

# Embodied Pedagogical Governance: Cultivating Spiritual Habitus Through *Tarbiyatul Aulad* in an Islamic Boarding School

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## ABSTRACT

Amid globalization and rapid social change, Islamic education faces growing pressure to sustain religious values that are lived in everyday practice rather than merely taught, yet how such values are internalized through organized institutional life remains insufficiently understood. This study examines how the principles of *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*, a classical Islamic framework for the upbringing and character formation of children, are enacted in the daily life of an Islamic boarding school, and how routines, role modeling, and the educational environment interact to shape the spiritual habitus of the santri. Adopting a qualitative intrinsic case study design, the research drew on in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis involving twenty informants comprising students, *ustadz*, *kiai*, and parents. The data were analyzed thematically and validated through source, methodological, and theoretical triangulation. The findings show that value internalization occurs not through any single activity but through the mutually reinforcing convergence of structured routines, the observable conduct of educators, and a deliberately maintained social environment, while disconfirming cases reveal that the santri retain interpretive agency within this structure. The study contributes the notion of *habitus by design* and frames *embodied pedagogical governance* as a lens that reconceives character formation as a problem of educational management. These insights imply that pesantren can strengthen value internalization by deliberately aligning daily schedules, exemplary conduct, and environmental arrangements as a single, coordinated strategy of institutional management.

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## INTRODUCTION

Globalisation, digitalisation, and rapid social change have created new challenges for education, including Islamic education (Afriantoni, 2024; Alam et al., 2025; Arik et al., 2024). While these forces have widened access to knowledge and technology, they have also raised concern about a weakening commitment to values, a growing gap between knowledge and practice, and reduced attention to the character and spiritual development of students (Biesta, 2024; Komalasari & Masyitoh, 2022; Livingston, 2022). In this situation education is no longer understood merely as the transmission of knowledge but as a space for cultivating ways of thinking, behaving, and acting that reflect valued commitments. The challenge is



especially acute for Islamic education, which seeks to uphold religious values while responding to the shifting dynamics of contemporary society (Romlah et al., 2025). How such values are sustained in everyday institutional life, rather than simply taught, has therefore become a pressing question.

Recent scholarship on character education has shifted accordingly, moving from debating which values should be taught toward examining how values develop and endure in the daily life of educational settings. Character is increasingly understood as something formed through repeated engagement in routines, institutional culture, social relationships, and the continuous experience of school life (Romlah et al., 2025; Suprihatin et al., 2025; Wiwik Maladerita et al., 2023). Habitus theory frames this process by explaining that dispositions of thought and action develop through sustained interaction with the social environment one inhabits (DasGupta & Roy, 2023; Modell, 2026), while studies of educational governance show that institutional culture and patterns of daily activity shape how norms are upheld within institutions. This perspective resonates with the concept of lived religion, which treats faith as enacted in everyday practice rather than held as doctrine alone (Allievi & Calabretta, 2025; Rieger, 2023). Together these strands suggest that value formation is governed as much by the arrangement of institutional life as by formal instruction.

Despite this convergence, research on character formation, habitus, and educational governance has developed largely within the context of general education. Studies of how religious values are internalized through deliberately organized institutional life remain comparatively scarce. Within Islamic education specifically, existing work has illuminated three concerns: moral education, the integration of religious values, and the transformation of institutions amid social change. Scholars have stressed the place of moral education in the Islamic tradition and examined the integration of Islamic values into formal systems (Adams & Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2021; Bahrami et al., 2022; Wang, 2021). Others have analyzed the moral contribution of pesantren through religious practice and the capacity of pesantren to preserve religious identity amid change (Bahri et al., 2026; Ipandang et al., 2022). This body of work nevertheless remains largely normative, structural, or transformational in emphasis. The question of how religious values are practiced, sustained, and reproduced through organized daily life therefore remains insufficiently examined.

