

Pedagogical Transformation through Student Council President Election: Internalizing Islamic Political Ethics and Divine Values in an Islamic Junior High School

Lola Permata Bunda^{1,*}) Yayuk Hidayah²

Program Studi Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia^{1,2}

^{*)Corresponding email: lolapermata.2025@student.uny.ac.id}

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Abstract : This study aims to examine how the Student Council President election at Junior High School (SMP) Al-Azhar Medan, an Islamic school, works as a pedagogical space for internalizing political ethics grounded in divine values. A qualitative case study was carried out. Data came from semi-structured interviews with nine informants (two candidates, four student voters, a *Pancasila* Education teacher, the student council advisor, and the school principal), observation of the election, and documentation in the form of election photographs, the voter attendance list, the ballot box, and the public vote tally. The data were analyzed with the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The results show six patterns: honest campaigning, trustworthy leadership, respect for peers' choices, civility in competition, rejection of manipulative practices, and a school culture that accompanies the election through counsel, habituation, supervision, and reflection. The election recorded 606 votes, 375 for Pair 01 and 231 for Pair 02. The study contributes an Islamic pedagogical reading of school democracy: divine values act as an ethical orientation that is transmitted through *nasihat*, *pembiasaan*, *muraqabah*, and *muhasabah*, so that an annual procedure becomes a moral learning experience for students.

Keywords : Divine values; Islamic education pedagogy; *Pancasila* Education; Political ethics; Student council election.

Abstrak : Penelitian ini bertujuan menelaah bagaimana pemilihan Ketua OSIS di SMP Al-Azhar Medan, sebuah sekolah menengah pertama Islam, bekerja sebagai ruang pedagogis untuk menginternalisasikan etika politik berbasis nilai ketuhanan. Penelitian menggunakan studi kasus kualitatif. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan sembilan informan (dua kandidat, empat siswa pemilih, guru Pendidikan Pancasila, pembina OSIS, dan kepala sekolah), observasi pemilihan, serta dokumentasi berupa foto kegiatan, daftar hadir pemilih, kotak suara, dan papan rekapitulasi suara. Analisis data mengikuti model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan enam pola: kejujuran berkampanye, kepemimpinan yang amanah, penghormatan atas pilihan teman, kesantunan dalam berkompetisi, penolakan praktik manipulatif, dan budaya sekolah yang mendampingi pemilihan melalui *nasihat*, *pembiasaan*, *pengawasan*, dan *refleksi*. Pemilihan

mencatat 606 suara, 375 untuk Paslon 01 dan 231 untuk Paslon 02. Penelitian ini memberi kontribusi berupa pembacaan pedagogis Islam atas demokrasi sekolah: nilai ketuhanan bekerja sebagai orientasi etis yang ditransmisikan melalui nasihat, pembiasaan, muraqabah, dan muhasabah, sehingga prosedur tahunan berubah menjadi pengalaman belajar moral bagi siswa.

Kata kunci : Nilai ketuhanan; Pedagogi pendidikan Islam; Pendidikan Pancasila; Etika politik; Pemilihan OSIS.

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INTRODUCTION

In many Indonesian schools the Student Council (*OSIS*) election is handled as an annual agenda item: a few posters, a round of speeches, a ballot box, and a winner. Teachers know the risks of that routine. Campaigns drift toward popularity, voters follow friendship groups, promises are made that nobody expects to be kept, and rivals are belittled in order to look stronger. A school election can therefore quietly rehearse the very political behavior that civic education hopes to correct. The social problem is not that students lack an election; it is that the election may teach procedure without teaching conscience. Democracy in education should not be reduced to casting ballots and naming a winner. In schools it is a pedagogical experience in which learners participate, express opinions responsibly, respect differences of view, and accept collective decisions with maturity, and the school functions as a moral community that cultivates honesty, fairness, civility, and responsibility (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Print, 2007).

