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Cultivating Students' Character through Security Governance, Discipline, and Habituation in Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 3

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Abstract

Character education has become a strategic priority in contemporary education, particularly within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), which provide a holistic environment for students' moral, social, and spiritual development. This study aims to examine how students' character is cultivated through the integration of security governance, institutional discipline, and habituation at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 3. Employing a qualitative ethnographic approach, the research was conducted over six months involving participant observation, semi-structured interviews with institutional leaders, dormitory supervisors, OPPM Security Division members, student leaders, and students, as well as document analysis. The data were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis integrated with ethnographic interpretation. The findings reveal that security governance functions not merely as a disciplinary mechanism but as an educational governance system that fosters responsibility, accountability, and leadership through continuous supervision and peer-led organizational practices. Institutional discipline provides structured routines that encourage self-regulation, while habituation internalizes moral values through repetitive educational and religious activities. The interaction of these three dimensions produces a sustainable process of value internalization that shapes students' responsibility, integrity, independence, leadership, and self-control. This study proposes an integrated governance-based model of character cultivation, demonstrating that security governance serves as the connecting mechanism linking institutional discipline and habituation within the twenty-four-hour educational ecosystem of the pesantren. The findings contribute theoretically to the discourse on governance-based character education and offer practical implications for strengthening student character through organizational culture and experiential learning in Islamic educational institutions.

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Introduction

Character education has become one of the foremost concerns in contemporary education as schools and higher education institutions are increasingly expected to cultivate students who possess not only academic competence but also integrity, responsibility, discipline, and social awareness. Amid rapid social change, digital disruption, and declining moral behavior among adolescents, educational institutions require comprehensive approaches capable of integrating cognitive, affective, and behavioral development (Shiddiq et al., 2024). Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have long been recognized as distinctive educational environments where character formation occurs continuously through the integration of religious instruction, institutional culture, daily interaction, and communal life (Kartiko et al., 2025). Unlike conventional schools, *pesantren* provide a twenty-four-hour educational ecosystem in which students experience values directly through structured routines, social norms, and collective responsibilities rather than merely learning moral concepts in classrooms (Ma'arif & Arif, 2026).

Recent studies have consistently demonstrated that character education in *pesantren* is strengthened through habituation, exemplary leadership (*uswah hasanah*), institutional culture, and hidden curriculum (Saifulloh & Neoh, 2022). Daily religious practices, discipline, communal responsibilities, and continuous interaction between teachers and students encourage the gradual internalization of moral values into students' personalities (Kibtiyah, 2025). Furthermore, scholars argue that sustainable character education depends on an educational ecosystem in which organizational culture, routines, and institutional regulations function synergistically to reinforce desirable behaviors (Mahmud et al., 2022). Studies conducted in Gontor and other *pesantren* have also highlighted the importance of habituation, environmental conditioning, supervision, and educational management in producing disciplined and responsible graduates (Ma'arif & Arif, 2026).

Despite this growing body of literature, significant gaps remain. Existing studies predominantly examine character education from the perspectives of curriculum implementation, institutional management, hidden curriculum, leadership, or habituation. Although discipline and supervision are frequently acknowledged as supporting elements, limited attention has been devoted to understanding how security governance, particularly the Security Division administered by the Organisasi Pelajar Pondok Modern (OPPM), operates as an educational mechanism for cultivating students' character. Previous studies generally treat security as an administrative or disciplinary function rather than as a pedagogical system that regulates behavior, facilitates value internalization, and develops students' self-governance through peer leadership. Consequently, the educational role of student-led security governance within *pesantren* culture remains underexplored both conceptually and empirically.

