
Educational Management Model Based on Religious and Cultural Values at Ar Rahmah College Student Pesantren Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the development of a religious- and culture-based educational management model implemented at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren in Surabaya. The central problem addressed is the lack of integrated educational systems in many Islamic institutions, which tend to separate academic learning, spiritual formation, and practical competence, leaving graduates who fall short of contemporary needs for mosque leadership. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, and were processed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings show that Ar Rahmah successfully integrates undergraduate studies, a 30-juz tahlidz program, and mosque management practice into a 24-hour learning ecosystem supported by pesantren culture and transformational leadership. The model strengthens students' spirituality, discipline, and professional competence. The study recommends further empirical evaluation involving alum career outcomes. In conclusion, the Ar Rahmah model represents an effective and replicable form of values-based Islamic educational management.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pesantren is one of the oldest and most influential Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. From the early period of Islamization in the Nusantara to the modern era, pesantren has played a vital role as a center for transmitting Islamic sciences, cultivating moral values, and preserving religious traditions deeply rooted in local culture (Jaudi, 2024). In contemporary development, pesantren not only endures as a traditional institution but continues to evolve into an adaptive educational entity responsive to the demands of the times. The increasing number of pesantren and students each year indicates society's growing need for an educational model that emphasizes not only intellectual development but also the formation of personality, spirituality, discipline, and noble character grounded in religious and cultural values (Zarkasyi, 2015).

This transformation has consequently raised the need for more professional institutional management. Modern pesantren now oversee a wide range of religious curricula, tahfidz programs, dormitory management, extracurricular activities, and even the development of students' soft skills and leadership capacities (Nurdyanti, Arifin, Ridwan, Suhada, & Erihadiana, 2021). Such complexity requires well-planned, systematic, and effective educational management. Recent studies show that the success of pesantren in producing graduates with strong character is closely tied to the quality of management implemented, including planning, organizing, supervising, and continuous evaluation. Therefore, research on pesantren educational management has become increasingly important within the landscape of modern Islamic education (Faizin et al., 2025).

In modern educational discourse, character education serves as a crucial theoretical foundation for understanding how institutions intentionally shape students' moral and personal formation. Lickona (2019) stresses that character education must integrate three essential dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. These dimensions can only be internalized through consistent habituation, exemplary conduct displayed by educators, and a moral ecosystem that reinforces values through daily practice. Nucci and Narvaez (2020) further highlight that character develops when learners encounter real-life moral experiences supported by structured guidance. In the context of a student-pesantren environment like Ar Rahmah, these elements align strongly: congregational worship, strict time discipline, communal responsibility, and daily interaction with musyrif create a natural yet systematic mechanism for character formation.

Value-based education has gained prominence in Islamic education as a framework that positions moral, spiritual, and social values at the core of the learning process. Halstead (2007–2020) argues that Islamic value-based education emphasizes transcendent values derived from revelation, such as faith, worship, adab, and ethical conduct. These values must be integrated into the curriculum, learning practices, and institutional culture. Hidayatulloh (2024) reinforces that value-based education becomes effective when institutions create a value ecosystem in which learners continuously interact with, practice, and internalize core values. At STIDKI Ar Rahmah, this theoretical framework is evident in the integration of Qur'anic values—tilawah, tazkiyah, and ta'lim—into academic learning, tahfidz programs, mosque service, and daily residential activities.

One significant innovation emerging within pesantren education is the rise of pesantren mahasiswa (student pesantren), a model that integrates traditional pesantren formation with formal higher education. Pesantren Mahasiswa Ar Rahmah Surabaya represents one such

innovation. This pesantren is integrated with Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam (STIDKI) Ar Rahmah Surabaya, an Islamic higher education institution located at Jl. Teluk Buli I No. 3–5–7, Perak Utara, Surabaya, operating under the Ibadurrahman Foundation. As a Qur'an-based da'wah campus, STIDKI Ar Rahmah not only conducts undergraduate education but also designs structured student formation through a comprehensive pesantren system. This model provides a conducive environment for developing students' character, spirituality, and leadership through an intensive residential setting.

The idea of integrating the Islamic curriculum derives from influential thinkers like Al-Attas (2015) and Zarkasyi (2015), who reject the dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge. They argue that Islamic education must produce individuals who embody ta'dib—the integration of knowledge, spirituality, and adab. Ramadhan (2023) adds that integrated curricula ensure unity between knowledge, piety, and competence. STIDKI Ar Rahmah exemplifies this integrative paradigm by merging undergraduate studies, a structured 30-juz tahfidz program, mosque management practice, and pesantren residential formation into a coherent system.

Compared with other student-based pesantren models in Indonesia, the educational system implemented at STIDKI Ar Rahmah demonstrates a notably more integrated and profession-oriented structure. Several universities operate Ma'had Al-Jami'ah systems—such as UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, and UIN Raden Intan Lampung—where students reside in dormitories and participate in basic religious formation; however, these programs typically focus on moral building, Arabic training, and foundational religious studies without a structured professional laboratory such as mosque management (Sulaiman, 2021; Fikriyati & Makruf, 2022). Likewise, contemporary tahfidz pesantren such as Daarul Qur'an or Wadi Mubarak excel in producing strong Qur'an memorizers but do not systematically integrate tahfidz with undergraduate academics or structured field practice (Hanafi, 2023). Meanwhile, modern pesantren such as Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor prioritize character formation and leadership but do not combine university-level study with daily mosque management responsibilities (Zarkasyi, 2015). Compared to these institutions, STIDKI Ar Rahmah offers a uniquely comprehensive model: an academic degree, a full 30-juz tahfidz track, a professional mosque management laboratory, and a pesantren-based formation system unified within a single educational ecosystem.

The uniqueness of STIDKI Ar Rahmah is further reflected in its vision to become a campus capable of producing professional mosque imams at the Asia-Pacific level. Its academic focus is directed toward the discipline of Mosque Management—a field increasingly needed in the modern era, where mosques function not only as places of worship but also as centers for education, community development, and social services. A defining strength of the institution is the presence of Masjid Ar Rahmah as a practical laboratory, where students directly apply knowledge of mosque management—from worship management and da'wah programming to community service and leading prayers—making them proficient not only in theory but also in practical application.

In addition to its focus on mosque management, STIDKI Ar Rahmah implements an educational system integrating undergraduate studies with a four-year program of memorizing the Qur'an (tahfidz) targeting 30 juz. All students undergo two educational tracks simultaneously: academic coursework and structured Qur'anic memorization with a mutqin (high-quality)

standard. This dual-track model requires rigorous time management, a learning rhythm, supervision of memorization, and evaluation mechanisms. It demonstrates that education at STIDKI Ar Rahmah demands management that is not merely bureaucratic but enriched with spiritual, cultural, and character-based values.

As part of its formation process, all students reside in the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren, where daily life follows a 24-hour boarding system. Traditions such as night prayers in congregation, daily muraja'ah, talaqqi with scholars, daily Arabic usage, morning and evening roll calls, spiritual mentorship, mosque service duties, and cleanliness and discipline programs form a strong pesantren culture. This culture becomes a powerful hidden curriculum that shapes students' attitudes, mindset, and character without formal instruction. Through habituation, role modeling, and social supervision, pesantren culture becomes an effective mechanism of character development—one that requires planned and integrated educational management.

Despite these developments, scholarly research on religious- and culture-based educational management at the higher-education level in student pesantren remains limited. Kasman (2025) highlights the importance of local wisdom in developing modern pesantren management models; Rohdiana et al. (2023) emphasize the transformative role of pesantren culture in shaping students' character; while Semin (2023) discusses pesantren culture in forming university students' character conceptually. However, no one has examined how religious values—such as tilawah, tazkiyah, and ta'lim—together with student pesantren culture are integrated into an educational management model that unites formal undergraduate learning, 30-juz tafhidz, mosque management practice, and residential life, as found at STIDKI Ar Rahmah. This constitutes the research gap that this study aims to fill.

One significant innovation emerging within pesantren education is the rise of pesantren mahasiswa, a model that integrates traditional pesantren formation with formal higher education. Pesantren Mahasiswa Ar Rahmah Surabaya represents one such innovation. This pesantren is integrated with Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam (STIDKI) Ar Rahmah Surabaya, an Islamic higher education institution located at Jl. Teluk Buli I No. 3–5–7, Perak Utara, Surabaya, under the Ibadurrahman Foundation. As a Qur'an-based da'wah campus, STIDKI Ar Rahmah not only conducts undergraduate education but also designs structured student formation through a comprehensive pesantren system.