For an Islamic school the problem has a pedagogical dimension as well as a civic one. In the framework of *tarbiyah* and *ta'dib*, Islamic education aims at forming a person whose conduct is ordered by *adab* (Al-Attas, 1980; Halstead, 2004), and its classical methods of counsel, habituation, supervision, and modeling are directed at conduct rather than at the recitation of rules (An-Nahlawi, 1979). The sources also supply an ethical vocabulary for political life. Leadership is an *amanah* that must be delivered to those who deserve it (QS. An-Nisa [4]: 58), decisions are reached through consultation (QS. Ali 'Imran [3]: 159), justice must hold even toward people one dislikes (QS. Al-Ma'idah [5]: 8), and ridiculing others is forbidden (QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 11). The Prophetic tradition adds that every person is a shepherd who will be asked about those in his or her care (narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim) and that whoever deceives others is not one of us (narrated by Muslim). Scholarship on Indonesia places Islamic schools within the wider conversation about democracy: Hefner (2024) frames Muslim engagement with democratic citizenship as a quest for an inclusive public ethics, and Hefner and Zaman (2007) and Parker and Raihani (2011) examine how Islamic schools take part in that process.

In the Indonesian context, democratic education also rests on *Pancasila* as the foundational value system of national life. *Pancasila* democracy recognizes freedom of choice, yet that freedom is guided by religious, humanitarian, unifying, deliberative, and

just values, and the principle of Belief in One Supreme God supplies a moral-spiritual framework for socio-political life. Within *Pancasila* Education, divine values are not a formalization of religion in school politics. They are an ethical reference that guides students to be honest and trustworthy, to respect the dignity of others, to reject manipulation, and to see leadership as a moral responsibility. In a school such as Junior High School (SMP) Al-Azhar Medan the national frame and the Islamic pedagogical frame meet in the same activity. The central problem is the gap between procedure and ethics. Election rules govern behavior from the outside, whereas divine values are meant to build an inner moral foundation, so that students do not lie, do not impose their will, and do not treat a position as a symbol of personal pride. This is consistent with Lickona (1991, 1996), who argues that character education must move from moral knowing and moral feeling to moral action. Civic virtue makes a similar demand. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) warn that citizenship education is inadequate if it only produces compliant citizens, Peterson and Civil (2023) argue that moral and civic virtue should not be treated apart, and Kahne and Sporte (2008) found that specific civic learning opportunities strengthened students' commitment to civic participation. In a school, civic virtue cannot remain a concept; it has to be practiced through making decisions, competing, and accepting shared outcomes.

Several earlier studies provide a foundation. Barky (2022) examined Student Council President election campaigns as political participation in schools, with a focus on the effectiveness of social media. Yamani et al. (2025) described how a student council chairperson election at a senior high school was used to instill democratic values within the *Pancasila* Student Profile Strengthening Project. Febriani et al. (2024) reported that a democratic-voice project that included a student council election at a junior high school contributed to students' critical reasoning, cooperation, and appreciation of diversity. Putra et al. (2024) showed that democratic values among students are fostered through directed participatory experience, including simulated elections and the change of the student council chairperson. In Islamic boarding schools, Khori et al. (2026) found that democratic education is enacted through student organizations, deliberative forums, and regulated leadership elections, and they describe it as a process of guided participation. On the religious side, Budiarti (2023) showed that belief in One Supreme God contributes to shaping the character of *Pancasila* Students at the junior secondary level, Veronika (2023) examined learning strategies for strengthening faith and piety within the *Pancasila* Student Profile, and Istianah et al. (2025) demonstrated that internalizing diversity values within *Pancasila* Education contributes to a peaceful school.

These studies leave a gap. Research on student council elections tends to describe participation, stages of the activity, campaign effectiveness, or student enthusiasm, and research on religious values tends to look at classroom learning or boarding-school governance. Few studies read the election itself as a pedagogical event in which divine values are turned into political ethics, and fewer still ask which Islamic pedagogical practices carry that process. Students' own experience of honest campaigning, trustworthy leadership, civility, respect for others' choices, and rejection of manipulation has not been examined in depth, although school democracy should shape ethical members of the school

community and not only voters who understand procedure. The novelty of this article lies in reading the Student Council President election as a pedagogical transformation: a procedural activity that, under guidance, becomes a moral experience of citizenship. Three contributions follow. First, school democracy is discussed through a moral-spiritual perspective that is anchored in Islamic education and *Pancasila* Education at the same time. Second, the relationship among divine values, political ethics, and civic virtue is made empirically visible through interview, observation, and documentation data. Third, the article identifies the pedagogical mechanisms (counsel, habituation, supervision, and reflection) through which the school accompanies students during the election.

