

SUFISTIC APPROACH OF CHARACTER EDUCATION IN AN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

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Abstract: This article explores the role of Kiai leadership and management strategies in fostering character education at Islamic boarding schools, with a focus on the integration of Sufism as a spiritual approach to shaping students' Islamic character (akhlak). Conducted at the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School in Bandung, the study employs a qualitative method using interviews with the school's director, a teacher, and alumni, alongside observations and documentation. Secondary data were drawn from scholarly articles, books, and other relevant literature. The findings reveal that the Kiai's character education strategy is deeply rooted in Sufistic principles, emphasizing both *hablu minallah* (relationship with God) through weekly Friday night religious recitations, and *hablu minannas* (relationship with others) through active community service. The study contributes to the discourse on Islamic education by showcasing the practical application of Sufism in contemporary pesantren leadership.

Keywords: Character education, Kiai strategy, sufism approach, At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School

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Introduction

In Surah Luqman verses 12-14, the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of educating children well. Character education is a major concern for every school's implementation of its education system.¹ Character education is an effort made through the learning environment², that aims to encourage the growth and development of all human potential in order to have a good personality, morals, and character so that it can have a good influence on the people around it.³ *Pesantren*, the oldest educational institution in Indonesia⁴, actually implemented the concept of character education long ago. However, the Ministry of National Education does not explicitly mention this as one of the implementations of character education. In fact, since centuries ago, boarding school educational institutions have been able to shape the character of students (*santri*). This is because this traditional educational institution has a 24-hour learning and education system, and the residence between Kiai as the central figure and his students is in the same location.⁵

Kiai is the central figure in the environment of the boarding school institution⁶, so the existence of this Kiai figure will affect the back and forth of a boarding school, including influencing the character building of students. The existence of Kiai and boarding school institutions are two things that cannot be separated because the figure of Kiai will determine policy management, including the development of boarding schools and students in them.⁷ Therefore, Kiai must have a strategy for character formation or education for his students. One example of Kiai's strategy in character education for his students is what is done at the As-Sururon Islamic boarding school, including the first, exemplary strategy, namely by Kiai giving a good example such as praying in congregation at the beginning of time and the mosque. Second, habituation strategy; one example is routinely reading Surah Al-Mulk after Maghrib prayer. Third, the strategy of advice, namely Kiai, gives good advice in a comfortable atmosphere. Fourth, is the reward and punishment strategy. Reward, for example, is given by giving praise to students who excel, and punishment is given by punishing students if they violate boarding school regulations.⁸

Kiai's leadership in designing strategies for character education in Islamic boarding schools for their *santri* is significant because the figure of Kiai strongly influences most Islamic boarding school management models as a leader and caregiver in an Islamic boarding school.⁹ Character building in the *Pesantren* world by Kiai is also carried out through the spiritual dimension. The spiritual dimension used as an alternative strategy in shaping the Islamic character (moral) of *santri* will not be separated from Sufism because Sufism always talks about morals or human behaviour with God and fellow humans.¹⁰ According to one of the leading scholars of Sufism, Zakariah al-Anshari, Sufism is the science of purity of soul, improvement of habits, and development of body and spirit to achieve eternal happiness.¹¹

Research on character development in Islamic boarding schools through spiritual

dimensions has been conducted. The first study, titled “Guidance in Dhikr to Enhance Spiritual Intelligence Among Boarding School Students Through Tazkiyatun Nafs,” was written by Cece Jalaludin Hasan in 2019. This article discusses religious teachers’ guidance, supervision, and assistance in enhancing students’ spiritual intelligence through *tazkiyatun nafs* at the At-Tamur Islamic boarding school in Cileunyi, Bandung Regency. However, this study does not address character development through a Sufism approach. The second study, entitled “Implementation of Islamic Boarding School Planning in Improving the Quality of Students,” was written by Eko Rahmad Cahyono, Aliyudin, and Herman in 2019. This study focuses on establishing objectives, programming, and budgeting for activities at the At-Tamur Islamic boarding school to cultivate the desired generation of students, aiming to enhance their quality so they can thrive in society and be beneficial to it. However, this study does not provide detailed insights into the specific improvements in student quality, such as “what” has been achieved. In contrast, the research conducted by the authors focuses on the management strategies of the religious leaders (Kiai) in shaping students’ character using a Sufism approach.

