
Marching Band and Character Education in Islamic Boarding Schools

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Abstract

Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions that provide an understanding of religion and commit to developing a strong character which is based on the Islamic values. This research aims to investigate information and provide an understanding of the role of marching bands in forming the students' character in Islamic boarding schools. The research method used is qualitative, with data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documents. The research participants consisted of marching band administrators, coaches, and students who were members of the marching band unit. The research results show that marching band activities effectively contributed to the development of student discipline, cooperation, creativity, and independence. This combination of training methods had created a holistic environment that supports the students' character development in Islamic boarding schools. Thus, marching band activities not only provide musical experience but also become a beneficial tool in forming strong character and integrity in students.

Keywords

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Introduction

Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions based on Islamic teachings for daily learning activities (Aziz et al., 2021). The students are taught religious values, knowledge of the Quran, hadith, and various aspects of life based on Islamic teachings. The learning carried out in Islamic boarding schools, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, have played a crucial role and had some goals. One of the goals of education in Islamic boarding schools is to form the students' character for the better (Abdurrahman, 2016). This character formation can occur due to many things, including the education system, learning environment, circle of friends, and learning activities. Furthermore, Islamic boarding schools are Islamic education institutions in Indonesia to deepen religious knowledge of Islam and practice it as a guide for everyday life in a traditional way (Fitriyah, 2019).

The students' character needs to be strengthened in social values, leadership, honesty, cooperation, and perseverance to help them succeed in everyday life and society (Pala, 2011). Character education is one of the national development priorities in Indonesia based on the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila. It must be founded on character education to form a society embodying noble, ethical, civilized, moral, and cultured characteristics in line with the Pancasila philosophy to realize the vision of national development. It aims to cultivate human qualities such as faithfulness, virtue, independence, creativity, discipline, intelligence, resilience, skill, physical and mental health, and professionalism. Apart from that, character education is an effort to help students develop all their potential to make these students become tough individuals, competitive, have noble character, morals, and nationality, tolerant, cooperation, patriotic, dynamic developing, oriented towards science and technology, all of which are based on faith and devotion to go based on Pancasila. In several Islamic boarding schools, art and culture are sometimes neglected in educational efforts and character formation. However, art has great potential in complementing traditional education provided by Islamic boarding schools. One form of art that may have an essential role in forming students' character in education is through extracurriculars (Eccles et al., 2003). Extracurriculars are one of the activities in Islamic boarding schools which has a role in developing students' skills and intelligence in the academic field, especially in non-academics (Pujiastuti & Haryadi, 2023). Extracurricular activities are student activities carried out outside mandatory school hours that aim to broaden students' knowledge and insight and develop interests and talents in a fun way. Extracurriculars can also be a forum for developing students' talents and interests, and there will be many activities related to students' hobbies or talents.

One example of extracurricular activities is the Marching band. It is an extracurricular that not only provides fun for students but also has a paramount role in forming student character (McNeal, 1999), especially in terms of discipline, cooperation, and independence. Two aspects are included in the Marching band: discipline and strong teamwork (Adderlet, 2009). Discipline is a key aspect in marching band, where students learn to obey the rules, show up on time, and take good care of their musical instruments. Meanwhile, strong teamwork is required in marching band performances, teaching students the importance of coordinating, communicating, and maintaining timing together. Apart from that, a marching

band is a group of musicians who play wind and percussion instruments in unison. This extracurricular activity typically involves performances aimed at entertaining and serving as an iconic feature in ceremonial events. Marching bands have strong connections with the military and music. Discipline and enthusiasm drive the players to continually practice and deliver their best performances. Collaboration between each section results in beautiful combinations, presented with precision and harmony, which is the objective of every marching band member.

In the context of creativity, marching band members could contribute to formation planning and musical interpretation, allowing them to hone their creativity and learn to think outside the box. In addition, independence is also honed in marching bands, where students learn to master their musical instruments, maintain equipment, and prepare themselves for practices and performances (Richards, 2012). These activities help students become more responsible and independent individuals, skills that are invaluable in their daily lives and wider society. Thus, marching bands in Islamic boarding schools not only provide musical experiences but also form the students' character through developing these aspects. Therefore, this research aims to explore the role of marching bands in forming the students' character in Islamic boarding schools.