Accordingly, this study examines the internalization of political ethics grounded in divine values in the Student Council President election at *SMP Al-Azhar Medan*, where the 2026 election involved two candidate pairs and 606 recorded votes. Three foci guide the inquiry: students' understanding of divine values in the election; the presence of divine values in campaigning, student interaction, and acceptance of the election results; and the pedagogical strategies the school uses to cultivate an honest, civil, and responsible democratic culture. Theoretically, the article enriches the study of *Pancasila* Education and Islamic education by showing how spiritual values are enacted in the practice of school democracy.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The design was chosen to obtain an in-depth understanding of how political ethics grounded in divine values is internalized within the real-life setting of the Student Council President election at *SMP Al-Azhar Medan*. A case study allows the phenomenon to be examined holistically and contextually through several data sources. The focus was not only the stages of the election but also the meanings, experiences, interactions, and values that develop within the school culture.

SMP Al-Azhar Medan was selected as the research site because of its strong emphasis on religious values, discipline, leadership, and student character development. Data were collected during the 2026 election period, from socialization, candidate screening, and campaigning to the presentation of vision and mission statements, voting, vote counting, and the announcement of results. The setting was considered appropriate for examining the relationship among divine values, political ethics, and the practice of school democracy.

Informants and Selection Rationale

Informants were selected purposively according to three criteria: direct involvement in the Student Council President election, understanding of the election process, and willingness to share information openly. Nine informants took part (Table 1). Two were candidates (K1 and K2), who could describe the campaign from the inside. Four were

student voters (S1 to S4). They were chosen from different grade levels, so that, together with the candidates, grades VII, VIII, and IX are all represented. This allowed perspectives from the youngest to the oldest students in the school to be heard. Three adult key informants were included because they design, supervise, and evaluate the election: a *Pancasila* Education teacher (G1), the student council advisor (P1), and the school principal (KS1). Combining student and adult informants allowed the data to capture not only what the school intends but also how students receive it.

To protect the students' identities, informants are identified by codes: K for candidates, S for student voters, G for the *Pancasila* Education teacher, P for the student council advisor, and KS for the school principal. Interviews were held on the school premises, and informants are identified only by code and initials in this article.

Table 1. Profile of Informants

No	Code	Initials	Position	Gender	Age (years)	Grade
1	K1	AKZ	Student Council candidate	Female	14	VIII
2	K2	AAY	Student Council candidate	Female	14	VIII
3	S1	AWW	Student voter	Male	13	VII
4	S2	IND	Student voter	Male	13	VII
5	S3	MRHS	Student voter	Male	15	IX
6	S4	ZKZ	Student voter	Female	15	IX
7	G1	LPB	<i>Pancasila</i> Education teacher	Female	-	-
8	P1	AA	Student council advisor	Male	-	-
9	KS1	SA	School principal	Male	-	-

Source: Authors' fieldwork data (2026). Informants are listed by initials. Age and grade are reported for the student informants only.

Data Collection, Trustworthiness, and Analysis

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation (Table 2). Interviews were conducted in Indonesian and the excerpts quoted in this article were translated into English by the authors. They addressed students' understanding of divine values, political ethics, honest campaigning, trustworthy leadership, respect for others' choices, and attitudes toward the election results. Observation was used to examine student interaction during campaigning, the presentation of vision and mission statements, voting, and responses after the results were announced. The documentation consisted of photographs of the election (Figures 1 to 4), the voter attendance list, the ballot box, the public vote tally (Table 3), and the school documents consulted: election rules, the list of candidates, vision and mission statements, campaign posters, the official election record, and the student council advisor's notes.

