

Student Obedience and Spiritual Well-Being in Islamic Education: Exploring the Role of *Adab* in Teacher–Student Relationships

Dwi Cinta Nur Sabila¹, Desyilia Widyasari², Ismail³, Hurin Karima Santosa⁴, Raisah Adilatin Nasyithoh,⁵ Zainudin Hasan⁶

Pendidikan Agama Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia ¹²³⁴⁵

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia ⁶

*e-mail correspondence: cintasabila242@gmail.com¹

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between student obedience to teachers and students’ inner satisfaction within the context of Islamic boarding school education. Despite extensive discussions on teacher–student relationships in Islamic education, limited research has explored how obedience grounded in *adab* (ethical conduct) contributes to students’ spiritual well-being and learning experiences. Employing a qualitative case study design, this research involved eight students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis and were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings reveal three major themes. First, obedience rooted in *adab* is associated with psychological tranquility, enhanced knowledge internalization, and the emergence of *hudhur al-qalb* (presence of heart), which students perceive as a form of inner satisfaction during the learning process. Second, students’ compliance is shaped by multiple factors, including teachers’ role modeling, students’ understanding of the philosophical foundations of institutional rules, and the influence of the surrounding social environment. These factors significantly affect students’ emotional stability and attitudes toward learning. Third, sustainable obedience is more effectively fostered through value internalization, reflective guidance, and open dialogue than through fear-based disciplinary approaches. This study contributes to the literature on Islamic education by conceptualizing obedience not merely as behavioral conformity but as a multidimensional process linked to spiritual well-being and meaningful learning. The findings suggest that educational institutions can strengthen students’ holistic development by promoting *adab*-based educational practices that integrate moral formation, supportive teacher–student relationships, and reflective engagement with institutional norms.

Kata kunci:

kepatuhan siswa, kepuasan batin, pendidikan Islam

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyelidiki hubungan antara ketaatan siswa kepada guru dan kepuasan batin siswa dalam konteks pendidikan sekolah berasrama Islam. Meskipun telah banyak diskusi tentang hubungan guru-siswa dalam pendidikan Islam, penelitian yang mengeksplorasi bagaimana ketaatan yang berlandaskan *adab* (perilaku etis) berkontribusi pada

kesejahteraan spiritual dan pengalaman belajar siswa masih terbatas. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan delapan siswa yang dipilih melalui pengambilan sampel bertujuan. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen, dan dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Temuan menunjukkan tiga tema utama. Pertama, ketaatan yang berakar pada adab dikaitkan dengan ketenangan psikologis, peningkatan internalisasi pengetahuan, dan munculnya hudhur al-qalb (kehadiran hati), yang dirasakan siswa sebagai bentuk kepuasan batin selama proses belajar. Kedua, kepatuhan siswa dibentuk oleh berbagai faktor, termasuk peran guru sebagai teladan, pemahaman siswa tentang landasan filosofis aturan institusional, dan pengaruh lingkungan sosial di sekitarnya. Faktor-faktor ini secara signifikan memengaruhi stabilitas emosional dan sikap siswa terhadap pembelajaran. Ketiga, ketaatan yang berkelanjutan lebih efektif dipupuk melalui internalisasi nilai, bimbingan reflektif, dan dialog terbuka daripada melalui pendekatan disiplin berbasis rasa takut. Studi ini berkontribusi pada literatur tentang pendidikan Islam dengan mengkonseptualisasikan ketaatan bukan hanya sebagai kesesuaian perilaku tetapi sebagai proses multidimensional yang terkait dengan kesejahteraan spiritual dan pembelajaran yang bermakna. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa lembaga pendidikan dapat memperkuat perkembangan holistik siswa dengan mempromosikan praktik pendidikan berbasis adab yang mengintegrasikan pembentukan moral, hubungan guru-siswa yang suportif, dan keterlibatan reflektif dengan norma-norma institusional.

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INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of education should be built on the foundation of student obedience to the teacher born from deep spiritual awareness, not coercion, so as to give birth to the essential inner satisfaction of each individual (Ihsan et al., 2025). In this ideal condition, the relationship between students and caregivers is harmoniously established based on the pure value of ta'dim , where obedience becomes a bridge for the transfer of knowledge and blessings, creating psychological calm and intrinsic motivation to develop (Ganiau). Students should feel happiness when obeying the teacher's directions because they believe it is a form of worship and a way to get closer to God, making the environment of ma'had a comfortable second home. However, the social facts that are happening today are in stark contrast to these noble expectations significantly. In the field, compliance is often pseudo-and coercive, driven by fear of disciplinary sanctions or rigid hierarchical pressure, rather than by genuine conscience. This triggers inner dissatisfaction, chronic anxiety, and alienation among young students. Instead of feeling peace of mind, many students experience stress due to inhumane and less dialogical demands for compliance. Inner conflict arises when the values of

sincerity are replaced by a culture of fear of wrong that inhibits creativity (Istianah & Azizah, 2025). This condition injures the essence of pesantren education which is supposed to soothe the soul and enlighten the intellect. If this gap between the ideals of religious values and social reality is not immediately bridged through the reform of the parenting approach, then the goal of the formation of noble character will fail completely, leaving a psychological wound for the students who should find inner satisfaction through a learning process full of compassion, mutual respect, and humanizing the relationship between educators and students in the auspices of Islamic educational institutions (Luailik, 2024).

This phenomenon of the difference between the idealism of obedience and a cohesive reality has attracted the attention of academics widely (Rahman, 2020). Some recent research supports the importance of this issue. The study found that forced obedience significantly reduced the natural enthusiasm for learning of students. Research also emphasizes that repetition without sincere spiritual awareness actually causes anxiety in learning (Alma, 2025). This research also highlights a strong and positive relationship between inner satisfaction and academic outcomes in the modern pesantren environment. In addition, the study revealed that a humane approach to foster care increases voluntary obedience compared to punitive methods. Finally, it noted the long-term negative psychological impact of harsh discipline on the mental health of young students (Al-kaff et al., 2026). Although some of these studies confirm that fear-based obedience undermines inner satisfaction, there are still significant and unmet research gaps. There has been no research that specifically combines an in-depth qualitative analysis of the micro-dynamics of student compliance with teachers with a quantitative measurement of the level of inner satisfaction on an ongoing basis, specifically in the setting of certain Islamic boarding schools (Irfieh & Sanusi, 2026). Most of the research is general to other Islamic boarding schools or only discusses one psychological aspect without being related to the policies of a particular institution. This gap is very important because the cultural context and internal policies of the institution have characteristics that affect the interaction between teachers and students specifically. Without filling the gap, the solutions offered may not be suitable for the needs of local stakeholders. Therefore, this research exists to bridge this gap by examining how the transformation of compliance from coercive to conscious can be optimized in order to achieve sustainable inner satisfaction in this specific institution, making a new empirical contribution (Susanto et al., 2025).

