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INTERNALIZATION OF BOARDING SCHOOL VALUES AND CULTURE AMIDST DECLINING PARENTING INTENSITY

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^{1,2,3} (Case study at MSW Sabilil Mukminin Islamic Boarding School, Kediri, East Java) Ahmad Dahlan Institute, Probolinggo

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Abstract

Caregivers play a very strategic role in educating and shaping the character of students. Ideally, students who receive supervision from their caretakers can instill a personality of obedience and compliance in them. And students who do not have caretakers or receive less supervision from their caretakers can experience a crisis of obedience and compliance. However, what happened at the MSW Sabilil Mukminin Kediri Islamic boarding school was a contradictory phenomenon to what should have happened. The decrease in the intensity of caretaker supervision did not actually reduce the level of obedience and compliance of the students. The students' obedience and compliance increased compared to previous generations when they had more intense supervision from caretakers. This study aims to describe the phenomenon that occurred at the MSW Sabilil Mukminin Kediri Islamic boarding school from the forms and patterns of obedience of students in daily life and analyze the process of internalization of Islamic boarding school values that influence student obedience. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed through the stages of condensation, presentation, and verification of data. The results of this study indicate that students' obedience stems from a strong internalization of the spiritual and cultural values of the Islamic boarding school, rather than from strict supervision by their guardians. Religious awareness, exemplary behavior among students, and the practice of religious observance are the dominant factors in shaping intrinsic discipline. This research contributes to strengthening the theory of character education based on Islamic boarding school culture and offers practical implications for Islamic educational institutions to balance structural and cultural approaches in shaping students' character.

Keywords: guardians, obedience, internalization, students, Islamic boarding school.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon occurring at the MSW Sabilil Mukminin Islamic Boarding School in Kediri demonstrates an interesting phenomenon in the students' obedience behavior. Based on researchers' observations (2021-2025), the level of students' compliance with the boarding school's regulations has actually increased compared to previous generations. However, according to a senior administrator, the intensity of mentoring by caregivers has decreased in recent years due to the lack of human resources as caregivers ready to accompany them around the clock. Consequently, one of the teaching staff at the boarding school concurrently serves as both the head of the boarding school and the caregiver, which is certainly not optimal in terms of supervision. An early source who lives in the boarding school, the Treasurer of the Boarding School, stated that "the students are now easier to direct and more obedient, even though we are not as intense in mentoring as before." And another source, a student who is also a caregiver, also acknowledged the same thing.

This statement demonstrates a real, contradictory phenomenon that merits in-depth study. This phenomenon is crucial to examine from an educational, social, and religious perspective because student compliance is an indicator of successful character development in Islamic boarding schools. Theoretically, compliance typically increases with the intensity of role models and mentoring from caregivers (Hartono et al., 2024). However, the reality on the ground shows a different dynamic, necessitating an analysis of how the process of internalization of values, social relations among students, and the influence of the Islamic boarding school environment operate without intensive supervision. This is also crucial in the context of Islamic education, as Islamic boarding schools are institutions for developing spiritual and moral character that rely on exemplary behavior, habituation, and intensive interaction between teachers and students (Mukri et al., 2024).

The gap between theory and fact is evident in the assumption that interpersonal closeness between educators and students is the dominant factor in the effectiveness of character education. However, the phenomenon at the MSW Sabilil Mukminin Islamic boarding school in Kediri actually shows the potential for other factors to play a role, such as Islamic boarding school culture, rule management, peer influence, the adaptation of the new generation, or internal factors of the students themselves. This gap represents an important research gap to uncover in order to provide academic contributions regarding how compliance can persist despite decreased supervision intensity. From a social theory perspective, this phenomenon can be explained through Grand Theories such as the theory of value internalization (Kohlberg, 1984; Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and the theory of character education in Islam (Al-Ghazali, 1997). These theories emphasize the importance of the habituation process, social structure, and educational environment in shaping moral behavior.

Therefore, this study aims to understand the complex interaction between internal factors of students, Islamic boarding school culture, and the dynamics of parenting that produce the phenomenon of obedience. Based on this background, this research aims to answer fundamental questions regarding the mechanism of growing obedience amidst the decreasing intensity of parenting. The main problems to be studied are formulated in the following questions: (1) What are the forms and patterns of obedience of students at the MSW Sabilil Mukminin Kediri Islamic Boarding School amidst the decreasing intensity of caregiver guidance? (2)

How does the process of internalizing Islamic boarding school values and culture contribute to the behavior of obedience of students?