Table 2. Research Data Collection Techniques

Technique	Data source	Data focus	Data form
Semi-structured interviews	Candidates, student voters, the <i>Pancasila</i> Education teacher, the student council advisor, the principal	Understanding of divine values, campaign ethics, trustworthiness, freedom to choose, acceptance of results	Interview excerpts
Observation	Campaigning, vision-mission presentations, voting, vote counting, announcement of results	Student interaction, civility, respect for choices, compliance with rules	Observation notes
Documentation	Election photographs, attendance list, ballot box, vote tally, election rules, posters, vision-mission statements, official records	Election procedure, safeguards, and supporting evidence	Photographs and school documents

Source: Authors' fieldwork design (2026).

The trustworthiness of the data was maintained through source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail. Source triangulation compared information from students, candidates, the teacher, the student council advisor, the principal, and school documents. Method triangulation cross-checked interview, observation, and documentation data. Member checking was conducted by confirming interview summaries with informants so that the meanings interpreted by the researchers remained consistent with their experiences. The audit trail consisted of research process notes, interview guides, observation notes, interview transcripts, and the coding record.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014): data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. In condensation, the data were coded under the themes of honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, civility in competition, respect for others' choices, and rejection of manipulation. In display, the findings were organized into thematic narratives, an evidence matrix, and tables. In conclusion drawing, the relationships among divine values, moral action, civic virtue, and Islamic pedagogical practice were interpreted in an integrated manner. The Results section reports the data themselves, and interpretation is reserved for the Discussion.

RESULTS

This section reports the data as they were collected: documentation, interview excerpts, and observation notes. It first describes the election as recorded in the documentation and then presents the six themes that emerged from the analysis, namely honest campaigning, trustworthy leadership, respect for peers' choices, civility in competition, rejection of manipulative practices, and the role of the school culture.

The Election as Recorded in the Documentation

Voting took place outdoors in the school courtyard, with voting stations set up along the paved area under the trees. The documentation shows the path every voter followed. Students first signed the voter attendance list, with a teacher indicating the line where the signature was to be placed (Figure 1a). The folded ballot was then dropped into a ballot box wrapped in red foil and labeled “*Kotak Suara*” (ballot box), which carried the school’s emblems; an adult staff member stood beside the student at the box (Figure 1b). After voting, voters’ fingers were marked with ink, and ink pads and sheets of fingerprints were kept on a table near the voting stations (Figure 1c).



Figure 1. Voting procedure on election day: (a) signing the voter attendance list, (b) casting the ballot into the ballot box, (c) ink marking after voting. Source: Authors’ documentation (2026).

Guidance from teachers was also visible on election day. Figure 2 shows a teacher speaking to a circle of students, among them candidates, committee members, and other students, in the school courtyard during the election activities.



Figure 2. A teacher giving guidance to students, including candidates and committee members, in the school courtyard. Source: Authors’ documentation (2026).

After the voting stations closed, the votes were counted and recorded on a whiteboard placed in the open, in two columns with tally marks and a total for each pair (Figure 3). The recapitulation shows 375 votes for Pair 01 and 231 votes for Pair 02, a total of 606 recorded votes (Table 3).



Figure 3. Public vote tally of the Student Council President election. Source: Authors' documentation (2026).

Table 3. Vote Recapitulation of the Student Council President Election

Candidate pair	Votes recorded	Share of recorded votes
Pair 01	375	61.9%
Pair 02	231	38.1%
Total	606	100%

Source: Public vote tally board (Figure 3). Percentages were calculated by the authors.

Honest Campaigning

Honest campaigning was one of the earliest themes to emerge. Students described a good campaign as one that is not used to demean rival candidates, spread unverified information, or make excessive promises. They connected honesty with accountability for every utterance. One student stated:

"A Student Council President candidate must be honest from the start. If you make a promise about a program, that promise really has to be achievable, not just a way to get more votes" (S1, interview, 2026).

The documents reflected the same expectation. According to the vision-mission document, candidates were expected to draft program promises that were realistic and that did not discredit opponents, and the election rules prohibited promises unrelated to student council programs.

Trustworthy Leadership

The second theme concerns trust as the measure of leadership. Teachers and the student council advisor affirmed that the Student Council President is responsible for serving fellow students and not merely for obtaining a position, and that candidates were assessed through their capacity to maintain trust as well as through their popularity. A candidate described the position in these terms:

"Becoming Student Council President is not about looking impressive, but about carrying out the trust given by friends" (K1, interview, 2026).

