

A Case Study on Constructing Student's Independence in Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi

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Abstract:

This study explores how student independence is constructed within the boarding system of Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi, Indonesia. It aims to examine the role of boarding culture, learning traditions, religious habituation, and daily social practices in shaping students' independence. Employing a qualitative intrinsic case study design, data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving pesantren caregivers, teachers, administrators, and students. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal that student independence is developed through four interconnected dimensions: personal, academic, social, and spiritual independence. Personal independence emerges through self-management and daily routines; academic independence is fostered through learning traditions such as sorogan, discussion, and collaborative study; social independence is strengthened through organizational participation and collective activities; while spiritual independence is embedded through continuous worship practices and religious discipline. The boarding system functions as an integrative environment that continuously reinforces these dimensions through everyday socio-religious interactions. The originality of this study lies in conceptualizing student independence as a multidimensional socio-religious construct shaped by the interaction of boarding culture, collective responsibility, and spiritual habituation. The findings contribute to Islamic education scholarship by providing insights for the development of character and independence education in Islamic boarding schools.

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Introduction

Recent studies indicate that pesantren contributes significantly to strengthening character education and transforming contemporary Islamic education. Zarkasyi (2022) and Mujahid (2021) demonstrate that educational reform of pesantren does not eliminate the fundamental character of pesantren, but instead strengthens value- and character-based Islamic educational transformation. Similarly, studies on religious moderation emphasize that pesantrens remain relevant in addressing contemporary social and educational challenges by cultivating religious values, tolerance, and character development (Huda, 2024; Ihsan, 2024). Other studies show that the hidden curriculum strategy in pesantren plays an important role in shaping moderate character, discipline, and students' social responsibility through everyday life practices (Mistar et al., 2025; Abdurrohman et al., 2025; Salim et al., 2024). In addition, research on pesantren educational culture reveals that the development of educators' competence, commitment, motivation, and institutional identity occurs through educational patterns based on exemplary behavior, habituation, shared values, and religious institutional culture (Kawakip & Sulanam, 2023; Fauzi et al., 2022). Furthermore, contemporary scholarship highlights that pesantren continue to sustain holistic character education through culturally embedded educational ecosystems that integrate moral formation, social responsibility, and spiritual development (Ma'arif & Arif, 2026). These findings indicate that pesantrens possess a distinctive character education model that differs from modern formal educational systems while remaining relevant to contemporary educational needs.

Nevertheless, many previous studies on pesantren have focused primarily on issues of Islamic educational modernization, curriculum reform, religious moderation, institutional transformation, and character education. Although these studies acknowledge the importance of character formation and educational values, studies specifically examining the construction of students' independence education within the daily life practices of Salaf Pesantren remain relatively limited. Existing studies rarely explain how independence is systematically developed through the interaction of boarding life, religious habituation, traditional learning methods, social relations, and collective culture. In fact, independence has historically been one of the fundamental characteristics of pesantren education. Consequently, an important gap remains regarding how the pesantren boarding system functions as an integrated educational environment for shaping students' personal autonomy, academic self-regulation, social responsibility, and spiritual self-discipline.

This study also extends the theoretical discussion of independence beyond the perspectives of self-directed learning (Knowles, 1975) and self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002) by situating these concepts within the socio-religious environment of pesantren. In this study, students'

independence is operationalized through four interrelated dimensions: personal independence, academic independence, social independence, and spiritual independence. Moreover, while Goffman (1961) conceptualizes boarding institutions as forms of total institutions characterized by intensive supervision and social regulation, contemporary pesantren may be more appropriately understood as value-driven educational communities where discipline, spirituality, collective responsibility, and character formation operate simultaneously through participatory social practices. The integration of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), boarding culture, religious habituation, and collective life therefore provides an important framework for understanding how independence is formed in pesantren settings.

Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi Rambipuji Jember is particularly interesting to study because it is a Salaf pesantren (traditional Islamic boarding school) that continues to preserve the tradition of teaching classical Islamic texts such as *Fathul Mu'in*, *Fathul Qorib*, and *Safinatun Najah*, while simultaneously developing an educational system based on independent living habituation. In daily pesantren life, students are accustomed to managing their personal needs, participating in organizational activities, studying independently, and carrying out worship activities in a disciplined manner within the boarding system. This condition demonstrates that the development of students' independence is shaped not only by the transfer of religious knowledge but also by the pesantren's overall life system.

Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze students' independence education within the pesantren system, particularly at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi Rambipuji Jember. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on character education, curriculum reform, or institutional transformation, this study specifically examines the mechanisms by which independence is constructed in the daily practices of a Salaf pesantren. This study is important because it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the construction of students' independence education within the Salaf pesantren tradition, while also enriching the discourse of contemporary Islamic education regarding the integration of character education, pesantren culture, and the formation of students' independence in the modern era.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using an intrinsic case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the construction of students' independence education within the Islamic boarding house system at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi Rambipuji Jember. A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to explore meanings, experiences, and socio-religious processes that naturally occur within pesantren life. From a qualitative research perspective,

social reality is understood as dynamic, contextual, and socially constructed through interactions within a particular environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, this approach enabled the researchers to obtain a holistic understanding of the formation of students' independence through the educational system, boarding culture, and daily life practices in the pesantren.

The research design used in this study was an intrinsic case study, focusing on an in-depth understanding of a particular case with unique characteristics (Stake, 1995). The selection of the case study was based on the characteristics of Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi. This salaf pesantren maintains the tradition of *kitab kuning* learning while simultaneously developing a boarding-based educational system that emphasizes character formation and students' independence. Yin (2018) explains that a case study is appropriate for examining contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident. Thus, the case study approach was considered relevant for examining how the pesantren system shapes students' independence in personal, academic, social, and spiritual dimensions.

This research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi Rambipuji Jember, specifically at Madrasah Aliyah An-Nur, a school within the pesantren. The research location was selected based on academic considerations that the pesantren possesses distinctive characteristics in integrating formal education with Islamic boarding education through a twenty-four-hour boarding system. In addition to maintaining the tradition of classical Islamic text learning, the pesantren also implements independent living habituation through students' daily activities, worship discipline, and involvement in organizational and social activities. These conditions made the pesantren a relevant research site for examining the construction of students' independence education within the context of contemporary Salaf pesantren.

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument (human instrument) directly involved in data collection and interpretation processes (Moleong, 2017). The researcher's presence in the field enabled understanding of the social context, establishing relationships with informants, observing pesantren activities, and interpreting the meanings emerging from the research data. The researcher's role as the primary instrument enabled the research process to remain flexible and responsive to field dynamics. Therefore, the researcher functioned not only as a data collector but also as an interpreter of the phenomenon of students' independence education within the pesantren's social and cultural context. To strengthen trustworthiness, the researcher maintained reflective field notes and engaged in self-reflection throughout the research process to minimize potential bias during data collection and interpretation.

The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling, a technique for selecting informants based on specific criteria to meet research needs (Sugiyono, 2018). This technique was

applied because not all individuals within the pesantren environment possessed information relevant to the research focus. The informants included pesantren caregivers, the head of the madrasah, vice principals for curriculum affairs, Islamic education teachers, pesantren administrators, and students knowledgeable about the practice of independence education within pesantren life. The selection of these informants was based on their involvement in planning, implementing, supervising, and experiencing the educational activities related to students' independence formation. Informants were selected gradually until data saturation was achieved, indicated by the recurrence of similar themes and the absence of substantially new information from subsequent interviews (Miles et al., 2020).

The data sources in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation of students' independence education activities within the pesantren. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from supporting documents, including pesantren profiles, student regulations, activity schedules, institutional archives, scientific journals, books, and previous studies relevant to pesantren education and character formation. The use of various data sources was intended to strengthen the validity and depth of the research analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Data collection techniques in this study included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Observation was conducted through passive participatory observation, in which the researcher was directly present in the pesantren environment to observe educational activities without becoming fully involved (Muhith et al., 2020). The observations focused on students' boarding life patterns, learning activities, worship practices, organizational activities, and social interactions related to the formation of independence. Particular attention was given to the four dimensions of independence examined in this study, namely personal, academic, social, and spiritual independence. Through observation, the researcher collected field notes, activity descriptions, and visual documentation to support the interpretation process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In addition to observation, this study employed semi-structured in-depth interviews. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they provided the researcher with flexibility to explore informants' experiences, perspectives, and meanings regarding students' independence in education (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Interviews were conducted directly with the main informants using open-ended interview guidelines developed from the research objectives and the conceptual dimensions of independence identified in the literature. The interview guide served as a flexible framework that enabled deeper exploration of issues that emerged during fieldwork. Through this technique, the researcher obtained deeper insights into the practices of independence formation,

habituation patterns within the boarding system, and the educational values internalized in the pesantren environment.