Several previous studies have shown a positive relationship between intensive mentoring and student discipline, for example: Hidayat (2025) examined the relationship between the exemplary behavior of Islamic scholars (kiai) and student obedience, the results showed that the intensity of interaction was very influential (Hidayat et al., n.d. 2025). Ayu (2022) studied Islamic boarding school management and found that effective supervision was a major factor in student discipline (Ayu, L. 2022). Syahfitri (2026) examined habituation in the formation of student character and concluded that daily supervision was very important in determining behavioral change (Syahfitri et al., 2026). However, these three studies did not address the phenomenon of growing student obedience despite decreasing supervision intensity. The differences in context, problem focus, and social conditions at MSW Sabilil Mukminin Kediri make this research original and relevant.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. This approach was chosen because the paradox of compliance requires a deep, contextual, and holistic understanding (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. 2018). Case studies allow researchers to explore the dynamics occurring within an institution in detail. This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. This choice is based on the need to understand the phenomenon of "compliance" in depth, not simply measuring its symptoms, but also interpreting the meaning, reasons, and dynamics behind it in a real-world context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Babchuk, 2016).

Qualitative methods enable researchers to capture rich experiences, perceptions, and social practices occurring in the field, allowing phenomena to be understood interpretively and contextually (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). A case study approach was chosen because the research focuses on a single institution as a "case" that is intensively examined. Case studies allow researchers to explore the processes, relational patterns, and institutional conditions that shape compliance—both formal compliance and compliance carried out in everyday practice (Yin, 2018).

By focusing on a single setting, case studies help build a holistic understanding of the "how" and "why" of phenomena within a specific environment (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). In its implementation, this research positions the researcher as the primary instrument, playing a role in both data collection and interpretation. Data are constructed through the researcher's engagement with the research setting, allowing social reality to be understood from the perspectives of the actors involved and from the surrounding context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2025).

This process requires researchers to be meticulous in building in-depth information, maintaining procedural consistency, and engaging in critical reflection throughout the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Overall, qualitative case study methodology allows for exploring compliance as a complex, multi-layered, and highly contextualized phenomenon. By focusing on a single institution, this research is expected to explain how compliance is formed, practiced, and interpreted by stakeholders, thus yielding a deep and comprehensive understanding (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The results of the study indicate that the obedience and compliance of students at the MSW Sabilil Mukminin Islamic Boarding School in Kediri are maintained despite a decrease in the intensity of supervision by the supervisors. The students' compliance is reflected in their discipline in carrying out obligatory and recommended worship, adherence to the boarding school's rules, and their attitude of manners in daily life. Students follow the rules not out of pressure or fear of sanctions, but rather out of a personal awareness that obedience is part of their religious responsibility and identity as students.

The research also found that the internalization of Islamic boarding school values occurs strongly through the practice of worship, the collective culture of the boarding school, and the role models of students. Intense social interaction among students creates effective informal social control, whereby the boarding school's norms are collectively maintained and preserved. Thus, student compliance is more intrinsic and sustainable, not solely dependent on the structural supervision of the guardians.

DISCUSSION

Forms and patterns of student compliance

The forms and patterns of student obedience can develop through three theoretical foundations: internalization of values, moral socialization, and Islamic religious education.

1. Theory of Internalization of Values

Morals develop through stages influenced by the social environment, rules, and experiences. Internalization of values occurs when an individual internalizes rules until they become self-aware. Internalization of values is the process by which a person no longer obeys rules simply because of external pressure, but because the rules have become part of their moral consciousness. Kohlberg divided moral development into six stages, grouped into three levels: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. At the pre-conventional level, a person obeys out of fear of punishment or the pursuit of rewards. At the conventional level, obedience arises from a desire for acceptance by the social group and adherence to prevailing norms. Meanwhile, at the post-conventional level, a person obeys because the values are believed to be universally valid moral principles.

From this perspective, internalization of values in Islamic boarding schools occurs when students are no longer obedient simply because of the supervision of their guardians, but because the values of the Islamic boarding school have been internalized within them. Habitual experiences, a moral environment, a consistent rule structure, and daily social interactions in Islamic boarding schools play a major role in encouraging students to rise to a higher moral level (Nurrohmah et al. 2025). Thus, the phenomenon of high student obedience despite decreasing intensity of guardianship can be explained as a manifestation of strongly internalized morals, where obedience no longer depends on external factors, but rather on the students' own internal moral awareness (Kohlberg, 1984).

