

# Hidden Curriculum and the Formation of Santri Obedience Character: A Phenomenological Study at Pondok Pesantren Annuqayah

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### **Abstract**

This study is grounded in the urgency of strengthening character education within Islamic boarding schools, particularly through the mechanism of the hidden curriculum that operates implicitly in students' daily lives. Although studies on pesantren education have developed significantly, limited attention has been given to micro-cultural practices as a medium for internalizing obedience values. This study aims to examine the hidden curriculum in shaping students' obedience character and to identify its empirical manifestations through symbolic practices at Annuqayah Islamic Boarding School. A qualitative approach with a phenomenological design was employed. Data were collected

through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation involving 10-15 informants, including a kiai, administrators, senior students, junior students, and alumni. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, open coding, categorization, and thematic analysis. The findings indicate that the hidden curriculum is manifested in five main themes: symbolic meaning, mechanisms of value transmission, the process of internalizing obedience, impacts on students' behavior, and variations in interpretation. The practice of arranging the kiai's sandals embodies the values of *mahabbah* (affection), *tawadhu'* (humility), and *barokah* (blessing), which are internalized through modeling, habituation, and informal social interaction. Students' obedience develops progressively from practical actions to reflective and spiritual awareness, contributing to improved social ethics and responsibility. This study affirms that the hidden curriculum functions as a cultural mechanism operating through lived experience and everyday practices in shaping students' obedience character, while contributing to the development of contextual and sustainable character education based on local wisdom.

**Keywords:** Hidden Curriculum, Obedience Character, Islamic Boarding School, Character Education.

#### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh urgensi penguatan pendidikan karakter dalam konteks pesantren, khususnya melalui mekanisme hidden curriculum yang berlangsung secara implisit dalam kehidupan keseharian santri. Meskipun kajian tentang pendidikan pesantren telah berkembang, eksplorasi terhadap praktik budaya mikro sebagai medium internalisasi nilai kepatuhan masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hidden curriculum dalam pembentukan karakter kepatuhan santri serta mengidentifikasi manifestasi empirisnya melalui praktik simbolik di Pondok Pesantren Annuqayah. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain fenomenologis. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi terhadap 10-15 informan yang terdiri atas kiai, pengurus, santri senior, santri junior, dan alumni. Analisis data dilakukan melalui reduksi data, open coding, kategorisasi, dan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hidden curriculum termanifestasi dalam lima tema utama, yaitu makna simbolik, mekanisme transmisi nilai, proses internalisasi kepatuhan, dampak terhadap perilaku santri, serta variasi pemaknaan. Praktik membalik sandal kiai mengandung nilai mahabbah, tawadhu', dan barokah yang terinternalisasi melalui proses modeling, habituasi, dan interaksi sosial nonformal. Kepatuhan santri berkembang secara bertahap dari tindakan praktis menuju kesadaran internal yang bersifat reflektif dan spiritual, serta berdampak pada peningkatan etika sosial dan tanggung jawab. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa hidden curriculum merupakan mekanisme kultural yang bekerja melalui pengalaman

langsung dan praktik keseharian dalam membentuk karakter kepatuhan santri, sekaligus memberikan kontribusi bagi pengembangan pendidikan karakter berbasis kearifan lokal yang kontekstual dan berkelanjutan.

**Kata Kunci:** Hidden Curriculum, Karakter Kepatuhan, Pondok Pesantren, Pendidikan Karakter.

## A. Introduction

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are residential-based Islamic educational institutions distinguished by their capacity to integrate formal instruction with the holistic social and religious development of students (santri). Unlike formal schools in general, the educational process in pesantren operates twenty-four hours a day through a dormitory system, intensive interaction among kiai, ustaz, and santri, as well as an institutional culture that has been preserved across generations. This condition makes pesantren function not only as institutions for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, but also as effective social spaces for shaping students' character, discipline, and moral orientation. In this context, the success of education in pesantren is not merely determined by the formal curriculum, but also by non-formal educational mechanisms that operate through habits, exemplary role models, and everyday culture.<sup>1</sup>

In contemporary educational discourse, character formation has become a strategic issue in many countries due to the growing challenges of digital disruption, individualism, declining social control, and symptoms of ethical degradation among younger generations. Formal educational institutions are often perceived as placing greater emphasis on academic achievement than on the sustained internalization of values. At this point, pesantren are regarded as having a comparative advantage because they develop education based on community life, collective discipline, spirituality, and intensive pedagogical relationships between educators and students. These values are often not explicitly taught in curriculum documents, but instead emerge through continuous everyday practices.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the concept of the hidden curriculum becomes a relevant theoretical framework for explaining the process of value transmission within the pesantren environment.

