

THE ROLE OF CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER AS LIVING HERITAGE IN SHAPING THE DISCIPLINARY CHARACTER OF SANTRI AT AL FURQON KAJEN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas tentang bagaimana praktik shalat berjamaah di pesantren bukan hanya sebagai ibadah rutin, tetapi juga sebagai sebuah warisan hidup yang diwariskan dan dilestarikan dari generasi ke generasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran shalat berjamaah dalam membentuk karakter disiplin santri di Pondok Pesantren Al Furqon Kajen. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan dokumentasi untuk menggali pengalaman santri serta kebijakan pesantren terkait pelaksanaan shalat berjamaah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keteraturan waktu, kebersamaan, dan kepatuhan terhadap tata tertib dalam shalat berjamaah menjadi instrumen penting dalam internalisasi nilai disiplin. Selain itu, shalat berjamaah berfungsi sebagai media pembentukan habitus religius yang memperkuat identitas santri sebagai individu yang taat, teratur, dan bertanggung jawab. Simpulan menegaskan bahwa shalat berjamaah berfungsi sebagai *living heritage* (warisan hidup) yang efektif dalam pembinaan karakter disiplin, sehingga perlu dipertahankan dan dioptimalkan sebagai strategi pendidikan karakter di lingkungan pesantren.

Kata kunci: Kedisiplinan, Pendidikan Karakter, Pondok Pesantren, Sholat Jamaah, Warisan Hidup.

ABSTRACT

This article discusses how the practice of congregational prayer in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) is not merely a routine worship activity but also a living heritage that is passed down and preserved from generation to generation. This study aims to analyze the role of congregational prayer in shaping the disciplinary character of santri (students) at Al Furqon Kajen Islamic Boarding School. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews and documentation to explore the santri' experiences and the pesantren's policies regarding the implementation of congregational prayer. The results indicate that temporal regularity, togetherness, and

adherence to regulations in congregational prayer serve as essential instruments in the internalization of disciplinary values. Furthermore, congregational prayer functions as a medium for forming a religious habitus that strengthens the santri' identity as obedient, orderly, and responsible individuals. The conclusion emphasizes that congregational prayer acts as an effective living heritage in fostering disciplinary character, thus necessitating its maintenance and optimization as a character education strategy within the pesantren environment.

Keywords: *Character Education, Congregational Prayer, Disciplinary Character, Islamic Boarding School, Living Heritage*

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of declining disciplinary character among the younger generation has become a crucial issue that continues to draw attention in both formal and non-formal educational settings. The rapid development of technology, the flow of globalization, and increasingly instant lifestyles have contributed to a decrease in discipline, such as lack of adherence to time, rules, and responsibilities (Nawawi, 2025). This condition not only affects individuals but also has broader implications for the quality of social life. In the context of Islamic education, pesantren play a strategic role as institutions that not only transmit knowledge but also shape *santri* (student) character through sustained religious practices (Triyono & Mediawati, 2023). One such practice is congregational prayer, which is carried out routinely and in a structured manner. Academically, this study is important to explore how religious practices as living heritage can foster disciplinary character. Practically, the findings are expected to contribute to strengthening character education based on religious traditions in pesantren.

A number of previous studies have examined the role of religious practices in shaping *santri* character, particularly within Islamic boarding schools. Research has shown that routine worship activities, such as congregational prayer, contribute positively to discipline, responsibility, and obedience to rules (Arifin et al., 2025). Several scholars have also highlighted Islamic boarding school as effective environments for character education through habituation and exemplary conduct. However, most of these studies tend to focus on general character formation without specifically analyzing congregational prayer as a form of living heritage that carries

cultural, historical, and spiritual continuity. In addition, prior research often emphasizes outcomes rather than exploring the internal processes and meanings experienced by *santri* in practicing discipline through such rituals. There is also limited attention to the contextual uniqueness of specific islamic boarding school, including Al Furqon Kajen Islamic Boarding School. Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by examining more deeply the role of congregational prayer as living heritage in shaping the disciplinary character of *santri*.