This study addresses these gaps by conceptualizing security governance as an integral component of character cultivation that interacts dynamically with disciplinary practices and habituation within the educational culture of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 3. Rather than viewing security merely as a mechanism of surveillance or rule enforcement, this research argues that it constitutes a cultural governance system through which students experience responsibility, accountability, leadership, and moral

discipline in everyday life. The novelty of this study lies in proposing an integrated framework that positions security governance, discipline, and habituation as interconnected educational processes embedded within students' organizational participation and the twenty-four-hour boarding school environment. This perspective extends previous studies by demonstrating that student organizations function not only as extracurricular structures but also as pedagogical institutions that actively cultivate character through daily governance practices.

Based on this perspective, the present study aims to explore how students' character is cultivated through the interaction between security governance, disciplinary practices, and habituation at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 3. Employing an ethnographic approach, this research seeks to understand the cultural meanings, organizational practices, and everyday interactions through which character values are continuously negotiated, practiced, and internalized within the boarding school community. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically by enriching the discourse on governance-based character education in Islamic boarding schools and practically by providing an alternative model for strengthening student character through organizational culture and student self-governance

Method

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach to investigate how students' character is cultivated through security governance, disciplinary practices, and habituation within the educational culture of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri Campus 3. Ethnography was selected because the study sought to understand character cultivation as a cultural process embedded in the everyday life of the boarding school community rather than as an isolated educational intervention (Ghaill & Haywood, 2021). Through prolonged engagement in the field, ethnography enables researchers to explore the meanings, values, routines, organizational structures, and social interactions that collectively shape students' character within their natural setting (Afidah & Goffar, 2024).

The research was conducted at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri Campus 3 over a six-month period, from January to June 2026. The boarding school was purposively selected because it implements an integrated twenty-four-hour educational system in which the Security Division of the Organisasi Pelajar Pondok Modern (OPPM) plays a central role in maintaining discipline, supervising students' daily activities, and facilitating character development through organizational governance. The continuous educational environment, operating twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, provided an appropriate context for examining how security governance, discipline, and habituation interact in students' everyday lives. Such prolonged field engagement is considered essential in ethnographic research because it enables researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' cultural practices and social realities.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the implementation and experience of security governance and disciplinary practices (Kartiko, et al., 2025). A total of thirty participants participated in the study, consisting of the campus director, teachers responsible for student affairs, dormitory supervisors (*musyrifah*), members of the OPPM Security Division, student leaders, and students from various grade levels. This diversity of participants enabled the researcher to

capture multiple perspectives regarding the operation of security governance, institutional discipline, and habituation as mechanisms for cultivating students' character. Participant selection in qualitative ethnography emphasizes information richness rather than statistical representation, allowing researchers to obtain in-depth insights into the cultural meanings shared by community members (Ma'arif & Arif, 2026).

Data were collected through prolonged participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis (Indrasanti & Wita, 2023). Participant observation served as the primary data collection technique because it allowed the researcher to observe students' daily routines, organizational meetings, religious activities, disciplinary supervision, security patrols, dormitory life, and other educational practices occurring throughout the twenty-four-hour boarding school system. Detailed field notes were recorded continuously during the six-month observation period. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences and interpretations regarding security governance, disciplinary implementation, organizational responsibilities, and habituation practices. Documentary evidence, including institutional regulations, OPKM organizational guidelines, disciplinary records, student activity schedules, and official reports, was also examined to complement and triangulate the observational and interview data. The integration of multiple data sources strengthened the credibility and contextual depth of the findings (Umiarso & Qorib, 2022).

Table 1. Participant Profile and Informant Coding

Informant Code	Participant Category	Role in the Institution	Years of Experience	Data Collection Methods	Observation Context
CD-01	Campus Director	Institutional leadership and educational policy	15	Interview, Document Analysis	-
SA 01-02	Student Affairs Coordinator	Student discipline and character development, Student affairs management	8-12	Interview	-
DS 01-06	Dormitory Supervisor (<i>Musyrifah</i>)	Supervising students' daily life	4-10	Interview, Observation	Dormitory supervision, nightly mentoring
SO 01-08	OPKM Security Officer	Security governance and discipline	1-2	Interview, Observation	Morning inspection, evening patrol, disciplinary briefing
SL 01-03	Student Leader	Organizational leadership	1	Interview	-
ST 01-10	Student	Daily boarding school experience	2-6	Interview, Observation	Classroom, dormitory, worship activities, organizational duties