Conceptually, the hidden curriculum refers to a set of values, norms, habits, and social expectations learned by students outside the formal curriculum. In the context of pesantren, the hidden curriculum is manifested through the exemplary role of the kiai, unwritten rules, patterns of communication, respect for authority, and the culture of collective life in the dormitory. Halid's study explains that the hidden curriculum in pesantren plays a role in transmitting values, attitudes, and behaviors through the daily lives

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<sup>1</sup> A Halid, "Hidden Curriculum Pesantren: Urgensi, Keberadaan Dan Capaiannya," *Tarbiyatuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 2 (2019): 140–50, <https://doi.org/10.36835/tarbiyatuna.v12i2.398>.

<sup>2</sup> L Lasmanah and M Mukarom, "Analisis Implementasi Hidden Curriculum Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri Di Pesantren Indonesia," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 11, no. 1 (2026), <https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v11i1.43724>.

of kiai and santri.<sup>3</sup> Lasmanah and Mukarom's study shows that the character formation of santri is influenced by norms, exemplary conduct, unwritten policies, and the cultural environment of the pesantren.<sup>4</sup> Similar findings were also reported by Umam, Bahrissalim, and Ghofur, who emphasized that habituation, institutional rituals, and peer norms contribute to the character development of santri.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, most previous studies have primarily focused on macro aspects, such as institutional management, worship routines, disciplinary systems, and structural relationship patterns between kiai and santri. The micro dimension, namely everyday symbolic practices that appear simple yet contain profound pedagogical meaning, has received relatively limited attention. In fact, within the pesantren environment, small actions performed repeatedly have the potential to become effective media for internalizing values through habituation, social imitation, and moral legitimation. One form of such symbolic practice can be seen in the habit of turning over the kiai's sandals, which is understood as an expression of *khidmah* (service), respect, and adab among santri toward an authoritative figure. Practices such as this indicate that the everyday culture of pesantren functions as a latent educational mechanism that shapes obedience based on awareness rather than merely administrative compliance.<sup>6</sup>

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the role of the hidden curriculum in shaping the character of obedience among santri at Pondok Pesantren Annuqayah. It also identifies the empirical manifestations of the hidden curriculum in the everyday lives of santri, including symbolic practices that represent the values of respect and obedience. Theoretically, this study is expected to broaden the field of Islamic boarding school studies by emphasizing micro-cultural practices as a medium of character education. Practically, the findings are expected to contribute to the development of a character education model based on local wisdom that is contextual, adaptive, and relevant to contemporary social challenges.

## B. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences and meanings constructed by santri regarding the practice of turning over the kiai's sandals as a form of hidden curriculum. A phenomenological approach was selected because it is capable of revealing the

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<sup>3</sup> Halid, "Hidden Curriculum Pesantren: Urgensi, Keberadaan Dan Capaiannya."

<sup>4</sup> Lasmanah and Mukarom, "Analisis Implementasi Hidden Curriculum Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri Di Pesantren Indonesia."

<sup>5</sup> K Umam, B Bahrissalim, and A Ghofur, "Lingkungan Pendidikan Berbasis Hidden Curriculum Dalam Pembentukan Karakter: Studi Kasus Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putra 1 Ponorogo," *Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal* 7, no. 12 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.47467/reslaj.v7i12.10505>.

<sup>6</sup> S F Rahmi, M S Syaillah, and F Z Maulia, "Muhadasah Dan Shalat Dhuha Sebagai Implementasi Hidden Curriculum Di Pesantren Qotrun Nada," *Kopula: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pendidikan* 8, no. 1 (2026), <https://doi.org/10.29303/kopula.v8i1.9234>.

structure of consciousness and lived experience within a particular socio-cultural context.<sup>7</sup> The research site was determined to be one of the pesantren located in Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, Madura, which continues to preserve the practice of *khidmah* as part of students' daily life. The research population included all santri and pesantren administrators, while the sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling strategy. Informants were selected based on specific criteria, such as length of stay in the pesantren (a minimum of two years), active involvement in *khidmah* activities, and an understanding of pesantren culture. The number of participants ranged from 10 to 15 individuals, consisting of kiai, administrators, senior santri, junior santri, and alumni, based on the principle of data saturation as the standard of data adequacy in qualitative research.<sup>8</sup>

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The interviews employed a semi-structured guideline developed from the concept of the hidden curriculum and Bourdieu's theory of habitus, which was then adjusted to the pesantren context.<sup>9</sup> Observation was conducted to capture actual practices and social interactions occurring naturally within the pesantren environment, while documentation was used to complement the data in the form of activity records, unwritten rules, and institutional archives. Data validity was examined through source and method triangulation, as well as member checking to ensure the consistency of the researcher's interpretations with the perspectives of the informants.

