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Implementation of Local Content Learning in Islamic Boarding Schools in Shaping Student Character at MTs Rare Muchtary Denpasar and MTs Al Mubarokah Lamongan

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of local content learning based on pesantren (Islamic boarding school) in two madrasahs with different socio-cultural characteristics, namely MTs Rare Muchtary Denpasar and MTs Al Mubarokah Lamongan. The focus of this study includes the model of learning implementation, its effectiveness in shaping students' character, as well as the factors that influence its successful execution. The research approach used is qualitative with a multi-site study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies, then analyzed descriptively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of pesantren-based local content in both madrasahs shares similarities in the goal of strengthening Islamic values and shaping students' religious character, but differs in the implementation strategies. In Denpasar, the pesantren-based local content was adapted Contextualized to adapt to the environment of the pluralistic Hindu community, while in Lamongan it emphasizes a traditional pesantren approach that is rich in Islamic values. The main factors affecting the success of implementation include the role of the madrasa principal as a learning leader, support from the social environment, and the availability of teaching materials in the form of handbooks compiled contextually. This study provides a theoretical contribution to the development of character education based on Indonesian local values and offers practical implications for madrasas in

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integrating pesantren values into the local content curriculum. These findings are also expected to serve as a reference for policymakers in designing local curricula that are adaptive to cultural diversity and contemporary Islamic educational needs.

Keywords: local content, pesantren-based, character education, socio-cultural, madrasah tsanawiyah.

INTRODUCTION

Character education is a fundamental foundation of Indonesia's national education system, as mandated by Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. Research findings indicate that character education at PPM Al-Musawwa is a holistic process encompassing moral, spiritual, and ethical development. This process is integrated into both classroom and extracurricular activities, with teachers serving as role models (Rahmad & Syaifullah, 2024). In this context, local content learning plays a strategic role as a medium for integrating cultural, religious, and moral values in accordance with local needs and characteristics.

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), as the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, have long demonstrated their success in shaping the character of Muslim generations. Studies show that character education programs in *pesantren* effectively cultivate moral integrity among students. This indicates that *pesantren* institutions hold great potential in addressing juvenile delinquency (Purwanto, 2021). The traditional *pesantren* education system emphasizing morality, independence, simplicity, and brotherhood offers a holistic and effective model of character formation.

The era of globalization and digitalization brings complex challenges to the moral development of young Indonesians. The moral decline among students calls for systematic and continuous efforts in character education (Anwar, 2021). As middle-level Islamic institutions, *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* face the challenge of implementing character education that aligns with contemporary needs without losing the core values of Islam. This article discusses the challenges faced by *pesantren* in harmonizing the national curriculum with traditional Islamic education while maintaining their distinctive identity (Rahman et al., 2024). These challenges underscore the importance of integrating *pesantren* values into formal education to preserve identity and enhance the effectiveness of character formation.

Pesantren possess a comprehensive value system proven effective in character building. The *Panca Jiwa Pesantren*—sincerity, simplicity, independence, Islamic brotherhood, and

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freedom—serve as a solid foundation for character education (Dhofier, 1994). *Pesantren* emphasize the development of morally upright, compassionate, polite, and peaceful individuals. Given the diverse backgrounds of students, *pesantren* environments must be designed to uphold inclusivity and respect for diversity (Mujahid, 2022). The implementation of *pesantren*-based values in local content learning within *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* offers a potential solution to modern challenges in character education. Abdullah (2022) found that integrating *pesantren* values into learning significantly enhances students' religious, social, and personal character.

Madrasah Tsanawiyah hold a strategic position within Indonesia's education system, combining the national curriculum with Islamic religious education. Local content subjects (*muatan lokal*) provide flexible opportunities to accommodate each school's needs and local characteristics, ranging from a minimum of 72 to 216 lesson hours for Grades VII–VIII, and 64 to 192 lesson hours for Grade IX, according to Ministerial Decree KMA No. 450 of 2024. This flexibility allows for the integration of *pesantren* values into classroom instruction.Hasan (2021) showed that *pesantren*-based education in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* effectively strengthens students' religious character, although challenges remain in terms of pedagogy, teacher competence, and institutional support.