Respect for Peers' Choices

Observation of the voting showed that some students still tended to choose a candidate on the basis of friendship ties. Teachers and the election committee, however, consistently emphasized that every student has the right to decide freely. Ballots were folded and cast individually into the box (Figure 1b). A student described how this emphasis translated into an attitude toward a friend who voted differently:

"Even though my close friend chose a different candidate, I must not be angry, because that is his right" (S2, interview, 2026).

Civility in Competition

The election produced a competitive atmosphere, but candidates were asked to keep it within limits: to present their vision and mission civilly, to avoid personal attacks on other candidates, and to keep their programs as the main focus. Observation notes from the vision-mission presentation session record that the committee set boundaries so that candidates would not use language that personally disparaged other candidates. The *Pancasila* Education teacher explained the reasoning:

"In the student council campaign, we direct our students to explain their programs, not to look for their opponents' weaknesses. Democracy in school must teach proper speech and respect for peers" (G1, interview, 2026).

Rejection of Manipulative Practices

Students and teachers shared a consistent understanding that the election must not involve coercion, intimidation, the spreading of information that harms other candidates, or promises that cannot be held accountable. The student council advisor put the school's position this way:

"We do not allow students to steer choices through group pressure, offer inducements, or spread bad news about other candidates. The election must be clean, because this is part of character education" (P1, interview, 2026).

The documented election rules prohibited negative campaigning, forced endorsement, and promises unrelated to student council programs. The documentation of the voting day also shows procedural safeguards that serve the same purpose: a signed attendance list (Figure 1a), a ballot box with an adult staff member present (Figure 1b), ink marking after voting (Figure 1c), and a tally written in public view (Figure 3).

The Role of the School Culture

The sixth theme is the school's role in building a religious democratic culture. According to the informants, this role was carried out through election rules, teacher mentoring, the habit of prayer before activities, guidance on honesty, and post-election evaluation. The student council advisor affirmed that both victory and defeat need to be accepted graciously, since the purpose of the election is not to build enmity but to shape a leadership experience. The school principal described what the school asked of students once the result was known:

"After the results were announced, we asked all students to return to supporting one another, because the student council election is not meant to divide friendships but to teach responsibility" (KS1, interview, 2026).

The interview sessions themselves were held at school with the candidates, the student council advisor, and the principal (Figure 4), and the evaluation notes kept by the advisor were consulted as part of the documentation.



Figure 4. Interview sessions: (a) with the candidates, (b) with the student council advisor, and (c) with the school principal. Source: Authors' documentation (2026).

Table 4. Evidence Matrix by Theme

Theme	Interview	Observation	Documentation
Honest campaigning	S1	–	Vision-mission document; election rules
Trustworthy leadership	K1; advisor	–	–
Respect for peers' choices	S2	Friendship-based choosing; free, individual voting	Figure 1b
Civility in competition	G1	Committee limits during vision-mission presentation	Figure 2
Rejection of manipulation	P1	Adult presence at voting stations	Election rules; Figures 1a–1c, 3
School culture	KS1; advisor	Prayer before activities; mentoring	Evaluation notes; Figure 4

Source: Authors' analysis of interview, observation, and documentation data (2026).

DISCUSSION

The results show an election that was run with procedures but was also talked about, supervised, and reflected on in moral terms. The Discussion reads that combination through three lenses: the shift from procedure to pedagogical experience, the divine values that students and teachers actually used as political ethics, and the Islamic pedagogical practices that carried the process.

From Procedure to Pedagogical Experience

The documentation in Figures 1 to 3 describes a procedure that would be recognizable in any well-run school election: an attendance list, a sealed box, ink, a public count. What changes the picture is what accompanied that procedure. Candidates were told to explain programs rather than hunt for weaknesses (G1), teachers and the committee stressed that every student chooses freely, and a voter echoed that a friend's different choice is that friend's right (S2), and the advisor connected a clean election to character education (P1). Procedure here supplied the rules of the game, and the surrounding talk supplied the reasons for it. This is the difference between knowing how to vote and understanding why a vote must be honest, which Lickona (1991, 1996) describes as the move from moral knowing toward moral action.