Table 1. Distribution of Research Informants' Identities

No.	Name Initials	Status/Role	Length of Stay in Pesantren	Description
1	KH. A	<i>Kiai</i>	> 20 years	Head of the <i>Pesantren</i>
2	KH. H.H	<i>Kiai</i>	> 20 years	Head of the <i>Pesantren</i>
3	A. F.M	Administrator / <i>Ustaz</i>	10 years	Daily Administrator
4	M. A. Y	Administrator / <i>Ustaz</i>	10 years	<i>Madrasah</i> Administrator
5	A. W	Senior <i>Santri</i>	8 years	University Student
6	A. K	Senior <i>Santri</i>	7 years	University Student
7	A. M	Senior <i>Santri</i>	5 years	Senior High School (MA) Student

<sup>7</sup> J W Creswell and C N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 5th ed. (SAGE Publications, 2023), <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/qualitative-inquiry-and-research-design/book268033>.

<sup>8</sup> M Hennink and B N Kaiser, "Sample Sizes for Saturation in Qualitative Research: A Systematic Review of Empirical Tests," *Social Science & Medicine* 292 (2022): 114523, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523>.

<sup>9</sup> P W Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968); H A Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition* (Bergin & Garvey, 1983), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/j.ctt1xp3s0p>.

8	A. R	Junior <i>Santri</i>	3 years	Junior High School ( <i>MTs</i> ) Student
9	H	Junior <i>Santri</i>	2 years	Junior High School ( <i>MTs</i> ) Student
10	S.N.M	Alumni	8 years	Alumni, currently teaching in the <i>pesantren</i>

The research procedure was carried out in several stages, beginning with a preliminary study and problem identification, followed by the development of research instruments, field data collection, and finally data analysis and reporting of findings. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis as developed by Braun and Clarke, which includes the stages of data familiarization, initial coding, theme searching, theme reviewing, and drawing conclusions. The analysis process was supported by NVivo 12 software to facilitate the management of qualitative data and the organization of thematic categories. This analytical approach enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns of meaning and relate them to the theoretical framework employed. Thus, the methodology applied in this study is expected to generate valid and in-depth findings, as well as make a significant contribution to the development of Islamic boarding school studies, particularly in understanding symbolic practices as part of the hidden curriculum.

Table 2. Stages of Thematic Analysis in the Study

Analysis Stage	Process Description	Output
Data Familiarization	Reading and understanding interview transcripts	Initial understanding of the data
Open Coding	Identifying important words/phrases	Initial codes (e.g., <i>tawadhu'</i> , <i>barokah</i> )
Searching Themes	Grouping codes into themes	Themes: symbolic meaning, mechanisms, obedience
Reviewing Themes	Validating the alignment of themes with the data	Final themes
Defining & Naming Themes	Naming and defining each theme	Analytical structure
Reporting	Preparing the findings narrative	Research findings

The data analysis process in this study followed the stages of thematic analysis systematically, beginning with data familiarization and continuing through to the reporting of findings. Each stage was conducted iteratively to ensure that the resulting themes genuinely represented the patterns of meaning emerging from the empirical data. The use of NVivo 12 software assisted in organizing the data, grouping codes, and enhancing transparency in the analytical process. Thus, this approach not only enabled an in-depth exploration of meaning, but also maintained the consistency and validity of the research findings.

### C. Results and Discussion

The results of data reduction, open coding, categorization, and thematic analysis of interview, observation, and documentation data indicate that the hidden curriculum in shaping the character of obedience among santri at Pondok Pesantren Annuqayah was identified in five major themes: (1) symbolic meaning, (2) hidden curriculum mechanisms, (3) internalization of obedience, (4) impacts on santri behavior, and (5) variations in meaning-making.

Table 3. Thematic Analysis Matrix of the Hidden Curriculum in Shaping the Character of Obedience among Santri at Pondok Pesantren

Main Theme	Subtheme	Initial Codes (Open Coding)	Representative Informant Quotations	Interpretation
Symbolic Meaning	<i>Mahabbah</i> (love)	love for the <i>kiai</i> , inner readiness	“Ini manifestasi mahabbah santri... simbol kesiapan menerima ilmu.”	The practice contains emotional and spiritual dimensions
	<i>Tawadhu'</i> (humility)	no pride, respecting the teacher	“Santri dilatih tidak gengsi melakukan hal kecil.”	Values of <i>adab</i> are instilled through simple actions
	<i>Barokah</i> (blessing)	blessing, ease in learning	“Melayani hal kecil dari <i>kiai</i> melancarkan pemahaman.”	Spiritual motivation strengthens internalization
Hidden Curriculum Mechanism	Modeling	imitating seniors, learning from examples	“Saya melihat kakak kelas lalu meniru.”	Learning process occurs through observation
	Habituation	repetition, routine practice	“Dilakukan berulang saat <i>kiai</i> datang/pergi.”	Forms automatic habits
	Non-formal Process	no written rules	“Tidak ada di tata tertib, ini tradisi.”	Values are transmitted implicitly
Internalization of Obedience	Internal awareness	without coercion, voluntary	“Santri bangga melakukannya.”	Obedience is based on awareness
	Micro-discipline	orderly in small matters	“Yang disiplin menata sandal lebih tertib kegiatan.”	Small habits produce broader impacts

