

Character Building Of Prospective Students Through The Education and Learning System At Gontor For Girls Campus 2

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Abstract

The formation of moral character is a fundamental aspect of Islamic education, which emphasizes the balance between intellectual development and moral development. This study focuses on sustainable efforts and innovations implemented in the education and learning system at Gontor for Girls Campus 2, which focuses on analyzing the character building of prospective students for the 2025-2026 academic year. This study uses a qualitative approach with a field study design. Participants include prospective students, teachers, and staf. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion. Data validity was ensured through data triangulation by comparing and double-checking the information obtained. The findings of the study show that continuous innovation in Islamic education at Gontor For Girls Campus 2 is reflected in the integration of intramural, extracurricular, and daily habituation activities rooted in the local wisdom of Islamic boarding schools. Discipline, internalization of values, and exemplary behavior shown by Senior Teachers, *Ustadzah* and *Mudabbirah* are key factors in shaping the *akhlakul karimah* among prospective students. The study highlights that sustainable, locally-based innovation in Islamic education plays an important role in preparing the youngest generation who are moral, adaptive, and competitive to face the challenges of the times.

Keywords: *Character Building, Prospective Students, Learning System, Islamic Education*

INTRODUCTION

Why is it important to build good character in prospective students? Because the Gontor for Girls Campus 2 learning system requires a common understanding between the boarding school and parents. Differences in perception often arise because some prospective students have previously studied at alumni boarding schools that have different character building systems and patterns from Gontor. Therefore, character building from the outset is necessary to align parents' understanding of the values and objectives of education at Gontor.¹ The development of students' character is a component and key in educating a generation with noble and civilized character. The purpose of education is not only to create intellectually intelligent human beings, but also those of noble character, who reflect obedience to Allah and love for others. However, there are various difficulties in character development that are becoming increasingly complicated in today's global and digital world.² The uncontrolled flow of information often affects children's attitudes and actions, resulting in moral deterioration such as declining morals, increasing materialistic values, and declining respect for parents, teachers and elders.³

Boarding School places the formation of noble character and morals as the main foundation that cannot be separated from the process of seeking knowledge. This is in line with the Islamic view that the success of education is not only measured by the mastery of knowledge, but also by how far a student is able to apply moral, spiritual, and social values in their life. In Gontor, moral development is carried out comprehensively and integrated, including daily life in the dormitory, learning activities in the classroom, extracurricular activities, and the evaluation system applied. This strategy not only emphasizes habituation and discipline, but also provides space for students to develop independence, leadership, and social responsibility.⁴

In order to optimally handle the moral crisis in the younger generation, the Islamic education system must present relevant and sustainable innovations.⁵ Islamic education must be transformed

¹ Muhammad Rifki and Muhammad Sholihin, 'Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Akhlakul Karimah Pada Santri Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Kampus 7 Kalianda Lampung Selatan', pp. 10–17.

² Cecep Sobar Rochmat and Syifa Rizki Sholihah, 'Membentuk Karakter Kritis Dengan Penilaian Pembelajaran Berbasis High Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) ', 6.2 (2022).

³ Alvia Islmi Syukur, 'Pengaruh Perhatian Kepala Sekolah Dan Sikap Akhlakul Karima Guru Terhadap Hasil Pendidikan Karakter Santri Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor', 7654 (2021).

⁴ Muhammad Agus Setiawan, Sheema Haseena Armina, and Achmad Jalaludin, 'Implementasi Konsep Islamic Social Entrepreneurship Pada Unit Usaha Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Muhammad', Indonesian Journal of Innovation Multidisipliner Research, 161 (2024), pp. 161–72.

⁵ Matnur Ritonga, Iswan Iswan, and Irwan Prayitno, '100 Tahun Pendidikan Karakter Dan Keteladanan KH Imam Zarkasyi Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor', Islamic Management: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, 7.01 (2024), pp. 1–16, doi:10.30868/im.v7i01.5700.

into an interesting, relevant, and practical learning process because traditional lecture techniques alone are inadequate. Learning innovations in several subjects and also the use of digital technology with Islamic principles, this is one of the innovations carried out to ensure that character development takes place holistically. Therefore, the daily actions of the students make *Akhlakul karimah* more than just a slogan, but as a tangible manifestation in the behavior, speech, and attitude of the students.⁶