Third, a study entitled “Memorising the Qur’an as the Spiritual Character of Anak Jalanan At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School in Bandung Regency” written by Boy Arief Rochman, Siti Rosmayati, and Arman Maulana in 2021. This study explains how memorizing the Qur’an is a spiritual character trait for students at the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School. The study employs the method of Qur’an memorization in shaping students’ characters, differing from the author’s previous research, which adopted a Sufism approach. Fourth, a study titled “At-Tamur Anak Jalanan Islamic Boarding School of Cibiru Hilir Bandung” was written by Jatmika Aji Santika, Fajriudin, and Dina Marlina in 2022. This study covers the history, activities, and profile of the Anak Jalanan At-Tamur Islamic boarding school. This study shares similarities with the author’s research, as both focus on the Anak Jalanan At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School. However, they also differ in the issues they highlight. This study focuses solely on the history, activities, and profile of the Anak Jalanan At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School. Meanwhile, the author’s research examines the management strategies employed by the Kiai in shaping the character of the students using a Sufism approach.¹²

Unlike previous studies that focused on spiritual development and management in general, this study investigates specific strategies used by Kiai in character building through a Sufi-based approach, which has not been widely explored. The four studies above are different from the author’s study, which focuses on character education in Islamic boarding schools by studying the strategies used by Kiai in shaping the character of students through a Sufism approach at the At-Tamur Islamic boarding school in Bandung. This article aims to understand and analyze how character education is conducted in Islamic boarding schools, specifically by studying the management strategies employed by Kiai in shaping the character of students through a Sufi-based approach at the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School in Bandung.

Method

This article uses qualitative research methods.¹³ Qualitative research methods aim to uncover social facts from the participants' perspectives and study conditions in their natural state.¹⁴ This study also employs a Sufism approach that is descriptive and analytical. The research location is at the At-Tamur Islamic boarding school, also known as the Anak Jalanan At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School (Anak Adam Jalan Menuju Tuhan), located at Jalan Cibiru Hilir RT 01 RW 01, Cibiru Hilir Village, Cileunyi District, Bandung Regency, West Java Province. This Islamic boarding school was chosen as the research object because it is unique and has adopted a Sufism approach in its educational process. This makes it relevant or novel in Islamic education, particularly regarding the Sufism approach for students.

Data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through interviews with the head of At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School, Kiai S, and one of the teachers (*ustaz*) and alums of At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School. Secondary data was obtained through scientific articles (journals), books, and other relevant literature related to the research topic.

Data collection techniques were carried out as follows: first, observation. The author conducted the observation as a participatory observation. Participatory observation was conducted when the author participated in the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School activities. Second, interviews. The interview format used by the author was a structured interview, where the author prepared a list of questions and then conducted the interview by following the list. Third, documentation. The author used documentation methods to collect data of a literature nature, such as scientific articles (journals), books, and other relevant reference materials related to the research topic.

Meanwhile, the data analysis techniques used were condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.¹⁵ Data condensation was conducted by selecting the data obtained and categorizing them to facilitate identifying the main themes. Data presentation is done after data condensation. Data is presented by narrating the data sorted to answer the research questions. In addition, data presentation is done by paying attention to the research methods and approaches used. Conclusion drawing is done by verifying the data that has been presented. Thus, conclusions that are following the research objectives can be drawn.¹⁶

Results and Discussion

Character Education, Islamic Boarding School, and Sufism Approach

Education is at the core of developing society's most valuable human resource.¹⁷ Character education is a system that instills character values in learners¹⁸, including knowledge, individual awareness, determination, and willingness and action to

implement values to God Almighty, self, others, the environment, and the nation to achieve the degree of *insan kamil*.¹⁹ Character education aims to develop the basic potential of learners, both students in formal education institutions and students in non-formal education institutions, to be virtuous, think well, behave well, strengthen and develop learners' attitudes towards multicultural behaviour and advance the nation's civilization that is competitive in world relations.²⁰ Therefore, the purpose of character education is to strive to help students achieve their maximum potential to make students a resilient, competitive, noble, virtuous, tolerant, cooperative, and nationalistic-minded person who respects each other, loves the country, and is based on faith and piety based on the Almighty God and based on Pancasila.²¹