Based on the limitations of previous studies, this research aims to examine more deeply the role of congregational prayer as a living heritage in shaping the disciplinary character of *santri* at Al Furqon Kajen Islamic Boarding School. This study seeks to explore not only the observable outcomes but also the internalization process of disciplinary values developed through the routine and structured practice of congregational prayer. In addition, it aims to reveal the meanings constructed by *santri* toward this practice and how these values are internalized in their daily lives. By employing a contextual approach, this research also highlights the unique characteristics of the islamic boarding school environment in supporting the formation of disciplinary character through sustained religious traditions. Specifically, this study focuses on the relationship between congregational prayer, the concept of living heritage, and the development of *santri*'s disciplinary character.

This study is based on the assumption that congregational prayer, as a form of living heritage, plays an important role in shaping the disciplinary character of *santri* at Al Furqon Kajen Islamic Boarding School. The routine, structured, and collective practice of congregational prayer is believed to serve as an effective medium for instilling disciplinary values through habituation, role modeling, and social reinforcement. From a qualitative perspective, the relationship examined is causal in nature, focusing on how the implementation of congregational prayer influences the development of discipline in terms of punctuality, adherence to rules, and personal responsibility among *santri*. Therefore, this study seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of internalizing disciplinary values through this practice, as well as the meanings constructed by *santri* in carrying it out in their daily lives.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the meanings, practices, and the process of inheriting disciplinary values through congregational prayer activities at Al Furqon Kajen Islamic Boarding School. The research site was selected due to its well-preserved religious traditions and the institution's openness to character education studies. Participants were determined using a purposive sampling technique with a key informant strategy. Three primary informants were intentionally selected based on their strategic roles: the *Kyai* (Head of the Pesantren as the policy formulator and source of values), the *Ustadzah* as the person in charge of daily guidance and supervision, and the *Santri* as the subjects directly experiencing the practice of congregational prayer. The selection was concluded with these three informants as they comprehensively represent the dimensions of policy, implementation, and experience, aligning with qualitative principles that prioritize depth of meaning over sample quantity (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Data were collected through three primary techniques. First, semi structured interviews served as the core instrument to delve into the *santri*'s lived experiences, habituation strategies, and the perception of the disciplinary values formed. The interview guide was structured around three dimensions: punctuality, adherence to regulations, and the meaning of togetherness in congregational prayer. Second, documentation in the form of activity schedules, Islamic boarding school regulations, guidance records, and religious activity archives was used as supporting data. The primary instrument in this study is the researcher, equipped with an interview guide, structured observation sheets, and voice recording devices. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which involves data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). Thematic analysis was applied to identify patterns of disciplinary value internalization, mechanisms of living heritage transmission, and the formation of religious habitus. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, as well as member checking by confirming preliminary findings with the key informants. The entire research process was conducted in

accordance with academic ethical principles, including informed consent, identity confidentiality, and the use of data strictly for academic purposes.

DISCUSSION

Congregational Prayer as Living Heritage and Institutional Practice

Congregational prayer in Al Furqon Kajen Islamic Boarding School functions as a living heritage because it continuously transmits religious, moral, and social values across generations. As emphasized by the *Kyai*, congregational prayer is not merely a ritual obligation, but an implementation of *fastabiqul khoirot* (competing in goodness), which is expected to be internalized in all aspects of *santri* life. This indicates that the practice embodies a value system that extends beyond ritual performance into daily behavior, making it a sustained and lived tradition. Furthermore, congregational prayer reflects the principle of equality as a core inherited value. The *Kyai* highlighted that all individuals stand in the same row (*saf*) with equal status during prayer. This practice reinforces social values such as solidarity, humility, and mutual respect among *santri* (Munir, 2025).