Literature Review

The role of marching bands in forming the students' character in Islamic boarding schools is to determine the extent of the role of marching bands in forming the students' character in Islamic boarding schools, evaluate the effectiveness of the use of marching bands in forming the students' character of Islamic boarding schools, and provide recommendations for the development of marching band activities in Islamic boarding schools as one of the efforts to form the students' character better. Extracurricular activities focus on developing students' abilities and responsibilities, preparing for their future, and enriching their social interactions. According to Rais and Syafruddin (2020), there are four functions of extracurricular activities in education: development, social, recreational, and career preparation. The development function supports students' personal growth by fostering new interests, enhancing potential, and creating opportunities for character formation and leadership skills development. Furthermore, social function aims to improve social skills and instill responsibility. This function provides opportunities for students to broaden their social experiences, practice social skills, and internalize moral and social values. The recreational function aims to contribute to student development and transform the school into a more engaging and stimulating environment. Furthermore, the career preparation function focuses on helping students prepare for future careers by developing their skills. Overall, extracurricular activities are crucial for broadening students' knowledge and skills, channeling their talents and interests, and aiding in the comprehensive development of their character. Teachers can also leverage these activities to the next form.

In the learning system at Islamic boarding schools, there are two types of learning activities, namely intracurricular activities and extracurricular activities. Teaching and learning activities carried out in the classroom and following the curriculum that has been prepared are part of intracurricular learning. This activity is mandatory for all students to participate in so

that the expected competency achievements of the students can be measured through an evaluation process in examination activities at the end of the school year. Apart from that, there are extracurricular activities. These activities have a role in increasing creativity and life skills for students and can form the character of students who regularly participate in these activities. This extracurricular activity is not mandatory for all students living in Islamic boarding schools. However, extracurricular activities are highly recommended for all students.

Figure 1. *Men's marching band parade performance*



The various extracurricular activities found in Islamic boarding schools are closely related to the continuity of life outside the institution, one of which is the marching band extracurricular. Marching Band is an extracurricular activity that combines neatness in marching and skill in playing music. A marching band is a group of people who play one or several songs using several combinations of musical instruments (wind, percussion, and several pit instruments) together. The marching band's performance is a combination of musical performances (wind and percussion) and the marching actions of the players. Generally, marching band performances are led by one or two field commanders and are carried out in

open and closed fields in rows that form formations with patterns that constantly change according to the choreographic flow of the songs being played and are also accompanied by dance actions performed by several flag player, Students who take part in Marching band be able to play music.

Marching bands in Indonesia are often found in military and semi-military institutions such as the Military Academy, Police Academy, or cadet schools. For Islamic boarding school circles, marching band units are also often found, such as *Latansa Corps*, *Nada Syiar Daar El-Qolam*, *Gema Nada Darussalam*, and so on, which have succeeded in achieving good achievements at national and even international levels. At the *Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah* Islamic Boarding School in Medan, researchers found two marching band units under the auspices of the Islamic boarding school, namely *Buana Nada Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah Putra* and *Buana Nada Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah Putri*. Even though they are under the same team, each marching band is in a different division, the *Buana Nada Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah Putra* marching band is in the marching band corps division. Meanwhile, the *Buana Nada Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah Putri* marching band is in the Marching Band division.

Figure 2. *Women's marching band training evaluation activities*



Carrying out marching band training is under the responsibility of *Ankubama* (Mainstay Coordinator for Marching Band Affairs), which is part of the management of the student organization within the scope of the coordinator. *Ankubama* has a role in adjusting practice times and preparing practice needs and is responsible for disciplining students who participate in marching band activities. Marching band practice is carried out regularly every Thursday and Friday every week. The marching band at the *Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah* Islamic Boarding School has several coaches who are tailored to the needs of the marching band. The background of some coaches at the Islamic boarding school are alumni of the Islamic boarding school.

The marching band training program at the *Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah* Islamic Boarding School begins with an opening call, physical training, marching practice, sectional musical instrument practice, ensemble musical instrument practice, and evaluation and ends with a closing roll call. In music training, students are taught to be able to read block notation and be able to interpret music when playing it.