The data were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis developed by Braun and Clarke in combination with ethnographic interpretation. The analytical process consisted of six iterative stages: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, construction of preliminary themes, review of themes, definition and naming of themes, and production of the final analytical narrative (Byrne, 2022). Throughout this process, interview transcripts,

field notes, observational records, and institutional documents were analyzed comparatively to identify recurring cultural patterns concerning security governance, discipline, habituation, responsibility, leadership, and value internalization (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Rather than merely describing participants' activities, the analysis sought to interpret how organizational culture and everyday educational practices contributed to students' character cultivation (Indrasanti & Wita, 2023). Reflexive thematic analysis is particularly appropriate for ethnographic inquiry because it facilitates the interpretation of both explicit and latent meanings embedded in participants' social and cultural experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

The trustworthiness of the study was established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced through prolonged engagement over six months, methodological triangulation, source triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing (Janis, 2022). Transferability was supported by providing a thick description of the educational context, institutional culture, participants, and daily activities of the boarding school. Dependability was ensured by maintaining an audit trail documenting data collection procedure, coding decisions, and analytical processes, while confirmability was strengthened through reflexive journaling to minimize researcher bias (Syarifah et al., 2026). Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the institution, and all participants voluntarily provided informed consent. Participants' identities were protected through pseudonyms, and all research data were stored confidentially throughout the study (Faruk et al., 2022).

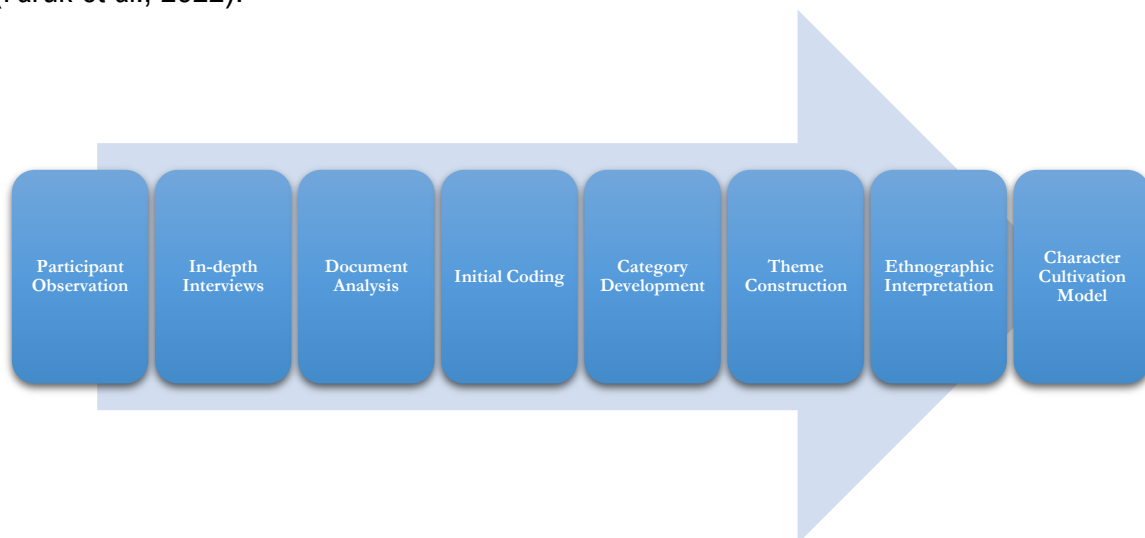


Figure 1. 24 Hour Character Cultivation Activities in Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 3