A productive way to address this gap is offered by *Tarbiyatul Aulad fi al-Islam*, written by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan as a foundational reference in Islamic pedagogy. The work understands the character formation of children as unfolding through four interrelated processes: habituation (*ta'wid*), exemplary conduct (*uswah*), supervision, and the cultivation of a supportive environment (*ri'ayah* and *bi'ah ṣāliḥah*) (Rodliyana & Efendi, 2026). These elements indicate that education involves more than conveying values. It also requires creating the conditions in which values become present in everyday life. This view converges with habitus theory and its emphasis on repeated practice in shaping disposition (Fathor Rozi et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2024). It aligns as well with experience-based approaches that treat lived experience as central to learning (Andreenkova et al., 2022; Mlambo et al., 2021). Even so, the relationship among the principles of *Tarbiyatul Aulad*, the formation of spiritual habitus, and the institutional practices of pesantren life has not yet been examined comprehensively.

Addressing this relationship requires a framework capable of connecting values, practices, and the management of institutional life, which this study develops through the notion of embodied pedagogical governance. The framework treats character formation not as the delivery of moral content but as something institutions shape through the deliberate orchestration of routines, role models, and environment, an orchestration this study terms habitus by design. Such a lens reframes the internalisation of religious values as a matter of educational management rather than curriculum alone, directing attention to how time, supervision, interaction, and culture are arranged in daily life. This emphasis matters because

it bears directly on how Islamic educational institutions can sustain value commitments under contemporary pressures, and because it extends habitus theory by specifying the institutional mechanisms through which dispositions are cultivated rather than merely reproduced. The pesantren, with its full boarding system, offers a particularly clear setting in which to examine these mechanisms at work.

This study is therefore significant in moving the analysis of religious character education from what is taught toward how institutional life is governed, offering both a conceptual contribution and a practical orientation for the management of value-based education. Its aim is to examine how the values of *Tarbiyatul Aulad* are implemented in the daily life of the pesantren and how routines, role modelling, and the educational environment shape the spiritual habitus of the santri. Two questions guide the inquiry: first, how are the values of *Tarbiyatul Aulad* enacted and sustained through the organised daily practices of the pesantren; and second, how do routines, exemplary conduct, and the educational environment interact to form the spiritual habitus of the students. Conducted at the Pondok Pesantren Remaja Tahfidzul Qur'an Raudlatul Falah (PPRTQ RF) in Pati, Central Java, the study seeks to deepen understanding of how religious values are internalised within the institutional life of Islamic boarding education.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design to understand how the values of *Tarbiyatul Aulad* are implemented and internalised in the daily life of the pesantren (Allam, 2024). The approach was chosen because the focus lies not in testing relationships between variables but in understanding the processes, experiences, and social practices that shape the spiritual habitus of the santri within a real-world context (Al Qur'an, 2025; Almås et al., 2023; Ananda et al., 2026). The study was conducted at the Pondok Pesantren Remaja Tahfidzul Qur'an Raudlatul Falah (PPRTQ RF) in Pati, Central Java, selected purposively because its full boarding system, structured schedule, and continuous supervision make the processes of habit formation, role modelling, and environmental management observable with particular clarity. Participants comprised 20 informants chosen through purposive sampling according to their involvement in the pesantren's educational life, as presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Characteristics of Informants

Informant Group	Code	Number	Role in the Pesantren's Educational Life
Students (aged 12–15)	S1–S12	12	Primary subjects experiencing daily routines, modelling, and the environment
<i>Ustadz</i>	U1–U3	3	Educators who supervise activities and serve as behavioural models
<i>Kiai</i>	K1–K2	2	Religious leaders who set the institution's values and direction
Parents	O1–O3	3	External observers of behavioural change beyond the pesantren
Total		20	

Source: Field data, 2026.

