

# Boarding School Caregivers' Parenting Patterns in Shaping Students' Religious Character: A Qualitative Study at SMP Insan Cendekia Madani

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## ABSTRACT

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The development of students' religious character is a central objective in Islamic boarding school education. SMP Insan Cendekia Madani in South Tangerang adopts the Madani Curriculum, which integrates national, Cambridge, and Islamic curricula, to foster students' piety (*taqwa*) and etiquette (*adab*). This study aims to examine the parenting patterns employed by dormitory supervisors in shaping students' religious character. A qualitative descriptive method was used, with data collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Thematic analysis was applied to identify key patterns in supervision and mentorship. Findings reveal that dormitory supervisors serve as educators, mentors, companions, and surrogate parents, following the Islamic framework of *al-Waalid*, *al-Ustadz*, and *as-Shohib*. A tiered mentoring system with a 1:16 supervisor-student ratio supports intensive character guidance. Programs such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, *dzikir*, and digital-based religious mentoring effectively instill Islamic values. However, challenges include inconsistent emotional bonding, varied supervisory approaches, and difficulties in accommodating diverse student needs. These findings underscore the importance of adaptive, student-centered parenting strategies. It is recommended that schools enhance supervisors' emotional intelligence, provide certified Islamic parenting training, and integrate psychological support systems to improve the overall effectiveness of character education in Islamic boarding schools.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Entering the 21st century, rapid technological advancements and globalization have significantly shaped the lifestyle, culture, and behavior of Indonesian society (Basrowi et al., 2023; Basrowi & Ghofur, 2019; Nuryanto et al., 2023). While these developments bring numerous benefits, they also present challenges, particularly in the preservation of Eastern values, including those rooted in Islam. The increasing exposure to Western cultural influences has led to a gradual erosion of moral and religious values among the younger generation. This phenomenon is reflected in the rising cases of violence, drug

abuse, deviant behavior, and identity crises, underscoring the urgent need for an education system that prioritizes character development based on religious principles (Sahin, 2018). Strengthening religious character within educational institutions is essential in addressing these growing social concerns (Basrowi et al., 2025; Junedi et al., 2024; Siskandar et al., 2023).

Religious character education is a fundamental component of Islamic education, as it seeks to nurture students' moral integrity, spiritual awareness, and ethical conduct in daily life. According to Al-Ghazali (2019), character development in Islam is not merely about knowledge acquisition but also about internalizing values that guide behavior. Islamic education emphasizes *tarbiyah* (holistic nurturing) and *ta'dib* (character refinement), aiming to produce individuals who embody moral excellence (*akhlaq al-karimah*) (Hashim, 2014). Schools, therefore, play a strategic role not only in academic development but also in moral and spiritual cultivation (Astin et al., 2010; Guna & Yuwantiningrum, 2024; Iksal et al., 2024; Islamic et al., 2024).

One effective model for fostering religious character is the boarding school system, which integrates Islamic parenting principles within a structured educational environment. Unlike conventional schools, boarding schools offer a 24-hour character-building system, allowing students to engage in religious, social, and academic activities under close supervision. In Indonesia, this model combines the traditional **pesantren** (Islamic boarding school) approach with modern education, aiming to balance religious knowledge (IMTAQ) and scientific literacy (IPTEK) (Ekasari et al., 2021; Ruhayat et al., 2024). Dormitory supervisors play a central role in shaping students' character through both structured programs and informal interactions, making parenting approaches within boarding schools a crucial factor in students' moral and spiritual development (Defitrika & Mahmudah, 2021; Woenardi & Supratno, 2022).

However, despite its potential, the implementation of the boarding school system in Indonesia faces significant challenges. One major issue is the inconsistency in curricula and parenting styles among institutions. Some boarding schools apply excessively strict disciplinary methods, while others adopt overly lenient approaches, both of which can hinder character formation if not implemented wisely (Mokal & Ahmad, 2023). Furthermore, the roles of dormitory supervisors and schoolteachers are often not well integrated, leading to a lack of continuity in character education. Ideally, dormitory supervisors should not only serve as caregivers but also possess a comprehensive understanding of educational and psychological principles to guide students effectively.

