into students' social interactions, both with peers and with religious teachers. Students demonstrate improvements in communication skills, public speaking skills, and the ability to work together in group activities. Programs such as religious lectures (kultum), sermons, community service, and student organizations serve as concrete vehicles for the transfer of social skills.

Based on this statement, it is also supported by the results of observations showing that

> *"Students are increasingly active in mutual cooperation activities, greeting each other, and working together without direct instructions from the ustaz, which indicates the internalization of social values."* (O/29-12-25)

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According to Hajian, 2019; Mansyur, 2019 transfer of learning is important for understanding how people develop abilities because no one is born with the ability to become a competent adult in society. To understand the various types of learning experiences that lead to transfer, it is defined as the ability to transfer learning from one context to a new context.

Transfer of learning plays a role in shaping the honest and ethical character of students through internalizing the values of trustworthiness and responsibility in their daily lives. This process is reinforced by methods of understanding, habituation, and role modeling through routine worship and structured activities (Priyadi & Wisudaningsih, 2023). At the Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic Boarding School, the development of independence and responsibility is realized through religious study, Islamic school (madrasah diniyah), and the obligation to participate in all Islamic boarding school activities as a form of concrete practice of these values.

This statement is also supported by the results of an interview with USTH A, a female Islamic boarding school teacher.

> *"If there are students who are dishonest, we are strict about it. Because if we don't emphasize it, honest character will not develop." (W/USTH A/29-12-25)*

According to (Kartiko dkk., 2026) it shows that the formation of students' morals through disciplined learning and instilling religious values in Islamic boarding schools is effective thanks to the role of the kiai and the educational council, support from parents and the community, as well as habits and role models directly supervised by teachers. This formation of students' morals will later become provisions for attitudes when they are in the community environment.

This statement is in line with previous research conducted by Jusubaidi et al., (2024) which shows that the religious education system in Islamic boarding schools should not only emphasize cognitive mastery of religious doctrine, but also needs to encourage the involvement of students in social life in order to form an open, tolerant and rational character.

This research study is also supported by previous research by Ina Usniati et al., (2024). Students of Darunnajah 2 Cipining Islamic Boarding School are equipped with knowledge and moral formation that is applied in daily life, so that when they return home or enter society they are able to demonstrate discipline, responsibility, and positive behavior which is evidence of the success of Islamic boarding school education.

In the long term, the transfer of learning at MBS Islamic boarding schools has an impact on the development of students' independence and self-awareness. Students begin to be able to

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manage themselves, make decisions based on moral values, and demonstrate readiness to face life outside the boarding school. This impact is the primary goal of Islamic boarding school education as part of out-of-school education. Students and alumni feel that the habits instilled at the boarding school remain with them after graduation. This demonstrates that the transfer of learning not only has short-term impacts but also shapes sustainable lifestyles and character.

This statement is also supported by the results of an interview with UST H, the Islamic boarding school's ustaz.

> *"Alumni who have attended college have felt the benefits. They are more disciplined with their time and adapt more easily to life outside the school."* (W/UST H/29-12-25).

The results of the study explaining the impact of transfer of learning, it can be concluded that the process carried out consistently results in changes in the character of students in the aspects of spirituality, discipline, responsibility, social skills, honesty, and independence. These changes occur gradually through repeated practice and reflection, and demonstrate a long-term impact on the students' readiness to face life outside the Islamic boarding school.

Based on the data presented above, it can be concluded that the overall research findings show that ustaz and ustazah occupy a central position in formulating the direction of character education in Islamic boarding schools. They not only deliver teaching material, but build a value framework that is the spirit of all educational activities through the integration of the formal curriculum, diniyah and Islamic boarding school programs. Character values are designed consciously and translated into learning practices that are integrated into the lives of students. Thus, the character formation process has been prepared from the planning stage to evaluation in a directed and consistent manner.

At the implementation level, the learning transfer process takes place through various strategies that connect the material to the students' daily lives. Habitual worship, leadership activities, religious lectures, social interactions, and a system of mentoring and regular evaluation serve as concrete means of instilling values. Learning is not confined to the classroom but takes place within the 24-hour dynamics of Islamic boarding school life. This demonstrates that value transfer occurs holistically through direct experience, role models, and continuous supervision.

The resulting impact is evident in changes in students' attitudes and behavior in spiritual aspects, discipline, responsibility, social skills, and independence. This transformation occurs gradually through a process of habituation and continuous reflection. Students not only understand values theoretically but also begin to demonstrate internal awareness in implementing them. Thus, transfer of learning has proven to be an effective bridge between the

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learning process and sustainable character formation within the Islamic boarding school environment.

Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the role of ustaz and ustazah in the transfer of learning process in Islamic boarding schools is fundamental to the character formation of students. Teachers serve not only as transmitters of learning materials, but also as role models, mentors, directors, and supervisors, ensuring that the values taught are truly internalized in the students' lives. The comprehensive 24 hour educational process in Islamic boarding schools provides ample space for the transfer of knowledge from the cognitive realm to the formation of real attitudes and behaviors. The success of the transfer of learning in Islamic boarding schools depends heavily on the integrity, commitment, and sincerity of the educators. When ustaz and ustazah are able to provide education that touches on the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects in an integrated manner, the Islamic boarding school becomes not only a place to gain knowledge but also a space for character transformation.

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