	<i>Kiai-Santri Relationship</i>	respect, <i>ta'dzim</i>	"Lebih dekat tapi tetap hormat."	Strengthens the social structure
<b>Impact on Santri Behavior</b>	Social ethics	politeness, caring attitude	"Jadi lebih peka membantu orang lain."	Builds social sensitivity
	Responsibility	alertness, initiative	"Kalau ada yang perlu dibantu langsung bergerak."	Develops proactive character
<b>Variations in Meaning</b>	Senior <i>Santri</i>	symbolic, spiritual	"Ini bentuk penghormatan tertinggi."	Deeper level of internalization
	Junior <i>Santri</i>	practical, functional	"Supaya kiai nyaman."	Early stage of value internalization

Table 3 represents the results of the thematic analytical construction that identified five major themes as manifestations of the hidden curriculum in shaping the character of obedience among santri. These themes do not stand separately; rather, they are interconnected in forming a value system internalized through everyday practices. To provide a more comprehensive understanding, each theme is analyzed in depth based on the empirical data obtained from the field as follows:

### 1. Symbolic Meaning in Shaping the Character of Obedience

The data indicate that the practice of turning over the kiai's sandals is understood by informants not merely as a technical action, but as a symbol of values embedded in the pesantren culture. The identified subthemes include mahabbah (love), tawadhu' (humility), and barokah (blessing). A kiai informant stated, "*Ini manifestasi mahabbah santri... simbol kesiapan menerima ilmu.*"<sup>10</sup> This statement indicates that the practice is associated with an expression of affection and the inner readiness of santri to receive knowledge. In addition, regarding the aspect of tawadhu', the caregiver stated, "*Santri dilatih tidak gengsi melakukan hal kecil.*"<sup>11</sup> This shows that the action is interpreted as a form of humility in the relationship with the kiai. In the aspect of barokah, a senior santri expressed, "*Melayani hal kecil dari kiai melancarkan pemahaman.*"<sup>12</sup> This quotation indicates that the practice is associated with the expectation of gaining ease in the learning process. Overall, the data show that the practice of turning over the kiai's sandals is understood as an action containing emotional and spiritual dimensions within the life of the pesantren.

### 2. Hidden Curriculum Mechanisms

The data indicate that the value of obedience is transmitted through the mechanisms of modeling, habituation, and non-formality. In the modeling subtheme, a junior santri

<sup>10</sup> Interview with KH. A, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with KH. H.H, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with M. AY, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

stated, “*Saya melihat kakak kelas lalu meniru.*”<sup>13</sup> This statement shows that the learning process occurs through observing the behavior of senior santri. In the habituation subtheme, observation results show that the practice of turning over the sandals is carried out repeatedly, especially when the kiai arrives or leaves a place. This repetition forms habitual patterns in the behavior of santri. Meanwhile, in the non-formality subtheme, an administrator stated “*Tidak ada di tata tertib, ini tradisi.*”<sup>14</sup> This indicates that the practice is not formally regulated, but continues as part of the pesantren culture passed down from generation to generation.

### 3. Internalization of Obedience

The data indicate that santri obedience develops through internal awareness, micro-discipline, and the kiai–santri relationship. In the aspect of internal awareness, an administrator stated, “*Santri bangga melakukannya.*”<sup>15</sup> This statement shows that the practice is carried out voluntarily by the santri. In the aspect of micro-discipline, an informant mentioned, “*Yang disiplin menata sandal lebih tertib kegiatan.*”<sup>16</sup> This indicates a connection between small habits and orderliness in daily activities. Meanwhile, in the aspect of the kiai–santri relationship, a senior santri stated, “*Lebih dekat tapi tetap hormat.*”<sup>17</sup> This statement shows that the practice is related to the formation of a relationship that combines closeness and respect.

### 4. Impact on Santri Behavior

The data indicate that practices within the hidden curriculum have an impact on the social behavior of santri, particularly in the aspects of social ethics and responsibility. In the social ethics subtheme, an informant stated, “*Jadi lebih peka membantu orang lain.*”<sup>18</sup> This indicates an increase in social sensitivity. In the responsibility subtheme, another informant mentioned, “*Kalau ada yang perlu dibantu langsung bergerak.*”<sup>19</sup> This statement shows the emergence of initiative in helping others. Overall, the data indicate that the practice is related to the formation of more responsive social behavior.