Character education in educational institutions is not only for formal educational institutions in schools for students but also applies in non-formal educational institutions, namely in boarding schools for *santri*. As a central figure in the world of Islamic boarding schools, Kiai has a strategy for shaping the character of his *santri*.²² One of the strategies that is considered an alternative to Kiai in character education is the Sufism approach. Islamic Boarding School is a traditional educational institution that has existed since the Hindu-Buddhist era in the archipelago, then adopted by Wali Sango in Islamisation in Indonesia.²³ The word *pondok* itself, according to Dhofier, means dormitory or hotel, while the word *Pesantren* has the same meaning, namely the place where students live.²⁴ The boarding school becomes a place for spiritual ascent and achievement of religious sciences²⁵, and it is also used as a place for character building of students or *santri*.²⁶

Islamic boarding schools can serve as a stronghold against radicalism.²⁷ Islamic boarding school, as the oldest educational institution in Indonesia, is a means to learn to deepen religious knowledge, this boarding school educational institution continues to exist until now.²⁸ Long before public schools and madrassas existed and entered all corners of the archipelago, boarding schools were already established, growing, and developing.²⁹ The existence of this boarding school educational institution is a cultural product and produces cultural products as well.³⁰ Character education in the boarding school world can be seen in educational institutions focusing on the teaching and learning process by understanding the materials taught in the classroom, but students (*santri*) must be able to apply their knowledge through the learning process to their daily lives.

Character education in the world of Islamic boarding schools is seen in the goals of Islamic boarding schools. According to Masyhud and Khusnurdilo in Purwanti, it is to create Muslim personalities who believe and are devoted to Allah Swt., have a noble character, are independent, practical, and firm in their stance in spreading the teachings of Islam, and love knowledge.³¹ Character education in Islamic boarding schools plays a major role in shaping the nation's character. *Pesantren*, an Islamic sub-culture rooted in Indonesian Islamic culture, has taught values and norms.³² The formation of character education is under Law Number 20 of 2003 Article 3 concerning the national education

system, which states that the purpose of national education is to develop the potential of students to become human beings who are faithful and devoted to God, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent and become democratic and responsible citizens.³³ The curriculum used in *Pesantren* is based on the national curriculum from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the religious education curriculum from the Ministry of Religious Affairs.³⁴

Character education in a boarding school environment requires a systematic and gradual process or stages following the stages of growth and development of students to develop it through knowledge, implementation, and habituation. In addition to the material taught at the boarding school, which is sourced from classical books such as *akhlakulil banin*, *ta'limul muta'allim*, *ihya' ulumiddin*, *hikam*, and other books to achieve success in character education, strategies are also needed to achieve the goals of character education.³⁵ The learning method in the *Pesantren* education system is a factor in the formation of character education for students through an integral process through teaching and learning activities, habituation to good behaviour, getting used to spiritual activities, and getting a good example from the leader of the *Pesantren*, namely Kiai.

The word Kiai itself comes from the ancient Javanese language, which means a respected person.³⁶ Kiai is a human who has a deep knowledge of Islam, practices it, and has a noble character. Kiai also usually teaches religious knowledge to students and the community and leads an Islamic boarding school institution.³⁷ According to Karel A. Steenbrink, in traditional societies, a person is called a Kiai because the community has accepted him, and people come to ask for his advice or send their children to study with the Kiai. Several factors can influence a person to become a Kiai, namely his Islamic knowledge, piety, descent, and the number of his students.³⁸

The Sufism approach in shaping students' character in Islamic boarding schools examine the psychological dimension based on intuitive feeling or, in Islamic teaching terms, *zauq* and *ilham*. Sufism means concentrating on the inner side of humans in Islamic teachings.³⁹ *Tasawwuf* is the object of study in the heart, and *Ihsan* is the application method to get closer to Allah Swt., including in character building in educational institutions. The definition of *Ihsan* itself is good, while according to the Prophet's Hadith about *Ihsan*, it is "you worship as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, then be sure that Allah sees you." Character education in the *Pesantren* world through the Sufism and *Ihsan* approach is a method that transfers values and happiness and promotes love in students' behavior.⁴⁰