The development of students character is a component and key in educating a generation with noble and civilized character.⁷ The purpose of education is not only to create intellectually intelligent human beings, but also those of noble character, who reflect obedience to Allah and love for others.⁸ However, there are various difficulties in character development that are becoming increasingly complicated in today's global and digital world. The uncontrolled flow of information often affects children's attitudes and actions, resulting in moral deterioration such as declining morals, increasing materialistic values, and declining respect for parents, teachers and elders.⁹

Meanwhile, *Akhlakul karimah* is the core of Islamic education which is the main goal in the process of fostering students. Boarding School places the formation of noble character and morals as the main foundation that cannot be separated from the process of seeking knowledge.¹⁰ This is in line with the Islamic view that the success of education is not only measured by the mastery of knowledge, but also by how far a student is able to apply moral, spiritual, and social values in their life. In Gontor, moral development is carried out comprehensively and integrated, including daily life in the dormitory, learning activities in the classroom, extracurricular activities, and the evaluation system applied. This strategy not only emphasizes habituation and discipline, but also provides space for students to develop independence, leadership, and social responsibility.¹¹

In order to optimally handle the moral crisis in the younger generation, the Islamic education system must present relevant and sustainable innovations. Islamic education must be transformed into an interesting, relevant, and practical learning process because traditional lecture techniques

6 Slamet Slamet, Mulajimatul Fitria, and Vaesol Wahyu Eka Irawan, 'Peran Guru PAI Dalam Membentuk Karakter Peserta Didik Di SMK NU Darussalam Kecamatan Srono', *Jurnal Budi Pekerti Agama Islam*, 2.3 (2024), pp. 298–305, doi:10.61132/jbpai.v2i4.495.

7 Unik Hanifah Salsabila and others, 'Implementasi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Membentuk Pribadi Akhlakul Karimah', 2 (2020), pp. 370–85.

8 Hanafiah Hanafiah and others, 'Pengembangan Pendidikan Karakter Di Sekolah Dasar: Analisis Peran Guru Dan Kurikulum', *Academy of Education Journal*, 15.1 (2024), pp. 939–47, doi:10.47200/aoej.v15i1.2340.

9 Subhi Nur Ishaki and M. Sholihin, 'Model Wali Kelas Dalam Membina Akhlak Santri Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor 7', *Jurnal Paramurobi*, 7 (2024), pp. 237–47.

10 Muwahidah Nurhasanah, Akhmad Sirojuddin, and Ali Wafa, 'Peran Wali Kelas Dalam Bimbingan Konseling Untuk Pembentukan Karakter Akhlakul Karimah Santriwati', *Sosaintek: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Sains Dan Teknologi*, 2025, pp. 96–118.

11 M Nizhomun Niam, 'Penanaman Pendidikan Life Skill Dalam Meningkatkan Kemandirian Santri Baru Di Pondok Modern Gontor Putra II Ponorogo', no. 1, pp. 108–17.

alone are inadequate.¹² Learning innovations in several subjects and also the use of digital technology with Islamic principles, this is one of the innovations carried out to ensure that character development takes place holistically. Therefore, the daily actions of the students make *Akhlakul karimah* more than just a slogan, but as a tangible manifestation in the behavior, speech, and attitude of the students.¹³

Therefore, this research is important because it addresses two critical gaps. First, it examines character building at the foundational stage of prospective students, a phase that is often overlooked but crucial for long term moral development.¹⁴ Second, it contributes to the discourse on sustainable and locally grounded innovation in Islamic education by analyzing how intramural, extracurricular, and daily habituation activities supported by discipline and exemplary behavior from senior teachers, *ustadzah*, and *mudabbirah* are systematically integrated to shape *akhlakul karimah* character.¹⁵

By employing a qualitative field based approach, this study seeks to provide an in depth understanding of how character education is practically implemented and internalized within the educational and learning system at Gontor For Girls Campus 2.¹⁶ The discussion will flow from the conceptual foundations of character education in Islamic pedagogy to the concrete strategies applied in the pesantren environment, followed by an analysis of their implications for contemporary Islamic education.¹⁷ Ultimately, this research is expected to contribute to existing scholarship by offering an empirical model of character based Islamic education that is moral, adaptive, and responsive to the challenges of the modern era.¹⁸

12 Syarifah, Muwahidah Nur Hasanah, and Lisa Dwi Saputri, 'Pola Pengasuhan Santri Remaja Dalam Memperkuat Budaya Akhlakul Karimah', *Dirasah : Jurnal Studi Ilmu Dan Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 7.2 (2024), pp. 679–91, doi:10.58401/dirasah.v7i2.1372.