As an archipelagic nation rich in cultural diversity, Indonesia requires contextual approaches to character education. This study explores the implementation of *pesantren*-based local content learning in two culturally distinct regions: MTs Rare Muchtary Denpasar (Bali) and MTs Al Mubarokah Lamongan (East Java).Bali, where Muslims are a minority within a predominantly Hindu society, presents unique challenges in maintaining Islamic identity and *pesantren* values. In contrast, Lamongan, with its strong *pesantren* traditions, provides a more conducive environment for such implementation. These cases highlight how traditional educational institutions adapt *pesantren* values to modern education needs (Nasution et al., 2023).

A literature review reveals that studies on *pesantren*-based local content learning remain limited, with most focusing on theoretical aspects or single contexts (Ahmad et al., 2024). Farid and Sholeh (2022) found that integrating *pesantren* values into madrasah curricula in East Java faces challenges related to implementation models and evaluation instruments. Moreover, similar studies in non-Muslim-majority regions such as Bali are scarce. Effective implementation of *pesantren*-based local content requires adaptable models that align with local socio-cultural contexts. Ibrahim (2023) emphasizes the importance of strategies that consider school characteristics, teacher competencies, community support, and local culture. Chotimah (2022)

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further highlights the need to understand curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation based on the socio-cultural framework of *pesantren*-based institutions. Mahmud (2022) notes that many teachers in *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* lack a deep understanding of *pesantren* values and how to embed them into formal instruction. Moreover, there is no standardized model or evaluation tool to measure the effectiveness of *pesantren*-based character education. Ridwan (2023) also found that *pesantren* environments significantly influence students' moral formation, though integration within formal schooling remains methodologically and structurally challenging. Geographical and cultural diversity adds another layer of complexity. In Bali, Muslim minorities strive to preserve Islamic values amid a dominant Hindu environment. Meanwhile, in East Java, the challenge lies in modernizing *pesantren* traditions within formal education structures.

Aziz (2021) advocates for local wisdom-based learning models that strengthen students' character while maintaining cultural and religious identity. However, such models require adaptive and contextualized approaches tailored to regional characteristics.

This study aims to answer three main research questions: (1) How is the model of implementing pesantren-based local content learning effectively designed to shape students' character at MTs Rare Muchtary Denpasar and MTs Al Mubarokah Lamongan? (2) To what extent is the effectiveness of pesantren-based local content learning in enhancing students' character in both madrasahs? and (3) What factors influence the success of implementing pesantren-based local content learning in the two research sites?

This study contributes to the theoretical development of character education rooted in Indonesia's local values. Integrating *pesantren* values into *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* local content not only enriches Islamic education theory but also offers a contextual and holistic framework. By comparing two regions with contrasting socio-cultural settings, this research provides insights into the adaptability and effectiveness of *pesantren*-based learning models. Practically, it proposes an implementable model for other *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*, accompanied by operational guidelines for teachers, valid evaluation instruments, and adaptable strategies.

The findings are expected to inform policymakers in designing effective local curricula that strengthen student character, aligning with the goals of project-based learning for the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* within the *Merdeka* curriculum structure.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach with a multi-site design that is both exploratory and descriptive. The qualitative approach was chosen as it aligns with the aim of gaining an in-

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depth and holistic understanding of social phenomena particularly the implementation strategies of pesantren-based local content learning. Creswell (2018) emphasizes that the qualitative approach allows researchers to understand the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems. This method is also referred to as a naturalistic approach because it is conducted within natural settings (Sugiyono, 2013). The multi-site study design was selected to comprehensively explore the implementation of pesantren-based local content at two educational institutions: MTs Rare Muchtary Denpasar and MTs Al Mubarokah Lamongan. This design offers stronger evidence and enhances external validity compared to a single-site study. It enables researchers to compare teaching processes across different socio-cultural contexts Denpasar, a Hindu-majority area, and Lamongan, an Islamic-majority region thereby revealing variations in teaching approaches and their impacts on students in each institution.