Insan Cendekia Madani, a boarding school established in South Tangerang in 2010, seeks to address these challenges by developing a structured parenting system that emphasizes personalized mentoring. Each dormitory supervisor is responsible for 16 students, using psychological assessments, counseling sessions, and regular parent reports to ensure holistic character development. The school adopts the Madani Curriculum, which integrates the Cambridge curriculum, the national curriculum (DIKNAS), and Islamic education, providing a balanced approach to both religious and academic excellence. Within the dormitory environment, emphasis is placed on strengthening worship practices, fostering discipline, and internalizing Islamic values through structured programs.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. Some students demonstrate low awareness of worship obligations, limited tolerance, and difficulties in character formation. These issues highlight the need for more adaptive and integrative parenting approaches within boarding schools. Research on effective parenting strategies in Islamic boarding schools remains limited, particularly regarding how dormitory supervisors can bridge the gap between formal education and character development in daily life.

While existing studies discuss the role of *pesantren* and modern Islamic education, few have specifically examined the parenting models used by dormitory supervisors in shaping students' religious character in boarding schools. Moreover, there is limited research on how Islamic parenting principles can be systematically integrated into dormitory supervision to enhance students' moral and religious development.

This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the parenting strategies employed by dormitory supervisors at SMP Insan Cendekia Madani. The findings are expected to provide practical recommendations for improving boarding school education in Indonesia, particularly in strengthening

Islamic character education through structured mentoring and parenting models. By offering insights into effective dormitory supervision techniques, this research contributes to the broader discourse on Islamic character education and the integration of parenting principles in boarding schools.

## 2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the parenting patterns used by dormitory supervisors in shaping students' religious character at SMP Insan Cendekia Madani, Serpong, South Tangerang. A qualitative approach is deemed most suitable for this research as it allows for an exploratory and interpretative analysis of human interactions, behaviors, and social contexts that cannot be fully captured through quantitative methods (Creswell, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 2018). Prior studies on Islamic character education and parenting in boarding schools have also successfully utilized qualitative approaches to capture the complexity of educational and parenting dynamics in structured yet flexible learning environments (Alwi & Basrowi, 2022; Defitrika & Mahmudah, 2021; Woenardi & Supratno, 2022). By adopting a field study, this research enables direct engagement with the research setting to gather concrete data through observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The researcher serves as the primary instrument, ensuring an interpretative and holistic understanding of dormitory supervisors' interactions with students and the parenting models applied within the boarding school environment.

The research targets key informants who have direct involvement in the parenting process within the dormitory. Informants are selected using purposive sampling, a technique that ensures participants are chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives (Mahendra et al., 2023, 2024; Nartin et al., 2024). The inclusion criteria for informants are:

- a. Dormitory supervisors – individuals responsible for mentoring and overseeing students' religious character development in the dormitory.
- b. The head of the dormitory – a key figure in designing and implementing parenting strategies.
- c. Students – those who experience the parenting process firsthand, providing insights into the effectiveness of supervision

Additionally, snowball sampling is employed to identify additional relevant informants based on recommendations from primary informants, particularly for obtaining varied perspectives regarding students' adaptation to dormitory life and character formation (Nartin et al., 2024). Data collection is carried out using three primary techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Furtasan Ali Yusuf & Basrowi, 2021; Mulyani & Basrowi, 2024; Sintani et al., 2024; Yusuf, 2023):

- a. Observation: Conducted in three stages—descriptive, focused, and selective observation (Spradley, 1980). Descriptive observation captures general activities in the dormitory; focused observation narrows down to specific parenting interactions; and selective observation verifies patterns identified in earlier stages.
- b. In-depth Interviews: Conducted with dormitory supervisors, the head of the dormitory, and selected students, following a semi-structured interview guide to allow flexibility while ensuring core topics are covered. Interviews explore dormitory supervisors' roles, challenges, and students' experiences.
- c. Documentation: Includes activity records, student reports, photographs, and other relevant documents, serving as a supplementary validation method to strengthen findings (Mulyani & Basrowi, 2024).

Data analysis follows Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, which consists of three main stages (Ray et al., 2021):

- a. Data Reduction: Irrelevant information is eliminated, while key themes related to parenting strategies, religious character formation, and student responses are categorized. For instance, transcripts from interviews are coded based on themes such as mentorship roles, student discipline, and religious practices.

- b. Data Display: The organized data is presented in tables, narrative descriptions, and matrices to facilitate interpretation. For example, an observation matrix may illustrate differences in supervisory approaches during morning prayers versus evening study sessions.
- c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Emerging patterns are analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions. The iterative nature of qualitative analysis ensures that findings are constantly validated through triangulation techniques, such as:
  - 1) Theory triangulation: Comparing findings with established theories on Islamic parenting and character education.
  - 2) Method triangulation: Cross-checking data from interviews, observations, and documentation.
  - 3) Time triangulation: Conducting repeated observations and interviews over different periods to ensure data consistency.
  - 4) Member checking: Seeking feedback from informants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations.