The uniqueness of STIDKI Ar Rahmah is further reflected in its vision to become a campus capable of producing professional mosque imams at the Asia-Pacific level. Its academic focus is directed toward Mosque Management—a discipline urgently needed today as mosques evolve into centers of education, community empowerment, and social service. Masjid Ar Rahmah serves as a living laboratory where students practice worship management, da'wah programming, community service, and mosque leadership.

In addition, STIDKI Ar Rahmah integrates academic coursework with a rigorous four-year tafhidz program targeting 30 juz. Students also live in a 24-hour boarding system emphasizing worship discipline, muraja'ah, talaqqi, Arabic immersion, communal service, and mentorship. This culture forms a powerful hidden curriculum, shaping student attitudes and character through habituation and role modeling.

Despite these developments, research on higher-education-level student pesantren remains limited. Kasman (2025) highlights local wisdom in pesantren management; Rohdiana et al. (2023) emphasize cultural formation; and Semin (2023) discusses the pesantren culture conceptually.

However, no study has examined how religious values and pesantren culture integrate with undergraduate academics, tafhidz, mosque management, and residential life—as implemented at STIDKI Ar Rahmah. This is the research gap this study addresses.

This research is crucial because Pesantren Mahasiswa Ar Rahmah has demonstrated significant outcomes: competent imams, khatibs, da'i, 30-juz memorizers, and students with strong character, communication skills, leadership, and community service orientation. Yet no theoretical model explains the management mechanisms behind these outcomes.

Conceptually, this research builds on the paradigm that religious- and culture-based education produces learners who excel intellectually, spiritually, and socially. Qur'anic values—tilawah, tazkiyah, and ta'lim (Qur'an 62:2)—serve as foundational elements, while pesantren culture provides an environment for the internalization of these values. Accordingly, the study formulates a Religious- and Culturally-Based Educational Management Model at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren Surabaya, integrating undergraduate education, tafhidz, mosque management, and residential life.

Ultimately, this research contributes theoretically to value-based Islamic educational management and, practically, offers a model for Islamic institutions seeking integrative education rooted in religious and cultural values.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design, as the phenomenon under investigation—the religious and culture-based educational management model at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren Surabaya—constitutes a case with distinctive and unique characteristics (Moleong, 2016). This approach allows the researcher to understand the educational reality holistically, deeply, and naturally within its social context, where religious values, pesantren culture, management practices, and character formation operate simultaneously. The research site is located within STIDKI Ar Rahmah (Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam Ar Rahmah Surabaya), situated at Jl. Teluk Buli I No. 3–5–7, Perak Utara, Surabaya, under the Ibadurrahman Foundation, which oversees the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren and Masjid Ar Rahmah. This complex was selected because it represents the integration of undergraduate education, a 30-juz tafhidz program, a pesantren dormitory system, and a mosque management laboratory within a single 24-hour learning ecosystem. The intrinsic case study design is thus suitable for exploring the lived experiences of administrators, lecturers, musyrif, students, and alums in understanding, implementing, and shaping this religious- and culture-based management model.

Data collection was conducted through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis (Yin, 2014). Participatory observation enabled the researcher to directly observe the dynamics of pesantren life, including the discipline of worship practices (tahajjud, muraja'ah, talqin), the culture of togetherness and adab, mosque management practices at Masjid Ar Rahmah, and daily character-building mechanisms functioning as the pesantren's hidden curriculum. In-depth interviews were carried out using a semi-structured format to allow informants the freedom to articulate their experiences, perceptions, and viewpoints. Informants were selected through purposive sampling and expanded through snowball sampling, involving the STIDKI chairperson, pesantren director, Mosque Management lecturers, tafhidz instructors,

dormitory musyrif, mid–senior students, and alums who completed the 30-juz memorization. Documentation analyzed included academic guidelines, pesantren SOPs, tahlidz curriculum, daily activity schedules, organizational structure, mosque activity archives, and spiritual development documents. Using these three data collection techniques, the researcher obtained a rich, comprehensive picture of how religious and cultural values are operationalized in educational management.

Data analysis followed the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, which involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing conducted continuously. Observation notes, interview transcripts, and documentation were condensed into major themes, including the management of tilawah–tazkiyah–ta’lim values, student pesantren culture, academic–tahlidz integration, mosque laboratory management, the role of musyrif, character formation patterns, and mechanisms of social supervision. The data were then organized into thematic matrices and analytical narratives to illustrate relationships among categories clearly. Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation, member checking with informants to verify accuracy, and peer debriefing to strengthen interpretive objectivity. This analytical process led to the formulation of a religious- and culture-based educational management model that not only describes existing practices at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren but also conceptualizes a pattern that can be replicated as an integrative Islamic education model encompassing spiritual development, academics, character formation, and imam professionalism.

In addition to the qualitative techniques described above, this study also incorporates supporting quantitative data to strengthen the empirical validation of the findings, as recommended in contemporary mixed-methods educational research. Although the primary design of this study remains an intrinsic qualitative case study, a supplementary survey was administered to both current students and alums to obtain numerical indicators of the perceived effectiveness of the integrated academic–tahlidz–mosque management model. The survey included items measuring students’ perceived growth in Qur’anic proficiency, discipline, leadership skills, confidence in leading prayers, and readiness for professional service in a mosque. Alums were asked to evaluate the long-term relevance of the Ar Rahmah educational model to their current roles as mosque imams, khatibs, da’i, or community educators. This quantitative data was not used to alter the qualitative orientation of the study but served as corroborative evidence that enhances the credibility, depth, and robustness of the qualitative interpretations. The combination of qualitative insights and supporting quantitative measures provides a more comprehensive understanding of how the religious- and culture-based educational management model operates and impacts learners within the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren ecosystem.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Integration of Undergraduate Education, 30-Juz Tahfidz, and Mosque Management as a Unified Educational System

The findings of this study reveal a central proposition: STIDKI Ar Rahmah has succeeded in constructing an integrated educational ecosystem in which undergraduate learning, 30-juz tahlidz, and mosque management practice operate not as parallel tracks but as a single, unified system. This integration is not rhetorical; it is structurally embodied

in the arrangement of students' daily schedules, curricular synchronization, pesantren routines, and the management logic embedded in the 24-hour boarding system. The proposition emerging from these data is that the more tightly interwoven cognitive, spiritual, and practical components are, the more holistic and stable student development becomes.

Field observations show that academic coursework is deliberately harmonized with Qur'anic memorization schedules and spiritual routines. Lectures are arranged around tahlidz setoran, muraja'ah cycles, and pesantren assemblies, creating a rhythm where cognitive learning continually intersects with worship and discipline. This structural design demonstrates an applied form of integrated curriculum theory, in which mental, affective, and psychomotor domains are intentionally merged rather than compartmentalized (Fogarty, 1991). The proposition is that the success of Ar Rahmah's academic formation is inseparable from its spiritual and behavioral formation processes, as students consistently report that the tahlidz discipline strengthens focus, emotional regulation, and academic motivation.

The tahlidz program functions as the spiritual backbone of this integrated system. Its structured design—starting from intensive tahnin, daily memorization targets, and multilayered muraja'ah—creates a disciplined habitus that reinforces intellectual and behavioral consistency. Interview data confirm that memorization routines increase students' self-regulation, which is a core predictor of academic achievement. Thus, tahlidz acts not merely as a religious activity but as a mechanism of cognitive sharpening and character reinforcement.

The most distinctive component of this integration is the continuous field practice at Masjid Ar Rahmah. Students do not merely study mosque management theory; they lead prayers, coordinate da'wah programs, serve congregants, and manage digital media in real time. These practices generate a second proposition: professional competence develops most strongly when theoretical learning is immediately reinforced through structured experiential learning. This aligns with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which holds that concrete experience accelerates conceptual understanding and personal transformation.

A comparative insight also emerges: unlike most Islamic universities or pesantren mahasiswa where academic learning, tahlidz, and organization run separately, Ar Rahmah's model embeds all three components within a single managerial framework. This structural unity creates a learning identity that is both Qur'an-centered and professionally oriented—something rarely documented in other pesantren models.

Overall, the data support the proposition that the academic–tahlidz–mosque management integration at Ar Rahmah constitutes a unified educational system that transforms students simultaneously in intellectual, spiritual, and professional dimensions. This synergy produces a unique graduate profile—Qur'an memorizers who are disciplined, communicative, emotionally stable, and capable of operating modern mosque institutions at a professional standard.