13 Rizkika Ramadhani, Mardiana, and Arizal Eka Putra, 'Peran Ustadzah Sebagai Uswatun Hasanah Terhadap', 5.02 (2025), pp. 279–84.

14 Anindya Pangestu and others, 'Krisis Moral Dalam Agama : Dampaknya Pada Kesejahteraan Dan Psikologis Anak Remaja', *Jurnal Kajian Islam Kontemporer*, 2023, pp. 1–13, doi:10.11111/nusantara.xxxxxxx.

15 Moh Alwi Yusron, Saiful Anwar, and Ayu Era Wardhani, 'Adapting Herbart's Teaching Method Based on Islamic Values: A Case Study at Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School', *Jurnal Al-Fawa'id : Jurnal Agama Dan Bahasa*, 15.1 (2025), doi:10.54214/alfawaid.vol15.iss1.776.

16 Abdah Munfaridatus Sholihah, 'Pendidikan Islam Sebagai Fondasi Pendidikan Karakter', *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Agama*, 12.1 (2020), pp. 49–58.

17 Muthmainnah Choliq, Dzikriyah Lailatul Rohmah, and Fanisa Aulia Putri, 'Peran Vital Guru Dalam Konsep Pendidikan Islam (Peran Guru Didalam Pendidikan Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor)', *DIAJAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 3.3 (2024), pp. 343–48, doi:10.54259/diajar.v3i3.2784.

18 Muhammad Rifkhi Maulana and M. Rizkal Fajri, 'Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Akhlakul Karimah Pada Santri Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Kampus 7 Kalianda Lampung Selatan', *Jurnal Ta'lim*, 2023, pp. 10–17.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach using a field research design. This approach was selected to provide depth understanding and describes the Character Building Of Prospective Students Through The Education And Learning System At Gontor For Girls Campus 2. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate for exploring the realities of education in pesantren, which is not only oriented to cognitive aspects, but also character formation.¹⁹

The location of the research is Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor for Girls Campus 2 in Sambirejo, Mantingan, Ngawi, East Java. The research participants included students, *ustadz*, *ustadzah* institutional administrators who were directly involved in educational activities and moral development programs.²⁰ Participants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting individuals with direct experience and active roles in the educational and character building processes.²¹

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis. Non participant observations were conducted to examine educational activities, character development practices, and teacher role modeling.²² Semi structured interviews with students, teachers, and administrators were used to explore their perspectives on moral character formation. Relevant institutional documents were reviewed to support and validate the data.

Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman model through data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The analysis was conducted continuously to ensure consistency with the research objectives.²³ Data validity is ensured through data triangulation by comparing and double-checking information obtained from various sources and times, such as interview results, observations, and supporting documents, so that the data produced is valid and accountable.

19 Dellia Annasthasya and others, 'Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif: Tinjauan Literatur Dalam Konteks Pendidikan', *Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisipin*, 3.7 (2025), pp. 423–29, doi:10.60126/jim.v3i7.1070.

20 Saepul Anwar and Masithoh Ayu Kusumandari, 'The Child Self-Reliance Character Education Model at the Aisyiyah Orphanage in Klaten', 5.1 (2021).

21 Siti Qurotul A'yun, bakhrudin All Habsy, and Mochamad Nursalim, 'Model-Model Penelitian Kualitatif: Literature Review', 4 (2025), pp. 341–54.

22 Muammar Khaddafi and others, 'Analisis Penggunaan Metode Kuantitatif Dan Kualitatif Dalam Penelitian Akuntansi: Studi Literatur Pada Jurnal Nasional Terakreditasi Analysis of the Use of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Accounting Research : A Literature Study of Accredited Nat', *Jurnal*, 2025, pp. 4025–31.