Results

Table 2. Integrated Findings from Ethnographic Data Sources

Theme	Observation	Interview	Documentation	Character Values
Security	Daily monitoring, patrol,	SO-01, SO-	Security regulations,	Responsibility,
Governance	inspection	05, DS-03	violation records	obedience
Discipline	Time management,	SA-01, ST-04,	Daily schedule,	Self-discipline
	attendance, sanctions	ST-09	attendance book	
Habituation	Worship, dormitory	DS-02, ST-05,	Activity schedule	Consistency,
	duties, language practice	SL-02		independence
Character	Responsible behaviour,	CD-01, SO-	Character evaluation	Integrity, leadership
Cultivation	leadership, self-control	03, ST-08	reports	

Security Governance as the Foundation of Character Cultivation

Ethnographic observation conducted throughout the six-month fieldwork revealed that the Security Division of the Organisasi Pelajar Pondok Modern (OPPM) functioned not merely as an institutional body responsible for maintaining order but also as an educational agent that continuously supervised students' behavioural development. Security officers were observed conducting routine morning inspections, monitoring attendance at congregational prayers, supervising dormitory cleanliness, checking punctuality in academic activities, and implementing disciplinary briefings before daily programs commenced. These supervisory activities were embedded within the twenty-four-hour boarding school system, creating an environment in which students consistently interacted with institutional expectations and behavioural norms. The researcher noted that supervision emphasized educational guidance rather than punitive control, encouraging students to gradually assume responsibility for their own behaviour (Observation Field Notes, February–May 2026).

Interview data confirmed these observations. One OPPM Security Officer explained:

"Our duty is not simply to punish students who violate the rules. We remind them repeatedly until discipline becomes part of their daily behaviour." (SO-03)

Similarly, a dormitory supervisor stated:

"Security officers act as educators because they accompany students throughout the day and continuously guide them to follow institutional values." (DS-02)

These findings were further supported by institutional documents, including the OPPM organizational handbook, disciplinary regulations, and daily supervisory schedules, which explicitly define the Security Division as responsible for educational supervision, behavioural monitoring, and character guidance rather than merely enforcing sanctions (Document D-01; D-03). Collectively, these findings indicate that security governance functions as the initial mechanism through which institutional values are introduced and reinforced in students' everyday lives, supporting the view that structured supervision contributes significantly to character education within pesantren (Kartiko et al., 2025; Ma'arif & Arif, 2026).

Discipline through Daily Institutional Routines

Participant observation demonstrated that discipline was embedded within almost every aspect of students' daily life. Activities followed a highly structured schedule beginning before dawn and continuing until bedtime. Students were expected to attend congregational prayers, academic classes, language programs, organizational meetings, dormitory duties, and evening study sessions according to predetermined time allocations. Compliance with these routines was consistently monitored by teachers, dormitory supervisors, and OPKM officers.

One student described:

"Initially I followed the rules because I was afraid of receiving disciplinary points, but after several months I no longer needed reminders because the routines had become habits." (ST-07)

The Student Affairs Coordinator similarly explained:

"Discipline is not established through punishment alone but through continuous consistency in implementing institutional routines." (SA-01)

Documentary evidence from attendance records, disciplinary reports, and weekly evaluations demonstrated that compliance was systematically monitored and discussed during organizational meetings. These findings indicate that institutional discipline functions as an educational process that gradually transforms externally regulated behaviour into self-discipline, consistent with previous studies emphasizing the developmental function of discipline in Islamic boarding schools (Rozikin & Astutik, 2021; Sapitri et al., 2022).