Documentation techniques were used to complement observations and interviews, yielding written and visual data related to the research focus (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). The documents examined included the pesantren organizational structure, institutional profiles, students' activity schedules, pesantren regulations, educational activity archives, and photographs of students' activities within boarding life. The documentation functioned to strengthen empirical data while helping the researcher better understand the social and cultural context of pesantren education. The collected documents were systematically reviewed, categorized, and compared with observational and interview data to support data triangulation and interpretation.

Data analysis in this study employed the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of four main stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2020). The analysis was conducted continuously from the beginning of data collection through the completion of the research. During the data condensation stage, the researcher selected, simplified, categorized, and interpreted field data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation (Saldaña, 2021). The analytical process involved initial coding of field data, followed by categorization of similar codes into broader themes and patterns related to the construction of students' independence. These themes were then interpreted in relation to the theoretical framework and research objectives. The categorized data were subsequently presented in descriptive-analytical narratives to facilitate the identification of patterns, relationships, and meanings related to students' independence education within the boarding pesantren system.

To ensure systematic data management, interview recordings were transcribed, field notes were organized, and research documents were classified by source and thematic relevance. This procedure facilitated data retrieval, coding, verification, and auditability throughout the analytical process.

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation, technique triangulation, and peer debriefing (Denzin, 2017). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants, including caregivers, teachers, administrators, and students. Technique triangulation involved comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. In addition, peer debriefing was conducted through academic discussions with fellow researchers to examine data interpretation consistency and reduce researcher subjectivity. The triangulation process also involved examining the convergence between participants' accounts, observed practices, and documentary evidence related to students' independence education. These

validation strategies were applied to ensure that the research findings were highly credible and valid, in accordance with the principles of contemporary qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Results and Discussion

Forms of Students' Independence at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi

The findings of this study reveal that students' independence education at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi Rambipuji Jember is constructed through an integrated boarding school system combining formal learning, daily life habituation, social activities, and spiritual development. Based on observations, interviews, and documentary evidence, students' independence is understood not merely as the ability to fulfill personal needs but as a multidimensional educational process encompassing personal, academic, social, and spiritual dimensions. The coding and categorization process identified these four dimensions as the dominant themes emerging from the data. Furthermore, triangulation across observations, interviews, and institutional documents demonstrated that these dimensions are continuously reinforced through daily boarding life, religious practices, learning traditions, and collective social interactions within the pesantren environment.

Personal Independence

Students' personal independence is reflected in their daily activities, which they carry out independently without depending on parents or pesantren caregivers. Based on observations, students are accustomed to washing their own clothes, organizing study schedules, cleaning their rooms, managing meals, and regulating worship and rest time in a disciplined manner. These routines are continuously practiced within the boarding system, where students live collectively in the pesantren environment for twenty-four hours a day.

One informant, identified as "AR," explained: "Here, students are trained to be independent from the moment they enter the pesantren. All personal needs are managed independently, including washing clothes, organizing study schedules, and maintaining room cleanliness. Without discipline, it is difficult to follow the pesantren activities." (Interview, March 12, 2026).

A similar statement was expressed by informant "MF": "At first, it was difficult because I was far from my parents, but eventually I became accustomed to it. In the pesantren, I learned how to manage myself and become responsible." (Interview, March 14, 2026).

The consistency between observational evidence and participants' narratives suggests that personal independence is not developed solely through direct instruction but through repetitive daily responsibilities embedded in the boarding environment. The gradual transition described by students—from dependence on parents to self-management—demonstrates that independence

emerges through habituation rather than through formal curricular intervention. This finding indicates that the boarding system functions as a practical learning environment in which students continuously exercise responsibility, decision-making, and self-regulation in everyday situations.