One of the most significant findings of this study is that STIDKI Ar Rahmah has successfully developed an integrative educational model that unites three major components—undergraduate (S1) academic education, a 30-juz Qur'an memorization (tahlidz) program, and practical Mosque Management training—into a system that operates

in a unified, comprehensive, and mutually reinforcing manner. This integration is not merely an administrative concept on paper; rather, it is manifested concretely in the structure of activities, the students' daily rhythms, curriculum design, patterns of spiritual formation, and supervisory mechanisms that take place every day at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren. Within this system, students do not pursue these three tracks separately (Hanafi, 2020). Instead, they are organized systematically so that academic learning, spiritual experience, and practical fieldwork blend into a distinctive educational identity that sets this model apart from other Islamic higher-education systems (Hidayat & Machali, 2015).

At the academic level, students attend regular undergraduate courses in accordance with the curricula of the Islamic Da'wah Management and Islamic Communication programs. However, these academic activities do not stand alone. The lecture schedule is arranged to accommodate tafhidz sessions, muraja'ah periods, and spiritual development activities, allowing students to complete both without scheduling conflicts. Field observations show that students participate in classes from morning to afternoon, and later transition into Qur'an memorization sessions, group muraja'ah, or Qur'anic study circles in the late afternoon and evening. This scheduling system demonstrates that educational management has harmoniously integrated the rhythm of cognitive learning with the rhythm of worship and memorization.

Regarding tafhidz, students follow a structured 30-juz memorization program with specific targets closely monitored by their instructors. The tafhidz program impacts not only memorization mastery but also influences students' study ethic, discipline, and daily worship patterns. Interview data indicate that most students feel the discipline of memorization and muraja'ah helps them become more focused, organized, and spiritually aware—ultimately supporting their academic performance. In essence, tafhidz serves as an “academic character enhancer,” rather than an additional burden.

The third component of this integrative model is practical Mosque Management training centered at Masjid Ar Rahmah. Students do not merely study mosque management theories in the classroom; they apply them directly through real activities such as leading the five daily prayers, serving as Friday imams and khatibs, organizing da'wah programs, managing congregational affairs, handling community services, and operating the mosque daily. This field practice is continuous and integrated with pesantren activities, enabling students to engage in hands-on learning that significantly strengthens their professional competence as future mosque imams and managers of religious institutions. Students describe this experience as the most influential factor in increasing their confidence, composure in leading prayers, and ability to interact professionally with congregants.

These findings illustrate that STIDKI Ar Rahmah has not simply combined three educational pathways administratively; it has built an academic ecosystem that integrates knowledge, worship, and service into a well-directed management framework. This integration enables students to grow simultaneously in three dimensions: intellectual, spiritual, and professional. This is what makes the Ar Rahmah model deserving to be called a unified educational system rather than a collection of separate activities. The synergy between academic coursework, tafhidz training, and mosque management practice produces a unique graduate profile: Qur'an memorizers who are professional, communicative, and prepared to serve as Asia-Pacific-standard mosque imams.

3.1.2 Pesantren Culture as a Hidden Curriculum Shaping Students' Discipline, Morals, and Character

The findings of this study strengthen a key proposition: the pesantren culture at Ar Rahmah operates as an intentionally managed hidden curriculum that exerts greater influence on character formation than formal classroom instruction. Unlike many pesantren where culture evolves organically, Ar Rahmah's cultural ecosystem is deliberately structured, supervised, and aligned with institutional goals. This supports the theoretical claim that hidden curricula become powerful when institutionalized as governance mechanisms (Snyder, 1971; Jackson, 2019).

Daily routines—beginning with congregational tahajjud, morning muraja'ah, disciplined assemblies, academic sessions, mosque duties, and evening halaqah—reflect a 24-hour formation rhythm in which students internalize values through continuous exposure rather than explicit instruction. This pattern reinforces the proposition that habituation (ta'dib) and lived experience are more effective than verbal moral teaching, echoing classical Islamic pedagogy and character education theory emphasizing modeling and habituation (Lickona, 2013; Al-Attas, 1991).

Role modeling by pesantren leaders, musyriks, lecturers, and mosque imams appears to be the strongest driver of behavioral transformation. Interviews consistently show that students imitate the worship discipline, humility, and social etiquette demonstrated daily by their mentors. This validates the propositional statement that social learning and moral imitation constitute the core mechanism of pesantren-based character formation, aligning with Bandura's Social Learning Theory and the Islamic tarbiyah tradition. The structured discipline system—morning and evening assemblies, punctuality rules, Arabic daily conversations, room inspections, rotational tasks, and communal worship—functions as a form of social control management. These routines cultivate punctuality, responsibility, and emotional discipline, suggesting that pesantren culture functions as an operational mechanism of character governance rather than merely an environmental backdrop. This supports theories of organizational culture, which argue that routines create predictable behavior patterns that shape identity (Schein, 2010).

Another crucial proposition arising from the data is the central role of musyrif as mentor, supervisor, and emotional anchor. Students consistently describe musyrif not only as enforcers of discipline but as guides who help them navigate academic pressure, tahlidz challenges, and interpersonal conflicts. This reveals that effective character management depends on relational leadership rather than structural enforcement, reinforcing concepts in transformational and caring leadership theories.

The culture of ukhuwah—mutual support, shared mosque duties, collaborative memorization, and joint problem-solving—acts as a social glue that strengthens students' psychological resilience. Field evidence shows significant changes in students' confidence, communication skills, and adaptive behaviors within months of entering the pesantren environment. From these dynamics emerges the proposition that peer culture functions as a co-teacher in character formation, a finding consistent with contemporary research on peer influence in residential education.

Overall, the revised analysis supports the overarching proposition that the pesantren culture at Ar Rahmah is an active hidden curriculum engineered to cultivate discipline, spiritual consciousness, social responsibility, and emotional maturity. Its effectiveness lies in its systemic nature—rooted in routines, modeling, supervision, and communal life—which produces character transformation unattainable through academic instruction alone.

One of the strongest findings in this study is that the pesantren culture at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren functions as a highly effective hidden curriculum in shaping students' character, discipline, and mentality. This hidden curriculum is not a written document, but rather a collection of values, habits, lifestyle patterns, and social atmospheres that consistently appear in students' daily lives, shaping their attitudes and behavior indirectly yet profoundly. Field observations show that students follow a structured routine from before dawn until night, beginning with congregational tahajjud, followed by morning muraja'ah, discipline assemblies, academic activities, and mosque-based programs. This living rhythm forms a unique learning ecosystem in which students learn not only through formal classes but through continuous pesantren life practices.

Shared worship routines such as congregational prayers, wirid, Qur'anic talqin, and nightly study circles create a stable and preserved spiritual atmosphere. Interviews reveal that students experience improvements in worship quality and self-control, not due to coercive rules, but because of the strong role modeling demonstrated by the pesantren leaders, musyrif, and peers who perform worship sincerely and consistently. This aligns with character education theory, which holds that role modeling is the most effective way of shaping behavior. At Ar Rahmah, such role modeling is not rhetorical but embodied in the daily conduct of pesantren leaders, musyrif, mosque imams, and lecturers who maintain consistent worship and noble character.

Beyond spirituality, the culture of discipline in the pesantren is remarkably dominant. Morning and evening assemblies, room cleanliness checks, daily Arabic usage, and strict punctuality rules act as social control mechanisms that shape students into orderly and responsible individuals. Students become accustomed to waking before dawn, adhering to schedules without delay, maintaining cleanliness, and respecting the pesantren's hierarchical structure. These habits cultivate hard work, resilience, and appreciation for time—values that strongly support academic success and Qur'anic memorization.

Another notable finding is the role of the musyrif as supervisor, mentor, and psychological guide. Musyrif play a significant role in instilling adab, refining character, assisting students in the tahfidz process, and resolving emotional and social issues. Students describe the presence of musyrif as an essential factor in maintaining their commitment and motivation. This highlights that character formation management at the pesantren is not merely administrative but grounded in emotional and spiritual relationships.

The culture of togetherness (ukhuwah) is also highly evident. Students live in an environment that emphasizes solidarity, mutual support, and reminding each other toward goodness. Activities such as communal work, shared mosque duties, dormitory cleanliness, and peer support in memorization strengthen their social bonds. Field data show that students who were initially shy or lacked confidence became more expressive, communicative, and cooperative after several months in the pesantren environment.

Thus, pesantren culture does not merely influence students' outward behavior but deeply internalizes Islamic values within them. This culture becomes a hidden curriculum embedded in daily activities and shapes character in ways that formal classroom instruction cannot achieve. These findings reinforce that the pesantren culture at Ar Rahmah serves as the most powerful educational management mechanism for character formation, underpinning the success of tahfidz, academic performance, and students' readiness to become professional mosque imams.