Figure 3. *The santri (students) doing combined music practice*



The marching band in the Islamic boarding school aims to train the musicality and character of the students following the discipline that already exists in the Islamic boarding school found in the *panca jiwa* and following the Islamic boarding school's motto.

Table 1. *The panca jiwa and motto of the Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah Islamic Boarding School, Medan*

<i>Panca Jiwa</i>
Sincerity
Simplicity
Independent
<i>Ukhuwah Islamiyah</i>
Freedom

Motto
Virtuous
Healthy
Free Thinking
Knowledgeable

The educational motto at the *Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah* Islamic Boarding School includes four main points, which are the criteria for the formation of Muslim, believer, and Muhsin personalities, namely highly virtuous, healthy, broadly knowledgeable, free-minded, and sincerely charitable.

- Highly Virtuous. It is a fundamental foundation that is instilled in all students at various levels. The implementation of this value is realized through all aspects of education and teaching in Islamic boarding schools.
- Be Healthy. Body health is a necessary aspect of education at the *Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah* Islamic Boarding school. A healthy body allows students to carry out their life and religious duties optimally, and health maintenance is carried out through various regularly scheduled sports activities.
- Broadly Knowledgeable. The students are educated through a learning process that is systematically designed to broaden their horizons and knowledge. They are not only taught facts but also taught ways of learning that can open their horizons of knowledge.
- Free Thinking. Freedom of thought does not mean freedom without principles, especially principles as a Muslim, believer and Muhsin. Freedom is a maturity symbol after the students have a high mind and broad knowledge.

Doing Sincere Charity. It is hoped that by understanding and applying the previous four main characteristics, students can do sincere charity in all their actions, with full intentions for Allah, a sincere heart, and activities carried out for the benefit of the public, as stated in the *Panca Jiwa* Islamic Boarding School.

Meanwhile, the *panca jiwa* are interpreted as the basis of life at the *Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah* Islamic Boarding School below.

- Sincerity. All actions are done with the sole intention of worship. It creates harmony between the *waqf* board, leadership, caregiver council, teachers, and students.
- Simplicity. It emphasizes a simple life, not passive or poor, but the values of strength, ability, fortitude, and self-control in facing life's struggles. Simplicity is the basis for the growth of a strong mentality and character.
- Independent. It refers to the ability to help oneself in studying and taking care of personal interests. Islamic boarding schools are also empowered to be independent without relying on external assistance.
- *Ukhuwwah Islamiyah*. It provides an atmosphere of close brotherhood, where joy and sorrow are felt together. This brotherhood does not only apply while at an Islamic boarding school but also influences the unity of the people after they return to society.
- Free. It signifies freedom in thinking, acting, determining the future, and choosing a path in life. This freedom must be guarded so that it is not misused so that students remain big-hearted and optimistic in facing difficulties by maintaining a balance between positive freedom and responsibility for the principles approved by God.

Methodology

This research used qualitative with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research allows researchers to explore the views and experiences of a phenomenon or people. Meanwhile, descriptive is an approach that aims to understand and explain a particular phenomenon or context in depth (Williams, 2007). In the context of this research, qualitative with a descriptive approach was to explore information about the role of marching bands in forming the students' character in Islamic boarding schools, which focused on values such as discipline, cooperation, creativity, and independence. In addition, it involved collecting high-quality data, such as interviews with marching band instructors, students, and boarding school staff. Interviews are used as a data collection technique to find problems that must be researched and if the researchers want to know things from respondents in more depth about behavior and the meaning of that behavior, direct observation of marching band activities, and analysis of related documents. The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively to identify emerging patterns, themes, and conclusions. According to Forinash (2012), observation is a method for obtaining data in qualitative research. The researchers have been monitoring and describing this teaching and learning activity.

This methodology allowed researchers to gain a more detailed understanding of how the students' character was developed through marching band activities in Islamic boarding schools. In addition, this research results provided a better understanding of the role of marching bands in Islamic boarding schools in forming the students' character, especially discipline, cooperation, creativity, and independence. Data and research findings were able to make a beneficial contribution to the development of education in Islamic boarding schools and increase a better understanding of the value of art and culture in Islamic education.