**Table 1** shows that the informants were deliberately drawn from four distinct positions within the same educational setting rather than from a single group, which is the feature that gives the sample its analytical value. The decisive point is the pairing of internal and external vantage points: students report the experience from within, *ustadz* and *kiai* account for the practices that shape it, and parents observe its effects beyond the pesantren walls. This composition allows each reported pattern to be examined from more than one angle, so that a claim made by students can be weighed against the accounts of those who

guide them and those who receive them at home. The structure of the sample therefore functions as the first safeguard of credibility, built into the design before any data were collected.

Data were collected from January to March 2026 through three complementary techniques: in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis (Khan & MacEachen, 2022; Kvalsvik & Øgaard, 2021; Opara et al., 2023). The semi-structured interviews with students were framed in simple, contextual language and focused on concrete daily experiences such as worship routines, interaction with teachers, and observed changes in their own behaviour, whereas interviews with *ustadz*, *kiai*, and parents focused on their observation of the character-formation process. Participatory observation was carried out during communal worship, Quran memorisation, lessons, social activities, and the enforcement of regulations, enabling the researcher to examine the relationship between formal rules and their enactment in practice. Document analysis then supplemented these sources through activity schedules, institutional regulations, educational guidelines, and student records. Drawing on the three techniques together supported methodological triangulation and allowed each finding to rest on more than one form of evidence (Dazzo, 2023; Radermacher, 2024; et al., 2024).

The data were analysed through thematic analysis following an iterative and reflective process (Braun & Clarke, 2024). All interview recordings were transcribed in full and read repeatedly before any coding began, after which the analysis proceeded through initial open coding, the grouping of codes sharing similar meaning into categories, and the development of themes capturing recurring patterns of value management in pesantren life. The analysis was conducted manually rather than through dedicated software, keeping the researcher in close contact with the data, while observational notes and documentary material were integrated into the same thematic structure so that convergence among the three sources could be traced theme by theme. Trustworthiness was supported by source, methodological, and theoretical triangulation (Muratoglu et al., 2025; Ogunkan & Akinpelu, 2025; van Hasselt, 2021), and the study observed established research ethics, with informants' consent obtained and their identities anonymised through the codes used in **Table 1**. As an intrinsic case study of a single pesantren, the design prioritises analytical depth over statistical generalisation.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The findings are organised around three elements of pesantren life that recurred across every data source: daily routines, exemplary behaviour, and the educational environment. A concluding synthesis then shows how the three operate as a single interconnected experience. For each element, interview accounts are presented first, followed by field observation and documentary evidence, and closed by an explicit triangulation that examines where the three sources converge and where they diverge. This sequence allows each finding to be read against multiple independent forms of evidence rather than a single account.

### Routines as Instruments of Educational Management

The daily life of students at the PPRTQ RF follows a structured routine that remains relatively consistent from day to day. From before dawn until just before bedtime, students' activities follow a set schedule of congregational prayers, Quran memorisation, lessons, cleaning duties, and various social activities. Field observations recorded each activity occurring in a relatively fixed sequence, producing a daily rhythm that students recognised and followed without repeated instruction. This regularity formed the empirical starting point for examining how routine operated as an instrument of educational management.

Interview accounts indicate that these routines were no longer experienced as rules that caregivers had to reinforce continually. Most students described having become

accustomed to the schedule, treating it as an ordinary feature of pesantren life rather than an imposed demand. One student remarked: "Once you're here, waking up early is just normal. You don't need to be told to do it anymore because all your friends get up right away too (S5)." Another student made a similar observation: "It feels bad to be late. It feels like something is missing because there are usually activities already underway (S8)." These accounts indicate that adherence to the schedule had shifted from externally enforced compliance toward a self-sustaining habit maintained by the students themselves. The *ustadz* and *kiai* expressed a parallel view, framing schedule consistency as a deliberate condition of pesantren life rather than an incidental arrangement. One *ustadz* explained: *The schedule is kept consistent so that the children can maintain a regular routine. If it changes too often, they'll have a hard time adjusting (U2).* A *kiai* added: *"What's important isn't just understanding the rules but getting used to following them every day (K1)."*