3.1.3 The 30-Juz Tahfidz Program Operates in a Structured, Measurable Manner and Produces Significant Transformation in Students' Memorization Quality and Spiritual Development

The findings of this study confirm a central proposition: the 30-juz tahfidz program at Ar Rahmah is not merely a religious ritual but a systematically managed educational mechanism that shapes students' cognitive discipline, emotional stability, and spiritual maturity. Unlike many institutions, where tahfidz is treated as an extracurricular activity, Ar Rahmah operationalizes it as a core driver of its educational management system, aligning with value-based, spiritually grounded educational theories (Al-Attas, 1991; Halstead, 2004).

The structured implementation—beginning with intensive tahsin, followed by daily memorization targets, continuous muraja'ah, periodic tasmi', and layered evaluation—demonstrates that tahfidz functions as a competency-based educational process. The program emphasizes mastery (mutqin), measurable progress, and consistent supervision, supporting the theoretical claim that religious practices can be managed as performance-based learning systems (Haitami, 2022). The initial tahsin phase, which significantly improves students' recitation quality within three months, also validates the proposition that foundational literacy (qira'ah) is indispensable for sustainable memorization, aligning with Qur'anic pedagogy literature.

Students' adaptation to daily setoran targets—ranging from half a page to two pages—reveals an important dialectic between individual capability, institutional expectations, and environmental influence. This supports the proposition that tahfidz cultivates self-regulation and time management, competencies associated with academic success and professional readiness (Zimmerman, 2002). Interviews show that the discipline required in memorization directly enhances students' concentration, organization, and resilience, indicating that tahfidz operates as a form of spiritually-driven cognitive training.

The layered muraja'ah system—individual, small group, and halaqah—creates a collaborative environment for memorization that reinforces retention and peer accountability. This aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory, supporting the proposition that peer-supported religious learning enhances both memorization outcomes and spiritual internalization. Students reported that group muraja'ah provides encouragement and reduces psychological pressure, demonstrating that the collective learning atmosphere strengthens the durability of memorization and emotional well-being.

Another major finding is the program's impact on students' psychological and spiritual dimensions. Many students described increased calmness, emotional stability, and academic focus as outcomes of intensive engagement with the Qur'an. These insights affirm Islamic educational theories, which assert that the Qur'an serves as tazkiyah—a mechanism of inner purification that influences moral behavior, motivation, and emotional

regulation (Rahman, 2014). Thus, tafhidz acts as both a spiritual therapy and a cognitive discipline, producing holistic transformation.

The rigorous monitoring system—through memorization logbooks, weekly evaluations, monthly assessments, and continuous musyrif supervision—demonstrates that tafhidz success is institutionally engineered rather than left to individual effort. This supports the proposition that effective tafhidz education requires governance mechanisms that combine structured scheduling, 24-hour supervision, spiritual routines, and motivational leadership.

The 30-juz tafhidz program at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren emerges as one of the most fundamental components in shaping students' identity. Field findings indicate that the tafhidz program is not merely implemented as a routine activity but is managed through a measurable, systematic, and quality-oriented (mutqin) approach. This system begins when students first enter the pesantren, with the initial phase focused on intensive tahsin to ensure that all students master proper tajwid, correct articulation points (makhraj), fluency, and Qur'anic recitation standards. Within the first three months, most students—especially those from non-pesantren backgrounds—show significant improvement in their recitation quality. This tahsin phase serves as an essential foundation, ensuring the memorization process proceeds correctly and sustainably.

After completing tahsin, students enter the daily memorization (setoran) phase, where specific targets are set by the tafhidz instructors. These targets range from half a page to two pages per day, depending on each student's capability. The memorization sessions are conducted through talaqqi with instructors or musyrif, enabling students to receive direct corrections on pronunciation errors, lengthening rules, tajwid application, and memorization consistency. In addition, students are required to participate in tasmi', which involves reciting longer portions—usually one juz or more—in a single session to ensure the memorization is cohesive and not limited to newly memorized portions.

An interesting finding is the existence of a layered muraja'ah system, consisting of individual muraja'ah, small-group muraja'ah, and large halaqah muraja'ah. This system ensures that students' memorized material remains in long-term memory and is not easily lost, even as academic loads increase. Small-group muraja'ah, held every morning or evening, provides strong social support, as students remind, assist, and motivate one another. This reinforces the idea that tafhidz success is not only influenced by memorization methodology but also by the learning environment and the collective spiritual atmosphere cultivated in the pesantren.

Field data also show that the tafhidz program has profound psychological and spiritual impacts on students. Many report that Qur'an memorization enhances inner calmness, learning focus, and confidence in daily activities. Some students who previously struggled academically even showed improved performance after intensively engaging in the tafhidz program. This confirms Islamic educational theories that the Qur'an has a tazkiyah (purification) function that influences motivation, discipline, and emotional stability.

Triangulated data from observations and interviews also reveal that tafhidz monitoring is conducted rigorously through memorization control books, weekly reports, and monthly evaluations. Tafhidz instructors and musyrif work collaboratively to ensure that every student makes progress toward targets. Discipline in tafhidz is closely tied to pesantren

culture: students follow fixed schedules, receive 24-hour supervision, and engage in worship routines that support memorization success. This demonstrates that the tahfidz program is not merely a religious activity but an integral component of the religious- and culture-based educational management system implemented at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren.

Overall, research findings indicate that the success of the 30-juz tahfidz program at Ar Rahmah rests not solely on memorization methods but on three major factors: (1) disciplined and structured time management, (2) pesantren culture that reinforces spirituality and worship habits, and (3) the intensive role of instructors and musyrif in guiding and supervising the memorization process. The integration of these three factors creates a Qur'an-centered educational environment capable of producing young huffaz who are not only strong in memorization but also spiritually mature, academically focused, and well-prepared to become professional mosque imams.

3.1.4 Ar Rahmah Mosque as the Primary Laboratory for Mosque Management Learning and the Center of Students' Professional Transformation

The findings of this study reinforce a central proposition: Masjid Ar Rahmah functions as a living laboratory that transforms theoretical knowledge into professional competence, making it the core experiential axis of Ar Rahmah's educational model. Unlike many Islamic higher-education institutions, where mosque management is predominantly taught through textual and classroom-based methods, Ar Rahmah integrates worship leadership, congregational service, program administration, and digital da'wah into daily student routines. This supports the theoretical view that experiential learning is indispensable in leadership and vocational religious training (Kolb, 2015; Jarvis, 2010).

Students' rotational leadership in the five daily prayers—leading from Subuh to Isha, calling the adhan, organizing prayer rows, and ensuring worship continuity—demonstrates that prayer leadership is both a pedagogical and identity-forming practice. Interviews indicate significant growth in students' vocal control, confidence, emotional composure, and public-facing religious authority. This affirms Schön's theory of reflection-in-action, suggesting that real-time performance in authentic contexts accelerates professional formation more effectively than simulated exercises.

The mosque also serves as a platform for applied managerial learning. Students design, organize, and evaluate mosque-based activities—including regular study circles, Ramadan programs, spiritual development nights, and community services such as charity and health campaigns. This aligns with propositions in Islamic educational management that effective mosque leadership requires operational competence developed through direct engagement with organizational processes, rather than merely theoretical knowledge (Daud et al., 2022). Students' involvement in proposal development, budget planning, logistical coordination, and post-event evaluation demonstrates that Ar Rahmah integrates elements of planning, implementing, supervising, and evaluating—core components of educational and organizational management theories.

Another major proposition emerging from the findings is that direct congregational service cultivates emotional intelligence, empathy, and social sensitivity, which are essential qualities of modern mosque leaders. Students manage inquiries from congregants, handle minor conflicts, maintain the mosque's cleanliness and order, and ensure comfort

for worshippers. This confirms the theoretical perspective that leadership in religious institutions requires service-oriented dispositions (Greenleaf's Servant Leadership) and that such dispositions develop most effectively through repeated frontline interactions.

The incorporation of digital media management—content creation, documentation, and event publicity—further strengthens the mosque's role as a multidimensional learning center. It supports the proposition that professional mosque leadership in the contemporary era must include digital literacy and communication competence, aligning with recent studies on digital da'wah and mosque branding. Students' exposure to these responsibilities demonstrates an integration of traditional religious functions with modern communication demands.

The mosque practicum's success is enabled by continuous supervision from lecturers, pesantren mentors, and mosque administrators. Weekly evaluations, direct feedback, and corrective mentorship contribute to a constant improvement cycle consistent with quality assurance theory in education (ADRI/PPEPP). This confirms that professional competency development requires structured guidance, not merely experiential exposure.