Character education in the *Pesantren* world through the Sufism approach with the *Ihsan* method is to purify the soul or *tazkiyatun nafs*, which is an exercise in controlling lust and cleansing the heart from despicable traits and diseases of the heart and instilling good traits and behaviour, which ultimately becomes a good character.⁴¹

Profile of Anak Jalanan At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School

At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School has a long name, namely Anak Jalanan At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School. The Anak Jalanan in question, according to Kiai Samsudin as the founder and leader of the *Pesantren*, means Adam's son on the road to God.⁴² At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School is an educational institution qualified as one of Indonesia's Islamic educational institutions or *Pesantren*. This is the result of a survey conducted by the administration of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School itself was officially established as a *Pesantren* on 20 January 2008 AD which was founded by Kiai Samsudin, M.Ag, Drs. H. Ahmad Subandi, Prof. Dr. Asep Muhyiddin, M.Ag, Nisa Hermawati, M.Psi, and Deden Mulyadi, M.Pd.⁴³

The name At-Tamur comes from the name of the foundation established by Drs. H. Ahmad Subandi, which is not yet running. At-Tamur itself has the meaning of dates and has a philosophy that even though dates live in barren areas, they have benefits. That is what the leader of the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School aspires to his students, even though they live in deprivation, they must be able to benefit the surrounding environment. Just like other Islamic boarding schools, At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School also has a curriculum that includes recitation of the Qur'an, teaching of the yellow book with various Islamic disciplines such as Hadith, *Fiqh*, *Aqidah*, Sufism, Language and Scientific Writing. The curriculum of At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School includes education in daily worship and morals, organizational education, community service, and *santri* entrepreneurship courses.⁴⁴

The board of teachers at the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School are *asatidz*, who devote their knowledge to the boarding school voluntarily. At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School students can be classified into three, namely students who live in the boarding school, *ngalong* students or students who do not live in the boarding school, and consultative students, who are students who come to the boarding school to ask for advice or consult in various fields.⁴⁵

The structure of At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School consists of advisors, coaches, and administrators. The advisory board consists of Drs. H. Ahmad Subandi (Alm), Prof. Dr. KH Asep Muhyiddin, Prof. Dr. H. Dudang Gojali, M.Ag, Kiai Nanang Suriyatna, M.Ud. The management consists of Kiai Samsudin, M.Ag as the leader or director of At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School, *Ustaz* Ilin Sholehudin, M.Pd as secretary, Kiai Asep Malik, M.Pd as treasurer and curriculum and Ust. Ilham Nurjaman, M.Pd is the head of the public relations department. The current head of At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School students is Hasbullah Yusuf, S.Sos.⁴⁶

Profile of Kiai At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School

The Kiai of At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School profile is Kiai Samsudin, M.Ag, born in Sukabumi on 03 April 1975. Kiai Samsudin is married to Nisa Hermawati, M.Psi, and

has three sons and daughters: Muhammad Aulia Rahman Shams, Yasmin Nur Azizah Shams, and Shafa Kamila Shams. Kiai Samsudin's residence is in the Bumu Cimekar Complex No. 19 Cimekar Village, Cileunyi District, Bandung Regency. The history of his education began at SDN Ciranji Sukabumi from 1984 to 1990, also studied at MD Miftahussa'adah Cileungsing Sukabumi from 1985 to 1990, then continued his education at MTs Miftahussa'adah from 1990 to 1993, from 1993 to 1996 continued his education at MA Al-Masthuriyah Cisaat Sukabumi and from 1996 to 2001 continued his studies at STAI Al-Masthuriyah Cisaat Sukabumi. His undergraduate education was taken at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.⁴⁷

As for Kiai Samsudin's work history, he started as a teacher at MD Miftahussa'adah from 1985 to 1990, then became a teacher at MI Al-Masthuriyah from 1996 to 2005, then from 2006 to 2007, became a team of writers at the Constitutional Court and became a team of facilitators for the LPKNU Anti-Drug campaign from 2006 to 2009. In 2009, he was also a Hajj and Umrah tour operator. Then, since 2009, also until now a lecturer at STAI Al-Masthuriyah, and since 2013, until now a lecturer at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.⁴⁸