Findings and Discussion

The *Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah Islamic* Boarding School is an educational institution that offers Islamic-based education to its students. This institution encompasses two levels. They are *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (early secondary education) and *Madrasah Aaliyah* (upper secondary education), located on Jalan Setia Budi Simpang Selayang, Medan. The school's educational approach is divided into formal and non-formal education. The formal education is under the guidance of *Kulliyatul Muallimain Islamiyah* (KMI), which collaborates with *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* and *Madrasah Aliyah* to adapt the learning materials and programs. Non-formal education is supervised by Regional Staff, in collaboration with the language section, *Mabikori* (Coordinating Guidance Council), and other supporting units, including supervising the students' daily activities.

Formal education includes extracurricular activities to enhance the student's academic skills. In contrast, non-formal education through extracurricular activities focuses on non-academic abilities development, interests, and talents, such as participating in a marching band. The marching band at this Islamic boarding school is known as *Buana Nada Raudhatul Hasanah* (BNRH). The daily management of the marching band at the Islamic Boarding School is organized by *Ankumaba*. This management structure includes coaching, public relations, catering, and the provision of supplies and equipment. Additionally, there is a section leader, who is responsible for maintaining discipline in each section.

The concept of extracurricular activities at Islamic boarding schools is an integral component of the student's educational experience. These activities are optional, allowing every student to participate under the school's supervision. The training material for these activities is provided by external trainers. The purpose of these activities is to improve students' skills and cohesiveness, as well as contribute to their personal development. Here are the answers of the participants in this research.

"Marching bands in Islamic boarding schools are a forum for students' creativity in extracurricular activities. In addition, marching bands provide entertainment at special events, such as commemorating Islamic holidays or Islamic boarding school events. Additionally, they also take part in events outside the Islamic boarding school to introduce Islamic boarding school culture to the surrounding community". [Participant A] ["*Marching band di pesantren menjadi wadah kreativitas santri dalam kegiatan ekstrakurikuler. Selain itu, marching band memberikan hiburan pada acara-acara khusus, seperti memperingati hari besar Islam atau acara pesantren. Selain itu, mereka juga mengikuti acara-acara di luar pesantren untuk memperkenalkan budaya pesantren kepada masyarakat sekitar*".]

Marching band extracurricular learning at the *Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah Islamic* Boarding School in Medan is part of the school's overall activities, adjusted to the Islamic boarding school's schedule and regulations. The training methods used here are different from those commonly seen in marching bands.

The training consists of two primary types: regular and intensive sessions. Regular training aims to strengthen the basic skills of the marching band members and is mandatory

for all active participants led by the Head Coordinator of the Marching Band Affairs (*Ankumaba*). It starts with an opening assembly to introduce the day's lesson, followed by a prayer, lasting about 5 to 10 minutes. Afterward, members practice in their respective divisions, guided by senior students acting as division captains. These regular sessions last between 45 to 60 minutes, ending with a closing assembly and evaluation. They focus on teaching basic marching band skills such as drills, postures, and musical techniques. These sessions were scheduled on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 4:30 to 5:45 p.m.

The training method includes lectures, demonstrations, and exercises. The lecture method is used for oral teaching. The following is a demonstration method, where the instructor provides post-theoretical practical examples, allowing students to ask questions for better understanding. This method is very effective for introducing new material or at the beginning of a training session. Last, the practice method is used after students understand the instructions, where they practice under the instructor's supervision. This repetitive method ensures mastery of the material, with the instructor continuously monitoring and evaluating the marching band members' performances.

Outcomes of the extracurricular marching band activities for students and their impact on Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah Islamic Boarding School

The educational process at *Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah* Islamic Boarding School systematically develops the personalities of male and female students. This character-building encompasses various aspects of the students' daily lives, where administrators, *ustadz* (religious teachers), trainers, and the leaders of the Islamic boarding school all participate in the educational process. From the interview results, the researchers found the responses from the participants as follows.