### 5. Variations in Meaning-Making

The data indicate variations in meaning-making between senior santri and junior santri. A senior santri stated, “*Ini bentuk penghormatan tertinggi.*”<sup>20</sup> This statement reflects a symbolic and spiritual interpretation of the practice. In contrast, a junior santri stated, “*Supaya kiai nyaman.*”<sup>21</sup> This indicates that the practice is understood in a practical and functional way. This difference demonstrates variations in how santri interpret the practice of turning over the kiai’s sandals.

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with A.R, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with M. AY, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with A.F.M, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with S.N.M, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with A.W, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with A.K, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with A.F.M, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with A. M, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with H, Guluk-Guluk, Sumenep, February 20, 2026.

Based on these five themes, the data indicate that the practice of turning over the kiai's sandals is part of the hidden curriculum embedded in the everyday lives of santri in the pesantren. This practice appears in the forms of symbols, habits, social interactions, and diverse interpretations among santri.

The findings reveal that the hidden curriculum plays a significant role in shaping the character of obedience among santri in Islamic boarding schools. This process takes place through mechanisms of habituation, exemplary conduct (modeling), and symbolic meaning-making internalized in everyday actions. This confirms that value education does not always occur through the formal delivery of subject matter, but rather develops through repeated social interactions that are not explicitly structured within curriculum documents. One empirical manifestation of this mechanism can be seen in the practice of turning over the kiai's sandals as a form of respect and khidmah performed by santri.

These findings are consistent with the concept of the hidden curriculum proposed by Philip W. Jackson, who argued that educational institutions transmit values, norms, and behavioral orientations through social routines outside the official curriculum.<sup>22</sup> This idea was further developed by Henry Giroux, who emphasized that educational institutions shape social consciousness through everyday practices.<sup>23</sup> In the context of pesantren, this mechanism becomes stronger because the boarding school system enables the process of value internalization to occur continuously for twenty-four hours a day. Symbolic practices such as turning over the kiai's sandals can be understood as a form of implicit pedagogy based on direct experience (experiential learning). Santri do not merely understand the value of obedience conceptually, but experience it through repeated actions within a particular social context. The exemplary conduct shown by senior santri and administrators becomes an important medium for transmitting these values, allowing them to develop into collective habits. Thus, obedience grows organically through institutional culture rather than solely through formal regulations.

From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu, repeatedly performed practices form habitus, namely internal dispositions that influence spontaneous actions. The obedience of santri emerging through everyday practices is no longer merely administrative, but becomes a practical consciousness embedded within the individual.<sup>24</sup> This is reinforced by the finding that santri perform the practice without coercion, but are motivated by intrinsic factors such as respect for the kiai and the hope of obtaining blessings (*barokah*).

Thus, the hidden curriculum in pesantren cannot be understood merely as a complementary element, but rather as a strategic mechanism for preserving institutional values and transmitting the character of obedience across generations. The practice of turning over the kiai's sandals demonstrates that local micro-cultural traditions have an important function in the process of contextual and sustainable character education.

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<sup>22</sup> P W Jackson, *Life in Classrooms*, Reprint ed (Teachers College Press, 2018).

<sup>23</sup> Henry A Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education: Towards a Pedagogy for the Opposition* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).

<sup>24</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

The findings of this study reinforce previous literature emphasizing that the hidden curriculum plays a significant role in shaping the religious and social character of santri through implicit mechanisms. The study by Lasmanah and Mukarom (2026) showed that character formation in pesantren occurs through processes of habituation, exemplary conduct, and a socially integrated environment.<sup>25</sup> These findings confirm that values are not only taught, but also directly experienced in the daily lives of santri. Likewise, Harahap (2022) highlighted that pesantren represent an effective alternative model of character education because they rely on direct experience as a medium for value learning.<sup>26</sup> The results of this study are situated within the same theoretical and empirical framework, namely that the hidden curriculum functions as a primary means of value internalization within the pesantren educational system.

Nevertheless, this study offers a more specific perspective by shifting the analytical focus from the macro domain to the micro level. Most previous studies have tended to emphasize formal or semi-formal activities, such as congregational worship, student organizational programs, or institutional guidance systems as means of character formation. In contrast, this study demonstrates that simple symbolic practices, such as turning over the kiai's sandals, in fact make a significant contribution to the process of internalizing the value of obedience. This shift in focus provides a new understanding that small practices, often overlooked, possess strong pedagogical potential because they occur repeatedly and are integrated into the social life of santri.