By applying these rigorous methodological steps, this study ensures that findings provide a credible and comprehensive understanding of the parenting patterns employed by dormitory supervisors in shaping students' religious character (Bang, 2024; Meydan & Akkas, 2024).

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Implementation of Dormitory Supervisors' Parenting Patterns

The parenting approach applied by dormitory supervisors at SMP Insan Cendekia Madani follows the concept of Islamic parenting by positioning supervisors as surrogate parents, educators, and companions (al-Waalid, al-Ustadz, as-Shohib). This approach aligns with theories of Islamic education that emphasize *uswatun hasanah* (exemplary role models) and *talaqqi* (direct transmission of knowledge and character) (Al-Ghazali, 2005; Zakiah Daradjat, 2018).

ICM		MUTABA'AH 7 AKHWAT JULI-AGUSTUS 2024																								
NO	NAMA	PEMBINA	KAMAR	SELASA 23-Jul-2024					RABU 24-Jul-2024					KAMIS 25-Jul-2024												
				MULAM	TAWAQUD	SHUBUH	SK	MAGHRIB	TILAWAH	ISY'	MULAM	TAWAQUD	SHUBUH	SK	MAGHRIB	TILAWAH	ISY'	MULAM	TAWAQUD	SHUBUH	SK	MAGHRIB	TILAWAH	ISY'	MULAM	
				1	SHAFIYAH ANANDA FASYA			x	tj	6	v	v	y	x	v	6	v	1	v	y	x	t1	6	h	h	h
2	ZAHRA KU SHAQUILA			x	v	6	v	v	y	x	v	6	v	0	t2	y	x	v	6	v	0	v	y			
3	SABILA ALEYDA ZAHRA			x	v	6	T2	v	y	x	v	6	v	1	t2	y	x	v	6	h	h	h	y			
4	EZZAH DARRA FAHIRA			h1	h	6	h	h	h	y	h1	h	6	h	h	h	y	h1	h	6	h	h	h	y		
5	AFIYAH MAHIRA UTAMA			x	v	6	v	v	y	x	v	6	v	2	v	y	x	v	6	v	0	v	y			
6	HASNA LUTHFI NURMUFRICHA			x	v	6	v	v	y	x	v	6	v	1	v	y	x	v	6	v	1	v	y			
7	LATIFAH ZAHRA MURSYID			x	v	6	v	v	y	x	v	6	v	2	v	y	x	v	6	v	3	v	y			
8	MUNIRAH			h1	h	6	h	h	h	y	h1	h	6	h	h	h	y	h1	h	6	h	h	h	y		
9	ATHAYA HUSNI AZMI			h1	h	6	h	h	h	y	h1	h	7	h	h	h	y	h1	h	7	h	h	h	y		
10	SYAKIRAH SALWA SALSABILA			x	v	6	v	v	y	x	v	7	v	3	v	y	x	v	7	v	1	v	y			
11	TIFANI HAIFA MEDINA			x	v	6	v	v	y	x	v	7	v	2	v	y	x	v	7	v	1	v	y			
12	CHALISA RAMADHANIA PUTRI			h1	h	h	h	h	y	h1	h	7	h	h	h	y	h1	h	7	h	h	h	y			
13	ATHIRAH SAFINA RAHIM			x	v	6	v	v	y	x	v	7	v	3	v	y	x	v	7	v	4	v	y			
14	ANDI HUMAERA ZAHEN NAFAY GAZLY			x	v	6	v	6	v	y	x	v	7	v	0	v	y	x	v	7	h	h	h	y		
15	AMEERA RAUDA AZKIYA			x	v	6	v	v	y	x	v	7	v	2	v	y	x	v	7	v	2	v	y			

Figure 1. Student Monitoring (Mutaba'ah)