The data collection technique was carried out thoroughly through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and analysis of documents related to the applicable ma'had regulations. The interview served as the main instrument which was carried out for a total of 180 minutes, divided into 3 different sessions to 8 speakers who were selected *purposively* and representatively. The speakers consisted of ma'had administrators and active students to obtain a balanced perspective between givers and receivers of rules in the hierarchy of Islamic education. The interview process is carried out using Javanese to maintain the familiarity and depth of the speakers' emotional expressions, which are then transliterated into Indonesian with the full consent of the speakers in order to maintain the accuracy of meaning. Furthermore, the data is

translated into English for international scientific publications, ensuring that the nuances of local meaning are preserved in the complex and sensitive language translation process. To maintain research ethics and personal data security, the names of the sources are disguised by changing them to initials in accordance with the needs of confidentiality and protection of the research subject. Observations were conducted directly to see compliance practices in the field, while document analysis was used to reinforce the validity of officially applicable written rules. The implementation of this technique requires the researcher to be sensitive to the thick and specific local cultural context. The division of interview sessions aims to build strong relationships so that the data produced is more authentic and not superficial or mere talk. Each session is recorded and recorded in detail to ensure no important information is missed during the field data mining process. Strict translation procedures are carried out by linguists to maintain the accuracy of the specific psychological and religious terminology used by students. Thus, the data collected has high integrity and is ready for further analysis to answer the problem formulation (Anami, 2021).

This research is very important and urgent to be carried out immediately because it is related to the mental health crisis and the potential for failure in achieving the goal of character education in the pesantren environment, which can damage the young generation of Muslims systemically. If this condition of coercive obedience that causes inner dissatisfaction is left without intervention based on empirical data, the impact will not only be in the form of a temporary decline in academic achievement, but also long-term psychological trauma that will hinder the social functioning of students in society in the future. The urgency of this research is increasingly clear considering the increasing cases of anxiety among pesantren students after the pandemic, so it is necessary to accurately map the specific dynamics in the pesantren environment that has a different culture compared to other pesantren (Hakim, 2012). Previous research is still general and has not provided contextual solutions that can be directly implemented by local caregivers. Without an in-depth study that integrates compliance and internal satisfaction specific to the institution, parenting policy reform will be based only on assumptions, not on accountable scientific evidence. Therefore, this research is very crucial as a strategic foundation to overhaul the disciplinary approach from punitive to educational, in order to save the psychological integrity of students. Delaying this study means allowing the degradation of spiritual values to continue unchecked. The results of this study are expected to be an immediate guide for policymakers to create a humane educational ecosystem, ensuring that compliance arises from awareness, not from fear, so that the noble goals of Islamic education can be achieved optimally and sustainably for the benefit of the ummah and maintaining the dignity of Islamic educational institutions in the midst of the challenges of modernity that are increasingly complex today. and make a theoretical contribution to the development of contemporary Islamic educational psychology which still lacks specific references to local dynamics (Syafei, 2025).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to investigate in

depth the social phenomena that occur in the Islamic education environment based on pesantren in a comprehensive and holistic way. The qualitative approach was chosen because it can capture the subjective meaning behind students' compliance actions as well as inner satisfaction that cannot be measured by statistical numbers alone (Poltak & Widjaja, 2024). The design of the case study allows the researcher to limit the research system to a specific context, namely the environment of the pesantren institution, so that the analysis can focus on the unique dynamics that occur within it without being disturbed by irrelevant external variables (Septiana & Khoiriyah, 2024). The implementation of this methodology is carried out by placing researchers as the main instrument that goes directly into the field to observe the natural interaction between teachers and students. The researcher does not manipulate the conditions of the field, but rather records reality as it is according to naturalistic principles.

Through this design, researchers can build a deep understanding of the gap between normative expectations and empirical reality (Akbar, 2024). The main focus is to understand the social, cultural, and psychological processes that shape obedience behavior and its impact on the emotional state of students. This approach is particularly relevant to uncover the fundamental reasons why coercive obedience still occurs despite being contrary to the ideal values of Islamic education. Thus, the design of the case study provides space for the emergence of new themes that may not have been anticipated before, ensuring that the research results are truly based on rich and contextual field data, not just theoretical assumptions that are far from the daily reality of the educational actors in the environment (Fitrah, 2018). In addition, this approach facilitates an in-depth exploration of the nuances of local culture that affect hierarchical relationships, ensuring that the interpretation of the data is inseparable from the socio-cultural context that surrounds the daily interactions between caregivers and students in pesantren-based educational institutions.

The data collection technique is carried out by the triangulation method through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis to ensure the richness of information (Malik et al., 2025). The interview was conducted for a total of 180 minutes which was divided into 3 different sessions to 8 speakers, including teachers, and students, to get perspectives from various parties. data collected through online interviews via WhatsApp if there is data saturation that has not been met during face-to-face interviews. The interview process is conducted in Javanese to build emotional closeness and comfort of the speakers, then transliterated into Indonesian with the full consent of the speakers, and finally translated into English for the purposes of international scientific publications. The names of the sources were disguised by changing them to the initials AQ, for example, up to A8 in order to maintain the security of their personal data and maintain research ethics. Observations were carried out to see firsthand compliance practices in classrooms and dormitories, while document analysis included a review of rules of conduct and student diaries. The implementation of this technique requires high precision in recording field notes and audio recordings to maintain data accuracy.

The use of regional languages in interviews is very important because many expressions of feelings related to inner satisfaction can only be conveyed authentically

in their native language. The gradual translation process ensures that no meaning is lost when converted into a foreign language. The researcher also ensured that *informed consent* was obtained before the session began. By involving three stakeholder elements, the data obtained becomes more comprehensive and minimizes one-sided bias. Neat documentation is physical evidence of the validity of the data collection process that has been carried out in accordance with strict qualitative research operational procedure standards and can be accounted for academically. The selection of resource persons uses *purposive sampling techniques* to ensure that they have first-hand experience related to the phenomenon of compliance and inner satisfaction that is being researched in depth in the field.