These findings indicate that the pesantren boarding system develops students' self-management skills through continuous habituation. From an educational perspective, this condition aligns with the concept of self-directed learning, which emphasizes individuals' ability to manage their own learning (Knowles, 1975; Anshu et al., 2022). The habituation of independent living through daily practices also demonstrates that pesantren education is not merely oriented toward knowledge transfer but toward character formation through direct experience or experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Nur, 2025).

The findings further reveal that personal independence is formed through the interaction between institutional expectations and students' daily experiences. Rather than being imposed solely through formal rules, independence develops as students repeatedly engage in self-management activities that require accountability and discipline. This process illustrates how experiential learning occurs naturally within the boarding environment, enabling students to internalize responsibility through practice rather than instruction.

These findings strengthen Lukens-Bull's (2005) argument that boarding life in pesantren shapes students' social discipline and identity through intensive collective living practices. In addition, Zarkasyi (2022) found that pesantren educational reform continues to maintain character formation as the primary foundation of Islamic education in pesantren. Therefore, students' personal independence at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi is constructed through the integration of dormitory discipline, social habituation, and pesantren educational culture.

Academic Independence

In the academic dimension, the findings indicate that students develop relatively independent learning patterns through the study of kitab kuning, deliberation sessions, group study, discussions, and traditional methods such as sorogan and bandongan. Based on observations, students are not only recipients of knowledge from teachers or kiai but are also required to prepare learning materials before attending lessons.

Informant "HN" stated: "In sorogan, students must study first before presenting the material to the teacher. Without self-study, students usually cannot read the classical texts properly." (Interview, March 16, 2026).

Meanwhile, informant "SY" explained: "Usually after the evening recitation, we study together in the dormitory rooms to review lessons that we have not fully understood." (Interview, March 17, 2026).

The findings indicate that academic independence is cultivated through a combination of individual responsibility and collaborative learning. While the sorogan method requires students to prepare learning materials independently, peer discussions and collective study sessions provide opportunities for reflection and knowledge reinforcement. The convergence of these practices suggests that academic independence in pesantren is not purely individualistic but is developed within a supportive learning community that balances autonomy with collaboration.

These findings indicate that the pesantren learning system encourages the formation of self-regulated learning, namely, students' ability to actively and independently manage their learning processes (Zimmerman, 2002). The sorogan method, which requires individual preparedness, demonstrates that pesantren has long developed a learning system based on personal responsibility in understanding Islamic knowledge.

In classical pesantren studies, Dhofier (1994) explains that the sorogan method emphasizes discipline, seriousness, and students' responsibility in studying classical Islamic texts. On the other hand, the use of discussion and presentation methods indicates the adaptation of pesantren toward modern learning approaches that emphasize students' active participation.

The findings also reveal that the interaction between traditional learning methods and collaborative academic culture strengthens academic independence. Students are encouraged to learn independently while simultaneously engaging in collective reflection and peer support. Such practices create a learning environment in which responsibility for knowledge acquisition is shared between individual effort and communal learning experiences.

These findings align with Hefner's (2009) study, which found that both modern and Salafi pesantren can integrate Islamic scholarly traditions with contemporary educational approaches without losing their essential identity. In addition, Fauzi et al. (2022) found that pesantren educational culture plays an important role in shaping learning motivation, commitment, and competence through habituation and exemplary systems. Thus, students' academic independence at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi is formed through the integration of traditional learning methods and active learning approaches.

Social Independence

Students' social independence is formed through collective dormitory life and students' involvement in organizational and social activities within the pesantren. Based on observations, students actively participate in organizational activities such as FMAA, environmental cleaning programs, inter-room cooperation, and various socio-religious activities. These activities require students to interact with others, coordinate responsibilities, resolve practical problems, and contribute

to communal goals. Consequently, social independence is developed not in isolation but through active participation in the collective life of the pesantren community.

Informant “FR” stated: “In the pesantren, we are taught to work together. There are cleaning schedules, organizational activities, and social programs that must be carried out collectively.” (Interview, March 18, 2026).

Similarly, informant “AS” explained: “In pesantren, no one can live alone. Everyone has to help and respect one another.” (Interview, March 18, 2026).