Parents reported the same pattern from the home setting, noting behavioural change after several months of residence: *"Before, he had to be reminded often to pray or manage his study time. After boarding school, he's more used to doing it on his own (O1)."* Not every account described a frictionless transition. A small number of students, particularly those in their first months at the pesantren, reported still needing reminders before the routine became automatic. As one *ustadz* observed, newer students still had to be woken for the dawn prayer during their early weeks before the collective rhythm took hold. This variation indicates that the routine was internalised gradually rather than uniformly, with the time required differing across individual students.

Observation and documentation corroborated the interview accounts in both pattern and detail. The daily schedule was meticulously organised and consistently followed, with activities taking place at their designated times and supervision functioning mainly to maintain order rather than to issue continual instruction. The pesantren's records likewise set out a clear schedule for each student's principal activities. The analytic path from these raw accounts to the consolidated themes is set out in **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** Thematic Coding Structure for the Daily Routine Findings

Representative Data Extract	Initial Code	Sub-theme	Theme
"Waking up early is just normal... you don't need to be told." (S5)	Self-initiated compliance	Habit replacing instruction	Routine as internalised order
"It feels bad to be late... something is missing." (S8)	Discomfort at deviation	Affective attachment to order	Routine as internalised order
"The schedule is kept consistent... if it changes too often, they'll have a hard time." (U2)	Deliberate temporal stability	Institutional consistency	Routine as managed structure
"Getting used to following them every day." (K1)	Practice over comprehension	Habituation as aim	Routine as managed structure
Newer students still need waking in their early weeks (U-account)	Gradual habituation	Variation in pace	Boundary of internalisation
Activities proceed on schedule with minimal instruction (Observation)	Autonomous transition	Enacted regularity	Routine as observed practice
Written daily schedule consistently followed (Documentation)	Codified rhythm	Institutional inscription	Routine as observed practice

Source: *The researcher's thematic analysis.*

**Table 2** makes the analytic process visible rather than merely listing evidence, tracing how scattered extracts were condensed into codes and then consolidated into four themes. The decisive feature is that three structurally independent themes, namely internalised order, managed structure, and observed practice, all point toward the same phenomenon of routine operating without enforcement. The boundary theme, capturing the slower habituation of newer students, is retained within the coding structure rather than discarded, signalling that the analysis accommodated disconfirming data. This transparency in moving from extract to theme is what grounds the finding in systematic interpretation rather than selective

illustration.

### Exemplary Behaviour as an Educational Practice in Islamic Boarding Schools

Exemplary behaviour featured prominently in daily life at the PPRTQ RF. The presence of *ustadz*, *kiai*, and administrators was not confined to teaching or supervision but extended to activities carried out alongside the students. Field observations recorded *ustadz* and *kiai* participating directly in congregational worship, Quran memorisation, discipline training, and routine social interaction. Their consistency allowed students to observe them continuously rather than intermittently. Most students reported learning expected behaviour more readily from what they saw than from verbal instruction. They described imitation as the natural and immediate response to the conduct around them. One student said: *"We see firsthand how the ustadz carries out his daily activities. So we imitate what he usually does (S3)."*

Another added: *"When the ustadz heads to the mosque, we usually follow right away. We don't need to be told (S8)."* These accounts indicate that the educators' observable conduct, rather than their stated instruction, functioned as the immediate reference point for student behaviour. From the educators' side, modelling was described as a deliberate responsibility rather than an incidental by-product of their presence. One *ustadz* explained: *"The children pay attention to what we do. That is why we strive to maintain our attitude and behaviour in our daily lives (U1)."* A *kiai* stated: *"Students are more likely to imitate what they see than what they merely hear (K2)."* Parents observed the same modelling effect carrying into the home environment: *"When they come home, the children often imitate the way of speaking and habits they observe from the teachers at the boarding school (O2)."* *"The most noticeable change isn't just in their worship but also in their attitude and how they interact with others (O3)."*

The modelling effect, however, was not unconditional. Several students noted that imitation depended on the perceived consistency of the educator, and that where an adult's conduct was seen as inconsistent, students were markedly less inclined to follow. They described emulating those who practised what they asked of others rather than those who merely instructed. This indicates that exemplary behaviour operated as an influence only when students judged it to be genuine, rather than functioning automatically.