Table 1: Informant Profile

NO	Name	Residence	Gender	Old
1.	AQ	Ma'had UIN Walisongo	Women	20
2.	ZU	Ma'had UIN Walisongo	Women	21
3.	DW	Ma'had UIN Walisongo	Women	20
4.	AI	Ma'had UIN Walisongo	Women	21
5.	HK	Ma'had UIN Walisongo	Women	18
6.	LF	Ma'had UIN Walisongo	Women	18
7.	NS	Ma'had UIN Walisongo	Women	19
8.	RA	Ma'had UIN Walisongo	Women	19

The validity of the data is validated using a triangulation model of sources and techniques to ensure the maximum credibility of research findings and can be accounted for. Triangulation is carried out by comparing the data of interview results between different sources and cross-matching them with the results of field observations and official documents of existing institutions (Mulyana & Martoso, 2024). This aims to minimize the subjective bias of researchers and ensure the consistency of information obtained from various diverse and relevant perspectives. Once the data is valid, the analysis is carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive model which consists of three flows of activities that occur simultaneously and continuously throughout the study. The first step is data reduction, where the researcher summarizes, selects, and focuses on the main things that focus on the specific theme of compliance and inner satisfaction of students. The second step is the presentation of data in the form of a matrix or a systematic logical narrative to facilitate the drawing of accurate and structured conclusions. The final step is the withdrawal of conclusions that are verified continuously during the research process to ensure the final validity of the field findings. The implementation of this model ensures that the findings are not only descriptive but also analytical and well-structured according to scientific principles (Malik et al., 2025). The researcher strictly *co-opted* the data to group information based on categories relevant to the formulation of the main problem of the research. This analysis process is cyclical, meaning that researchers can return to the field if incomplete or ambiguous data is found halfway through. Validation through triangulation ensures that the researcher's interpretation is in accordance with the reality experienced by the source in real life and as it is. Thus, the final results of the research have a strong empirical foundation and can be scientifically accounted for in national and international

academic forums (Pattipeiluhu et al., 2026). This method allows researchers to present in-depth findings regarding social dynamics in the pesantren environment without generalizing excessively or too broadly. Finally, this entire series of methodologies is designed to produce practical recommendations for the development of character education in Islamic educational institutions that have a strong and distinctive tradition of Islamic boarding schools.

RESEARCH RESULT

A. Adab-Based Obedience and Students' Inner Well-Being

The findings of this case study reveal three interconnected themes concerning the meaning of student obedience within Islamic educational settings. First, participants described obedience grounded in adab (ethical respect) as an important pathway to inner tranquility, enabling them to engage more deeply with knowledge and fostering a sense of receptivity toward learning. Rather than being perceived as mere compliance with institutional regulations, obedience was understood as a personal disposition that facilitated self-discipline and reduced internal conflicts during the learning process. Second, students associated obedience to teachers' pedagogical guidance and spiritual direction with a more meaningful educational experience. Participants reported that adherence to teachers' advice encouraged reflective learning, strengthened their commitment to religious studies, and contributed to a sense of spiritual and intellectual fulfillment. Third, the collective culture of obedience embedded within the institutional environment was perceived as creating a focused and supportive learning atmosphere. Such an environment minimized distractions and enabled students to experience *hudhur al-qalb* (presence of heart), which participants regarded as a form of profound inner satisfaction during their educational journey. Overall, the study suggests that obedience in Islamic boarding school education extends beyond behavioral conformity and functions as a spiritual and educational practice through which students cultivate inner well-being, meaningful learning experiences, and moral self-development. These findings highlight the central role of adab-based relationships in shaping the lived experiences of students and sustaining the moral ecology of contemporary Islamic educational institutions.

This study confirms a significant positive correlation between students' compliance levels and their inner satisfaction during the intensive learning process in the pesantren environment. As stated by AQ, "It feels like obedience is calm and sincere when you get positive direction, especially respect and obey the rules, while the direction from the teacher is positive," when following the teacher's directions wholeheartedly without the slightest hesitation in every daily activity that exists. This feeling is supported by ZU who said, "there is a calmness of heart and a sense of peace in oneself," the obedience of students to the teacher has a very great influence on inner satisfaction. In the life of the pesantren, obedience is not only carrying out orders, but also a form of manners and sincerity. This shows that the higher the level of compliance based on sincerity, the greater the inner satisfaction felt by the students. DW revealed, "My heart is satisfied," when he managed to fulfill his academic and worship obligations well every day without any coercion. This is in line with AI which states, "Knowledge is easy to enter," when manners to teachers are maintained consistently and *istiqomah* is always in learning interactions. The institutional environment supports this, as HK said, "The atmosphere is very conducive," to achieve internal happiness through sincere obedience from the whole conscience. In the end, LF concluded, "This is the happy path," which was taken to gain the blessings of knowledge from the scholars who guided with affection. This qualitative data strengthens the finding that spiritual discipline is the main foundation of the psychological well-being of students in the environment of modern

institutions that continue to grow rapidly. The informants feel a significant change in themselves in real life. They do not feel pressured by the applicable rules. Instead, they feel helped by the existence of this structure. The environment fully supports this every day. All feel the real benefits of obedience. The learning process becomes more meaningful for them. Life feels more directed and clear. All agree on one main thing. Compliance is the key to success.

The first finding highlights that obedience based on manners creates an atmosphere of *hudhurul qalb* as the peak of inner satisfaction in learning. NS states, "Manners are the key to knowledge," which opens the door of the heart to receive knowledge in a profound and meaningful way for life. RA adds, "The heart is fully present," while respecting the teacher so that worldly distractions can be effectively minimized. AQ feels, "Serenity is real," when the ego is subdued before the giver of knowledge who believes in its truth. ZU confessed, "I focus on studying," because that respect removes the noise of the mind that often interferes with concentration. DW mentioned, "Science permeates within," the soul when manners become the top priority before the material is taught. AI affirms, "This is the pinnacle of satisfaction," a spiritual that cannot be bought with any material in this world. Thus, adab is not just etiquette, but spiritual technology to achieve the presence of a whole heart in solemnly pursuing religious knowledge. The students felt a big difference in themselves. They understand the subject matter more easily. The heart becomes softer and more open. The mind is no longer chaotic by the world. All because of the manners that are maintained. This process goes naturally without being forced. There is no significant pressure for the students. Only the love of knowledge exists. Teachers are respected wholeheartedly always. Knowledge comes by itself easily. This condition is very supportive of learning. The students felt very comfortable. They can absorb knowledge well. All this thanks to strong manners.