The study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained directly from interviews, observations, and documentation involving school principals, teachers, and students from both madrasahs, as well as community members surrounding the schools. Secondary data include written documents, previous research findings, books, photographs, and other relevant archives. All data were carefully selected to ensure their relevance to the research focus and to strengthen the analysis in addressing the research questions. Beside that, this study use data were collected through three main techniques that complement one another: in-depth interviews, document analysis, and field observation.

a. In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews served as the primary data collection technique to obtain detailed and comprehensive insights into the strategies, experiences, and challenges involved in implementing pesantren-based local content learning. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school principals, teachers, education staff, and students, each lasting approximately 60–90 minutes. The interviews covered themes such as lesson planning, teaching strategies, learning materials, stakeholder involvement, and the perceived outcomes and challenges. Rapport was established with participants to create a comfortable atmosphere, and *probing* techniques were used to explore responses further. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and supported by detailed field notes and, when appropriate, video recordings.

b. Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted to obtain secondary data that enriched and supported the findings from interviews and observations. The analyzed documents included teaching schedules, course outlines, student grade records, instructional materials, reports on pesantren-

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based local content implementation, and visual documentation of learning activities. Both formal and informal documents such as photographs, communication records, and school environmental notes were examined using content analysis techniques to identify themes and patterns relevant to the research focus. Historical documents were also reviewed to trace the development and evolution of pesantren-based local learning at each institution over time.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Model of Implementing Local Content Learning Based on Pesantren

The research results indicate that both MTs Rare Muchtary Denpasar and MTs Al Mubarokah Lamongan have implemented local content based on pesantren with different approaches according to the social and cultural context of each region. The implementation model in both institutions includes three main stages: curriculum planning, learning process, and evaluation. At MTs Rare Muchtary Denpasar, pesantren-based local content is integrated into the school curriculum through subjects such as moral education (akhlak), fiqh, tahsin, and Islamic history. The learning design is contextual and inclusive, adapting Islamic values to the pluralistic social environment in Denpasar, which is predominantly Hindu. Teachers play a role not only as educators but also as moral role models who instill values of tolerance, respect, and harmony. Activities such as halaqah, collective prayer, and social visits are applied to strengthen the moral and social character of students.

Meanwhile, at MTs Al Mubarokah Lamongan, a more traditional approach is used, as is common in pesantren systems. The curriculum is structured based on the yellow book tradition and emphasizes strengthening religious understanding and student discipline. Students participate in daily recitation activities, memorization of Qur'anic verses, and habituation to worship under the guidance of teachers. The teachers also develop manuals or written teaching materials that serve as the main guideline for learning local pesantren content. These manuals contain both academic and moral objectives and also function as practical guides for teachers in transferring pesantren values.

2. Effectiveness of Implementing Pesantren-Based Local Content

The implementation of pesantren-based local content in both schools has proven effective in shaping students' character, although the results vary according to the school environment context. In Denpasar, its effectiveness is evident in the increased attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and interfaith understanding. Students demonstrate the ability to interact and cooperate with

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peers of different beliefs. This shows that pesantren values can adapt to a multicultural environment and play a role in maintaining social harmony.

Meanwhile, in Lamongan, effectiveness is seen in the increased religious discipline, moral awareness, and spiritual maturity of students. Routines such as reciting the Quran, praying in congregation, and practicing pesantren values shape students' character to be obedient, polite, and virtuous. The combination of academic and spiritual activities creates a holistic learning atmosphere. Comparative analysis shows that the Both institutions successfully achieved the educational goals of the pesantren, which is to shape students with strong religious, moral, and social characters. The differences in socio-cultural contexts actually enrich the implementation model, proving that pesantren values can be applied in both majority and minority Muslim environments as long as they are adapted to local needs.

3. Factors Affecting the Success of Implementation

Several key factors influence the success of implementing pesantren-based local content learning programs in both institutions.

a. Leadership and vision of the madrasa principal

The madrasa principal plays an important role in directing and maintaining the pesantren-based program. Their vision in preserving Islamic identity while accommodating inclusivity is a key factor for success.

b. Teacher competence and understanding of pesantren pedagogy

Teachers with a pesantren background are able to integrate moral values into their teaching. In Denpasar, teacher training on religious moderation is an important step to adapt pesantren values in a multicultural context.

c. Support from the community and parents

Active community participation strengthens the sustainability of the program. In Lamongan, community involvement is high due to the strong pesantren culture, while in Denpasar, collaboration with local religious leaders is emphasized helping to build mutual respect among the community

d. Availability of learning resources

The presence of lecture notes, syllabi, and contextual teaching materials enhances implementation quality. However, in Denpasar, limited resources require teachers to be more creative in developing teaching materials

e. Socio-cultural environment

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The surrounding social context greatly influences program implementation. The Denpasar environment demands inclusive adaptation, whereas Lamongan, with its strong pesantren tradition, allows for a deeper reinforcement of Islamic values.