Documentation reinforced these accounts at the institutional level. Several internal guidelines explicitly positioned *ustadz* and caregivers as figures expected to set an example in conduct, discipline, and religious practice. Taken together with the interview and observational evidence, this indicates that modelling was treated as an institutional expectation rather than an informal habit, and that its convergence across sources is captured in the triangulation reported later in **Table 5**.

### The Educational Environment as a Guardian of Consistency in Students' Behaviour

The educational environment at the PPRTQ RF was central to forming and sustaining behavioural consistency. Students' lives unfolded in a relatively integrated setting where daily activities, social interaction, regulations, and religious practice occupied a single shared living space. Field observations recorded most activities being carried out collectively, placing each student in intense and continual interaction with peers, educators, and staff. These conditions created a social space in which particular values and habits could be practised continuously.

Most students described the environment as having habituated them to the established norms. They located behavioural order as much in their peers as in their supervisors. One student explained: *"Here, everyone follows the same rules. So we already know what we should do and what we shouldn't do (S4)."* Another added: *"If a friend forgets or breaks the rules, they're usually reminded right away by their friends (S9)."* These accounts indicate that behavioural order rested not only on formal supervision but also on horizontal correction among the students themselves. The *ustadz* and *kiai* described the environment in similar terms, treating it as something to be actively maintained rather than left to chance. One *ustadz* explained:

"The environment is very influential. If the atmosphere is good, it is easier for the children to maintain the habits that have been established (U3)." A *kiai* added: "A *pesantren* is not just a place of learning, but a place where people live together. Therefore, the environment must be maintained so that it continues to support the educational process (K1)." Parents perceived the same effect from outside the institution: "While at the *pesantren*, children are more focused because the environment is supportive (O2)." "Their social interactions are more controlled, so we feel more at ease (O3)."

The environment's regulating force was not absolute. A few students described occasions where peer pressure produced reluctant rather than internalised compliance, noting that some friends observed the rules mainly when others were watching. This indicates that collective pressure secured outward consistency more readily than it guaranteed internal commitment. The gap between the two marked the practical limit of environmental influence. Observation and documentation supported the interview findings. Students' access to activities outside the *pesantren* was clearly regulated, daily interaction followed a structured pattern, and written rules governed worship, discipline, social interaction, and the use of communication devices. These rules provided a shared reference framework for daily life. The two mechanisms through which the environment regulated behaviour are distinguished in **Table 3**.

**Table 3.** Regulatory Mechanisms of the Educational Environment

Mechanism	Source of Regulation	How It Operates in Daily Life	Observed Limit
Horizontal regulation	Peers	Spontaneous reminders and corrections among students during shared activities	Can produce compliance enacted only under observation
Vertical regulation	Institution	Written rules governing worship, discipline, interaction, and device use	Defines the framework but does not by itself secure internalisation
Combined effect	Peers and institution together	Peer correction enacts in practice the framework that rules define on paper	Outward conformity more reliable than internal conviction

Source: The researcher's thematic analysis.

**Table 3** indicates that the environment regulated behaviour through two distinct mechanisms operating together rather than a single undifferentiated influence. The substantive insight is that the horizontal and vertical mechanisms were mutually supporting rather than redundant, since spontaneous peer reminders enacted in practice the framework that formal regulation only defined on paper. This dual structure explains why consistency persisted even where direct supervision was absent, as the social space itself carried the norms forward. The shared limit recorded in the final column, situational compliance under observation, exposes the boundary of the mechanism by showing that environmental pressure governs outward conduct more reliably than inward conviction.