Kiai Samsudin is quite active in several organizations, including being active in the PC IPNU of Sukabumi Regency, PW IPNU West Java, PP IPNU in Jakarta, Lensa Sukabumi, PP AMMDI Golkar in Jakarta, PW LKPNU West Java, PW LPNU West Java and Al-Masthuriyah Alumni Family. Kiai Samsudin was also noted to have founded several institutions, namely Lensa Sukabumi in 2002, Majmu North Jakarta in 2006, Anak Jalanan At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School in 2008, LP2M At-Tamur in 2009 and Cirebon Guardian City Foundation in 2016.⁴⁹

Kiai's Strategy in Character Education for *Santri* Through Tasawuf Approach

Kiai's strategy in character education for his students through the Sufism approach at the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School is seen in the mission and soul of the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School students themselves. This was conveyed by Kiai S, namely;

"Character education is essentially about creating good *santri* morals, so this character education is indeed the mission of the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School, which is to foster the soul and *akhlak* of students so that they can receive, enjoy, and be grateful for the blessings of life so that they are beneficial for themselves and their environment. Character education at At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School is also seen in the motto of the *Pesantren*, which is learning, struggling, having faith, and sharing. Sharing is taking and giving benefits to share with others. In addition to having noble character or morals, At-Tamur students must be able to share even in situations of deprivation; for example, that is usefulness, which is character education at At-Tamur. The character education strategy is also given through the delivery and appreciation of the soul of the *santri*, which has three important points, namely the soul of accepting, enjoying, and being grateful".⁵⁰

Kiai's strategy in character education at At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School is to produce

students who are knowledgeable, charitable, and beneficial to their environment, as Kiai S said;

“So character education in At-Tamur *Pesantren* is generally *santri*, which must be knowledgeable, charitable, and useful. Knowledge, especially in learning religious knowledge, is obtained from recitation every night, which is held after Isha’s prayer. The knowledge gained is shown with noble behaviour. The implementation of knowledge must be directly proportional to having good behaviour. *Santri* must also be able to do charity work, such as *istiqamah* practicing practices or recitations of dhikr, and so on. Including useful, where students live must be able to benefit. At At-Tamur itself, character education to be able to be useful has been taught, for example, by teaching Diniyah Madrasah children after Maghrib prayer with no payment, pure devotion, also for example, by learning to help the neighbors of the *Pesantren*, by becoming mosque and RT administrators, this is character education so that one day the students graduate they are used to socializing and benefiting the community.”⁵¹

The stages of Kiai’s strategy in character building and education through the Sufism approach at the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School are first, through Friday night recitation, and second, through community service. Sufism improves human relations with God (*hablu minallah*) and human relations with humans (*hablu minannas*).

Friday Night Recitation

Kiai’s strategy in character education through the Sufism approach to his students is *first* through Friday night recitation with the material being guidance on *tawasul*, prayer, dhikr, and prayer together.

“One of the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School programs is public recitation. The public recitation is coaching carried out every Friday night with *tawasul*, invocation, dhikr, *ratiban*, and prayer together. Sufism is about purifying the soul and forming *akhlak* to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter. One way to purify the soul is to institute the Friday night tradition with *tawasul* and dhikr so that students always remember their God. This is character education through Sufism.”⁵²

Kiai helps students to be muhasabah for mistakes and do repentance in order to purify the soul, then Kiai motivates them always to do good in everyday life, and Kiai helps students have peace and tranquility in their hearts, minds, and souls so that they can always be close to Allah Swt.⁵³

Guidance on *tawasul*, invocation dhikr, and direction from the Kiai on Friday night while doing *istigosah* and reading *rotibul hadad*, which is carried out in the congregation and directly guided by the Kiai. After reading *the rotibul hadad*, Kiai always gives direction, motivation, and advice to do good.