23 Agus Budiman and Rahmadita Mutiah, 'The Implementation of Teaching Aids in Mind Mapping Program to Improve Tarikh Islam Learning Outcomes of First Year Student at Darussalam Gontor For Girls 2 on 2020-2021', 5.1 (2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of field observations, interviews, and documentation studies conducted at Gontor for Girls Campus 2, the research shows that since 2023, Gontor for Girls Campus 2 has been functioning as a preparatory campus for prospective students. This preparatory program lasts for about one year before the students are transferred to the main campus or other branch campuses. According to institutional documents, the program is designed to develop mental readiness, disciplined habits, as well as proficiency in Arabic and English as the main languages within the Gontor environment. In its implementation, prospective students follow a structured daily schedule from waking up to nighttime rest. The series of activities include the five daily congregational prayers, classroom learning, language activities, dormitory guidance, as well as organizational and extracurricular activities.²⁴

The next finding shows the integration of Islamic values in the learning process. Based on classroom observations and interviews with teachers as well as teachers of both religious and general subjects, learning is always linked to Islamic teachings²⁵. Teachers not only convey academic material but also incorporate moral messages such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for teachers. Learning also emphasizes the development of attitudes in addition to cognitive aspects.²⁶

The teachers also serve as role models in punctuality, polite speech, and patience in guiding the students. As the words of the Prophet Muhammad *إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ* “*Indeed I was sent nothing but to perfect noble morals*” This hadith emphasizes that the essence of Islamic teachings is not only on the aspect of rituals or laws, but further emphasizes the formation of character and morality for humans.²⁷ Changes in the character of prospective students became one of the main findings of this study. Interviews with several prospective students showed changes in attitude after participating in the preparatory program, such as becoming more disciplined, independent, able to control emotions, and more responsible for tasks. Observations of daily behavior also showed

24 Susanti Mutiara Annisya and Galuh Gery Resty, ‘Pembentukan Karakter Generasi Muda Yang Berakhlak Islami Ala Manajemen Pendidikan Pesantren’, *Jurnal Studi Pesantren*, 5.1 (2025), pp. 28–37, doi:10.35897/studipesantren.v5i1.1546.

25 Nurhasanah, Sirojuddin, and Wafa, ‘Peran Wali Kelas Dalam Bimbingan Konseling Untuk Pembentukan Karakter Akhlakul Karimah Santriwati’.

26 Akhmad Prayogi Nur Fani, Anggi Septia Nugroho, and M. Rizkal Fajri, ‘Implementasi Sistem Poin Dalam Membina Kedisiplinan Santri Lama Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Kampus 7 Kalianda Lampung Selatan’, *Madrosatuna: Journal of Islamic Elementary School*, 9.1 (2025), pp. 51–55, doi:10.21070/madrosatuna.v9i1.1633.

27 Eka Fatmala, Hepi Ikmal, and Winarto Eka Wahyudi, ‘Urgensi Organisasi Pelajar Dalam Pengembangan Karakter Kepemimpinan Perspektif Teori Gibson Di SMK Al-Futuh Tikung Lamongan’, *At-Ta’lim : Jurnal Pendidikan*, 8.2 (2022), pp. 130–42, doi:10.55210/attalim.v8i2.826.

regularity in performing communal worship, adherence to activity schedules, and polite interactions between students and teachers as well as peers.²⁸

The findings of the study show that continuous innovation in Islamic education at Gontor for Girls Campus 2 is reflected in the integration of intramural, extracurricular, and daily habituation activities rooted in the local wisdom of Islamic boarding schools. Discipline, internalization of values, and exemplary behavior shown by Senior Teachers, *ustadzah* and *mudabbirah* are key factors in shaping the morals of karimah among prospective students. The study highlights that sustainable, locally-based innovation in Islamic education plays an important role in preparing the youngest generation who are moral, adaptive, and competitive to face the challenges of the times.

Research findings based on interviews indicate that the development of noble character is at the center of all educational activities at Gontor for Girls Campus 2. This aligns with the concept of Islamic education, which places character formation as the main goal of education, as emphasized in the hadith about the perfection of character. Education is not only understood as a process of transferring knowledge but also as a process of personality transformation that touches on the moral and spiritual dimensions of the students.²⁹

The integration of classroom learning, dormitory life, and extracurricular activities demonstrates a holistic approach to character development. This model aligns with character education theory, which emphasizes the importance of role modeling, habituation, and a conducive environment in the process of internalizing values. The pesantren environment functions as a hidden curriculum, where values are not only taught explicitly but are directly experienced in the daily lives of students through social interactions, discipline, and institutional culture.³⁰ This is consistent with the results of field interviews:

“Here, we have to pray five times a day at the mosque and socialize with our friends. We can't be selective about our friends. We have to be disciplined from the moment we wake up until we go back to sleep, filling our time with scheduled activities. The female religious teacher always motivates us to stay enthusiastic”.