This reading adds to earlier work. Yamani et al. (2025) found that an *OSIS* chairperson election can integrate democratic values at every stage, and Putra et al. (2024) emphasized directed participatory experience. The present case supports both, and it adds that the direction of the experience was moral as well as procedural. Barky (2022) treated campaigns as political activity in schools; the data here show students judging a campaign by the honesty of its promises (S1) and the civility of its language (G1), not only by its reach. Peras et al. (2025) tie democratic school culture to the quality of student–teacher relationships, and the guidance session in Figure 2 and the post-election appeal by the

principal (KS1) are examples of the relational work that such a culture needs. Febriani et al. (2024) likewise identify school readiness and teacher competence among the conditions that support a democratic-voice project at a junior high school, which is consistent with the part that teachers, the committee, and the advisor play in this case.

The civic-virtue literature gives a vocabulary for what students were practicing. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argue that citizenship education is inadequate if it only produces compliant citizens, and Print (2007) and Biesta (2011) stress participation and lived democratic experience. In this study students were asked to do more than comply. A candidate described the position as a trust (K1), and a voter described tolerating a friend's different choice as a matter of right (S2). Both statements are small, but they are the kind of everyday civic virtue, such as responsibility and respect for the rights of others, that a school election can actually train. Kahne and Sporte (2008) found that specific civic learning opportunities in school strengthened students' commitment to civic participation. An election that is explained and supervised, as this one was, can be read as one such opportunity, although the present study did not measure commitment.

Divine Values as Political Ethics

The six themes can be read as divine values translated into political conduct (Table 5). Honest campaigning corresponds to *sidq*, truthfulness in what one promises. Trustworthy leadership corresponds to *amanah*, which the Qur'an links directly to rendering trusts to those who deserve them (QS. An-Nisa [4]: 58), and K1's phrase "carrying out the trust given by friends" is close to that idea in ordinary words. Respect for peers' choices reflects the principle of consultation and freedom of decision (QS. Ali 'Imran [3]: 159). Civility in competition reflects *adab* in speech, including the prohibition of ridicule (QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 11), and the rejection of manipulation echoes both the demand for justice (QS. Al-Ma'idah [5]: 8) and the Prophetic warning against deceiving others (narrated by Muslim).

Seen through Pancasila Education, the principle of Belief in One Supreme God is operationalized through honesty and trustworthiness. Respect for others' choices and dignity reflects the principle of Humanity, efforts to preserve friendship after the election reflect Unity, deliberation and voting reflect Democracy, and equal opportunity for candidates and voters reflects Social Justice. The Student Council President election therefore becomes a concrete place where Pancasila values are translated into students' actions.

Thus, the Student Council President election is not merely a democratic procedure but also an educational process that fosters integrity, tolerance, responsibility, and active participation. Through this experience, students learn that leadership requires not only the ability to win votes but also a commitment to serving others and upholding Pancasila values in everyday school life. Furthermore, the election provides students with opportunities to develop democratic awareness and ethical leadership. By participating in the electoral

process, students learn to accept differences, respect collective decisions, and prioritize the common good over personal interests

Table 5. Themes, Divine Values, and Pedagogical Mechanisms

Theme	Divine value in political conduct	<i>Pancasila</i> principle	Main pedagogical mechanism
Honest campaigning	<i>Sidq</i> : promises that can be kept	Belief in One Supreme God	Counsel (<i>nasihat</i>); rules on campaigning
Trustworthy leadership	<i>Amanah</i> : position as a trust	Belief in One Supreme God	Counsel; teacher and advisor guidance
Respect for peers' choices	Freedom of decision and consultation	Humanity; Democracy	Habituation (<i>pembiasaan</i>) in voting
Civility in competition	<i>Adab</i> in speech	Humanity; Unity	Supervision (<i>muraqabah</i>) of presentations
Rejection of manipulation	Justice; rejection of deceit	Social Justice	Supervision; procedural safeguards
School culture	<i>Tarbiyah</i> and <i>ta'dib</i> in the school	Unity	Prayer habit; post-election reflection (<i>muhasabah</i>)

Note: Interpretive mapping by the authors based on the results in Tables 3 and 4 and the sources cited in the text.