The growing obedience of students despite decreasing supervision from their caregivers indicates that obedient behavior is no longer driven solely by external factors (punishment or control), but has evolved into obedience based on internal moral awareness. According to Kohlberg's theory, students are at a conventional or

even post-conventional stage of moral development, where obedient behavior stems from a personal belief in the goodness of the rules. The repetitive and structural lifestyle of Islamic boarding schools allows for stable values to be embedded, allowing students to remain obedient even without close supervision. Thus, this phenomenon represents a mature form of internalization of values.

The habituation and character formation of students in Ghafur's 2025 research findings show that the habituation of religious behavior and daily discipline in Islamic boarding schools plays a significant role in shaping the character of students. Routines such as congregational prayer, reciting the Quran, and structured activities create self-discipline in students. The Islamic boarding school environment, which is full of religious values, makes students remain obedient even though they are not always supervised. Islamic Boarding School Culture in Internalizing Moral Values by Ghafur's research also shows that Islamic boarding school culture such as traditions of etiquette, habituation of worship, etiquette, and hierarchical social relations play a very strong role in internalizing the moral values of students. In a strong culture, students follow values not because of orders, but because these norms become part of their identity (Ghafur, O. A. 2025).

2. Moral Socialization Theory

Secondary socialization in institutions such as Islamic boarding schools can form a stable structure of consciousness through habituation, imitation, and the legitimization of values. Berger & Luckmann explain that society shapes social reality through a socialization process that occurs in two stages: primary socialization and secondary socialization. Primary socialization occurs within the family during childhood, while secondary socialization occurs when an individual enters a specific institution, such as a school, the military, or an Islamic boarding school, which has its own norms, values, and structures.

In secondary socialization, individuals learn to understand the reality constructed by institutions through habituation, repetition, internalization of rules, and legitimization of values by authority figures. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, students undergo an intense moral socialization process through collective lifestyles, daily discipline, peer interactions, consistent rules, and religious symbols that shape their framework of consciousness. Repeated moral values such as discipline, simplicity, and obedience ultimately shape the structure of students' consciousness. Once the social values of Islamic boarding schools have taken root, external control (supervision by caregivers) is no longer the dominant factor in fostering obedient behavior. In other words, Islamic boarding school culture has become a social reality internalized by students, allowing compliance to emerge independently and consistently (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

The secondary socialization experienced by students in Islamic boarding schools through interactions with peers, regulations, collective lifestyles, and a religious atmosphere creates an objective reality that is considered "taken for granted." The culture and values of Islamic boarding schools become a living structure of consciousness within the students. Once these values are realized within the students through habituation, legitimacy, and imitation, the presence of guardians is no longer the primary factor in shaping obedience. In other words, Islamic boarding schools have created a self-regulating community, where students control their own behavior. This phenomenon arises because, despite the weakening

of physical supervision, the power of social values remains powerful.

The influence of Islamic boarding school supervisory management on student discipline can also improve student discipline. Once a culture of discipline has been established, students are able to maintain good behavior without direct supervision (Dahri, A. 2023). Research has revealed that Generation Z has a strong tendency towards self-regulated motivation, which is the intrinsic motivation to comply with rules when they perceive them to align with their personal values. Compliance no longer depends on an authority figure, but is driven by an internal understanding that the rules are important to themselves (Sari, N. I., & Lestari, A. 2025).

3. Islamic Educational Theory

Al-Ghazali stated that character education is formed through habituation, role models (uswah), and spiritual practice (riyadhah). A religious environment strengthens the morality of students. Al-Ghazali stated that character education is a process of moral formation through knowledge, spiritual practice (riyadhah), and continuous moral practice. He emphasized that morality (akhlak) is the result of repeated habits, not something that emerges suddenly. Therefore, the educational environment must provide a space for the habituation of pious deeds and praiseworthy behavior.

According to Al-Ghazali, the exemplary conduct (uswah) of teachers or kiai is the most important component in character education. However, he also emphasized that a positive environment can replace direct role modeling once a stable moral structure has been established. In Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), the religious atmosphere, such as communal worship activities, daily routines, the use of polite language, and a culture of respect for teachers, creates a strong space for internalizing character. This explains how students' obedience remains high even though their teachers do not always provide intensive guidance (Al-Ghazali, 1997).