At the same time, congregational prayer also operates as an institutional practice that is systematically organized within the *pesantren* environment. The implementation is governed by strict rules, including the requirement for *santri* to be حاضر (present) in the mosque before the *adhan* is completed, supported by active supervision through the active prodding (locally known as *oprak-oprak*) method. These structured regulations demonstrate that the sustainability of this practice is not only culturally inherited but also institutionally maintained. In addition, the application of educational sanctions reinforces the institutional dimension of congregational prayer. *Santri* who violate the rules are given productive tasks, such as cleaning the mosque, which aim to instill discipline rather than merely punish. This approach reflects a deliberate pedagogical strategy in which religious practice is integrated into a broader system of character education (Sinta, 2025).

The integration of living heritage and institutional practice makes congregational prayer an effective medium for internalizing disciplinary character. The structured and repetitive nature of the practice fosters punctuality, adherence to rules, and a sense of responsibility among *santri*. Therefore, congregational

prayer in this context should be understood not only as a religious obligation but also as a dynamic educational mechanism that bridges inherited values and institutional regulation in shaping the holistic character of *santri*.

Discipline Values and Their Internalization through Prayer Practices

The practice of congregational prayer at Al Furqon Kajen Islamic Boarding School serves as a fundamental instrument in deeply embedding disciplinary values within the *santri*. This occurs because congregational prayer acts as a systematic character education strategy through a structured, repetitive, and consistent habituation process. Field findings reveal that this habituation is manifested in standard operating procedures that require *santri* to be in the mosque before the call to prayer (*azan*) concludes, supported by active supervision through the *oprak-oprak* (direct summoning) method by the *ustadzah* to ensure punctuality. Consequently, congregational prayer becomes an effective medium for internalizing disciplinary values by integrating spiritual obedience with the daily behavioral regularity of the *santri*.

Philosophically, the internalization of discipline is based on a spirit of obedience that is both proactive and competitive in goodness. The *Kyai* emphasizes that congregational prayer is a tangible implementation of the *fastabiqul khoirot* value, which aims to encourage *santri* to constantly strive for the best self-quality through devotion. He explained that the discipline formed through this spirit is not merely cognitively oriented but also instills an awareness that discipline is the primary key to success in all areas of activity. Therefore, the discipline developed in this Islamic boarding school is not just mechanical compliance with rules, but rather a value-consciousness that has been spiritually internalized (Putra et al., 2024).

The disciplinary character resulting from the practice of congregational prayer also possesses a social dimension that strengthens collective solidarity and responsibility. Placing *santri* in equal prayer rows (*saf*) regardless of social background fosters a sense of togetherness and compassion among one another (Muhammad & Wajdi, 2025). Student informants stated that their motivation to remain disciplined often arises from the consistency of their peers and the existence

of an organic social control mechanism where *santri* remind each other or inquire about the reasons for a friend's absence from the congregation. Thus, the discipline formed is not only individual but also becomes a collective consciousness that strengthens the social identity of the *santri* within the islamic boarding school environment (Abdurachman et al., 2021)..

The internalization of discipline through congregational prayer directly transforms into superior time management skills within the academic lives of the *santri*. Strict time regulations require *santri* to perform precise calculations in balancing university schedules, personal needs, and religious responsibilities. Interview data shows that *santri* feel more capable of managing their sleep, bathing, and study times, even experiencing a sense of mental tranquility that provides longer study durations because the obligation of prayer has been fulfilled at the beginning of its time. This proves that devotional discipline automatically integrates academic discipline into a single behavioral ecosystem that is consistent, responsible, and sustainable.

Formation of Disciplinary Character and Religious Habitus of *Santri*

The process of forming a disciplinary character begins with strict adherence to the dimension of temporal regularity. The research findings indicate that the pesantren's standard operating procedures, which require *santri* (student) to be in the mosque before the call to prayer (*azan*) concludes, have created a new "biological clock" for the *santri*. Based on interviews with the *Ustadzah*, the active supervision method known as *oprak-oprak* (direct summoning) compels *santri* to perform precise time calculations, balancing their academic schedules, personal needs such as bathing and sleeping, and ensuring their return to the pesantren before the *Maghrib* prayer begins.