In addition, this study also enriches the discourse by presenting the spiritual-transcendental dimension as an important factor in shaping obedience. While previous studies have placed greater emphasis on social and cultural aspects, the findings of this study indicate that the obedience of santri is driven not only by social norms or environmental pressure, but also by belief in the value of blessings (barokah) attached to the relationship with the kiai. This dimension makes a significant conceptual contribution because it broadens the understanding of the hidden curriculum in the context of Islamic education, namely not only as a social mechanism, but also as a process of value internalization rooted in spiritual consciousness.<sup>27</sup> Thus, this study not only confirms previous findings, but also offers new elaborations that enrich the field of Islamic boarding school studies.

### Contextual Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of the Hidden Curriculum

The totalistic environment of the pesantren is a major factor influencing the effectiveness of the hidden curriculum in shaping the character of obedience among santri.

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<sup>25</sup> L Lasmanah and M Mukarom, "Implementasi Hidden Curriculum Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri Di Pesantren Indonesia," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 11, no. 1 (2026): 150–65, <https://journal.unpas.ac.id/index.php/pendas/article/view/43724>.

<sup>26</sup> A T Harahap, "Hidden Curriculum Di Pesantren Sebagai Solusi Pembentukan Karakter Anak Masa Kini," *Attanwir: Jurnal Keislaman Dan Pendidikan* 13, no. 2 (2022): 115–30, <https://ojs.attanwir.ac.id/index.php/attanwir/article/view/225>.

<sup>27</sup> S Afiah, M Asy'arie, and S A Aryani, "Kearifan Lokal Sebagai Sarana Pendidikan Islam Multikultural: Studi Hidden Curriculum Di Ponpes Nurul Huda Sragen," *Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v21i2.13092>.

The integrated life system that combines formal learning, religious practices, and social interaction creates a holistic educational ecosystem in which values are not merely taught, but directly experienced in everyday life. The intensity of interactions occurring continuously throughout the day enables the process of value internalization to take place in a sustained and simultaneous manner. This is consistent with the finding that the pesantren environment, as a boarding school–based educational system, has a strong capacity to shape character through habituation and consistent social interaction.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the totalistic environment functions as a strategic medium in accelerating the process of habituation and the formation of stable behavior.

In addition, cultural homogeneity within the pesantren environment further strengthens the adaptation process of santri to prevailing norms. The minimal presence of external distractions allows greater focus on the internalization of pesantren values cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally. This process takes place through intensive social interaction, so that norms initially perceived as external gradually become part of individual habits. This reinforces the argument that institutional culture plays an important role in shaping character through the continuous internalization of values.

Another important factor is the charismatic authority of the kiai, which functions as a source of value legitimacy within the pesantren. The kiai possesses not only structural authority, but also symbolic and cultural authority formed through moral integrity, depth of knowledge, and social recognition. In this context, practices associated with the kiai acquire broader meaning because they are connected to a respected figure. The obedience of santri emerges not through formal coercion, but through internal awareness rooted in relationships of respect. This finding is consistent with studies showing that the role of authoritative figures in Islamic education is highly decisive in the process of character formation and value internalization.

The mechanisms of modeling and habituation are also important factors in the effectiveness of the hidden curriculum. Santri learn behavior through observing senior students or administrators, which is then followed through imitation and reinforced through repetition. This process is consistent with the social learning theory of Albert Bandura, which emphasizes that individual behavior is shaped through observation and imitation of models. Over time, actions repeatedly performed develop into ingrained and automatic habits. This indicates that character formation depends not only on cognitive understanding, but also on repeated practices within specific social contexts.

The spiritual dimension becomes an intrinsic factor that deepens the internalization of values. The practice of turning over the kiai's sandals is understood not merely as a social act, but also as a form of worship associated with the hope of receiving blessings (*barokah*). This belief provides transcendental meaning to the action, thereby encouraging behavioral consistency without reliance on external supervision. This is in line with studies showing that pesantren education integrates the spiritual dimension as a primary foundation in shaping the

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<sup>28</sup> Harahap, "Hidden Curriculum Di Pesantren Sebagai Solusi Pembentukan Karakter Anak Masa Kini"; S Ma'arif and A Rofiq, "Pendidikan Pesantren Dan Transformasi Sosial," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan* 7, no. 2 (2022): 200–215, <https://doi.org/10.24832/jpnk.v7i2.2545>.

character of santri.<sup>29</sup> Thus, spiritual motivation functions as an internal reinforcement that sustains the continuity of the practice.

In addition, this study shows the existence of variations in meaning-making influenced by the level of santri experience. Senior santri tend to possess a more symbolic and reflective understanding, whereas junior santri remain at the stage of practical interpretation. This difference indicates that value internalization occurs gradually and hierarchically. As experience and social interaction increase, the understanding of santri develops from imitation toward reflective awareness. In the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu, practices performed repeatedly will form habitus, namely internal dispositions that guide individual actions spontaneously.