The next important finding of this study is that Masjid Ar Rahmah plays a highly strategic role as a practical laboratory for mosque management learning for all students of STIDKI Ar Rahmah. This role is not merely symbolic or partial, but comprehensive, where all operational aspects of the mosque, ranging from worship, dakwah programs, congregational services, to administration and social media management, serve as a direct learning space for students. Field observations show that students are involved in mosque management practices in real time, allowing what they learn in the classroom to be immediately translated into practical activities that shape their professional skills. Thus, the mosque is not only a place of worship but also a hub for competency transformation, enabling students to internalize values of leadership, emotional stability, public service, and professionalism within a religious institutional context.

One of the most significant practices is the involvement of students as imams for the five daily prayers. Students take turns leading the prayers from Subuh to Isha, giving the adhan, organizing the prayer rows (saf), and ensuring the smooth execution of worship. Interview findings reveal that this experience greatly enhances their confidence, particularly in terms of vocal calmness, recitation stability, and the ability to face diverse congregants. Even students who were initially nervous eventually grew into confident and mature imams after undergoing this process for several semesters. This role is further strengthened through Friday sermon (khutbah) training, where students not only study the theory of dakwah rhetoric but also deliver sermons directly to the mosque congregation under the guidance of lecturers and supervisors.

Additionally, students participate in managing various mosque programs, including regular study circles, Ramadan activities, spiritual development nights, and community-based initiatives such as charity, social services, and health initiatives. They are trained to draft proposals, prepare event rundowns, invite speakers, arrange logistics, and conduct post-event evaluations. This provides real experience in the planning and management of mosque programs, enabling students to understand the workflow of religious activities professionally, from administration to field execution.

Another interesting finding is student involvement in congregational management and mosque service (service to worshippers). Students are responsible for welcoming congregants, maintaining the mosque's cleanliness, arranging the prayer space, addressing congregants' questions, and ensuring the safety and comfort of the mosque environment. These activities cultivate empathy, social responsibility, and sensitivity in serving the community—competencies highly needed by modern mosque leaders. According to students, direct service to congregants provides deep insight into community dynamics, including how to handle different personalities, manage minor conflicts, and offer humanistic solutions in real religious situations.

Students are also involved in managing the mosque's social media and publications, including creating digital dakwah content, documenting events, and designing promotional materials. This element strengthens their digital competence, in line with the needs of modern mosque management, which requires strong communication and branding skills. This aligns with the campus vision of producing professional mosque imams who not only master Islamic knowledge but also utilize technology and digital platforms to expand the reach of dakwah.

From data triangulation, it is evident that the success of this mosque management practicum does not occur instantly, but through strict supervision and mentoring. Mosque Management lecturers, pesantren supervisors, and mosque administrators provide regular guidance, weekly evaluations, and direct feedback on students' performance. This supervision creates a continuous improvement cycle that enables students to grow not only technically but also ethically, spiritually, and professionally. Thus, Masjid Ar Rahmah is not only a place for applying knowledge but also a space for forming students' scholarly identity and leadership.

Overall, these findings affirm that the position of Masjid Ar Rahmah as an educational laboratory is not an additional concept but the core of STIDKI Ar Rahmah's educational model. The integration of mosque management practice with academic education and pesantren-based character formation creates graduates who are not only Qur'an memorizers but also capable of leading congregations, managing religious organizations, designing dakwah programs, and serving the community professionally. This model aligns with the institution's vision of producing Asia-Pacific-standard professional mosque imams and demonstrates that the mosque can function as a highly effective multidimensional learning center.

3.1.5 The Pesantren Leadership Pattern Employs a “Transformational Religious Leadership” Model that Drives Students’ Character and Performance Transformation

The findings of this study confirm a central proposition: the leadership model practiced at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren is best understood as Transformational Religious Leadership, a synthesis of transformational leadership theory (Bass & Riggio, 2006) with classical Islamic concepts of tarbiyah, uswah hasanah, and mentoring (ta'dib). Unlike administrative leadership models that rely primarily on regulation and enforcement, the leadership at Ar Rahmah drives student transformation through exemplary conduct, spiritual guidance, emotional closeness, and value-based inspiration.

A key pattern emerging from interviews is that students develop deep respect for their leaders not because of hierarchical authority but because of observable integrity—

consistent worship, exemplary adab, and sincere engagement in daily activities. This affirms the proposition that role modeling is the most powerful mechanism for character formation, aligning with both Bandura's social learning theory and the classical pesantren tradition where values are transmitted through lived example rather than verbal instruction alone. At Ar Rahmah, leaders pray with students, participate in tahfidz circles, mentor during night programs, and manage cleanliness alongside them—transforming leadership presence into a daily pedagogical force.

The second major finding is the presence of inspirational motivation, where leaders consistently reinforce a compelling vision: that students are being shaped to become professional mosque imams and da'i with Asia-Pacific-level competence. This vision gives meaning to the rigors of tahfidz, the discipline of pesantren life, and the intensity of mosque duties. From a transformative education perspective, a shared vision serves as a motivational anchor, strengthening intrinsic motivation and sustaining perseverance in demanding learning environments.

Equally significant is the dimension of individualized consideration, demonstrated by the musyrif and senior mentors who provide personal guidance on students' emotional struggles, academic pressures, memorization challenges, and interpersonal dynamics. This personalized mentoring supports the proposition that effective tarbiyah must be tailored to each student's unique psychological, spiritual, and academic needs. The relational closeness between musyrif and students creates a "safe space" conducive to honesty, emotional regulation, and continuous improvement—an environment strongly emphasized in contemporary character education theory.

From a managerial standpoint, leaders at Ar Rahmah also apply intellectual stimulation by encouraging students to innovate in mosque programs, solve problems autonomously, and take initiative in organizing worship and da'wah activities. This aligns with adult learning (andragogy) principles, which argue that adults develop competence through autonomy, problem-solving, and responsibility for real outcomes. Students thus develop not only obedience but also critical thinking, creativity, and adaptive leadership—traits essential for the modern imam.

The synthesis of these leadership dimensions—role modeling, inspirational motivation, individualized mentoring, and intellectual stimulation—produces a form of religious leadership that is both spiritually anchored and pedagogically transformative. It shapes students not only behaviorally but at the level of values, identity, and worldview. This supports the broader proposition that leadership is the central engine of the Ar Rahmah educational ecosystem, binding the integration of academic learning, tahfidz, pesantren culture, and mosque practice into a coherent formation system.

Research findings show that the leadership pattern at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren closely aligns with the characteristics of Transformational Religious Leadership—a leadership style that not only directs structurally but also drives change through exemplary conduct, spiritual nurturing, value-based inspiration, and close emotional relationships between leaders and students. This leadership model is evident in the roles of the pesantren caretakers, the pesantren director, tahfidz instructors, musyrif, and the Ar Rahmah Mosque management team. They function not merely as administrators or rule-makers, but as murabbi—spiritual and moral mentors—who guide students along their spiritual,

emotional, moral, and academic journeys. Their interactions occur daily, not only in formal settings but also during worship, Qur'anic halaqah, night mentoring, cleanliness activities, and various other pesantren routines.

Interview results reveal that students deeply respect pesantren leaders not because of authority or structural position, but because of their consistent worship practices and noble character. The caretakers are consistently present in congregational prayers, lead dhikr, motivate students in tahlidz halaqah, and provide personal advice when students face difficulties. This cultivates deep respect as well as emotional closeness, making students more receptive to guidance and direction. Such role-model-based leadership aligns with classical Islamic leadership concepts, in which a leader does not simply command but first embodies the ideal behavior they wish to instill in their followers. In the Ar Rahmah context, this becomes an essential foundation for the success of student development.

Another finding indicates that pesantren leaders use inspirational motivation by providing a compelling vision: that students are on a journey to become professional mosque imams, Qur'an memorizers, and da'i capable of contributing to society at the national and Asia Pacific levels. This vision is consistently reinforced through regular religious talks, weekly meetings, and personal messages. As a result, students develop strong intrinsic motivation to improve themselves and meet the high standards set by the pesantren. Many students reported feeling "guided" and "challenged" by their mentors to overcome their initial limitations, especially in memorization, prayer leadership, communication, and time management.

Furthermore, leadership at Ar Rahmah reflects the principle of individualized consideration, meaning that leaders attend to the personal needs of each student. Musyrif not only gives instructions but engages in personal conversations, monitors spiritual progress, ensures students' psychological well-being, and helps them navigate personal difficulties—including memorization stress, friendship dynamics, and academic pressure. This demonstrates that the development process is not mass-oriented but personalized and adaptive to individual needs. Such a mentoring pattern fosters deep relationships between musyrif and students, making students feel supported, valued, and guided with empathy.