“On Friday nights, too, after *tawasul* and dhikr, I like to continue with *tausiyah*, which is often about the behaviour and practices of the saints so that students can be

motivated to follow in the footsteps of the *auliya* Allah. After the *tausiyah* is usually closed by eating *liwet* and having coffee together”.⁵⁴

The cultivation and character education carried out by Kiai to his *santri* at the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School is also carried out with supervision from Kiai in the context of *tazkiyatun nafs* with *mujahadan* and *riyadhah* or exercises, such as reading multiplying recitation of dhikr and fasting *sunnah*. Kiai's supervision ends when his students already feel the fear of Allah Swt. by worshipping continuously or *istiqamah* and always doing good, feeling the fear of Allah Swt. in tasawuf terms is called *khauf*.⁵⁵

The guidance of dhikr in the context of character education through a Sufism approach, which is used as a strategy in creating Islamic morals of *santri* is also inseparable from the help of Kiai with the implementation of several means of *tazkiyatun nafs*, including the discipline of praying 5 (five) times in congregation at the Mosque and multiplying *sunnah* prayers, fasting, both Monday-Thursday fasting, *ayamul bidh* fasting, *mutih* fasting or speaking fasting and increasing the recitation of dhikr, in addition to the tradition of dhikr which is routinely carried out on Friday nights, Kiai also encourages his students to have dhikr readings that are always carried out in *istiqamah*.

On every Friday night after dhikr together, Kiai gives *tausiyah*, in the *tausiyah* Kiai usually instructs his students to start learning to practice several practices to form Islamic character. As FM said as follows:

“Technically, in the teachings of Sufism in the At-Tamur *Pesantren*, there are many teachings, one of which is on our Friday night, we are required as *santri* to read *rotib hadad*, *rotib athos*, then *shalawat* etc., and on several occasions, Pak Kiai gave instructions to us such as in the past there was a 7 (seven) day *mutih* fasting, then there was for shaping and preparing if one day we were given fate by Allah not following what we wanted, and we were used to eating only white rice. Then there used to be fasting, not to ask others. It aims to hone our resilience and our *qanaah* on accepting enough of what we have without having to ask others because the truth is that humans, while the sun is still rising, sustenance is still there, and how humans can carry out and realise their potential”.⁵⁶

After Kiai *tausiyah*, usually followed by eating together, it is closed by *chatting*. *Chatting together* or discussing *together* is one of the strategies in character education implemented by Kiai at At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School in order to maintain the original purpose of the Islamic boarding school, namely to print morals and improve the quality and quantity of students.⁵⁷

“*Ngopi bareng* is usually a moment of confiding or consultation, and this consultation also usually often uses a Sufism approach to finding the best solution. This consultation or problem-solving is also one of the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School programs, namely *Tasawuf* Psychotherapy, meaning that the *Pesantren* provides time for anyone who wants to talk about problems in their daily lives in various fields. It is the first

stage in character education at At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School on Friday night”.⁵⁸

Character education for At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School students is also carried out by the board of teachers through learning or recitation every night except Friday night (special Kiai schedule) and Sunday night (holiday) after Isha prayer. The recitation is based on the Yellow Book, which examines various Islamic disciplines. From the recitation, it is hoped that students can implement it in their daily lives as *akhlakul karimah* to Allah Swt. and to fellow humans.

In this case, IS, who is one of the teachers of At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School, said that:

“In my view, starting the process of Islamic character education in the world of Islamic boarding schools, especially in the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School, is through learning or recitation based on the yellow book, whether in the fields of Al-Qur’an, hadith, *fiqh*, *akhlak* (morals) or others, from learning or recitation, it must then be implemented into everyday life. Recitation at At-Tamur is almost every night except Sunday night routinely after Isha prayer, which is the process of character formation or education earlier”.⁵⁹

Community Service

Kiai and *santri* discussions are also usually filled with talks about the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School program, which includes recitation activities and community service. Although the formal structure of the *Pesantren* organization is as an educational institution, *Pesantren* in Indonesia also acts as a centre of Islamic teachings that aims to develop the human resources of its students and the surrounding community.⁶⁰ In the *ngobrol bareng* event or joint discussion between Kiai and *santri*, Kiai indirectly stimulates *santri* to be active in participating in the recitation in improving the quality of their knowledge, as well as active in community service, one of which is by teaching and educating children at Madrasah Diniyah (MD) Syahida. MD Syahida is managed under the auspices of the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School.