Overall, the factors of a totalistic environment, kiai authority, mechanisms of modeling and habituation, spiritual motivation, and variations in meaning-making interact with one another in shaping the effectiveness of the hidden curriculum. These findings indicate that the internalization of the value of obedience is the result of a complex process involving social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions simultaneously.

### Meaning and Implications of the Findings

The principal meaning of these findings indicates that the hidden curriculum in pesantren is an implicit educational mechanism that operates systematically in shaping the character of obedience among santri. The practice of turning over the kiai's sandals represents that values are not transmitted through formal instruction, but through symbols, habits, and social interactions that occur repeatedly. These findings indicate that the process of value internalization in the pesantren context becomes more effective when santri directly experience such practices in their daily lives. Thus, culture-based character education derives its strength from concrete experience rather than merely normative transmission. These findings are consistent with recent studies showing that the hidden curriculum operates through social routines and everyday culture as the primary medium for value formation.<sup>30</sup>

In addition, these findings interpret the hidden curriculum as a latent social system structured through relationships, habits, and collective practices. The obedience of santri is not formed instantly, but develops through a gradual process involving observation, imitation, and habituation. In this context, simple practices such as turning over the kiai's sandals function as an effective pedagogical medium because they are integrated into the social life of santri. This indicates that micro-actions performed repeatedly have a significant role in shaping the internal dispositions of individuals.<sup>31</sup> These findings are consistent with

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<sup>29</sup> Ma'arif and Rofiq, "Pendidikan Pesantren Dan Transformasi Sosial."

<sup>30</sup> M S Latif et al., "Study of Hidden Curriculum as a Method of Non-Formal Education in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Journal of Instructional and Development Researches* 5, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.53621/jider.v5i1.475>.

<sup>31</sup> M H Majid, "Pengaruh Penerapan Hidden Curriculum Dan Keteladanan Guru Terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Santri," in *Blannual Conference on Islamic Education (BICOIN)*, 2025, <https://bicoin.or.id/journal/index.php/bicoin/article/view/403>; N A Salim et al., "Fostering Moderate Character of Santri: Effective Hidden Curriculum Strategy in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v7i2.4676>.

the social learning theory of Albert Bandura and are supported by contemporary studies emphasizing that the character formation of santri takes place through habituation and exemplary conduct within the pesantren environment.

Another meaning that can be drawn from these findings is that the obedience of santri is multidimensional, encompassing social, moral, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Obedience is driven not only by social norms or structures of authority, but also by intrinsic motivation rooted in belief in the value of blessings (*barokah*).<sup>32</sup> These findings affirm that, within the context of pesantren education, the spiritual dimension plays an important role in strengthening the internalization of values. This is reinforced by studies showing that character education in pesantren cannot be separated from religious dimensions and the spiritual experiences of santri.<sup>33</sup>

From a theoretical perspective, this study both strengthens and expands the concept of the hidden curriculum, which has largely been understood within the context of formal educational institutions. The findings demonstrate that the hidden curriculum in pesantren is more complex because it involves the integration of culture, social relations, and spiritual values. In the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu, practices carried out repeatedly form habitus as internal dispositions that influence individual actions.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the study of the hidden curriculum needs to be understood as a multidimensional process encompassing not only socio-cultural aspects, but also religious dimensions.<sup>35</sup> This contribution enriches the development of character education theory, particularly in the context of boarding-based Islamic education.

The practical implications of this study indicate that simple local cultural practices possess strategic value in character formation. Pesantren need to preserve and reproduce symbolic practices as part of a living educational system. In addition, the roles of the kiai and senior santri as agents of exemplary conduct become key factors in sustaining the hidden curriculum.<sup>36</sup> Without the presence of figures who serve as behavioral models, the process of

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<sup>32</sup> Majid, "Pengaruh Penerapan Hidden Curriculum Dan Keteladanan Guru Terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Santri"; Salim et al., "Fostering Moderate Character of Santri: Effective Hidden Curriculum Strategy in Islamic Boarding Schools."

<sup>33</sup> B K Asror et al., "Penerapan Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Tradisi Berdo'a Di Pondok Pesantren Syaikh Zainuddin NW Anjani Lombok Timur," *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan* 9, no. 1 (2024): 304–18; Suriyati et al., "Eksistensi Lembaga Pondok Pesantren Sebagai Pusat Pendidikan Karakter," *Al Asma: Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 2 (2024): 151–60.