Observational data further revealed that organizational participation and collective responsibilities function as practical arenas for developing leadership, cooperation, and accountability. Students are required to negotiate responsibilities, communicate with peers, and contribute to shared activities within the boarding environment. These experiences cultivate social competencies that enable students to function effectively within a community while maintaining personal responsibility. Consequently, social independence in the pesantren context extends beyond self-reliance and encompasses the capacity to collaborate, adapt, and contribute constructively to social life.

These findings demonstrate that pesantren life develops students’ interpersonal skills and social responsibility through continuous collective interaction. From Vygotsky’s (1978) social learning perspective, knowledge and behavioral development occur through interaction with others within a particular socio-cultural environment. Therefore, collective life in pesantren becomes an effective medium for developing students’ social skills, leadership capacity, and communal awareness.

The findings also indicate that social independence is reinforced through the hidden curriculum embedded in daily boarding practices. Organizational activities, dormitory responsibilities, and collective worship routines provide students with repeated opportunities to learn cooperation, respect, discipline, and accountability. Through these experiences, social values are not merely taught but continuously practiced and internalized.

This study supports previous findings showing that the collective culture of pesantren plays an important role in shaping moderate character, social solidarity, and students’ leadership through hidden curriculum strategies (Pageh et al., 2025; Salim et al., 2024). The findings further suggest that social independence in pesantren is not synonymous with individual autonomy alone but involves the ability to balance personal responsibility with collective commitment. Therefore, social independence emerges as a socio-cultural competence developed through participation in the communal life of the pesantren.

Spiritual Independence

The findings show that the most dominant dimension of students' independence education at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi is spiritual independence. The formation of spiritual independence is achieved through the habituation of worship practices such as congregational prayers, dhuha prayer, recitation of classical Islamic texts, dhikr, and daily litany practices. These activities are regularly carried out within the boarding system and constitute an inseparable part of students' daily lives.

Based on observations, most worship activities are performed in a disciplined manner even without direct supervision from pesantren administrators. This condition indicates the internalization of spiritual awareness among students and demonstrates that religious practices have become part of their personal identity rather than merely institutional obligations.

Informant "MS" explained: "Students who have stayed in the pesantren for a long time usually become aware of worship responsibilities by themselves without being told." (Interview, March 20, 2026).

A similar statement was expressed by informant "RH": "At first, worship practices were carried out because of pesantren regulations, but eventually they became habits and personal needs." (Interview, March 20, 2026).

The transition from externally regulated worship practices to internally motivated religious commitment emerged as a recurring pattern across participants' accounts. This finding suggests that spiritual independence is formed through a gradual process of value internalization in which religious practices evolve from institutional obligations into personally meaningful commitments. The boarding environment, therefore, facilitates not only behavioral compliance but also the development of autonomous religious consciousness.

These findings indicate that spiritual education in pesantren does not merely produce formal obedience but also develops religious awareness through habituation and value internalization processes. From the perspective of Islamic education, worship habituation is part of a gradual and continuous process of religious character formation (Azra, 2012; Al-Otaibi, 2022). The findings demonstrate that sustained participation in religious practices enables students to internalize spiritual values and develop personal responsibility toward worship without external pressure.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that spiritual independence functions as a foundation supporting the other dimensions of independence. Personal discipline, academic responsibility, and social commitment are strengthened by the internalization of religious values that guide students'

attitudes and behaviors. In this sense, spiritual independence operates not only as a religious outcome but also as a central mechanism influencing broader character development within the pesantren environment.

These findings strengthen previous studies showing that religious practices in pesantren significantly contribute to students' character formation by integrating exemplary conduct, spiritual discipline, and Islamic educational culture (Zainuri et al., 2025; Rofiah et al., 2025). Therefore, spiritual independence becomes a distinctive characteristic of pesantren education that differentiates it from many modern formal educational systems. Rather than focusing exclusively on academic achievement or personal autonomy, pesantren education seeks to cultivate a form of independence rooted in religious awareness, moral responsibility, and spiritual commitment.