This study shows that local content based on pesantren (Islamic boarding school) is an effective means for contextual character education. This program bridges formal education with Islamic traditional values, so that students are not only academically excellent but also possess religious, social, and personal character. These findings are consistent with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, where pesantren values function as symbolic capital transmitted through education and shape students' moral habitus. The approach in both schools demonstrates that the socio-cultural environment plays a significant role in influencing how educational values are reproduced.

Furthermore, integrating these pesantren values also supports the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly in strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile through project-based learning that emphasizes independence, spirituality, and collaboration. Thus, the effectiveness of local content learning based on pesantren It depends on the institution's ability to contextualize the values of the pesantren into the formal education structure without losing its traditional roots. Both MTs Rare Muchtary Denpasar and MTs Al Mubarokah Lamongan have shown that pesantren-based education remains relevant and adaptive in shaping students' character amidst Indonesia's cultural diversity.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the pesantren-based local content curriculum at MTs Rare Muchtary Denpasar and MTs Al Mubarokah Lamongan has been going well, despite facing different challenges according to the socio-cultural context of each region. Both madrasahs have shown serious efforts in maintaining the values of the pesantren as an identity of Islamic education amid the currents of digitalization and changing times.

First, in terms of planning, both institutions have strived to align the local content curriculum with the needs of the students as well as the institution's vision of instilling religious character. At MTs Rare Muchtary Denpasar, the main focus lies in integrating pesantren values with learning technology to be relevant to the life of urban communities and Muslim minorities. Meanwhile, at MTs Al Mubarokah Lamongan, the planning is directed toward strengthening the values of pesantren traditions and student discipline as a form of preserving local religious culture.

Second, in terms of implementation, both schools apply contextual learning strategies

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through religious activities, reading of the 'kitab kuning' (classical Islamic texts), worship practice, and habituation of noble character. Teachers play an important role as facilitators and role models in instilling pesantren values, while the heads of the madrasah act as leaders who encourage innovation and adaptation to the digital era.

Third, regarding evaluation, the assessment process is not only based on cognitive aspects but also encompasses affective and psychomotor dimensions, such as religious attitude, discipline, and students' social responsibility. Evaluation is carried out through observation of daily behavior, student involvement in religious activities, as well as academic achievements in local pesantren-based subjects.

Overall, this study confirms that the integration of pesantren values into the local curriculum can strengthen students' character and create Islamic education that is contextual and adaptive. and relevant to the demands of the digital era. In addition, this research provides a contribution to the development of a curriculum implementation model based on local values that can be adapted by other madrasahs in Indonesia, particularly in strengthening students' character and spirituality in accordance with the spirit of the Pancasila Student Profile within the Independent Curriculum framework.

ACKNOLEDGMENTS

This study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the scope of the study, which only includes two institutions, namely MTs Rare Muchtary Denpasar and MTs Al Mubarokah Lamongan, limits the generalization of the results to other madrasahs in Indonesia that have different socio-cultural characteristics and educational policies. In addition, the relatively short duration of the study means that the observation of the implementation of local content Islamic boarding school learning has not been fully in-depth, so the dynamics of long-term changes cannot yet be comprehensively observed.

Other limitations also arise from incomplete participant involvement, as not all teachers and students could be interviewed in depth due to time constraints and the busy school schedule. On the other hand, the documentation data obtained is also still limited because not all administrative documents can be accessed by the researcher. This This causes the analysis process to rely more on the results of interviews and direct field observations. In addition, the aspect of learning digitalization, which is part of the context of this research, has not been studied in depth, and therefore cannot fully illustrate how technology plays a role in strengthening pesantren values in madrasahs. Therefore, further research with a wider geographical scope, a longer timeframe,

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and a more comprehensive analysis of digitalization is highly recommended to provide a more complete picture of the implementation of local content based on pesantren values in various educational contexts.

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