The three elements did not operate in isolation. Routines, role modelling, and the educational environment were interrelated and together formed a cohesive pattern of daily life at the PPRTQ RF. The findings from the three preceding sections show that the regularity of activities, the presence of role models, and a supportive social environment coexisted within a single educational experience. Where all three were consistently present, the values conveyed were not merely understood as rules but enacted in daily practice.

The data show each element contributing a distinct function within that pattern. Routines supplied the temporal structure that produced relatively stable behaviour, while the conduct of *ustadz* and *kiai* supplied a concrete model of how that behaviour was to be enacted. The environment supplied the social space in which the resulting habits were collectively sustained through continual interaction among students, caregivers, and other members of the *pesantren*. The integrative relationship among these functions is summarised in **Table 4**.

**Table 4.** Integrative Synthesis of Research Findings

Element of Findings	Empirical Manifestations	Observed Process	Identified Impacts
Daily Routines	Regular and recurring activity schedule	Students' consistent participation in ongoing activities	Development of regular daily behaviour
Role Modelling	Presence of teachers and religious leaders in various activities	Observation and imitation of educators' behaviour	Reinforcement of values in daily life
Educational Environment	Rules, social interaction, and pesantren culture	Social support and supervision in communal life	Maintaining consistency in behaviour and habits
Integration of the Three Elements	An integrated educational life	Continuous interaction among the three elements	A holistic educational experience

Source: The researcher's thematic synthesis.

**Table 4** makes clear that the three elements are not parallel causes of one outcome but sequential contributors to a single process, each supplying what the others cannot. Routine furnishes structure without content, modelling furnishes content without permanence, and the environment furnishes the permanence that fixes both into shared practice. The decisive analytical point lies in the fourth row, where integration yields an effect, a holistic educational experience, that none of the three elements produces in isolation. This indicates that the formative power observed in the data resides in the interaction among the elements rather than in any one of them, which the earlier qualifications confirm by showing where single elements falter when acting alone.

Across the data sources these functions reinforced one another. Students described their daily activities as habits performed automatically; educators emphasised consistency and personal example; parents reported behavioural change after a period of residence; and observation and documentation confirmed that schedules, regulations, and activities were carried out consistently. The disconfirming instances identified within each element, concerning the pace of habituation, the conditionality of modelling, and the depth of conformity, did not contradict this pattern but qualified it. To make the convergence across the three data sources explicit, the triangulation is set out in **Table 5**.