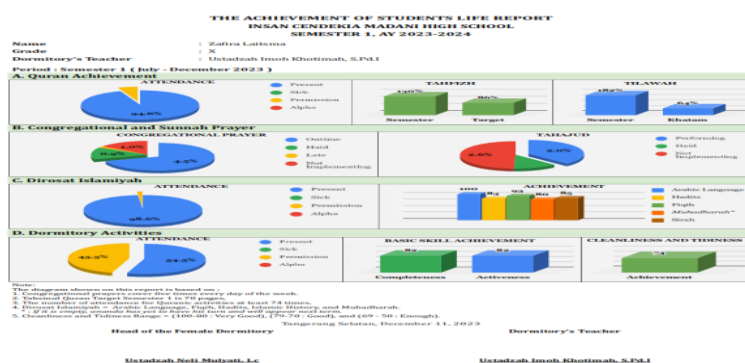


Figure 2. Dormitory Report

Findings from interviews with dormitory supervisors indicate that their role extends beyond teaching Islamic subjects like Tahsin and Tahfidz Al-Qur'an to include moral and behavioral guidance. As stated by one supervisor:

*"Kami tidak hanya mengajarkan Al-Qur'an, tetapi juga bagaimana siswa berperilaku sesuai nilai-nilai Islam dalam keseharian mereka."* (Interview, Dormitory Supervisor, 2024).

To achieve this, the dormitory implements a structured mentorship system, where one supervisor oversees 16 students, ensuring close monitoring and individualized guidance. The monitoring system (Mutaba'ah) includes daily student self-reports, digital tracking, and monthly evaluations, which help in identifying behavioral progress and challenges.

### 3.2. Strategies for Enhancing Religious Character

The school implements various strategic programs, such as School Orientation Programs (MPLS), routines for obligatory and voluntary prayers, Quran recitation, collective prayers, and social service (khidmah). These programs aim to instill religious character by habituating students to Islamic values rooted in the Quran and Hadith. The dormitory integrates structured programs that align with Islamic character education theories, particularly those emphasizing habituation (ta'dib) and spiritual strengthening (tarbiyah ruhiyyah) (Hidayatullah, 2016). Observational data highlight seven core programs designed to enhance students' religious character (see Table 1).

Table 1. Dormitory Supervisor Training Programs

No	Program Type	Program Objectives
1	Internal Upgrading	Improving the competency and professionalism of dormitory supervisors.
2	Thematic Studies	Providing an understanding of adabul mu'allim (teacher's etiquette).
3	Monthly Islamic Lectures	Enhancing Islamic knowledge and spiritual awareness.
4	Arabic Language Learning	Enhancing Arabic communication skills through dialogue with native speakers in collaboration with EWAN Institute.
5	Quran Teacher Training	Standardizing Quran recitation quality using the Wafa method.
6	Parenting Training	Providing knowledge and effective parenting strategies suitable for application to students.
7	Civitas Tahfidz Program	Maintaining and improving Quran memorization among dormitory supervisors.

A dormitory supervisor explained how internal upgrading programs enhance their ability to build students' religious character:

"Melalui pelatihan ini, kami diajarkan cara memahami karakter setiap anak dan memberikan bimbingan sesuai dengan kondisi mereka." (Interview, Dormitory Supervisor, 2024).

### 3.3. Contribution of Parenting Patterns to Religious Character

The Islamic parenting approach applied in the dormitory has led to positive changes in students' religious awareness, etiquette, and leadership skills. Based on observational data, improvements were noted in students' discipline in worship, communication etiquette, and participation in religious activities. However, interviews with students reveal varied responses. Some students appreciate the structured mentorship, while others struggle with adapting to the strict supervision. One student mentioned:

"Saya merasa lebih disiplin dalam sholat dan menghafal Al-Qur'an, tetapi terkadang pendekatan pengasuh terlalu kaku." (Interview, Student, 2024).

These findings indicate that while Islamic parenting fosters religious discipline, a balance between structure and emotional support is crucial.

TINGKAT PELANGGARAN	BENTUK KONSEKUENSI
Pelanggaran tingkat 1	a. Jika dilakukan 1-2 kali dalam satu pekan
	1. Input Data <a href="https://bit.ly/pelanaqarandisiplinsmpsma">https://bit.ly/pelanaqarandisiplinsmpsma</a>
	2. Teguran lisan.
	3. Pembinaan di tempat disesuaikan dengan jenis pelanggaran/konsekuensi fisik yang bukan kontak badan, seperti: <i>Simulasi, Push up, Lari, Kerja bakti.</i>
	b. Jika dilakukan 3 kali dalam satu pekan
Pelanggaran tingkat 2	1. Membuat surat perjanjian/conference form.
	2. Apabila pelanggaran tingkat 1 dilakukan lebih dari 3 (tiga) kali selama satu pekan, maka selanjutnya dianggap pelanggaran tingkat 2.
	1. Input Data <a href="https://bit.ly/pelanaqarandisiplinsmpsma">https://bit.ly/pelanaqarandisiplinsmpsma</a>
	2. Pemanggilan siswa, membuat surat perjanjian/conference form.
	3. Pemberitahuan orangtua secara lisan. <i>(Jika dilakukan 2 kali dalam satu pekan)</i>
	4. Melaksanakan konsekuensi seperti: membuat poster, kampanye kebaikan, dan lain sebagainya