According to Al-Ghazali, effective character education is achieved through the inculcation of good deeds, spiritual practice, and exemplary behavior. Daily habits such as congregational prayer, reciting the Quran, maintaining good manners, and adhering to the pesantren's schedule shape the character of students through consistent riyadhah (religious obedience). The religious environment of the pesantren creates an atmosphere conducive to the development of morals without the need for constant supervision. Once values have become character (khuluq), students will adhere to the rules with awareness and sincerity.

This explains why students remain obedient even when their guardians' supervision decreases, as they have undergone a long process of moral conditioning, until obedience arises from the heart, not from fear of their guardians. The exemplary conduct of the kiai (Islamic scholars) has a strong influence on student obedience. This means that the values and morals instilled by the kiai can internalize obedient behavior (Hidayat, N.A., Rahmat, N.A., & Anton, N. 2025).

The relationship with the research context of these three theories helps explain how Islamic boarding school values can be absorbed into the students even though the intensity of direct role models from the caregivers is reduced.

The process of internalizing Islamic boarding school values and culture

The process of internalizing values and culture at the MSW Sabilih Mukminin Kediri Islamic boarding school is influenced by several things:

1. The Islamic boarding school cultural environment

Islamic boarding schools have a daily schedule of activities for students, from waking up to going to bed. These activities include the five obligatory prayers in congregation, the sunnah prayers (qobliyah and ba'diyah), reading the Quran three times a day, classroom study, daily thematic studies, and daily duty at the boarding school twice a day, morning and evening. Thus, the Islamic boarding school creates a total institution where all student activities are regulated 24 hours a day. Islamic boarding school culture, such as independence, simplicity, and obedience, is not taught theoretically but is practiced through collective traditions.

A consistent religious atmosphere helps religious values permeate the personalities of students (Purnama, A., Ehwanudin, E., & Wijaya, A. 2025). The Islamic boarding school cultural environment (subculture) also creates an ecosystem that forces students to adapt completely. This culture includes traditions of respect for teachers (ta'zim), independence, and simplicity. This environment functions as a hidden curriculum where values are absorbed through daily routines, not just classroom lessons (Aviah Asmaul Husna, & Hamid, R. 2025).

The process of internalizing Islamic boarding school values and culture occurs primarily through the distinctive cultural environment of Islamic boarding schools: living together (collectively) in dormitories, closeness between students and kiai/ustaz, regular worship rhythms, and binding rules. This environment creates a strong habit formation situation because students experience the values repeatedly from waking up to sleeping. The integration of religious values helps someone develop a strong and steadfast personality above religious values (Sasana et al., 2026). In the Islamic boarding school tradition, the kiai is the center of moral authority as well as a reference for exemplary behavior. This relationship pattern makes values not only taught as concepts, but also lived in daily practice, so that students more easily absorb values such as manners, discipline, and responsibility (Hadi, S. 2025).

In addition, Islamic boarding school culture is formed through continuous traditions of knowledge and rituals, such as the study of yellow books (bandongan/wetonan), sorogan, halaqah, and collective religious activities (congregational prayer, wirid, khataman, and commemoration of Islamic holidays). This process encourages the internalization of values through two main channels: (1) the transmission of knowledge and norms (students understand the reasons, arguments, and limits of behavior), and (2) the formation of character through practice (students experience directly a simple lifestyle, obeying schedules, respecting teachers, and living in harmony).

In other words, the Islamic boarding school cultural environment functions as a social space that instills values through a combination of learning, social supervision, and collective conditioning. Within this environment, internalization is also reinforced by social mechanisms such as peer control, a culture of mutual advice, and a relatively consistent system of rewards and sanctions. Because students live in a close-knit community, deviant behavior is easily detected and promptly corrected, while good behavior is socially reinforced.

Islamic boarding school culture also emphasizes values such as sincerity, humility, reverence for teachers, brotherhood, and simplicity, which are instilled through everyday language, symbols, traditions, and rules of communal living. This structured environment ensures that values extend beyond the cognitive realm to the affective and behavioral realms, as students are trained to practice these values in a practical way every day (Ishomudin, Hesim Muzedi, & Muhammad Zaironi, 2026).