**Table 5.** Triangulation Matrix Across the Three Data Sources

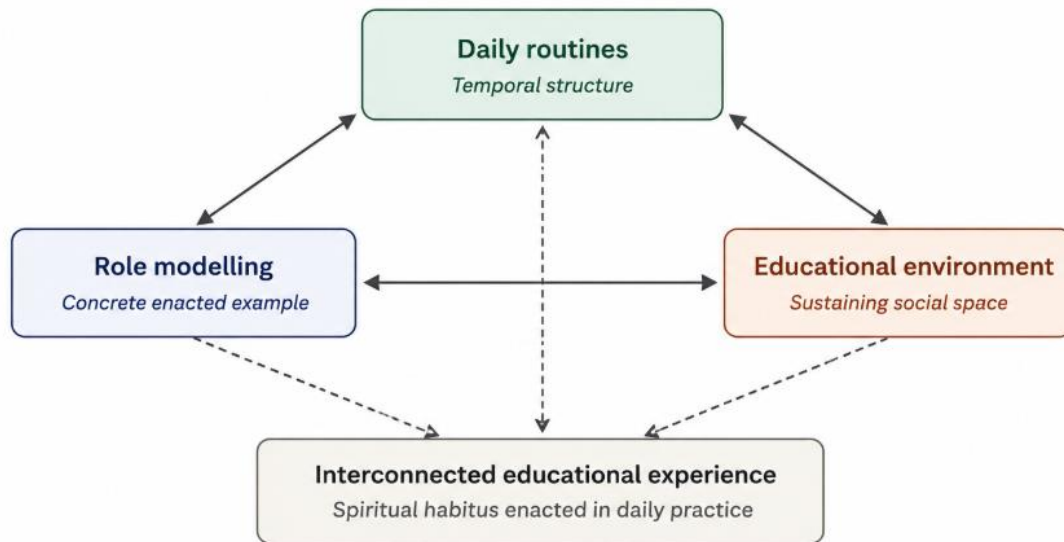
Element	Interview Data	Field Observation	Institutional Documents
Daily Routines	Students report the schedule as a self-sustaining habit (S5, S8); educators frame consistency as deliberate (U2, K1)	Activities occur in fixed sequence; supervision maintains order rather than instructs	Records specify a clear, fixed schedule for each student's main activities
Exemplary Behaviour	Students imitate observed conduct (S3, S8); educators treat modelling as a responsibility (U1, K2)	<i>Ustadz</i> and <i>kiai</i> arrive early and participate directly in worship and memorisation	Guidelines position educators as expected exemplars in conduct and practice
Educational Environment	Students cite shared norms and peer correction (S4, S9); leaders stress maintaining the setting (U3, K1)	Activities are collective; peer reminders arise spontaneously	Written rules govern worship, discipline, interaction, and device use

Source: The researcher's thematic analysis.

**Table 5** demonstrates that each element was independently corroborated by all three data sources, so that no finding depended on a single method of evidence. The analytical weight of the matrix lies in the absence of cross-source contradiction, since what students reported in interviews was also visible in observed practice and inscribed in institutional

records, three forms of evidence that could have diverged but did not. This consistency across methodologically independent sources is what distinguishes a robust pattern from a self-reported impression, and it grounds the integrative claim in more than the participants' own narration. The convergence displayed here provides the empirical basis for the conceptual relationship represented in **Figure 1**.

The relationship among the three elements, together with their convergence into a shared formative experience, can be represented as an interlocking model. Figure 1 sets out how routines, role modelling, and the educational environment feed into one another and jointly sustain the pattern of daily practice observed across the data.



**Figure 1.** The interconnection of routines, role modelling, and the educational environment in shaping students' daily practice at the PPRTQ RF

**Figure 1** represents the three elements not as a linear chain but as a mutually reinforcing triad, each connected to the other two and all converging on a single shared outcome. The substantive claim carried by the figure is directional closure, in that routine, modelling, and environment each return support to the others, so that the weakening of any one is buffered by the remaining two. This circularity accounts for the resilience of the pattern observed in the data, where individual lapses in habituation, sincerity, or conviction did not destabilise the overall consistency. The figure thus consolidates the empirical findings into a single representation of how the three elements operate together as one interconnected educational experience.

## Discussion

This study set out to understand how the values of *Tarbiyatul Aulad* are internalized in the daily life of the pesantren. The findings indicate that internalization does not occur through any single activity but through the interplay of daily routines, the exemplary conduct of educators, and the educational environment experienced continuously. Across all data sources, the values conveyed did not remain at the level of normative understanding but were enacted in practices repeated until they became ordinary. Education here therefore operates through structured life experience, in which daily activity itself becomes the principal site of value internalization rather than a supplement to formal instruction. The triadic convergence answers the research question directly: the spiritual habitus of the santri is formed not by transmitting values as content but by embedding them in the organized texture of everyday life (Wrigley-Carr, 2024).

These findings reinforce the literature on lived religion, which positions everyday

practice as a central arena for religious experience (Allievi & Calabretta, 2025; Hall, 2022). The results also qualify that literature in an important respect. In the pesantren, religious experience does not arise spontaneously from ordinary life but unfolds within an environment deliberately structured around time, activity, interaction, and communal living. Much of the lived-religion scholarship emphasizes the informal and unplanned character of everyday faith. The present case, by contrast, shows the same everyday texture being intentionally produced and maintained by an institution. The pesantren thus represents a setting where lived religion and deliberate pedagogy coincide rather than stand apart.