The second finding reveals the dynamics of supporting and inhibiting factors of compliance that have a direct impact on the emotional stability of daily students. HK said, "Teachers are role models," so that students feel motivated to follow in the teacher's footsteps without having to be forced. Then obedience grows naturally because there are real examples of caregivers. However, LF complained, "The rules are sometimes confusing," if the philosophy behind them is not well explained to the students. NS states, "Friends and a positive environment have a great influence," a positive environment can bring positive things that are true, so as much as possible we try to avoid bad things and bad intentions because if little by little we get used to these bad things it becomes a habit and not good for the future. RA feels, "I become restless," when there is a conflict between personal desires and strict binding institutional obligations. AQ added, "Friends need support," to remain *istiqomah* amid the temptation to violate existing regulations. ZU concluded, "The environment determines the heart," whether to be calm or restless during his education at this institution. This complex interaction shows that the quality of teachers and the social atmosphere are the main barometers of students' spiritual happiness during their studies. External factors play a very important role here. Internalizing values takes a long time. Not everyone immediately understands its meaning. It takes intensive guidance from teachers. The environment must be well maintained. So that there are no internal conflicts. All parties must be self-aware. Rules are not just for binding. But for the common good of all. Students need a clear explanation. So that there are no misunderstandings. Compliance becomes easier to live with. The heart became calmer.

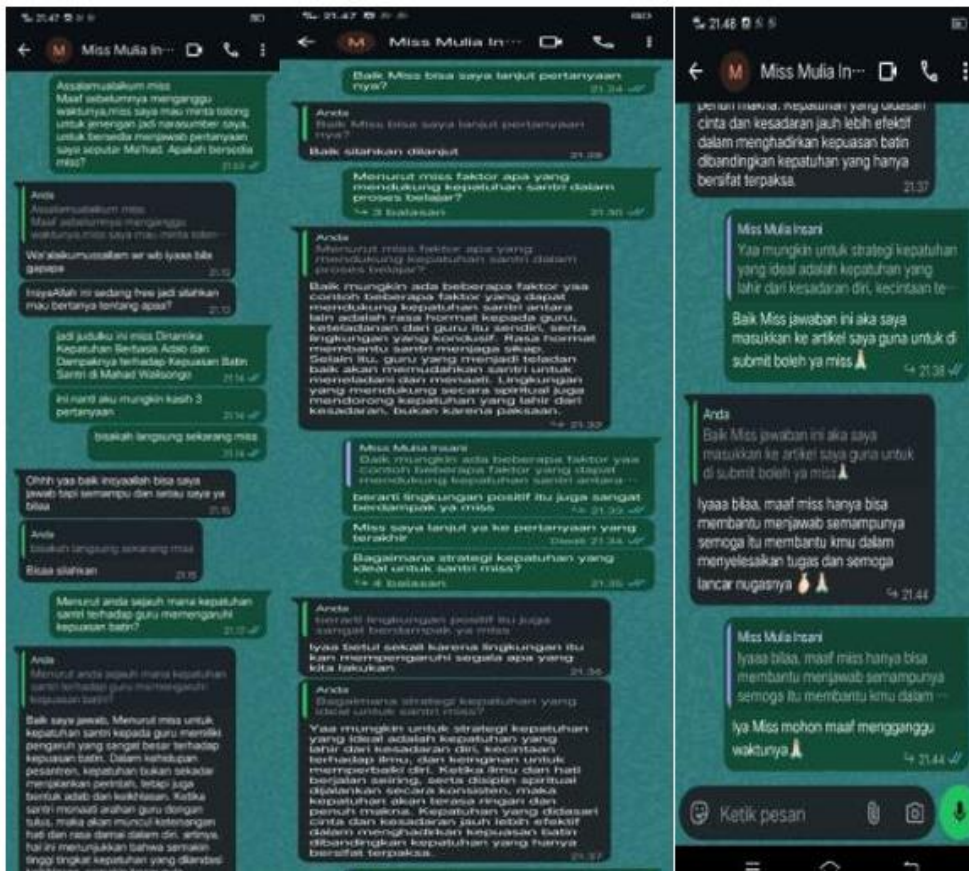


Figure 2: online interviews with administrators in the pesantren environment.

The third finding emphasizes strategies to increase compliance through a persuasive approach and internalization of the value of manners rather than coercion. DW states, "Dialogue is essential," so that students understand the wisdom behind every command given by the teacher. The AI feels, "I'm self-aware," that the rules are made for their good not to curb personal freedom. HK confessed, "There is no fear," punishment but love for the learning process that is undergone every day. LF adds, "The Master embraces us," with a humanist approach that touches the emotional and spiritual aspects deeply. The NS states, "The wisdom must be clear," so that obedience grows from full awareness not because of burdensome external pressures. The RA concludes, "This is the best way," to build a culture of mutual respect that is sustainable in the long term. This strategy proves that intrinsic obedience is more effective at creating inner satisfaction than fragile extrinsic obedience. This approach is very popular with students. Students feel valued as human beings. There was no pressure in the slightest. Everything went smoothly. The relationship becomes more intimate. Open communication is always here. Problems quickly resolved well. Everyone feels very comfortable. The learning process is so pleasant to feel. The heart feels very peaceful. This strategy needs to be maintained. So that a good culture is maintained.

The overall findings confirm that obedience is a vital spiritual instrument that shapes the internal happiness of students during intensive education. AQ said, "I'm happy here," because he found meaning in life through obedience to the teacher and the rules. ZU states, "The ideal compliance strategy is one born of self-awareness, love for knowledge, and a desire to improve oneself. When knowledge and the heart go hand in hand, and spiritual discipline is carried out

consistently, obedience will feel light and meaningful. Obedience based on love and awareness is much more effective in bringing inner satisfaction than obedience that is only forced. Knowledge and heart," come together when spiritual discipline is carried out consistently and earnestly at all times. DW feels, "It's holistic education," which touches cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects simultaneously and balanced. AI added, "A superior generation is born," from an ecosystem that prioritizes noble morals and high integrity in the future. HK stated, "A joint commitment is needed," from the entire academic community to keep this culture alive and thriving. LF concluded, "Peace is a choice," which is taken through a path of conscious obedience and full of personal responsibility. This synergy creates an educational ecosystem that is not only intellectually superior but also spiritually satisfying for students who are studying religious knowledge for the sustainable progress of the people and nation in this modern era. All agree on this important point. Education is not just the brain. But also the human conscience. The students feel very lucky. The future is brighter. The characters are very well formed. All this is thanks to the obedience that exists in the teacher and the rules that apply. In this institution, everything is neatly maintained. They are ready to face the challenges of the world. With the provision of knowledge and manners.