Learning Methods and the Boarding System in Forming Students' Independence

The findings of this study reveal that the formation of students' independence at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi is influenced not only by learning materials but also by the integration of learning methods and the pesantren boarding system. The twenty-four-hour educational system integrates all students' activities into the educational process. As a result, independence is cultivated not only through formal instructional activities but also through continuous participation in daily routines, social interactions, and religious practices embedded within pesantren life.

In learning practices, the pesantren applies a combination of traditional and modern methods such as lectures, *sorogan*, *bandongan*, discussions, and presentations. This combination enables students not only to understand religious texts but also to develop critical thinking, communication skills, and a sense of responsibility in learning. The integration of these methods reflects an educational approach that balances the preservation of classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary pedagogical practices.

Informant "KH" explained: "The sorogan method trains students' mentality and responsibility because they must be fully prepared before presenting the material to the teacher." (Interview, March 22, 2026).

Meanwhile, observations showed that students' discussion activities often took place informally in dormitory rooms after evening recitation sessions. These activities indicate the existence of a collective learning culture that naturally develops within pesantren life. Students not only study independently but also engage in collaborative reflection and peer learning, creating a dynamic educational environment that continuously supports academic growth.

The findings suggest that learning methods in pesantren function not merely as instructional techniques but also as mechanisms for developing responsibility, discipline, and autonomy. The *sorogan* method encourages individual accountability because students are required to prepare and

present learning materials independently. At the same time, discussion and presentation activities facilitate communication skills, critical reflection, and collaborative problem-solving. Consequently, students' academic independence is formed through the interaction between personal initiative and collective learning experiences.

From the perspective of contemporary education, these conditions demonstrate the integration of traditional and student-centered learning, positioning students as active subjects in the learning process (Alam, 2023; Mingorance Estrada et al., 2019). These findings are also consistent with studies on pesantren educational transformation, which indicate that pesantren are capable of preserving Islamic scholarly traditions while adaptively adopting modern educational approaches (Zarkasyi, 2022). The findings therefore demonstrate that traditional and contemporary pedagogical practices are not mutually exclusive but can function synergistically in supporting students' independence.

Beyond learning methods, the boarding system serves as the primary foundation for students' independence. Dormitory life enables continuous educational processes through supervision, habituation, shared responsibilities, and intensive social interaction. Unlike conventional schooling systems that primarily operate during formal instructional hours, the pesantren boarding environment extends educational experiences into all aspects of students' daily lives. As a result, independence is reinforced through continuous participation in routines that require self-management, social adaptation, and spiritual commitment.

From Goffman's (1961) perspective, the boarding system may be characterized by features of a total institution, as educational activities, social interactions, and daily routines occur within a highly structured environment. However, the present findings suggest that pesantren differs substantially from the coercive institutions originally described by Goffman. Rather than relying primarily on control and surveillance, the educational process at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi is grounded in exemplary leadership, religious values, collective responsibility, and voluntary participation. Therefore, the pesantren may be more appropriately understood as a value-driven educational community that promotes independence through internalization and social engagement rather than through institutional coercion.

The findings further indicate that the boarding system functions as a socio-religious ecosystem in which personal, academic, social, and spiritual dimensions of independence are developed simultaneously. Daily responsibilities cultivate personal independence; learning traditions strengthen academic independence; organizational participation develops social independence; and worship habituation reinforces spiritual independence. These dimensions continuously interact and mutually reinforce one another within the pesantren environment.

Theoretically, the findings demonstrate the convergence of several educational perspectives. Self-directed learning emphasizes students' ability to manage themselves independently (Knowles, 1975), while self-regulated learning highlights learners' capacity to control their learning processes (Zimmerman, 2002). Experiential learning explains how independence develops through direct engagement in everyday experiences (Kolb, 1984), whereas socio-cultural learning emphasizes the role of social interaction and collective participation in human development (Vygotsky, 1978). The present study shows that these perspectives are not contradictory but complementary in explaining how students' independence is formed within the socio-religious context of pesantren.

Therefore, the formation of students' independence at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi results from the integration of learning methods, the boarding system, pesantren culture, and continuous religious habituation. These findings indicate that pesantren possesses a holistic educational model in which character formation, social responsibility, spiritual awareness, and learning autonomy are developed simultaneously through everyday educational experiences.