"It was found the impact on the student's character and personality development is very positive. Many positive impacts have been observed, including the development of musical skills, a trait not possessed by everyone. In addition, students who are involved in marching band activities are also recognized for their discipline. They consistently work in groups, emphasizing teamwork in their musical endeavours and daily lives. Additionally, participation in marching band is associated with increased self-confidence and a sense of loyalty. Overall, marching band activities instill discipline and responsibility, in line with the essential values in Islamic boarding school education".
["*Ada dampak terhadap perkembangan karakter dan kepribadian siswa sangat positif. Banyak dampak positif yang terlibat, termasuk pengembangan keterampilan bermusik, suatu sifat yang tidak dikuasai oleh semua orang. Selain itu, siswa yang terlibat dalam kegiatan marching band juga diakui kedisiplinannya. Mereka secara konsisten bekerja dalam kelompok, menekankan kerja tim dalam upaya musik dan kehidupan sehari-hari mereka. Selain itu, partisipasi dalam marching band dikaitkan dengan peningkatan kepercayaan diri dan rasa kesetiaan. Secara keseluruhan, kegiatan marching band menanamkan kedisiplinan dan tanggung jawab, selaras dengan nilai-nilai esensial dalam pendidikan pesantren.*"]

The character traits instilled are based on the "*Panca Jiwa*" (five spirits) of the Islamic boarding school and its motto, forming the core values of character education for the students. In addition, to the "*Panca Jiwa*", *Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah* Islamic Boarding School also upholds a special motto in its approach to student education. The amalgamation of the "*Panca Jiwa*" and the Islamic Boarding School Motto aims to form students into individuals with strong religious values and resilience in their social and personal lives. Based on interviews with caregivers, it was emphasized that the key to forming good character in administrators and students lies in the exemplary leadership provided. Leaders play a crucial role in guiding teachers to guide student administrators. Subsequently, these values are imparted by the administrators to the students, resulting in the significant reinforcement of character values from administrators, mentors, and leaders. Leaders need to offer guidance effectively, use positive language, set commendable examples, embrace rather than punish, and win the hearts of those they mentor, fostering discipline and character building. In marching band, this approach is instrumental in forming students' character. Overall, the development process at Islamic boarding schools does not solely focus on forming the external aspects of students (*Santri*) but also nurtures their internal awareness and knowledge of religious development. Each caregiver holds specific responsibilities in their respective areas, serving as a role model and controller for students to help them cultivate good character. It includes caregivers involved in the marching band.

“Even though it is different from marching bands in high schools in general, marching band extracurricular activities in Islamic boarding schools still play a big role in student development. These activities focus on improving musical abilities, discipline, cooperation, self-confidence, and loyalty. Not only beneficial for parents and but these activities also help in promoting Islamic boarding schools, attracting the interest of prospective students and parents, and providing a platform for the student's creativity in the art of musical performance.” [Participant B] [*Meskipun berbeda dengan marching band di SMA pada umumnya, namun kegiatan ekstrakurikuler marching band di pesantren tetap berperan besar dalam perkembangan siswa. Kegiatan tersebut fokus pada peningkatan kemampuan bermusik, kedisiplinan, kerjasama, rasa percaya diri, dan loyalitas. Tidak hanya bermanfaat bagi para santri, kegiatan ini juga membantu memajukan pesantren, menarik minat calon santri dan orang tua, serta menjadi wadah kreativitas santri dalam seni pertunjukan musik.*”]

Apart from its core educational program, the *Ar-Raudlatul Hasanah* Islamic Boarding School is an institution that seamlessly integrates daily life with formal and informal education. This institution embraces a modern approach while preserving its religious values in everyday activities. Due to their open-minded ethos, Islamic boarding schools are effective at incorporating technology into their students' education.