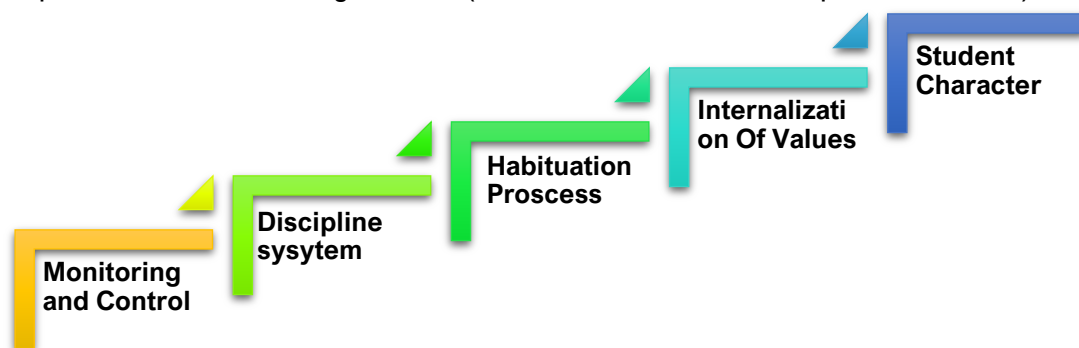


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Students' Character Cultivation in Islamic Boarding Schools

Habituation as a Process of Value Internalization

Long-term observation showed that repeated participation in religious worship, communal responsibilities, language use, and dormitory activities gradually transformed institutional rules into personal habits. Habituation occurred not only through repetitive practices but also through continuous interaction with peers, teachers, and organizational leaders. A student leader explained:

"Every activity here is repeated every day. Eventually students perform these activities without being instructed because they have become part of our daily life." (SL-02)

Likewise, a student remarked:

"After living here for several months, waking up before dawn, attending prayers, and completing responsibilities became automatic." (ST-05)

Institutional schedules, dormitory regulations, and annual activity calendars consistently reflected this emphasis on repetitive educational practices. The ethnographic evidence suggests that habituation served as the cultural mechanism through which institutional norms evolved into personal values. These findings support theories of value internalization, which argue that repeated social practices eventually become stable behavioural dispositions (Kibtiyah, 2025; Ghoffar & Subando, 2025).

Character Cultivation through the Integration of Security Governance, Discipline, and Habituation

The integration of ethnographic observations, interview data, and institutional documents demonstrated that character cultivation emerged from the interaction of security governance, discipline, and habituation rather than from any single educational activity. Security governance established behavioural boundaries, discipline organized students' everyday conduct, and habituation transformed repeated actions into internalized values. Throughout six months of observation, students increasingly displayed responsibility, punctuality, independence, leadership, honesty, and self-regulation in both academic and dormitory settings. The Campus Director emphasized:

"Character education is not taught only in classrooms. It is experienced continuously through the organizational culture and daily life of the pesantren." (CD-01)

This perspective was reinforced by institutional documents describing OPPM as an educational organization responsible for nurturing leadership, responsibility, and moral integrity among students. Ethnographic interpretation therefore indicates that security governance should be understood not merely as administrative control but as an educational governance system embedded within the hidden curriculum of the pesantren. The findings extend previous studies by proposing that Security Governance → Discipline → Habituation → Character Internalization constitutes an integrated framework for character cultivation in Islamic boarding schools (Ma'arif & Arif, 2026; Kartiko et al., 2025).

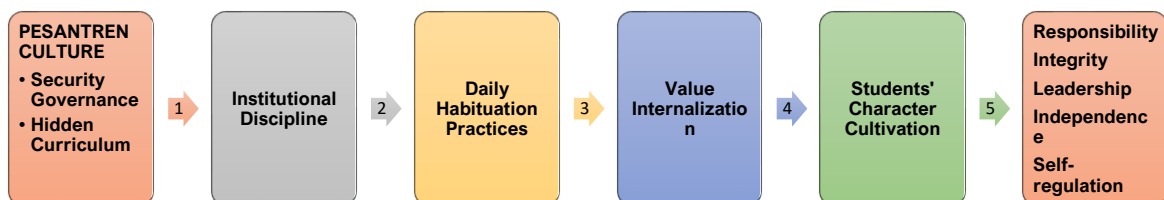


Figure 3. Integrated Governance-Based Model of Students' Character Cultivation in Islamic Boarding Schools