This study was conducted within a single Salaf pesantren context; therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the socio-cultural environment of Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi. The study does not claim statistical generalizability to all pesantren in Indonesia, which vary considerably in organizational structure, educational orientation, and boarding practices. Furthermore, although triangulation and peer debriefing were employed to enhance trustworthiness, qualitative interpretation inevitably involves researcher subjectivity. Future studies may employ comparative multi-site designs to examine how different pesantren traditions shape the development of student independence across diverse educational contexts.

The originality of this study lies in its conceptualization of student independence as a multi-dimensional socio-religious construct shaped by the interaction among boarding culture, religious habituation, collective responsibility, and traditional learning practices. While previous studies have primarily examined pesantren from the perspectives of curriculum reform, educational modernization, religious moderation, or character education, this study specifically explains the mechanisms through which independence is cultivated in everyday boarding life. The findings demonstrate that personal, academic, social, and spiritual independence do not develop in isolation but emerge from a mutually reinforcing educational ecosystem embedded in pesantren culture.

The findings show that *sorogan* methods, dormitory life, worship discipline, and social relations among students function as the principal mechanisms for internalizing the values of independence. Consequently, this study offers a new perspective: independence education in pesantren is not developed solely through formal instructional approaches but through continuous socio-religious habituation within the pesantren's boarding culture.

Theoretically, this study integrates the perspectives of self-directed learning (Knowles, 1975), self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002), experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), socio-cultural learning (Vygotsky, 1978), and institutional socialization (Goffman, 1961) into a unified framework for understanding independence formation in Islamic boarding schools. In practice, the findings provide insights for curriculum developers, pesantren leaders, and Islamic education policymakers on the importance of integrating daily life experiences, religious habituation, collective participation, and institutional culture into character and independence education programs. These findings may serve as a reference for developing educational models that strengthen independence while maintaining the distinctive values and traditions of Islamic boarding schools.

Conclusion

This study concludes that students' independence at Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi Rambipuji Jember is constructed through a multidimensional educational process embedded within the pesantren boarding system. The findings demonstrate that independence is not developed primarily through formal instruction but through the continuous integration of boarding culture, religious habituation, collective responsibility, and traditional learning practices. The study identifies four interrelated dimensions of independence—personal, academic, social, and spiritual independence—which are simultaneously cultivated through students' participation in daily boarding life. The findings indicate that the boarding environment functions as an educational ecosystem in which self-management, learning responsibility, social engagement, and spiritual commitment are continuously reinforced through everyday experiences.

Theoretically, this study contributes to contemporary Islamic education scholarship by conceptualizing student independence as a multidimensional socio-religious construct rather than merely an individual academic competence. The findings extend the perspectives of self-directed learning, self-regulated learning, experiential learning, and socio-cultural learning by demonstrating how independence is formed through the interaction of religious values, collective culture, and daily educational practices within the pesantren environment. The originality of this study lies in its explanation of the mechanisms through which independence is cultivated through the integration of boarding life, worship habituation, social participation, and traditional learning methods. Consequently, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how independent education operates within the context of salaf pesantren.

In practice, the findings suggest that character and independence education can be strengthened through educational approaches that integrate daily life experiences, foster habituation to values, encourage collective participation, and engage with institutional culture. For pesantren leaders and curriculum developers, the findings highlight the importance of maintaining educational practices that connect learning activities with social responsibility, spiritual development, and self-management. For policymakers, the study indicates that educational quality should be assessed not only through academic achievement but also through the development of character, responsibility, and independence as essential educational outcomes.

A Case Study on Constructing Student's Independence in Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi

Future studies may employ comparative multi-site approaches involving different pesantren traditions and educational models to examine how various institutional cultures influence the development of student independence. Further research may also explore the influence of family background, digital transformation, and broader social environments on the formation of independence among santri.

Overall, this study demonstrates that student independence in pesantren is not an isolated individual attribute but a socio-religious capacity nurtured through the continuous interaction of learning, worship, collective life, and institutional culture. The central message of this study is that independence is most effectively developed when education is embedded within meaningful daily experiences that integrate personal responsibility, social engagement, and spiritual commitment into a unified educational process.

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A Case Study on Constructing Student's Independence in Pondok Pesantren An-Nur Haji Alwi

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