Figure 3. Rules and Consequences at Insan Cendekia Madani

### 3.4. Challenges in Implementation

Several challenges hinder the optimal implementation of parenting patterns:

- Diverse Student Characteristics – Variations in students' backgrounds, learning styles, and emotional needs affect how they respond to dormitory supervision.
- Inconsistent Supervisory Approaches – Differences in mentorship styles among supervisors create discrepancies in guidance quality.
- Emotional Bonding Issues – Some students express difficulty in forming strong emotional connections with supervisors, affecting their engagement in religious activities.

A dormitory supervisor highlighted this challenge:

"Beberapa anak butuh pendekatan yang lebih lembut, sementara yang lain perlu lebih banyak bimbingan disiplin." (Interview, Dormitory Supervisor, 2024).

### 3.5. Effectiveness of Islamic Parenting Patterns in Boarding Schools

The Islamic parenting model implemented at SMP Insan Cendekia Madani aligns with the principles of tarbiyah Islamiyah, which emphasize education through example (uswatun hasanah), structured discipline, and spiritual nurturing. However, findings suggest that the effectiveness of this

approach depends largely on the supervisors' competencies in fostering emotional connections. The school's initiative to enhance supervision quality through training programs like SAGAKU (Sekolah Guru Ahli Qur'an) is a strategic measure to improve mentorship effectiveness.

### 3.6. A Multidimensional Approach to Character Development

The dormitory's religious character-building programs reflect a holistic integration of faith, practice, and community engagement. Activities like congregational prayers, Quran recitation, and Hadith study strengthen students' spiritual foundation, while social service (khidmah) fosters empathy and social responsibility.

However, not all students internalize these values equally. Interviews indicate that some students experience difficulty in adjusting to structured mentorship, reinforcing the need for personalized parenting strategies based on students' psychological and emotional needs.

### 3.7. Challenges in Building Emotional Bonding

Despite the democratic parenting approach, some students report emotional distance from supervisors. According to Nata (2010), effective character education should consider moral feeling (emosi moral) and moral loving (kasih sayang moral) as fundamental to students' internalization of religious values. A student shared:

*"Saya merasa bimbingannya baik, tapi kurang ada pendekatan yang memahami perasaan kami."*  
(Interview, Student, 2024)

To address this, supervisors must strengthen their interpersonal skills, including empathetic listening, emotional intelligence, and effective communication.

### 3.8. The Impact of the Boarding School Environment on Religious Character

The Islamic parenting approach at SMP Insan Cendekia Madani provides valuable insights for other Islamic boarding schools and policymakers in education. Key implications include:

- a. Standardizing Islamic Parenting Training – Islamic boarding schools should adopt systematic training programs for dormitory supervisors to ensure consistent mentorship quality.
- b. Enhancing Emotional and Psychological Support – Schools should integrate counseling services into mentorship programs to address students' emotional needs.
- c. Developing Adaptive Parenting Models – Future policies should encourage contextual and student-centered parenting strategies that balance discipline with emotional well-being.

A policy recommendation includes the integration of formal supervisor certification programs focusing on psychological mentoring and student engagement.

## 4. CONCLUSION

This study finds that religious character development—centered on the values of *taqwa* (piety) and *adab* (etiquette)—is the primary focus at SMP Insan Cendekia Madani, supported by integrated mentoring strategies, a structured curriculum emphasizing Islamic teachings, and a supervised dormitory system that enables close student guidance. Key programs such as congregational prayers, Quranic recitation, dhikr, voluntary fasting, and community service further reinforce students' spiritual and moral growth, with dormitory supervisors playing critical roles as mentors and surrogate parents. However, the research identifies a limitation in the inconsistency of emotional bonding between supervisors and students, which may hinder the effectiveness of mentorship, especially for students from diverse backgrounds. Future research should explore strategies to strengthen emotional connections within the mentoring process, assess the long-term impact of structured religious programs on students' character development, and evaluate the effectiveness of adaptive, student-centered parenting models and integrated psychological support systems in various Islamic boarding school contexts.

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