The findings of this study reveal that the construction of students' character in the Islamic boarding school is carried out through the integration of security systems, disciplinary structures, and habituation practices. These findings are derived from data obtained through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

Table 3. Summary of Findings from Observation, Interviews, and Documentation

Main Theme	Subtheme	Observation Findings	Interview Evidence	Documentary Evidence	Interpretation
Security Governance	Educational supervision	OPPM Security officers monitored students through inspections, attendance checks, dormitory supervision, and daily patrols within the 24-hour boarding school system.	"Our duty is not only to enforce rules but also to educate students through continuous supervision." (SO-03)	OPPM organizational handbook, security regulations, violation records (D-01, D-03)	Security governance functions as an educational mechanism that cultivates responsibility, accountability, and rule compliance.
Discipline	Institutional discipline	Students consistently followed structured daily schedules, including congregational prayers, classes, organizational duties, and dormitory responsibilities.	"Discipline eventually becomes personal awareness rather than obedience because of punishment." (ST-07); "Consistency is the key to discipline." (SA-01)	Daily timetable, attendance records, weekly disciplinary reports (D-04, D-05)	Institutional discipline gradually transforms externally regulated behaviour into self-discipline.
Habituation	Value internalization	Religious practices, language discipline, communal cleaning, and organizational activities were repeatedly practiced every day.	"After several months, these routines became part of my daily life." (ST-05)	Student handbook, dormitory regulations, annual activity schedule (D-06, D-07)	Continuous repetition encourages students to internalize institutional values as personal habits.
Character Cultivation	Internalization of character values	Students demonstrated responsibility, leadership, honesty, cooperation, independence, and self-control in academic and dormitory life.	"Character is formed through everyday experiences rather than classroom instruction alone." (CD-01)	Character evaluation reports, annual organizational reports (D-08, D-09)	Character cultivation emerges from the interaction of security governance, discipline, and habituation within the pesantren culture.

Discussion

Security Governance as an Educational Governance System for Character Cultivation

The findings demonstrate that the Security Division of the Organisasi Pelajar Pondok Modern (OPPM) functions beyond its conventional role of maintaining order and enforcing institutional regulations. Rather than operating merely as a disciplinary authority, the Security Division serves as an educational governance mechanism that continuously facilitates students' moral development through supervision, mentoring, and organizational responsibility. The ethnographic evidence indicates that security governance becomes an integral component of the educational process because students experience discipline through continuous interaction with peers who simultaneously act as organizational leaders and educational role models.

This finding extends previous studies that generally describe discipline as an administrative instrument within Islamic boarding schools. Faruk et al. (2022) argued that character education management in pesantren depends upon the integration of institutional leadership, regulations, and educational supervision. The present study expands this perspective by demonstrating that governance responsibilities delegated to student organizations create opportunities for peer-led character formation rather than relying solely on teacher-centered supervision (Faruk et al., 2022). Likewise, Kartiko et al. (2025) emphasized that pesantren cultivate character through institutional culture and organizational management; however, this study specifically identifies security governance as a pedagogical mechanism through which responsibility, accountability, and leadership are internalized by students (Kartiko et al., 2025).

These findings also reinforce the argument of Afidah and Goffar (2024), who asserted that pesantren culture creates a social environment in which character education is continuously practiced through institutional norms and collective interaction. In the context of Gontor Putri 3, security governance represents a cultural practice that shapes students' behaviour through participation rather than coercion, thereby transforming institutional discipline into educational experience.

Institutional Discipline as a Process of Self-Regulation

The study further reveals that discipline within Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 3 is not primarily maintained through punishment but through consistency in implementing institutional routines across the twenty-four-hour boarding school environment. Students gradually move from externally regulated behaviour toward self-discipline as they repeatedly engage in structured educational activities.