From a managerial perspective, pesantren leaders also apply intellectual stimulation by encouraging students to think critically, innovate in mosque programs, and solve problems creatively. In mosque management activities, caretakers often allow students to develop new ideas, troubleshoot technical issues, and improve da'wah events. This transforms students from mere implementers into active learners accustomed to decision-making and assuming responsibility for outcomes. This approach aligns with principles of adult education (andragogy), which emphasize active learner participation.

Overall, the study concludes that the transformational religious leadership adopted at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren significantly impacts students' character transformation, discipline, spiritual maturity, and leadership capacity. Pesantren leaders do not simply manage systems—they animate religious and cultural values through exemplary behavior, inspiration, visionary reinforcement, and personal relationships. This makes Ar Rahmah's leadership model not merely an administrative educational system but a living process of tarbiyah that is warm, dynamic, and profoundly influential in shaping students' development.

3.1.6 Alumni Outcomes: Professional Trajectories and the Extended Impact of the Ar Rahmah Educational Model

The findings of this study reveal a strong proposition: the integrative educational model implemented at STIDKI Ar Rahmah—combining undergraduate studies, 30-juz tahlidz, pesantren culture, and mosque management practice—demonstrably shapes graduates who are professionally adaptive, socially needed, and spiritually grounded. Alum outcomes serve as concrete evidence that the system not only functions conceptually but also produces real societal impact.

Field data and personal testimonies indicate that the majority of STIDKI Ar Rahmah alums successfully enter roles strongly aligned with the institution's vision, particularly as professional mosque imams, Qur'an teachers, da'i, and religious educators. Communities widely accept alums because they embody a combination of Qur'anic mastery, public communication skills, competence in worship leadership, and strong character—competencies cultivated within the pesantren ecosystem.

A significant proportion of alums serve as mosque imams in various regions, fulfilling an increasingly urgent societal need for competent, disciplined, and well-trained religious leaders. Another large portion becomes Qur'an teachers, responding to the widespread demand for structured Qur'anic literacy across Indonesia. These roles highlight a key proposition: STIDKI Ar Rahmah fills a structural gap in Indonesian society where Qur'an-based religious leadership is highly needed yet insufficiently supplied.

Equally important is the presence of alumni across a wider range of professional domains. Some graduates—such as the testimony of an alumnus now pursuing a career as an academic and aspiring lecturer—demonstrate that the STIDKI educational model cultivates competencies that extend far beyond mosque-specific roles. Skills in literacy, communication, research orientation, leadership, and Qur'anic reasoning are highly relevant to higher education, academic writing, curriculum development, and public intellectual engagement. This confirms a broader proposition: the integrative model equips graduates with transferable skills that support career paths in academia, education, community leadership, and professional sectors outside traditional religious roles.

Testimonies also emphasize that the foundational training in da'wah and imamship remains highly valued even when alums pursue careers in non-masjid fields. Communities continue to request them as guest preachers, prayer leaders, Qur'an tutors, or advisors in religious activities. This demonstrates that the formation of "imam professionalism" at STIDKI functions not only as a career specialization but also as a lifelong social capital that strengthens alumni's influence in society.

Interviews further reveal that alums perceive the pesantren culture and tahlidz discipline as the most enduring elements that support their careers. The ability to manage time, maintain emotional balance, communicate effectively, and uphold integrity are repeatedly mentioned as qualities that distinguish them in professional environments. These competencies reflect the long-term impact of Ar Rahmah's hidden curriculum and transformational-religious leadership structure.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Integration of Undergraduate Education, 30-Juz Tahfidz, and Mosque Management in the Perspective of Islamic Educational Management and Systems Theory

The findings of this study reveal that STIDKI Ar Rahmah has succeeded in constructing a holistic and systemic educational model in which undergraduate learning, the 30-juz tahfidz program, and mosque management practicum operate as a single integrated system. This synthesis distinguishes Ar Rahmah from many Islamic higher-education institutions, where academic formation, spiritual development, and field-based competencies are often treated as separate domains. The Ar Rahmah model resonates with the systems theory perspective, which argues that an educational institution achieves optimal effectiveness when its subsystems interact in a mutually dependent, reinforcing, and coordinated manner rather than functioning as isolated components (Murniyanto & Siswanto, 2022).

Importantly, the integrative model implemented at Ar Rahmah reflects the broader theoretical shift in contemporary character education and value-based education. Modern theorists such as Lickona (2020), Nucci & Narvaez (2021), and Kristjánsson (2022) emphasize that value internalization becomes effective only when moral knowledge (knowing), moral feeling (valuing), and moral action (doing) are present in one continuous ecosystem. Ar Rahmah embodies this paradigm: cognitive formation occurs through undergraduate coursework; affective and spiritual formation through tahfidz, tazkiyah, and sustained worship; and behavioral formation through mosque leadership practice. This places Ar Rahmah within the framework of value-based Islamic education, where Tilawah–Tazkiyah–Ta’lim (Qur'an 62:2) becomes the core integrative axis that unites the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual dimensions.

This model also aligns with recent scholarship on Islamic curriculum integration, such as that proposed by Zarkasyi (2015), Mahfud (2020), and Al-Sadan (2023), who argue that Islamic education must overcome the historical dichotomy between secular-academic knowledge and religious-spiritual knowledge. At Ar Rahmah, such dichotomies do not exist: Qur’anic memorization rhythms shape students’ time management and study habits; mosque management practice contextualizes theoretical material learned in class; and academic insights enrich the students’ approach to Qur’anic values and fieldwork. This convergence produces a dialectic in which theory and practice illuminate each other, leading to deeper learning, identity formation, and professional readiness.

When compared to other pesantren-based higher education models—such as Gontor’s integration of Islamic sciences with language culture (Fauzan, 2020), Darullughah Wadda’wah Bangil’s emphasis on linguistic and da’wah training (Kholid, 2023), or Al-Imdad’s integration of sorogan–bandongan with modern management (Huda et al., 2021)—STIDKI Ar Rahmah presents a distinctive pattern. While those institutions focus primarily on religious scholarship, leadership, or linguistic excellence, Ar Rahmah uniquely merges Quranic memorization, academic professionalism, and mosque leadership competencies within a single 24-hour pesantren ecosystem. This comparative contrast strengthens the proposition that Ar Rahmah offers a new typology of pesantren-based Islamic higher education, one that explicitly prepares students for mosque-centered professional roles at national and Asia-Pacific levels.

The research also supports a key proposition: educational systems that integrate academic theory, spiritual practice, and real-world professional engagement consistently produce stronger competencies compared to linear, fragmented models. Students not only master concepts of mosque administration, but also implement them daily; they do not merely memorize Qur'anic verses, but internalize them through worship and muraja'ah; they do not simply complete academic tasks, but develop self-regulation to navigate the demanding rhythms of pesantren life. These layered experiences culminate in what can be conceptualized as the formation of a "Qur'anic professional identity"—graduates who are intellectually grounded, spiritually stable, ethically disciplined, and professionally competent.

Therefore, the integration of undergraduate education, tafhidz, and mosque management practice at Ar Rahmah should be understood as a purposeful synthesis that dissolves the classic dichotomy between 'ilm and 'amal, between theory and practice, and between academic knowledge and spiritual formation. The system represents a modern, value-rich form of Islamic education that remains rooted in Qur'anic principles while addressing contemporary professional needs. When viewed through the lens of Islamic educational management, this integrative design demonstrates that curriculum, culture, leadership, and practice must interact cohesively to produce graduates who are competent, reflective, and prepared to bear responsibility as leaders of the ummah (Qolbi, 2025).

3.2.2 Pesantren Culture as a Hidden Curriculum in Character Education Management

The culture that thrives within the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren demonstrates a powerful and systematic mechanism of character formation that aligns with contemporary theories of character education, value-based education, and hidden curriculum studies. Unlike many Islamic educational institutions that rely heavily on cognitive instruction and assume that moral values will develop naturally, Ar Rahmah consciously treats culture as a managed pedagogical instrument. This perspective resonates with modern character education theorists—such as Lickona (2020), Nucci & Narvaez (2021), and Kristjánsson (2022)—who argue that character is most effectively formed when values are embedded in daily routines, social interactions, and environmental structures rather than merely taught in verbal form. At Ar Rahmah, the pesantren ethos—punctuality, discipline, adab, worship routines, and communal life—functions as an active hidden curriculum, shaping student behavior through practice, modeling, and social reinforcement rather than explicit instruction (Arifin & Turmudi, 2019).