B. Factors Shaping Students' Obedience in Islamic Educational Settings

The analysis identified three interconnected themes regarding the factors that shape students' obedience to teachers and their perceived influence on inner satisfaction within Islamic educational settings. First, participants consistently highlighted teachers' moral conduct and pedagogical competence as important elements that fostered willingness to follow guidance and institutional expectations. Students described obedience as emerging more naturally when teachers were perceived as credible role models whose actions reflected the values they taught. In such circumstances, participants associated obedience with feelings of trust, comfort, and personal fulfillment in the learning process. Second, participants emphasized that limited understanding of the philosophical foundations underlying institutional regulations often generated tensions in their educational experiences. Several students described difficulties in attaching meaning to rules that were perceived merely as obligations, leading to feelings of uncertainty and occasional resistance. These experiences suggest that students' interpretations of institutional norms play a crucial role in shaping how obedience is understood and practiced. Third, the peer environment emerged as a contextual factor that could either reinforce or challenge students' commitment to institutional values. Participants reported that supportive peer relationships encouraged consistency in religious practices and strengthened their sense of belonging, whereas less supportive social environments were perceived as sources of distraction that affected concentration and spiritual engagement. Taken together, these findings indicate that students' obedience is shaped through the interaction of relational, institutional, and social dimensions. Rather than functioning solely as compliance with authority, obedience appears to be a socially constructed experience influenced by role modeling, meaning-making processes, and the broader educational environment in which students negotiate their spiritual and educational development.

The first finding shows that the role model of morality and pedagogic competence of teachers is the dominant supporting factor that directly strengthens students' voluntary obedience without the slightest coercion in the daily teaching and learning process in this modern era. AQ stated, "because example is also due to environmental factors, because if we set an example, our environment is somewhat slightly affected by the environment." ZU added, "respect for teachers, example from the teachers themselves, and a conducive environment," Respect helps students maintain their attitude. In addition, teachers who are good role models

will make it easier for students to emulate and obey. A spiritually supportive environment also encourages obedience born of awareness, not of compulsion. DW revealed, "Good teacher morals," makes respect grow naturally in the hearts of students towards teachers who guide patiently and sincerely. AI states, "Learning becomes fun," when teachers have qualified competence in conveying complex Islamic material that is easily understood by students. HK feels, "Competent teachers," so that students' confidence increases in following the learning directions given smoothly and correctly according to the target. LF concluded, "I respect the teacher," as the main basis for obedience born from awareness not because of fear of punishment that burdens the hearts of students. This data confirms that the ideal teacher figure is the main key in building a positive and sustainable culture of obedience for all students who are studying religion seriously for the future. These interactions create an intrinsic sense of comfort as they feel guided by figures worthy of imitation in everyday life without excessive psychological pressure for all those who learn.

The implications of the teacher's support cause a genuine sense of comfort and inner satisfaction because they feel guided by a figure worthy of imitation in daily life without the slightest coercion or excessive psychological pressure for students who are pursuing knowledge. DW said, "The heart becomes comfortable," when the rules are explained with the compassionate approach of a teacher who is compassionate and deeply understands their mental state. The AI states, "There is no coercion," so obedience is carried out sincerely without a heavy burden on the shoulders that interferes with study concentration. AQ felt, "Very satisfied," because their spiritual progress was well monitored by the supervisor who cared about the character development of the students. ZU revealed, "Guidance is felt," present in every small step taken while studying at this institution with great care. The NS declares, "The soul is calm," because it is confident that the teacher's direction brings good to the world and their hereafter in the future. RA concluded, "Teachers love," so that a sense of emotional security arises while in this educational environment fully and comprehensively. This inner satisfaction is the main barometer of the spiritual happiness of students while studying in the pesantren environment very well and meaningfully for life. The optimization of these supporting factors is needed to create a learning ecosystem that is not only physically disciplined but also emotionally and spiritually satisfying for all students who are studying religious knowledge seriously for a better future and benefit the people and the state in a sustainable manner. This reciprocal relationship strengthens the voluntary obedience of students so that the implication is that it creates a genuine sense of comfort and inner satisfaction because they feel guided by a figure worthy of imitation.

On the other hand, students' lack of understanding of the philosophy of institutional rules is a significant inhibiting factor that often triggers hidden resistance in students who are studying at this educational institution. AQ complained, "The rules are confusing," when the reasons behind certain bans are not clearly conveyed by the fully responsible administrators. ZU stated, "Why should this," so that critical questions arise that have not been answered about the wisdom of the regulation in depth and detail. DW revealed, "Philosophy is lacking," so that the rules are only considered as a mere burden of formality for all those who are here. The AI feels, "I wonder," about the urgency of compliance if the benefits are not explained in detail and in depth for intelligent students. HK stated, "It is not clear why," so the motivation to obey decreases drastically in their hearts every day during activities. LF concluded, "Want to know wisdom," because a complete understanding will give birth to a stronger and stronger obedience later for all. This resistance has implications for anxiety and decreased inner satisfaction due to internal conflicts between personal desires and institutional obligations that are strictly and binding for all students. This study found that transparency of information regarding the

philosophy of rules is crucial to prevent misunderstandings that can undermine the harmony of the relationship between students and teachers in this modern Islamic education environment. Without a good understanding, obedience is only a heavy burden that hinders the Islamic learning process which should please the heart and calm the souls of students who are studying religion seriously.