This finding is consistent with Sapitri et al. (2022), who explained that discipline is effectively constructed through the hidden curriculum embedded within school culture rather than through formal instruction alone. Similarly, Rozikin and Astutik (2021) found that discipline in pesantren emerges through continuous implementation of institutional regulations supported by collective supervision. The present study complements these findings by showing that self-regulation develops because students experience discipline as a shared organizational responsibility rather than as external control (Milah, S. et al., 2026).

Furthermore, Nisa et al. (2025) demonstrated that structured morning routines significantly contribute to the development of students' disciplinary character. The ethnographic findings of the present study broaden this understanding by illustrating that character formation occurs throughout the entire twenty-four-hour educational cycle, where daily prayers, academic activities, dormitory responsibilities, organizational meetings, and security supervision collectively reinforce disciplined behaviour.

Table 4. Synthesis of Discussion

Discussion Theme	Empirical Evidence	Supporting Literature	New Contribution
Security Governance Discipline	Observation, Interview, Documents Daily routines	Faruk et al. (2022); Kartiko et al. (2025) Sapitri et al. (2022)	Security becomes educational governance. Discipline evolves into self-regulation.
Habituation	Repetitive practices	Kibtiyah (2025)	Habituation internalizes values through organizational life.
Integration	Triangulated findings	Ma'arif & Arif (2026)	New governance-based model of character cultivation.

Habituation as the Mechanism of Value Internalization

Another important finding is that habituation serves as the primary mechanism through which institutional values become internalized as students' personal character. Repeated participation in religious activities, language discipline, communal responsibilities, and organizational duties gradually transforms externally imposed regulations into voluntary behavioural habits.

This finding supports the work of Candra et al. (2021), who argued that habituation is one of the most effective methods for developing character because repeated educational experiences encourage behavioural consistency. Likewise, Ghoffar and Subando (2025) found that habituation strengthens students' disciplinary character through continuous practice of institutional routines. The present study extends these conclusions by demonstrating that habituation functions effectively when integrated with security governance and organizational supervision.

Similarly, Ngadiono (2024) emphasized that habituation-based education in pesantren contributes to sustainable character formation because moral values are repeatedly practiced in authentic social contexts. Milah et al. (2026) further argued that religious habituation enhances students' moral awareness through consistent participation in daily worship. The findings of this study support these arguments while showing that habituation becomes more meaningful when reinforced by peer leadership and organizational governance (Rozikin, M. C. et al., 2021).

An Integrated Model of Character Cultivation in the Twenty-Four-Hour Boarding School System

The principal contribution of this study lies in proposing an integrated model of character cultivation that combines security governance, institutional discipline, and habituation within the twenty-four-hour educational ecosystem of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 3. Previous studies have generally discussed these three dimensions separately. For example, Jalaluddin et al. (2021) emphasized strengthening

character values, Kibtiyah (2025) focused on value internalization, and Ma'arif and Arif (2026) described pesantren as a holistic educational ecosystem. However, little attention has been devoted to explaining how these dimensions interact systematically within students' organizational life.

The ethnographic evidence demonstrates that security governance establishes behavioural boundaries, institutional discipline organizes students' daily conduct, and habituation transforms repeated actions into internalized values. Together, these processes cultivate responsibility, integrity, leadership, independence, and self-regulation among students (Wulandari et al., 2023). This integrated process also supports the findings of Intansari et al. (2025), who argued that habituation and exemplary practices should operate simultaneously in character education, and Mufattakhatin et al. (2024), who highlighted the importance of strengthening independent character through authentic educational experiences.