“The students’ beneficial habits for the environment are actively involved in helping the neighbors of the *Pesantren*, then all students are also required to teach MD children, and students also learn to manage MD, mosques, and households. This is solely so that *santri* is useful in their environment. This useful character is also one of the core teachings of Islam. Even in the world of Sufism, it is also taught this way, improving their relationship with God and fellow humans. This is character education at At-Tamur”.⁶¹

Community service, one of which is the obligation to teach children at MD Syahida after Maghrib to Isha prayers, is one of the strategies in character education carried out at the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School. This is also felt by one of the alums of the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School itself, namely Brother FM, who said that;

“Character education, in general, is the discipline of the students, especially in this case the students who also double as students, where they are required to be disciplined about their class hours from morning to evening or until Maghrib, then after that they are scheduled to follow the rules of teaching the children who are around the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School, because it is one of the character education how we must be responsible for our readiness to become At-Tamur students, first from morning to Maghrib can be anywhere after that in the evening we must devote ourselves as teachers to the children around who need it.”⁶²

In character education through the Sufism approach implemented by Kiai at the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School by chatting together, Kiai teaches not only to improve his *santris*’ relationship with Allah (*habluminallah*) but also to learn to socialise well with fellow humans (*habluminnaas*). This will give birth to a *santri* character with a noble personality that benefits the surrounding environment.

This is in line with IS’s opinion, which is that the form of character education through the Sufism approach can be done in two ways: individual and group. The individual way *istiqamah* to worship Allah Swt. the group way is to be actively involved in various social activities.

“In my opinion, this application can be divided into two parts: individually and in groups. An individual application is by *istiqamah* worship, which is both *mahdhah* or goer *mahdhah*. Then, the application in groups is by being active in social activities. In At-Tamur, *santri* are required to teach MD children, then learn to take care of the Mosque Prosperity Council (DKM) of the Mosque and the Household environment (RT), that is, the application of character education in groups”.⁶³

Community service by being active in the DKM and the Ke-RT-an environment was also spoken by FM because, according to him, this is character education carried out at the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School as well as distinguishing it from character education carried out by other *Pesantren*. To raise the character of economic independence students, At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School has a business forum in Sufism to avoid begging for others.

“The general character of education at At-Tamur is also about honesty and about how to serve the community there, one of which is that in the At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School, *santri* become multi-talented, they can become a DKM, they can become at the same time involved in political institutions in RT, Residents’ Houses (RW) either directly or indirectly, and this is evidenced by several agendas, for example 17 August, they took part in the village, in RT and RW. Then, the last thing that might be able to describe the general character at At-Tamur is the existence of a suggestion to the *santri* from the Kiai to instill a socio-economic spirit, one of which is that in the At-Tamur *Pesantren* itself, there is a business such as Martabak Santri, then there was also *liwet santri* and coffee *santri*. It is solely none other than to hone the character of the students so that they do

not forget about the world and do not forget about the hereafter as well”.⁶⁴

The application of character education in At-Tamur Islamic Boarding School through the Sufism approach Kiai devotes himself to the community around the Islamic boarding school complex. This is in the teachings and science of Sufism, which also aims to make life valuable and more useful. Because the Sufis and even the Prophet Muhammad Saw set an example by devoting themselves to Islam and Muslims.

Conclusion

Kiai's management strategy in conducting character education through a Sufism approach at the At-Tamur Islamic boarding school is divided into two parts. First, Islamic character education by strengthening *hablu minallah*, or improving one's relationship with Allah Swt., through recitation every Friday night with material on *tawasul*, *zikir*, *shalawat*, reading *rotibul hadad* and praying together, followed by *tausiyah* and *ngopi bareng* (drinking coffee) together. The recitation is conducted jointly by the Kiai and the At-Tamur Islamic boarding school students, who gather to carry out various activities on Friday nights. Second, *hablu minannas*, or improving good relations with fellow human beings, is achieved through community service, namely the students actively teaching and educating children living around the boarding school at the Syahida MDA (Madrasah Diniyah Awaliyah). Some students serve as Syahida DKM (Mosque Prosperity Council) members, and the students also actively assist neighbors or the community near the At-Tamur Islamic boarding school.

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