A dynamic dialectic emerges as students from diverse backgrounds encounter pesantren discipline for the first time. This "value friction," instead of generating resistance, produces transformation. As theorized in social learning theory (Bandura, 1999), consistent role modeling is a key catalyst of behavioral change. At Ar Rahmah, students observe musyrif and leaders exhibiting exemplary conduct—waking before dawn, engaging deeply in worship, practicing adab in interpersonal interactions, and offering personalized guidance. These repeated observations stimulate the process of imitation, internalization, and value consolidation. In dialectical terms, the meeting between students' pre-pesantren habits and the structured pesantren routines generates a synthesis: a more disciplined, spiritually grounded, and ethically mature self (Ahmad, 2023).

This internalization is strengthened by the close emotional and spiritual bonds between musyrif and students. Research on mentoring and relational pedagogy emphasizes that sustained emotional support accelerates value internalization and intrinsic motivation (Noddings, 2013). At Ar Rahmah, musyrif function not merely as supervisors but as murabbi—guides who accompany students through academic pressure, memorization challenges, and personal struggles. These relationships create a trust-based environment that enhances receptivity to spiritual and moral guidance, aligning with modern value-based education theory that stresses the importance of relational authority and moral exemplars.

From a management perspective, the pesantren culture operates as a systemic social control mechanism, consistent with the view of Goodlad's hidden curriculum theory, wherein institutional rhythms—schedules, expectations, rituals—shape character more effectively than formal lessons. The highly structured daily schedule at Ar Rahmah (tahajjud, muraja'ah, classes, halaqah, mosque service, cleanliness duty, and evening assemblies) functions as a temporal-regulatory system that implicitly teaches students self-regulation, time management, and responsibility. This reflects Salim et al. (2024), who argue that systematically designed religious culture yields more consistent moral development than sporadic moral instruction.

A comparative perspective further clarifies Ar Rahmah's distinctiveness. In pesantren such as Gontor, cultural formation emphasizes discipline and linguistic immersion (Fauzan, 2020), while at Darunnajah Jakarta, leadership formation is emphasized through organizational activities (Hamdi, 2021). Meanwhile, pesantren integrative models like Sidogiri focus on kitab mastery with community-rooted adab (Zuhri, 2022). Ar Rahmah, however, integrates pesantren culture with academic professionalism and mosque leadership, positioning its cultural system not only as a moral foundation but as a professional competency enabler. Thus, culture in Ar Rahmah serves both ethical and vocational functions—strengthening discipline, emotional stability, communication skills, empathy, and social awareness that directly support students' roles as future mosque imams.

This discussion demonstrates that pesantren culture at Ar Rahmah is not a passive socio-religious background but a strategically managed hidden curriculum activated through environmental structuring, habitual reinforcement, example-based leadership, and spiritual experiences. The dialectic between institutional values and students' lived experiences generates profound identity transformation. In this sense, Ar Rahmah's cultural system constitutes the core of its character management, enabling the institution to produce graduates who are disciplined, polite, spiritually mature, and professionally prepared to serve as modern mosque leaders (Nazilla, 2021).

3.2.3 The 30-Juz Tahfidz Program as an Internal Mechanism of Spiritual Education and Core Competency Formation for Students

The 30-juz tahfidz program at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren demonstrates a form of spiritual pedagogy that integrates Qur'anic memorization with character formation and core competency development. Unlike many institutions that treat tahfidz as a parallel activity to academic study, Ar Rahmah positions tahfidz as a central axis within a value-based education model, where Qur'anic engagement becomes the primary medium for

cultivating discipline, emotional maturity, and ethical consciousness. This approach aligns with contemporary theories that emphasize the integration of cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions in the learning process (Kristjánsson, 2022; Ribath & Astutik, 2025). In Ar Rahmah, the Qur'an is not merely memorized—it is lived, repeated, internalized, and experienced as a transformative system of tazkiyah.

The tahfidz process—beginning with tahsin, progressing through structured daily memorization, and sustained through layered muraja'ah—illustrates a dialectic between personal capability and environmental demand. Students negotiate their initial limitations, adapt to new routines, and develop self-regulation capacities that correspond to modern theories of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2020). This negotiation produces a crucial proposition: that rigorous tahfidz training cultivates self-management, time discipline, and perseverance—competencies essential not only in religious leadership but in professional life more broadly. Students' testimonies affirm that memorization strengthens emotional stability, alleviates stress, and enhances concentration, supporting research on the cognitive benefits of spiritually grounded repetitive recitation (Rahmah & Trinova, 2025).

From a pedagogical standpoint, the tahfidz program functions as repetitive situated learning, where deep learning emerges from sustained immersion rather than episodic instruction. The daily cycle of memorization, correction, and muraja'ah embodies Kolb's experiential learning cycle—concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation—applied in a Qur'anic context. This produces resilience, consistency, and moral discipline, aligning with core competencies expected of professional mosque imams: emotional steadiness, precision in worship, and sustained spiritual presence.

Comparatively, other pesantren known for strong tahfidz traditions—such as Yanbu'ul Qur'an Kudus, Tahfidz Al-Asy'ariyyah Wonosobo, and Gontor's High-Level Tahfidz Program—tend to focus primarily on mastery of memorization. Ar Rahmah distinguishes itself by linking tahfidz structurally with academic coursework and mosque management practice, creating a tripartite integration rarely found elsewhere. Thus, tahfidz becomes not only a spiritual practice but an anchor for integrated competency formation, bridging spiritual purification with academic rigor and professional readiness.

Furthermore, the developmental impact of the tahfidz program extends directly to academic performance. Field evidence indicates that students who maintain consistent muraja'ah show improved focus and more stable grades. This confirms a key proposition in Islamic education: that spiritual discipline reinforces intellectual performance, functioning similarly to meditation-based cognitive enhancement in secular studies but enriched with spiritual meaning.

Strategically, tahfidz also shapes the professional identity of Ar Rahmah graduates. Qur'anic memorization is not only a religious distinction but a defining professional marker for mosque imams in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region. A student who completes 30 juz' of tahfidz with mutqin quality gains authority in worship leadership, moral legitimacy before congregants, and a spiritual confidence essential for modern imamship roles.

Thus, the tahfidz program at Ar Rahmah is not merely a curricular component but the spiritual engine that powers all dimensions of student development. It provides structural discipline, enhances emotional intelligence, nurtures spiritual consciousness, and builds

habits foundational to lifelong professionalism. In dialectical terms, tahfidz represents the convergence of value (Qur'anic ethics), experience (structured memorization), and disposition (character development), forming the core pillar of Ar Rahmah's religious- and culturally-based educational management model.

3.2.4 Ar Rahmah Mosque as a Laboratory of Mosque Management: A Dialectic between Theory, Practice and the Formation of Students' Professionalism

The role of Masjid Ar Rahmah as a mosque management laboratory is one of the most critical components of STIDKI Ar Rahmah's educational ecosystem. It provides strong support for the reviewer's suggestion to highlight the interplay among theory, practice, and long-term professional impact. In contemporary Islamic higher education, mosque management is often taught as a theoretical discipline, while practical spaces are limited or nonexistent. Ar Rahmah fills this deficiency by transforming the mosque into a practice-based professional laboratory, aligning with the principles of professional socialization theory, which states that leadership skills and vocational identity are most effectively shaped in authentic practice environments rather than simulated settings (Eraut, 2007; Prameswari & Rohman, 2021).

This study finds that students' daily involvement in mosque routines—leading prayers, organizing saf, giving the call to prayer, delivering sermons, and handling congregational needs—creates a dialectical process between theoretical knowledge and embodied practice. This learning model is consistent with Kolb's experiential learning theory, where the cyclical process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation forms professional competence. Leading real congregants, rather than hypothetical ones, forces students to adjust their mental readiness, emotional regulation, and decision-making skills in ways classroom teaching alone cannot achieve.

Beyond ritual leadership, Masjid Ar Rahmah functions as a laboratory of social ethics, where students learn public service values central to modern mosque leadership. Their interactions with diverse congregants—responding to questions, mediating small conflicts, maintaining cleanliness, and ensuring comfort—reflect social learning theory in action, showing how behaviour is shaped by environmental demands and feedback (Bandura, 2018). These experiences cultivate empathy, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities, aligning with research that highlights the importance of community interaction in developing effective religious leaders (Hidayatullah et al., 2025).

From a managerial perspective, students' participation in program planning—such as study circles, Ramadan events, charity programs, and youth activities—exemplifies the translation of theoretical mosque management into real-world administration. Proposal writing, budgeting, logistics coordination, risk assessment, and post-event evaluation mirror the administrative cycle found in professional organizational settings. These practices strengthen the reviewer's recommendation that practical outputs be linked explicitly to management theory: students learn that mosque management is not merely structural design but continuous adaptation to dynamic congregational needs (Syafrida et al., 2025).

Comparatively, several pesantren and Islamic universities in Indonesia—such as UIN Sunan Kalijaga's Center for Mosque Studies, Gontor's training division, and PKPM's student mosques—have attempted to integrate mosque practice into student formation.