Internal conflicts between personal desires and the obligations of existing institutions in a strict and binding manner often have implications for anxiety and decreased mental satisfaction due to the pressure felt by students daily in their activities. DW confessed, "Hearts are restless," when it comes to choosing between personal desires and strict institutional rules that bind them tightly. AI states, "Want to be free," but is bound by obligations so that psychological tension arises that is quite disturbing to the comfort of their lives. AQ feels, "Inner conflict," occurs continuously if there is no bridge of understanding that connects the two parties in a good and harmonious manner. ZU revealed, "It was very stressful," when the rules were perceived as a barrier wall rather than a useful guide to life. NS states, "It is difficult to obey," if the heart still feels forced by the system that applies in the environment of this institution as a whole. RA concludes, "Satisfaction decreases," because energy is depleted to fight against selfish desires that are not in line with existing rules. Thus, the complex interaction between teacher quality, understanding of regulations, and social atmosphere determines the level of compliance which ultimately becomes the main barometer of students' spiritual happiness during their education in a very good Islamic boarding school environment. Mitigation of inhibiting factors is needed to create a learning ecosystem that is not only physically disciplined but also emotionally and spiritually satisfying for all students who are studying religion seriously for the future. This anxiety must be overcome so that inner satisfaction can be achieved optimally in the intensive and meaningful Islamic learning process for the lives of students.

The dynamics of the peer environment function as a double-edged sword that can support or hinder obedience, where a positive environment strengthens peace of mind while a negative environment interferes with students' spiritual focus in pursuing religious knowledge optimally. AQ stated, "Friends are a great influence," so the choice of association is very crucial for the emotional stability of the students' daily life in the institution. ZU added, "A positive environment," strengthens peace of mind and supports consistent obedience to teachers and *istiqomah* in worship. DW feels, "The atmosphere is supportive," when the friends around him also obey the rules that apply in this institution well. AI states, "If a friend is bad," then the spiritual focus of students in pursuing religious knowledge will be optimally and significantly impacted. HK concluded, "We must be together," building a culture of obedience so that no one feels alone in obedience to the teacher. LF emphasized, "Ecosystem is important," to determine the level of compliance which ultimately becomes the main barometer of students' spiritual happiness. Optimization of supporting factors and mitigation of inhibiting factors are needed to create a learning ecosystem that is not only physically disciplined but also emotionally and spiritually satisfying for all students who are studying religious knowledge seriously for a better future and benefit the people and the country in a sustainable manner. This study confirms that the complex interaction between teacher quality, understanding of regulations, and social atmosphere determines the level of compliance which ultimately becomes the main barometer of students' spiritual happiness while studying in an institution environment in a very good and meaningful way for their lives.

C. Understanding Student Obedience in Islamic Boarding Schools

This study found three interconnected themes concerning the relationship between

student obedience to teachers, inner satisfaction, and strategies for fostering meaningful obedience within Islamic educational settings. First, participants consistently described obedience as closely associated with emotional tranquility and a sense of inner balance during their educational journey. Students perceived adherence to teachers' guidance not merely as compliance with authority but as a practice that supported self-discipline, reduced internal tensions, and enabled deeper engagement with religious learning. These experiences contributed to what participants understood as a form of inner satisfaction derived from meaningful educational and spiritual growth. Second, the quality of teacher–student relationships emerged as a central element in shaping students' experiences of obedience. Participants emphasized that relationships characterized by care, trust, and mutual respect encouraged a more voluntary and reflective form of obedience. Within such relationships, students felt acknowledged and supported, which strengthened their sense of spiritual fulfillment and belonging within the educational community. Third, participants highlighted the importance of educational approaches that promote understanding rather than coercion. The internalization of adab values, combined with opportunities for open dialogue regarding the purpose and wisdom of institutional expectations, was perceived as fostering a deeper commitment to obedience. Students reported that obedience became more meaningful when grounded in personal awareness and understanding rather than fear of sanctions. Taken together, these findings suggest that obedience is best understood as a relational and meaning-centered educational practice. The interaction between respectful teacher–student relationships, value internalization, and reflective engagement with institutional norms contributes to students' experiences of inner satisfaction and supports the holistic aims of Islamic education.

The first findings confirm a significant positive correlation between students' levels of compliance and their emotional stability in an institutional environment conducive to intensive learning. AQ stated, "I feel calm," when I managed to obey the teacher's directions without violating the rules that apply every day consistently and istiqomah in activities. ZU added, "Obedience is peaceful," as it eliminates anxiety about the sanctions that may be received if stubborn to the instructions of competent teachers in the field of science. DW revealed, "The heart becomes stable," when discipline is carried out so that emotions are not easily provoked by external provocations that interfere with the focus of learning for all students. HK felt, "Not restless," because he knew the boundaries were clear so that his life was more directed and his steps in daily activities in this institution. LF stated, "Emotions are awakened," when obedience becomes a daily habit that is firmly rooted in students who study religious knowledge seriously and sincerely. The NS concluded, "Real stability," as a form of inner satisfaction that is essential in pursuing religious knowledge in a deep and meaningful way for their lives. This data shows that obedience to the teacher's direction has direct implications for peace of mind as a form of inner satisfaction that is essential in pursuing religious knowledge in depth and meaningfully for their daily lives without ego obstacles that interfere with the intensive and well-structured learning process under the guidance of competent scholars in the field of Islamic science comprehensively and completely for the sustainable progress of mankind in the future. It is good for all parties involved in it actively and positively for the lives of students.

Obedience not only maintains emotional stability but also creates peace of mind as a form of inner satisfaction that is essential in pursuing religious knowledge in a deep and meaningful way for students who are studying at this institution. AI says, "Knowledge enters the heart," when manners to teachers are well maintained so that the blessings of knowledge can be achieved easily and smoothly without significant obstacles for them. RA stated, "Very satisfied," because spiritual progress is clearly seen along with strict adherence to the curriculum in this educational institution. AQ feels, "Peace of mind," is the greatest gift of discipline lived sincerely without

the slightest coercion from others who force them to obey. ZU added, "Inner happiness is when one feels close to the teacher through sincere obedience from the bottom of the heart and *sincere* in interaction. HK states, "Internal satisfaction," arises because there is no conflict between personal desires and the institutional obligations that bind them tightly and firmly on a daily basis. LF concluded, "This is the meaning of life," finding the purpose of learning through the path of conscious obedience and full of personal responsibility for each student in pursuing knowledge. Thus, the synergy between conscious compliance and humanistic learning strategies is the main key in maximizing the inner satisfaction of students in the institutional environment optimally for the entire academic community. The implementation of this strategy requires a joint commitment from the entire academic community to build a culture of mutual respect that is sustainable and long-term for the competent young generation and has a long-term positive impact on the development of their character in a better future that is beneficial to the people and the country in a sustainable manner for the real and significant progress of humanity for all parties involved in it actively and positively for the the life of students who demand knowledge.