Thus, the role of *ustadzah* and *musyrifah* as role models strengthens the theory of modeling in education, which states that students learn values and behavior through real examples from figures

28 Vallery Gaol, 'Perkembangan Media Massa Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Perubahan Sosial Di Masyarakat Perkotaan Vallery Josua Lumban Gaol', *Perkembangan Media Massa Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Perubahan Sosial Di Masyarakat Perkotaan*, 2024, pp. 1–8.

29 Suhaimi Suhaimi and others, 'Konsep Pendidikan Islam Menurut KH. Imam Zarkasyi Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Pendidikan Islam', *JIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 8.2 (2025), doi:10.54371/jiip.v8i2.6839.

30 Silviana Putri Kusumawati and Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, 'Pendidikan Aqidah-Akhlak Di Era Digital', 1.3 (2021), pp. 130–38.

they respect. Exemplifying punctuality, politeness in speech, patience, and responsibility has a stronger impact than merely giving verbal advice. This demonstrates that effective character building requires consistency between the values taught and the behavior demonstrated.³¹

One-year preparation program also demonstrates continuous innovation in Islamic education that remains based on the traditional values of the pesantren. This finding supports the idea that the modernization of Islamic education does not have to abandon its foundational values, but can be achieved through the renewal of methods without losing the essence of Islamic education itself.³² The use of Arabic and English in daily communication, a structured discipline system, and adaptation to technological developments reflect efforts to adjust to the demands of the times without erasing Islamic identity.³³ Getting used to worshipping in congregation, being disciplined with time, living simply, and social responsibility demonstrate the process of internalizing values through practices carried out repeatedly. This aligns with the theory of habituation in moral education, which emphasizes that character is formed through consistent and continuous actions. Values that are continuously practiced in daily life gradually become part of the students' personality.³⁴

CONCLUSION

The transformation of Gontor for Girls Campus 2 into a preparatory campus has strengthened its function as a foundational stage for character formation. The one year preparatory program equips prospective students with mental readiness, language competence, discipline, and moral awareness, enabling them to adapt to the comprehensive educational culture of Gontor. This system ensures that character building occurs gradually and systematically, aligning students' behavior, mindset, and values with the principles upheld by the institution.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the integration of religious and general knowledge within the learning system reinforces character education. Knowledge is consistently linked to Islamic values, ensuring that learning outcomes are not limited to cognitive achievement but extend

31 Siti Mahmudah and others, 'Urgensi Pendidikan Akidah Akhlak Menurut Kh. Ahmad Dahlan', *Tamaddun*, 23.2 (2022), p. 151, doi:10.30587/tamaddun.v23i2.5431.

32 S I Malyuna, 'Strategi Pendidikan Membentuk Karakter Santri Mandiri Dan Percaya Diri Di Pondok Pesantren Modern Darussalam Gontor 3', *Permata: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama ...*, 4 (2023), pp. 45–59 <<https://journal.bungabangsacirebon.ac.id/index.php/permata/article/view/616>>.

33 Muthmainnah Choliq, Dzikriyah Lailatul Rohmah, and Fanisa Aulia Putri, 'Peran Vital Guru Dalam Konsep Pendidikan Islam (Peran Guru Didalam Pendidikan Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor)'.

34 Subhi Nur Nurdin, M. Sholihin, and M. Rizkal Fajri, 'Metode Wali Kelas Dalam Membina Akhlak Santri Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor 7', *Paramurobi: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 7.2 (2024), pp. 237–47, doi:10.32699/paramurobi.v7i2.7463.

to moral conduct and daily behavior. Teachers, supervisors, and dormitory mentors function as role models, making the learning environment a living example of discipline, responsibility, sincerity, and mutual respect.

Character building at Gontor for Girls Campus 2 is also strengthened through habituation in daily activities and extracurricular programs. These activities provide practical spaces for students to internalize values such as independence, honesty, leadership, cooperation, and social responsibility. The positive changes observed in prospective students particularly in discipline, manners, emotional control, independence, and responsibility confirm the effectiveness of the education and learning system as a holistic character building framework.

In conclusion, the education and learning system at Gontor for Girls Campus 2 successfully supports the character building of prospective students through a sustainable, value based, and integrated Islamic educational approach. By consistently applying the Five Souls of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor sincerity, simplicity, independence, *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, freedom. This system prepares students not only to excel academically but also to become morally grounded Muslimah who are ready to face future challenges while maintaining a strong Islamic identity.

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