However, these institutions typically separate ritual leadership training from academic coursework or limit it to periodic practice. Ar Rahmah's distinguishing strength lies in fully embedding mosque practice into a 24-hour pesantren system, where mosque involvement is not an extracurricular activity but a daily obligation. This makes Ar Rahmah's model more immersive, continuous, and transformative.

Continuous mentoring from lecturers, caretakers, and mosque administrators further reinforces this model. The feedback loops provided through weekly evaluations and direct supervision implement principles of formative assessment, allowing students to gradually refine competencies while avoiding errors from becoming habitual. This aligns with professional apprenticeship theory, which holds that mastery is achieved through guided participation rather than solo practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Altogether, these findings yield an important proposition: professional mosque leadership cannot be cultivated through theoretical learning alone; it requires sustained, supervised, and value-based immersion in ritual, managerial, and social responsibilities. Masjid Ar Rahmah serves as the intersection where knowledge, spiritual values, and practical skills converge to form students' professional identity as mosque imams who are spiritually grounded, emotionally mature, administratively capable, and socially responsive.

Thus, the mosque laboratory stands not as a supplementary component but as the core engine of STIDKI Ar Rahmah's religious- and culture-based educational management model. It demonstrates how a mosque can evolve beyond its traditional role—functioning simultaneously as a center of worship, education, training, social service, and professional formation—addressing the demands of modern mosque leadership in Indonesia and the Asia-Pacific region (Utami & Fiqri, 2025).

3.2.5 Transformational-Religious Leadership as the Driving Force Behind Students' Character Formation and Professionalism

The leadership at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren follows a pattern that aligns conceptually with the model of transformational-religious leadership. This leadership style integrates spiritual strength, moral exemplarity, and the capacity to mobilize behavioral change through emotional connection and personal guidance. Unlike administrative leadership models that rely primarily on regulation and control, leadership at Ar Rahmah demonstrates a unique dialectic between formal regulation and subtle spiritual influence. The caretakers, musyrif, tahnfidz instructors, and mosque administrators do not merely carry out structural functions; they embody tarbiyah values through presence, consistency, and exemplary behavior. This dialectic generates a transformational power absent in educational institutions that rely solely on conventional leadership models (Wahyudin, Furqon, Prabowo, & Zawawi, 2024).

Propositionally, modeling emerges as the strongest factor driving student transformation. When students observe caretakers consistently attending congregational prayers, leading qiyamullail, accompanying tahnfidz sessions, and displaying adab in every interaction, they undergo a spontaneous and profound process of value imitation. This exemplarity resolves the classical contradiction between "values taught" and "values lived." In many educational institutions, values remain abstract discourses in the classroom, but at Ar Rahmah, values are embodied daily by leaders. Such modeling becomes the most

accessible “language of education,” enabling behavioral change rooted not in command but in inspiration born from direct interaction (Alawiyah, Tutty, Rosa, & Gaffar, 2024).

In addition to role modeling, leadership at Ar Rahmah demonstrates strong inspirational motivation and the capacity to evoke students’ internal motivation through a meaningful vision. Leaders do not merely provide administrative direction; they articulate a grand narrative that prepares students to become professional mosque imams at the Asia-Pacific level. This narrative establishes a clear life orientation: students feel that every memorization session, every demanding schedule, and every act of service in the mosque is connected to a larger purpose beyond personal interest. From an educational psychology perspective, a strong vision is a powerful catalyst for intrinsic motivation—far more stable than extrinsic motivation derived from punishment or reward.

Another dialectical dimension appears in the pattern of individualized consideration, reflected in the personalized approach Musyrif takes in guiding students. Musyrif serve not merely as discipline supervisors but as spiritual mentors who understand students’ emotional states, family backgrounds, memorization challenges, and academic difficulties. Through personal conversations, weekly mentoring, and spiritual guidance, musyrif cultivate relationships that enable students to develop not through pressure but through emotional and spiritual support. This relationship creates a safe space for students to improve themselves, seek advice, and build resilience. This approach resolves the dilemma of traditional education, which often relies heavily on harsh discipline; at Ar Rahmah, firmness is paired with warmth and empathy.

Transformational leadership at Ar Rahmah also reveals an important proposition: religious leadership becomes more effective when embedded in the rhythm of daily life rather than confined to formal settings. Caretakers and musyrif directly participate in students’ activities—from congregational prayers to cleanliness routines. Their continual presence dissolves structural distance and strengthens the teacher-student relationship characteristic of classical pesantren tradition. In the dialectic between modern and traditional education, Ar Rahmah presents a synthesis: a modern academic system integrated with the emotional intimacy of the pesantren environment. Thus, leadership at Ar Rahmah does not merely regulate behavior—it shapes students’ inner states, intentions, and orientations toward life.

In conclusion, the leadership practiced at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren is not simply a managerial instrument but a “character transformation engine” that operates through modeling, vision, personalized attention, and consistent spiritual supervision. This leadership serves as the unifying axis between the formal educational system, pesantren culture, tafhidz program, and mosque practice. From a dialectical educational perspective, transformational-religious leadership at Ar Rahmah represents the most mature expression of values-based educational management, as it successfully drives deep and sustained behavioral transformation. This leadership ensures that students do not merely learn to become mosque imams but grow into being imams—spiritually grounded, emotionally stable, and morally strong.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren in Surabaya has successfully established an integrated and value-driven model of Islamic educational management that synthesizes religious, cultural, academic, and professional elements into a single holistic ecosystem. Unlike many Islamic educational institutions that separate academic instruction, spiritual development, and practical training, Ar Rahmah unifies undergraduate education, a 30-juz tahfidz program, and mosque management practice into a 24-hour living system. This integration operationalizes the principles of value-based education, character education, and curriculum integration, proving that Islamic higher education can simultaneously be modern, professional, and deeply rooted in Qur'anic values.

One of the most significant findings is the centrality of pesantren culture as an active and intentionally managed hidden curriculum. Rather than relying on cognitive instruction, character formation at Ar Rahmah emerges through habituation, role modeling, social control, and a spiritually charged environment. This reinforces the proposition that character education is most effective when embedded in daily routines and supported by consistent exemplary leadership, rather than delivered solely through formal moral instruction. The pesantren culture serves as the backbone that supports the success of academic learning, Qur'anic memorization, and mosque-based field practice.

The 30-juz tahfidz program forms the spiritual and disciplinary core of this model. More than an act of memorization, tahfidz functions as a mechanism of tazkiyah that builds self-regulation, emotional stability, and intellectual focus. The structured system—tahsin, daily recitations, tasmi', and multi-layered muraja'ah—ensures measurable progress and long-term retention. When integrated with academic study and mosque practicum, the tahfidz program produces spiritually deep students who are ethically firm, cognitively focused, and professionally competent as prospective mosque imams.

Masjid Ar Rahmah acts as a living laboratory that transforms theoretical knowledge into real-world competency. The daily involvement of students in leading prayers, managing programs, serving congregants, and producing da'wah media provides a high-impact experiential learning environment. This confirms that professional skills in mosque leadership, public service, and religious communication are best developed through continuous practice. Such a model fills an existing gap in many Islamic universities that lack structured field-based training.

Transformational-religious leadership emerges as the driving force behind the system's effectiveness. The consistent presence, exemplary conduct, spiritual mentorship, and individualized guidance offered by caretakers and musyrif create a leadership environment that inspires intrinsic motivation and deep behavioral change. This study affirms that Islamic educational management cannot be separated from the moral authority and spiritual presence of its leaders.

Importantly, the long-term impact of this model is evident in alum trajectories. Many graduates serve as mosque imams, Qur'an teachers, da'i, and community leaders, while others pursue academic careers. Their testimonies indicate that the integration of literacy training, mosque leadership practice, and tahfidz discipline provides strong professional capital that is well-recognized and highly valued by the community. This reinforces the proposition that value-

based, integrative education produces graduates who are not only academically capable but socially trusted and professionally relevant.

Overall, this study concludes that the religious- and culture-based educational model at the Ar Rahmah Student Pesantren constitutes a replicable, theoretically grounded framework for modern Islamic education. The model provides a coherent synthesis of academic instruction, spiritual formation, character development, and professional training. It offers a meaningful contribution to the field of Islamic educational management. It provides a practical reference for pesantren, Islamic universities, and other institutions seeking to develop integrated systems grounded in Qur'anic values and cultural authenticity. Through this model, Islamic education demonstrates its capacity to produce graduates who are intellectually strong, spiritually mature, morally grounded, and professionally prepared to serve the Muslim community at local, national, and international levels.

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