The quality of interpersonal interaction between teachers and students is the main mediator in strengthening intrinsic obedience so that students feel valued and spiritually satisfied without feeling pressured by the rules in the institution. DW stated, "Teachers love," so that a sense of emotional security arises while in this educational environment fully and thoroughly for students who study seriously. AI added, "I'm valued," when opinions are heard while still having to adhere to the rules that apply in this institution in a strict and well-structured manner. NS feels, "Intimate relationships," making rules not feel rigid but rather a form of affection from a mentor who cares deeply about their development. RA stated, "Not depressed," because the humanist approach of teachers touches deeply on the emotional and spiritual aspects for those who sincerely pursue religious studies. AQ expresses, "Teacher compassion," reinforces intrinsic obedience so that students feel valued and spiritually satisfied without feeling pressured by rigid rules that burden their conscience on a daily basis in activities in a strict and structured environment. ZU concluded, "Positive interaction," is the main key to the spiritual happiness of students while studying in the pesantren environment very well and meaningfully for their lives in a real and significant way for all. In the end, the goal of education is not only achieved cognitively but also touches on a deep affective and spiritual aspect for each individual student who is studying under the guidance of competent scholars and educators in the field of Islamic science comprehensively and completely for the sustainable progress of the ummah and has a positive impact on the nation in a better future for all parties involved in it actively and positively for the lives of students who demand religious knowledge earnestly and sincerely from their deep conscience.

The most effective improvement strategies involve a persuasive approach through the internalization of the values of manners rather than coercion and the creation of an open dialogue space that allows students to understand the wisdom behind each responsible teacher's order. DW says, "Dialogue is important," so that students understand the wisdom behind every command given by a teacher who is fully responsible for their education thoroughly and deeply. The AI feels, "I'm self-aware," that the rules are made for their good not to strictly curb the personal freedoms they currently have in these institutions. HK confessed, "There is no fear," punishment but love in the learning process that is lived every day earnestly and sincerely from a deep conscience. LF added, "Teachers embrace us," with a humanist approach that touches the emotional and spiritual aspects deeply for all students who study here well. NS stated, "Wisdom must be clear," so that obedience grows from full awareness not because of external pressure that burdens the conscience of all students in their daily activities in the institutional environment. The RA concludes, "This is the best way," to build a culture of mutual respect that

is sustainable and long-term for all parties involved in it actively and positively for their lives. Thus, obedience grows from full awareness not the fear of punishment that burdens their conscience daily in activities in a strict and well-structured institutional environment and increases the self-capacity of students significantly and optimally for a better future and benefits the people and the state in a sustainable manner for the real and significant progress of humanity for all parties involved in it actively and positive for the lives of students who demand religious knowledge earnestly and sincerely from their deep and meaningful conscience for their daily lives without the obstacles of disturbing egos.

The synergy between conscious compliance and humanist learning strategies is the main key in maximizing the inner satisfaction of students in the institutional environment optimally for the entire academic community here in a comprehensive and profound way for their lives. AQ said, "I am happy here," because they found the meaning of life through obedience to the teachers and the rules that existed in this institution thoroughly and deeply for their souls. ZU states, "Knowledge and heart," come together when spiritual discipline is exercised consistently and earnestly at all times without ceasing from those who study sincerely. DW feels, "This is holistic education," which touches cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects simultaneously and in a balanced manner for students who study religion seriously. AI added, "A superior generation is born," from an ecosystem that prioritizes noble morals and high integrity in the future for the nation and state in a sustainable manner. HK stated, "A shared commitment is needed," from the entire academic community to keep this culture alive and thriving in this environment in a sustainable and positive manner for all. LF concluded, "Peace is a choice," which is taken through the path of compliance that is aware and full of personal responsibility of each student in their daily activities in the pesantren environment. The implementation of this strategy requires a joint commitment from the entire academic community to build a culture of mutual respect that is sustainable and long-term for the competent young generation and has a long-term positive impact on the development of their character in a better future that is beneficial to the people and the country in a sustainable manner for the real and significant progress of humanity for all parties involved in it actively and positively for the The life of students who demand religious knowledge earnestly and sincerely from their deep and meaningful conscience for their daily lives without ego barriers that interfere with the intensive and well-structured learning process under the guidance of competent scholars.

DISCUSSION

This study reveals several crucial findings regarding the dynamics of student compliance and inner satisfaction in Islamic educational institutions. First, obedience based on manners and respect is positively correlated with peace of mind and material understanding, making discipline a vital spiritual instrument to achieve *hudhurul qalb* in Islamic learning. Second, supporting factors such as the role model of teachers' morals strengthen comfortable voluntary obedience, while lack of understanding of the philosophy of rules and negative social environment is the main obstacle that triggers resistance and anxiety among students significantly. Third, there is a significant relationship between obedience and emotional stability, where the quality of interpersonal interaction is a key mediator in determining the spiritual satisfaction of students while studying religious knowledge. The most effective improvement strategies involve a persuasive approach through the internalization of the values of manners rather than coercion, as well as the creation of open spaces for dialogue so that obedience grows from full awareness rather than fear of punishment. The synergy between conscious obedience and humanist learning strategies is the key to maximizing optimal inner satisfaction for all

students in this institution. This implementation requires a strong commitment from the academic community to build a culture of long-term sustainable mutual respect for the common good. Ultimately, the goal of education is achieved not only cognitively but also touches the deep affective and spiritual aspects of each individual student. Thus, the transformation of obedience from coercion to awareness is an absolute requirement to achieve peace of mind in the tradition of modern Islamic boarding school education that prioritizes noble morals in order to produce a superior generation that is competent and inwardly happy in pursuing religious knowledge solemnly and *istiqomah* under the guidance of teachers who are believed to be the source of blessings of sacred science for the entire academic community in the environment as a whole.