2. Islamic boarding school regulations and rules

Regulations serve as a formal disciplinary instrument that fosters habituation or habits. Strict rules regarding prayer times, religious study sessions, and the prohibition on the use of electronic devices are designed to cut off distractions from the outside world, allowing students to focus on internalizing spiritual and intellectual values. Regulations also serve as an instrument of social control, forcing habituation (Munir, S., & Kudus, M. I. 2024). Through rules, students learn discipline and responsibility. Internalization occurs when students begin to obey the rules not out of fear of punishment, but out of an awareness of the benefits of these rules for their learning process (Muzaki, M., et al. 2026).

3. Students' Internal Motivation

The most effective internalization is rooted within. This motivation is often driven by the concept of intention (spirituality) and the desire to obtain blessings. When students have a clear goal (such as becoming a religious scholar), they will actively absorb the values of the Islamic boarding school without feeling burdened by external pressures. The most effective internalization occurs when students are intrinsically motivated. The initial intention (*tashihun niyah*) to seek knowledge for the sake of Allah's pleasure leads students to view all difficulties in the Islamic boarding school as part of the *mujahadah* (soul's struggle). Without this motivation, rules will be seen as merely an external burden (Al Baqi, S., et al. 2017).

4. The Influence of Friends

Friendships have a significant influence on students' role models. This is evident in Islamic boarding schools, where a misbehaving student was expelled. The other students' violations decreased. Even students who were frequently caught violating rules stopped violating after the expulsion of the misbehaving student. This is reinforced by the testimony of administrators and teachers at Islamic boarding schools. In boarding school life, peers are a very dominant agent of socialization. The existence of a culture of shared destiny accelerates the adoption of values (Kurniawan, Y., & Sudrajat, A. 2017).

If the social environment upholds the values of diligence and honesty, students will tend to conform or adapt to these values to be accepted within their group. In Islamic boarding schools, peers are a "second family." Group dynamics (peer influence) are very powerful in accelerating the socialization process. Students tend to imitate the behavior of the majority in their room or classroom. If the group culture is positive, the process of value transmission will proceed more quickly through social support mechanisms (Lutfiyah, A. 2022).

5. More relaxed yet structured leadership

This leadership model prioritizes a persuasive and dialogical approach. The boarding school allows students to go home once a week to prevent boredom within the boarding school. The boarding

school provides students with space for expression (relaxed), such as permission to leave the boarding school for shopping and snacks, but remains within the framework of a clear curriculum and values (structured). This creates a sense of security and trust, so that students obey not out of fear, but out of respect and love (Alwiyah et al., 2025).

This leadership model is often referred to as authoritative. The caretaker provides space for students to express themselves and develop their interests (loose), while remaining within the curriculum and vision of the Islamic boarding school (structured). The caretaker's warm and dialogical approach makes the values more easily accepted by Generation Z students than a purely authoritarian approach (Dainori, D. 2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon at the MSW Sabilil Mukminin Islamic Boarding School in Kediri, this study concludes that the manifestation of student obedience is the result of complex interactions that can be explained through three main theoretical foundations. Conceptually, this phenomenon is validated by the theory of internalization of values, which shows a shift from external obedience to internal moral awareness. Furthermore, the theory of moral socialization explains how the structure of student consciousness is formed stably through the institution of the Islamic boarding school, while the theory of Islamic education emphasizes the aspects of *riyadah* (spiritual training) and continuous moral habituation. The synergy of these three theories proves that obedience can be maintained consistently even though the intensity of supervision by caregivers has decreased.

The operational obedience of students is formed through the cultural ecosystem of the Islamic boarding school, which functions as a total institution, where all 24-hour activities are regulated by a strict rhythm of worship and collective traditions. This process is reinforced by the regulations and rules of the boarding school, which act as formal disciplinary instruments to create habituation or behavioral habits. In this environment, rules are no longer seen as mere physical limitations, but rather as instruments of social control that force a transformation of behavior from compulsion to a self-identity as civilized students.

Furthermore, the sustainability of this obedience is significantly driven by the students' internal motivational factors, rooted in spirituality and the intention to seek God's pleasure. This intrinsic motivational force is further solidified by the influence of friendships or peers, who act as dominant socialization agents through a "shared fate" culture. Interestingly, this looser yet structured parenting approach—which prioritizes communicative-persuasive patterns—successfully builds a sense of trust and self-love in the students. This authoritative leadership style has proven more effective for the new generation in fostering much more stable voluntary obedience than a repressive, strict supervision pattern.

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