The most significant finding concerns the relationship between spiritual habitus and Bourdieu's account of habitus as disposition. In its classical formulation, habitus develops through social reproduction, forming unconsciously within a given social structure (Garau & Bazzani, 2025; Gibson & Sagarin, 2023; Mohammad Ebrahimi & Koh, 2021). The findings, however, point to a different dynamic, since the practices shaping the students' habits arise from consciously designed arrangements rather than unconscious reproduction. This dynamic is best captured by the notion of *habitus by design*, which marks the conceptual contribution of the study. Rather than rejecting Bourdieu's concept, the term extends it, naming the deliberate cultivation of dispositions that classical theory treats as an unconscious byproduct of social position. The findings thus specify the mechanism through which an environment is engineered to make particular dispositions more likely without determining them outright.

The data prevent any deterministic reading of this design, because the disconfirming cases show students retaining genuine agency. The variation in the pace of habituation indicates that internalization was negotiated over time rather than imposed uniformly. The conditionality of modeling, where imitation depended on the educator's perceived sincerity, shows that students evaluated rather than absorbed the examples around them. The situational compliance reported by a minority reveals that environmental pressure secured outward conformity more readily than inner conviction. These tensions are not anomalies but evidence that *habitus by design* operates through, rather than against, the agency of the santri. Character formation therefore depends not only on an organized system but also on each student's capacity to interpret and negotiate it, which is what distinguishes a governance account from a determinist one.

Drawing these threads together, the findings support *embodied pedagogical governance* as a framework for explaining the interconnection among values, practices, and the management of educational life. The framework distinguishes three interrelated layers: a normative layer of underlying values, a sociological layer of interaction and culture, and an empirical layer of concrete daily practices. These layers condition one another in the process of character formation, which is why no single element accounts for the outcome alone. The framework is never fully insulated from competing influences, as digital media and family expectations expose students to values beyond the institution's walls (Cavers et al., 2024; Mueller & Flickinger, 2021; Shen et al., 2025). This points to environmental management as an ongoing negotiation with external forces rather than a settled accomplishment. The interconnection is not unique to the pesantren, since schools likewise manage routines, build cultures, and shape environments.

The specific contribution of this study lies in reframing value internalization as a problem of educational management rather than of curriculum alone. Character formation, on this account, is not the residue of moral instruction but an outcome that institutions actively produce through the way they arrange time, supervision, interaction, and culture. If dispositions are formed through the orchestration of routines, role models, and environment, then the decisive variable is not the content delivered to students but the structure of the life they lead. What an institution teaches matters less than how it organizes the daily experience through which values are practiced until they become habitual. Educational management thus emerges as the true site of character formation, where the alignment of schedules,

exemplary conduct, and environmental arrangements becomes a strategic instrument. Value-based education ceases to be a question of designing better lessons and becomes one of governing the conditions under which dispositions take hold.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the values of *Tarbiyatul Anlad* fi al-Islam are internalised not through instruction alone but through the interconnection of daily routines, the exemplary conduct of educators, and the educational environment in which the santri are continuously immersed. The formation of spiritual habitus emerges less from the transmission of knowledge than from the deliberate management of life experience, social interaction, and institutional culture within the everyday rhythm of the pesantren. In capturing this dynamic, the study contributes the notion of habitus by design and frames embodied pedagogical governance as a way of understanding character formation as an object that institutions can shape through how they structure time, modelling, and environment, with direct implications for educational management. Although confined to a single pesantren over a limited period, and therefore unable to speak to the long-term durability of habitus, the study points toward comparative and longitudinal inquiry as its natural extension. Its central lesson endures: in residential education, character is governed less by what is taught than by how daily life is arranged.

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