Theoretically, the findings of this study strengthen the validity of the Adab Theory in Islamic Education which affirms that adab is the spirit of knowledge and the key to human spiritual happiness as a whole. The first indicator of this theory, namely the spiritual hierarchical relationship between teacher and student, is significantly related to the finding that obedience based on manners creates peace of mind and *hudhurul qalb* (Mukminin, 2018). This confirms the theoretical postulate that students' humility before the teacher opens the door to the blessing of knowledge and intrinsic emotional stability. Second, the exemplary indicator (*uswah hasanah*) in this theory is relevant to the finding that teacher morality is the main supporting factor for obedience, proving that the transfer of knowledge in Islam is personal and spiritual, not just a purely cognitive technique (Aula Ramadhani et al., 2025). Third, the indicator of internalization of values (*tazkiyatun nafs*) is closely related to the persuasive strategy found, where obedience must be born from the awareness of the heart and not coercion, in accordance with the concept of sincerity in Islamic education theory that rejects coercion (Zaenuri, 2025). Thus, this study provides tangible empirical evidence that the theoretical framework of adab is not only normatively relevant but also psychologically in shaping inner satisfaction. The synergy between external obedience and internal calmness proves that discipline in the pesantren tradition is a real manifestation of deep spiritual health according to this theory. Therefore, this research enriches the treasures of Islamic education theory by integrating the dimensions of formal obedience and inner satisfaction as a whole unit in the process of forming the character of students who *are kaffah* and meaningful for their lives in a sustainable and profound manner in accordance with the applicable sharia guidance to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter in a balanced and proportionate manner for each individual.

A comparative review of a number of previous studies shows that these results are generally relevant and support the existing literature on the relationship between student discipline and psychological well-being in the context of Islamic education (Lutfiyah et al., 2025). Previous studies have agreed that teacher authority has a significant influence on learning motivation, but it is still largely focused on administrative compliance and cognitive achievement without touching the spiritual dimension in depth (Uri & Saputra, 2025). These findings support the aspect of teacher influence, but differ fundamentally because it places adab-based compliance as the key to peace of mind, not just obedience to external regulations. If previous research highlighted more inhibiting factors such as facilities or monotonous teaching methods, this study reveals that the lack of understanding of the philosophy of rules and the dynamics of peer association is more dominant in influencing the emotional stability of daily students (Abshar, 2025). In addition, the enhancement strategies offered earlier tend to be structural and punitive in nature, while these findings emphasize a persuasive approach and internalization of values to achieve intrinsic inner satisfaction (Hasan et al., 2026). This indicates a paradigm shift from external compliance to a deeper and more meaningful internal awareness for life (Hamka et al., 2024). Thus, although broadly in line with previous studies, this study

offers a more specific depth of analysis in the context of modern pesantren. No findings are rejected, but rather enriched with new dimensions. *The novelty* or novelty of this research lies in the integration of the concept of formal obedience with the achievement of inner satisfaction (*hudhurul qalb*) as a whole unit in the ecosystem of Islamic educational institutions, which has not previously been specifically revealed how the mechanism of adab becomes a vital spiritual instrument for shaping the internal happiness of students in intensive Islamic learning (Suparman et al., 2020).

Based on the novelty of this research, there are a number of strategic steps that are urgent to be implemented at this time. From the aspect of government policy, the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education need to revise the evaluation standards of Islamic education by integrating indicators of spiritual *well-being* and the formation of manneristic character, not only focusing on cognitive and administrative achievements (Wijaya & Hidayat, 2026). Affirmative policies are needed to support teacher training programs that emphasize pedagogic-spiritual competence, as well as provide national guidance on the humanistic and value-based management of modern pesantren education. In the context of education in Islamic higher education institutions, this finding demands the transformation of the learning approach from instructive-authoritarian to dialogical-persuasive, where the internalization of the value of manners becomes the main foundation of academic interaction. Institutional leaders need to design an integrated curriculum that aligns formal discipline with a space for spiritual reflection, as well as establish a psychospiritual mentoring unit to help students understand the philosophy of rules so that obedience grows from awareness, not fear. In addition, the creation of a positive social environment through peer mentoring programs and lecturer examples is the key to mitigating factors that inhibit compliance. The synergy between government macro policies and micro-innovation at the institutional level will create an educational ecosystem that not only produces graduates who are intellectually competent, but also mentally calm and spiritually strong (Ramdan & Bariyah, 2025). In the end, investment in this holistic approach is a fundamental step to produce a generation of Muslims who are superior, have integrity, and are able to make a sustainable contribution to the progress of the people and nation in the midst of today's increasingly complex and dynamic global challenges (Amrullah, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study reveals a reality that is quite surprising for the modern educational paradigm: that student obedience to teachers in the context of Islamic educational institutions is not a form of restraint of individual freedom that many parties are often worried about, but rather becomes a free path to spiritual independence and true inner satisfaction. This finding dismantles the common assumption that discipline is always the opposite of happiness, because it is empirically proven that obedience based on manners actually gives birth to deep peace of mind and *hudhurul qalb* atmosphere for students. Positive dependence on the teacher's example and internalization of values through persuasive dialogue shows that the heart of the student only finds its home of peace when it leans on the authority of trusted knowledge, not when it is free without a clear direction. This is surprising because it reverses the common logic that considers self-autonomy to be the main source of happiness; On the contrary, this study proves that conscious surrender in the corridor of adab actually frees humans from the shackles of ego and deep existential anxiety. Thus, obedience is not merely an instrument of institutional order, but the most effective spiritual technology for producing whole, calm, and intellectually competent human beings. These findings challenge us to redefine the meaning of freedom in Islamic education, where the pinnacle of the freedom of the soul is found in conscious obedience and love to the teacher as the intermediary of sacred divine knowledge.

The main drawback of this study lies in the limited scope of the sample in only one specific Islamic educational institution, so that the generalization of the findings to the broader Islamic educational environment becomes less representative in depth. The cultural, curriculum, and demographic characteristics of students in these environments may have specific uniqueness that does not fully reflect the reality in other similar institutions or traditional Islamic boarding schools with different approaches that are more diverse throughout the archipelago. These limitations have the potential to reduce the external validity of the research, as compliance and inner satisfaction factors can be greatly influenced by diverse contextual variables in each Islamic higher education institution. To address these weaknesses, future research should be designed with a cross-institutional comparative approach, involving a wide range of public and private Islamic universities in diverse contexts to test the consistency of findings more accurately. In addition, the use of more in-depth mixed methods as well as longitudinal studies is needed to measure the long-term impact of adab-based adherence on the spiritual stability of students as they go through their education. Researchers are also further advised to involve control variables such as socioeconomic background and previous education to isolate the pure influence of teacher-student interaction without intrusive bias. By expanding the sample and the variety of contexts, the weaknesses of generalizations can be overcome so as to produce stronger policy recommendations that can be universally applied for the development of holistic and sustainable Islamic character education in Indonesia and at the global level. It is important that the pattern of the relationship between obedience and inner satisfaction is not considered as a mere local phenomenon, but rather as a universal principle of Islamic education that can be adapted in a wider range of cultures.

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