Table 5. Comparison Between Previous Studies and the Present Study

Previous Studies	Main Focus	Main Findings	Contribution of This Study
Faruk et al. (2022)	Character education management	Character is supported through institutional management	Shows that Security Governance is not only management but also an educational governance mechanism.
Afidah & Goffar (2024)	Pesantren culture	Institutional culture supports character formation	Explains how security governance operationalizes pesantren culture through daily supervision.
Kartiko et al. (2025)	Character education in pesantren	Institutional culture strengthens character	Identifies peer-led security governance as the connecting mechanism of character education.
Kibtiyah (2025)	Value internalization	Habituation internalizes values	Demonstrates that habituation becomes effective only when integrated with discipline and security governance.
Present Study	Security governance, discipline, habituation	Integrated governance-based character cultivation	Proposes a new integrated framework: Security Governance → Discipline → Habituation → Value Internalization → Character Cultivation

The findings also resonate with Nazilah and Ishari (2026), who emphasized that boarding school life provides continuous opportunities for character development through structured activity patterns. Unlike previous studies, however, this research identifies Security Governance as the connecting mechanism that links institutional discipline with habituation, thereby producing a sustainable process of character cultivation. Consequently, this study proposes a conceptual framework in which Security Governance → Discipline → Habituation → Value Internalization → Character Cultivation, offering a new perspective for understanding governance-based character education in Islamic boarding schools.

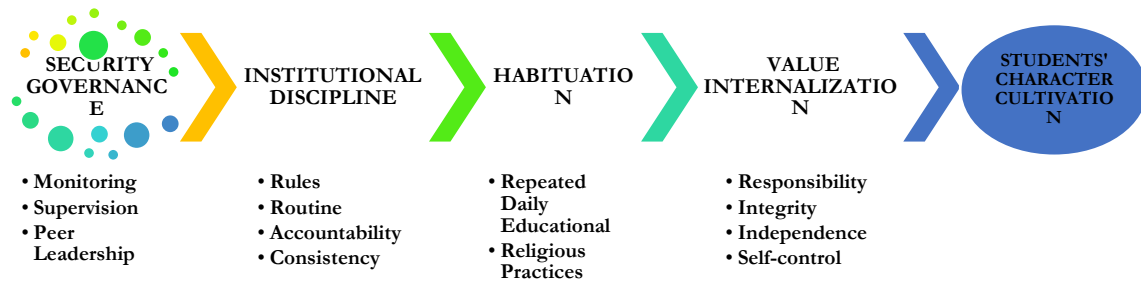


Figure 4. Integrated Governance-Based Character Cultivation Model

Conclusion

This study concludes that students' character cultivation at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Putri 3 is achieved through the dynamic integration of security governance, institutional discipline, and habituation within a twenty-four-hour educational ecosystem. Rather than functioning merely as mechanisms of control, security governance and disciplinary practices serve as educational processes that guide students toward responsibility, accountability, and self-regulation. Continuous participation in structured daily routines—including religious worship, organizational responsibilities, academic activities, and communal life—gradually transforms externally regulated behaviors into internalized values and stable character traits. The findings demonstrate that character education in pesantren is a continuous cultural process in which values are learned through lived experience rather than through classroom instruction alone.

The principal contribution of this study lies in proposing an integrated governance-based model of character cultivation in Islamic boarding schools. Unlike previous studies that have examined security, discipline, or habituation as separate dimensions, this research demonstrates that these elements operate as an interconnected educational system. Security governance establishes behavioral boundaries through educational supervision, institutional discipline organizes students' daily conduct, and habituation reinforces repeated practices that facilitate value internalization. This integrated framework enriches the literature on character education by positioning student-led organizational governance as a pedagogical mechanism that bridges external regulation and internal character formation. Practically, the findings provide a reference for educators, school leaders, and policymakers seeking to strengthen character education through organizational culture, peer leadership, and experience-based learning environments.

Despite these contributions, this study is limited to a single ethnographic case within one Islamic boarding school, which may restrict the transferability of the findings to other educational contexts. Future research is therefore encouraged to conduct comparative multi-site studies involving different pesantren models and educational

institutions to examine the broader applicability of the proposed framework. Further investigations may also explore the integration of digital governance, student leadership, and cross-cultural educational practices in supporting sustainable character development in contemporary Islamic education. Such studies would further refine the governance-based model and expand its relevance across diverse educational settings.

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