Islamic Pedagogical Practices Behind the Transformation

The title of this article speaks of pedagogical transformation, and the data suggest where it happened. An-Nahlawi (1979) lists counsel, habituation, and supervision among the classical methods of Islamic education, and each appears in the results. Counsel appears in the teacher's and advisor's explanations of why campaigns must be honest and clean (G1, P1). Habituation appears in the prayer before activities, in the practice of voting by folded ballot, and in the repeated expectation that candidates focus on programs. Supervision appears in the committee's limits during the vision-mission presentation and in adult presence at the ballot box (Figures 1 and 2). Reflection, or *muhasabah*, appears in the post-election evaluation and in the principal's request that students return to supporting one another (KS1).

This is also where the Islamic and *Pancasila* frames meet. In the sense described by Al-Attas (1980) and Halstead (2004), education aims at the right ordering of conduct in relation to God and community, and the election gave students a setting in which to practice that ordering. In the excerpts reported here, informants did not describe divine values as the imposition of a single religious expression. They described honesty, trust, restraint, and respect. That is consistent with the position stated in the Introduction that divine values in *Pancasila* Education serve as public ethics and not as formalized religion. Khori et al. (2026) report a comparable pattern in *pesantren*, where student organizations and regulated leadership elections operate as guided participation within an institution's own traditions, and Hefner (2024) situates such arrangements within the wider search for an inclusive public ethics in Indonesia.

Critical Reflection and Limits

Several observations temper the picture. Friendship-based choosing was still visible at the voting stations, so internalization is incomplete, and one election cannot show whether the attitudes expressed in interviews will last. Divine values also carry a risk that every religious school should name: if they appear only as symbols or formalities, an election remains procedural, and if they are enforced as uniform religious expression, they can become symbolic pressure on students. The data here point in the more hopeful direction, since informants spoke of conduct and not of display, but that is a reading of what informants said and not a test of what students do when no adult is present.

The study has further limits. It examines a single school and a single election cycle, so the findings are not intended for broad generalization. The student voice rests on six informants, two of them candidates, and the adult voices come from three key informants. Future research could compare elections across faith-based, public, and multicultural schools, follow students over more than one election, or use phenomenological or school-ethnographic approaches to capture candidates' and voters' experience in greater depth.

Theoretical Contribution and Implications

The theoretical contribution of this article is a reading of the school election as a pedagogical sequence, in which students are guided (counsel), accustomed (habituation), supervised, and invited to reflect, and in which divine values supply the ethical reasons that connect each step. Democratic procedure remains necessary, but without a value orientation it risks remaining a formality.

For practice, the findings suggest that schools can plan the Student Council President election as a democratic education program: guidelines for ethical campaigning, a declaration of a peaceful election, an assessment rubric for vision-mission statements, a post-election reflection forum, and the integration of political-ethics content into *Pancasila* Education and Islamic Religious Education lessons. These suggestions follow from the mechanisms identified above, and their effectiveness remains to be tested.

CONCLUSION

The Student Council President election at *SMP Al-Azhar Medan* worked as a pedagogical space where political ethics grounded in divine values was practiced and not only taught. Interview, observation, and documentation data show honest campaigning, trustworthy leadership, respect for peers' choices, civility in competition, rejection of manipulative practices, and a school culture that accompanied the process. The election itself followed visible safeguards and recorded 606 votes, 375 for Pair 01 and 231 for Pair 02.

The pedagogical transformation lies in how the school accompanied the procedure. Counsel, habituation, supervision, and reflection turned a routine election into an experience in which students were asked to treat leadership as a trust and a vote as a moral

act. Divine values in this setting functioned as public ethics (honesty, trust, restraint, and respect), consistent with both Islamic education and *Pancasila* Education.

The findings come from one school and one election cycle, and some tendencies, such as friendship-based choosing, persisted. Future research is encouraged to examine similar practices in other school contexts and across several election cycles, so that the relationship among divine values, school culture, and the shaping of students' political ethics can be understood more broadly.

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