“Teacher at the Islamic boarding school, this marching band activity has a very positive effect on students in the formation of student character, where the marching band trains students to be disciplined, diligent, and united within themselves.” [Participant

C] [*"Guru di pondok pesantren, kegiatan marching band ini memberikan pengaruh yang sangat positif bagi santri dalam pembentukan karakter santri, dimana marching band melatih santri untuk disiplin, rajin, dan persatuan yang ada dalam diri mereka."*]

“Music is regarded as a learning tool that influences the intelligence and creativity of its practitioners, fostering an atmosphere of enthusiasm and cohesion in various activities. Within this Islamic boarding school, speakers are installed in each dormitory, connected to a broadcast station that plays Arabic and English music every afternoon. This practice stems from the belief that one effective method of learning a foreign language is through listening to and articulating its words. Furthermore, instrumental music is frequently utilized in various activities at the Islamic boarding school, including dramas, major events, and extracurricular exercises”.[Teacher] [*"Musik dianggap sebagai sarana pembelajaran yang mempengaruhi kecerdasan dan kreativitas para pelakunya, menumbuhkan suasana semangat dan kekompakan dalam berbagai aktivitas. Di lingkungan pesantren ini, speaker dipasang di setiap asrama, terhubung dengan stasiun siaran yang memutar musik Arab dan Inggris setiap sore. Praktik ini bermula dari keyakinan bahwa salah satu metode belajar bahasa asing yang efektif adalah melalui mendengarkan dan mengartikulasikan kata-katanya. Selain itu, musik instrumental sering digunakan dalam berbagai kegiatan di pesantren, termasuk drama, acara besar, dan latihan ekstrakurikuler."*]

The marching band extracurricular activity at this Islamic boarding school is highly beneficial for the students and the institution itself. Participation in the marching band is limited to students with musical talents. The program not only teaches music but also integrates marching skills, ensuring that only the most capable and dedicated students can partake and excel in this activity.

At this Islamic boarding school, marching band is equivalent to other arts extracurricular activities, such as band, contemporary *Nasyid*, *Qasidah*, and others. The school views music not as a prohibited element but as a tool for socializing and introducing the Islamic boarding school to the wider community. Particularly in the realm of music, the school provides its marches and hymns to all students at the start of their education, reinforcing the idea that music, if used appropriately and in moderation, is not destructive.

Conclusion

In this research, the researchers have investigated the role of marching band activities in forming the students' character in Islamic boarding schools. The research results showed that marching band activities have significant potential in developing the student's character, with one of the main factors being appropriate training methods, namely lectures, demonstrations, and drills. Through the lecture method, marching band instructors provide a theoretical understanding of values such as discipline, cooperation, creativity, and independence. It helps students understand the importance of these values in the context of marching band activities and their daily lives.

Demonstration methods play a crucial role in illustrating how these values are implemented in practice. The instructor shows concrete examples of how the rules,

regulations, teamwork, creativity, and independence are applied during marching band practice. It provides students with a visual understanding of the importance of implementing these values.

Meanwhile, the drill method or independent practice allows students to internalize and apply these values in their daily practice. Independent practice provides students with the opportunity to hone personal discipline, practice cooperation in moving and playing music, develop creativity in designing movements and interpreting music, and understand how important independence is in caring for musical instruments and preparing oneself for practice. With this combination of approaches, students can internalize the values of discipline, cooperation, creativity, and independence, which ultimately influence their character development. Therefore, marching band activities in Islamic boarding schools not only provide musical experience but are also a useful means of supporting the formation of strong character and integrity in students.

Islamic boarding schools are a place to instil character values in students and are expected to improve the level of education through increasing extracurricular activities and the quality of teaching staff. Therefore, the recommendation is that schools prioritize the maintenance of marching band musical instruments so they can still be used in marching band extracurricular activities for future generations. Additionally, the research offers several suggestions for various stakeholders:

- Islamic Boarding School Administrators. It is recommended that administrators focus on developing and improving the quality of marching band instruments. Providing access and support to students who participate in marching band activities is essential so that they can explore and showcase their potential.
- *Santri* and *Santrivati* (Male and Female Students). The students are encouraged to increase their training efforts and concentrate on developing their abilities while adhering to the discipline inherent in Islamic boarding schools.
- Marching Band Coaches and Administrators. Coaches and administrators need to preserve the uniqueness and characteristics of marching bands in Islamic boarding schools. It should be done while respecting the norms and rules in the Islamic boarding school environment.

However, this recommendation aims to further strengthen the positive impact of marching band extracurricular activities on character development in the Islamic boarding school environment.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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