In line with the principles of living heritage, these disciplinary values are no longer perceived as external compulsions but have transformed into a religious habitus. Data from student informants show that they do not feel burdened by these strict regulations because they experience tangible benefits, specifically mental tranquility during study sessions. When the *Isya* prayer is performed punctually in congregation, *santri* feel they have a longer and more directed duration to focus on

their university assignments. This proves that devotional discipline automatically integrates academic discipline into a single behavioral ecosystem. The *Kyai* emphasized that positive behavioral changes and self-quality improvements serve as primary indicators that these values have become deeply ingrained in the *santri'* character.

Character building at Al Furqon Kajen Islamic Boarding School is further strengthened by a mutually supportive social environment. The concept of *fastabiqul khoirot* (competing in goodness) emphasized by the *Kyai* fosters a positive spiritual competition. Interestingly, the *santri'* greatest motivation to remain disciplined stems not only from leadership figures but also from the consistency of peers who consistently prioritize congregational prayer. There is an organic social control mechanism where *santri* remind one another or inquire about the reasons for a peer's absence from the congregation, indicating that disciplinary character has become a collective consciousness.

Although a habitus has been established, the role of sanctions is maintained to mitigate internal obstacles such as laziness. The sanctions applied are educational and productive, such as cleaning the mosque, aimed at providing a deterrent effect without compromising the *santri'* dignity. The accumulation of weekly sanctions monitored by the management ensures that this living heritage tradition maintains its authority and remains resilient against the influences of modernization.

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ABSENSI SHOLAT BERJAMAAH KAMAR AR-RAHMAH

| No. | Nama | Senin | | Selasa | | Rabu | | Kamis | | Jum'at | | Sabtu | | Ahad | |
|-----|-------------------------|-------|---|--------|---|------|---|-------|---|--------|---|-------|---|------|---|
| | | S | M | S | M | S | M | S | M | S | M | S | M | S | M |
| 1. | Chory Nur Aisyah | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| 2. | Wahdatul Mustafidah | . | . | H | T | H | T | H | T | H | T | H | T | H | T |
| 3. | Nadiah Ramadhani Syarif | H | H | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| 4. | Jihan Arum Sakinah | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| 5. | Aulia Putriana (122) | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H | H |
| 6. | Khusnul Fatimah | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| 7. | Ardelian Salsabila | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| 8. | Fani Rifqoh | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| 9. | Alfa Musyarofah (144) | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| 10. | Zahwa Zamabiya | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| 11. | Valda Akhsanah Mila | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| 12. | Nawang Wulan | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| 13. | Syafa Athayah Ghaidah | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| 14. | Farkhanun Azah | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| 15. | Aminatu Zulfia Alysa | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . |

Keterangan:
S: Sakit
T: Terlambat
I: Ijin

Figure 1. Appendix: Photographs/Records of the Congregational Prayer Attendance Book at Al Furqon Kajen Islamic Boarding School.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that congregational prayer at Al Furqon Kajen Islamic Boarding School functions not only as a religious obligation but also as an effective 'living heritage' that continuously transmits disciplinary values across generations. The integration of religious traditions and institutional regulations creates a structured and sustainable system that supports character education. Through the consistent and collective practice of congregational prayer, values such as punctuality, obedience to rules, responsibility, and togetherness are systematically internalized in the daily lives of *santri*. The findings reveal that the internalization of disciplinary character occurs through several key mechanisms, namely habituation, role modeling, supervision, enforcement of rules and educational sanctions, as well as strong social support among peers. These mechanisms transform discipline from an external obligation into an internal awareness, reflected in the formation of a religious habitus. As a result, *santri* develop not only spiritual discipline but also academic and social discipline, demonstrating the holistic impact of this practice.

Furthermore, congregational prayer fosters a collective consciousness where discipline is maintained not only through institutional control but also through peer encouragement and shared values. Although challenges such as internal motivation and laziness remain, the structured system and consistent practice ensure the sustainability of this tradition. Therefore, congregational prayer can be regarded as a strategic and effective medium for character education in pesantren, highlighting the importance of preserving and optimizing this living heritage to strengthen the disciplinary character of future generations.

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