<sup>34</sup> Afiah, Asy'arie, and Aryani, "Kearifan Lokal Sebagai Sarana Pendidikan Islam Multikultural: Studi Hidden Curriculum Di Ponpes Nurul Huda Sragen"; H Wibowo, "Etika Santri Kepada Kiai Menurut Kitab Ta'lim Muta'allim Di PP Kotagede Hidayatul Mubtadi-Ien Yogyakarta," *Panangkaran: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Masyarakat*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.14421/panangkaran.2020.0402-01>.

<sup>35</sup> I Rohili et al., "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Pesantren Pada Siswa Program Keagamaan," *Bulletin of Educational Management and Innovation* 2, no. 1 (2024): 20–33; S Maulidin, D J D S Siregar, and Prayitno, "Analisis Manajemen Pendidikan Karakter Di Pondok Pesantren," *Bustanul Ulum Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 2 (2024): 136–55.

<sup>36</sup> Majid, "Pengaruh Penerapan Hidden Curriculum Dan Keteladanan Guru Terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Santri"; Salim et al., "Fostering Moderate Character of Santri: Effective Hidden Curriculum Strategy in Islamic Boarding Schools."

value transmission through implicit mechanisms will lose its effectiveness.<sup>37</sup> This is consistent with empirical findings emphasizing the importance of exemplary conduct in shaping the character of santri.<sup>38</sup>

For formal educational institutions, these findings imply that character education is insufficient if it relies solely on a written curriculum. It requires the creation of an institutional culture that enables students to directly experience values through habituation and social interaction. This approach indicates that the integration of the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum is a more effective strategy for shaping students' character in a sustainable manner. Recent studies also confirm that school culture-based approaches have a significant impact on students' character development.

Socially, these findings indicate that practices rooted in local culture have strong potential to shape individuals who are ethical, responsible, and socially concerned. Values internalized through the hidden curriculum affect not only life within the pesantren, but are also carried into broader community life.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the pesantren educational model can serve as a reference for developing character education that is contextual, sustainable, and relevant to local cultural values.

#### D. Conclusion

The hidden curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Annuqayah plays a significant role in shaping the character of obedience among santri through implicit cultural mechanisms that operate systematically. The main findings show that the practice of turning over the kiai's sandals is not merely a technical action, but a symbolic representation of the values of mahabbah, tawadhu', and barokah, which are internalized through social interaction, habituation, and exemplary conduct. The process of developing obedience takes place through modeling, habituation, and intensive kiai-santri relationships, enabling obedience to develop from practical actions into internal awareness that is reflective and spiritual. In addition, the practice contributes to the formation of social ethics and responsibility among santri, while also demonstrating variations in meaning-making based on experience and level of involvement in pesantren culture.

Theoretically, this study contributes to expanding the concept of the hidden curriculum as a multidimensional process that encompasses not only social and cultural aspects, but also spiritual dimensions within the context of boarding-based Islamic education. These findings enrich the study of character education by affirming that value internalization is more effective when it occurs through direct experience integrated into everyday life. Practically, this study emphasizes the importance of preserving local cultural practices as

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<sup>37</sup> Halid, "Hidden Curriculum Pesantren: Urgensi, Keberadaan Dan Capaiannya"; Lasmanah and Mukarom, "Implementasi Hidden Curriculum Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Santri Di Pesantren Indonesia."

<sup>38</sup> M E H Kuncoro, M Maufur, and B Basukiyatno, "Implementasi Pendidikan Multikultural Sebagai Penguatan Nilai Karakter Santri," *Journal of Education Research*, 2024, <https://www.jer.or.id/index.php/jer/article/view/962>.

<sup>39</sup> Afiah, Asy'arie, and Aryani, "Kearifan Lokal Sebagai Sarana Pendidikan Islam Multikultural: Studi Hidden Curriculum Di Ponpes Nurul Huda Sragen"; Latif et al., "Study of Hidden Curriculum as a Method of Non-Formal Education in Islamic Boarding Schools."

media for character education, while strengthening the roles of the kiai and senior santri as agents of exemplary conduct in the process of value transmission.

The implications of this study indicate that the pesantren educational model based on the hidden curriculum can serve as a reference for developing contextual and sustainable character education, both within pesantren and formal educational institutions. The integration of the formal curriculum with culture-based daily practices constitutes an effective strategy for shaping students' character holistically. However, this study has limitations, particularly its scope being confined to a single pesantren, so the findings cannot yet be broadly generalized. In addition, the phenomenological approach employed emphasizes the subjective experiences of informants, meaning that interpretation is highly dependent on the local social and cultural context.

Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to expand the study sites across various types of pesantren in order to obtain more comprehensive comparisons. Further studies may also employ a mixed methods approach to quantitatively measure the influence of the hidden curriculum on character formation. In addition, exploration of other symbolic practices within pesantren should be conducted to enrich understanding of the role of local culture in character education.

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