



## Strengthening Disciplined Character Education in Modern Islamic Boarding School Assalaam Surakarta During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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### **Abstract**

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Modern Islamic Islamic Boarding School Assalaam Surakarta continued to carry out face-to-face learning and pesantren activities. Assalaam Islamic Boarding School remains active in fostering discipline character strengthening through various kinds of activities. This study describes the implementation, obstacles, and efforts to strengthen discipline character education in boarding school-based lower secondary schools at the Assalaam Islamic Modern Islamic Boarding School Surakarta during the covid-19 Pandemic. This type of research is phenomenological research with a descriptive qualitative approach. The collection technique used is by interview, observation, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out by compiling and preparing the data, reading the entire data, coding the data, applying the coding process to describe settings and themes, connecting each theme/description, and interpreting the theme/description. The results showed that character strengthening was carried out with strategies and policies, namely making rules or basic rules for students specifically for the COVID-19 Pandemic. Barriers come from factors of santri, mursyid, parents, and the background or environment around students. To overcome these obstacles, PPMI Assalaam formed a task force and abolished visiting hours for the guardians of students.

**Keywords:** *Disciplined Character; Boarding School; Covid-19 Pandemic*

### **Introduction**

In early 2020, the world was shaken, spreading the new virus called coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). World health organization (WHO) sets Covid 19 as a pandemic because all of the world's citizens are potency infected with this virus, and one of the countries is Indonesia. All life sectors in the world had hampered, including the education sector. This condition pushed the decision-maker of education to immediately adapt in the making decision. That thing affected the changes and updates of the decision to be implemented (Ratu et al., 2020). The decision made expedites the implementation of the learning activity process in the pandemic period.

Everyone wants to get new skills, knowledge, and character. It is hampered by Covid-19, causing the limited range of motion physically. Lickona (2015) described that there are two big things to be the educational goals. It's to help the human being smart and to help the human being kind. Now, many school systems encounter trouble in the appraisal about the student character because of a pandemic. Frequently the teacher gives a valuation to the students at a glance. Student character building is the important thing in the appraisal of human Resources.

Marzuki (2012) stated that character education is not only learning good or bad to the student but also creating a good attitude, so the student has a good character. It has the same mission as moral education. Muslich (2013) described that character education must be started from an early age on the formal education (kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and university). One of the efforts to create character education had conducted by integrating it into all of the school activities.

Pondok Pesantren Modern Islam (PPMI) Assalaam Surakarta is a formal education institution based the boarding school that prioritizes character building. It creates in the vision that is to realize the student has the equilibration of spiritual, intellectual, and moral. The Boarding school is the school system with the dormitory where the student, teacher, employee, and staff are living together in the education environment integrated. Through the implementation of the boarding school, the student joins the regular education from morning to afternoon in the school when the evening they join the extracurricular program and the night they join the religious program. For 24 hours, the student is in the teacher monitoring so that the teacher is easily controlling the character-building student in the curricular and extracurricular activity both learning in the school, dormitory, and the pesantren environment. The boarding system management is in all of the student activity programs, set, and scheduled while the institution rule is equal with the character value.

During Covid-19, Pondok Pesantren Islam Assalaam is still active doing the character building through various activities. The activities were conducted by the teacher as the advisor; for example, the civic education teacher takes a role to fix their major. The national council for social studies stated that civic education has a positive impact on education in the school, home, and environment. The school management to create the character building in Pandemic should be scheduled and flexible with the health protocol, school activity, the rhythm in the learning. This study has an aim that is to describe the implementation, the trouble, and the effort to develop the character building in the high school based on the boarding school in Pondok Pesantren Islam Assalaam during this Pandemic.

## ***Research Method***

This research type is the phenomenology study with the qualitative approach. This study will describe the trouble and effort to develop the character building in Pondok Pesantren Islam Assalaam during this Pandemic. The data collecting is conducted with an interview, observation, and documentation. The interview involves the headmaster, teacher, the head student, head dormitory, and student. The observation was conducted to observe the character-building activities. The documentation takes the school document, the school activities photo, and another document related to developing the character building. The data analysis is conducted to set and prepare data, read all data, give the data code, implements the coding process to describe the theme and setting, relate the theme, and interpret the theme/description (Creswell, 2016).

## ***Result and Discussion***

### ***1. The discipline character building in PPMI Assalaam Surakarta during covid-19***

One of the advantages of the boarding school compared to the education institutions is in developing the character building of students. It's practised in the daily activities related to themselves or

their social community. It was occurred every day and can be discipline character building. The student life is in the boarding school 24 hours a day in the learning process continuously. According to Zakiyah & Rusdiana (2014) stated that the character education can't be conducted in a short time. The character is a process creating good value for the student. Character education is the education process holistically that relates the moral and the student social life as a basis to create a great generation, independent and having principles (Raharjo, 2010).

Based on the observation, PPMI Assalaam is an educational institution with a modern boarding school that integrated two education systems in the 24 hours curriculum design. The first part is the student education that involves all education processes in the daily activities and the scheduled activities out of the morning activity of teaching and learning. The second part is the education activity of the school unit involved in the school subject structure conducted on the morning learning process. Both the student education and the regular education still determined the student report and their graduation in PPMI Assalaam. Sriyanti (2013) said that the integration of two systems was conducted to create the people cadre having a good capability, not only about the theology but also about the technology, information, science, and knowledge to the student could compete in the globalization era. PPMI Assalaam commits to graduate the students who have the character scholars (*Doc. Nilai-Nilai Dasar Kependidikan Keassalaaman*). To master in Islam science, natural science, and social science.

The education in PPMI Assalaam Surakarta needs tight discipline because the education model of boarding schools has busy activities. It related to the interview and the observation with the headmaster PPMI

“one of privilege that we have is to develop the character building, and it must do in the pesantren education. In this pandemic period, the discipline character is the important thing for the student because they are living in a communal environment that is susceptible to the virus spreading medically. To prevent it, we have to do a healthy and clean lifestyle, and Assalaam decided to conduct face-to-face learning in October 2020. (interview with the PPMI Assalaam Secretary/ 14 April 2021.”

The secretary state is relating with the head student, and head dormitory of PPMI Assalaam that said about the discipline character is the crucial thing.

“The discipline character will create the systematic character for the student. The systematic is in all activity. Our activity is conducted as usual, like the other boarding school. That's mean the learning activity, praying, eating, and all activity systematically (interview/ the head dormitory PPMI Assallam/ 5 April 2021).”

"For us, discipline is the main thing in the education, both the formal education and the informal education, both in the family and in the boarding school. To develop the character-building must be in line with discipline building. One of the main values in Assallam is character building, starting from the morning, waking up, waiting in line for the bathroom, eating, and not be late to the mosque. So, I think, discipline is the base thing in education, especially in the pesantren (interview/ the head student PPMI Assallam/ 1 April 2021).

The observation result describes that developing the discipline character has been regulated in Tata Tertib Dasar Peserta Didik (TIBSAR) contenting fourteen chapters and 31 articles. Chapter one is about the general requirements. Chapter two to chapter eleven is content about the student rules related to worship, learning, clothes, manner, security, health, and finances. Chapter twelve is content about punishment and an offense. Chapter thirteen and fourteen are content with the transition rules and closing conditions. The articles in TISBAR can be grouped that is following:

- a) The worship discipline  
The worship is being a priority to discipline the student and being a measuring tool of the time management in the boarding school. The student must pray together five times in time. In the fasting, the student must do the Ramadan fast, Arafah fast and they are recommended to do the sunnah fast or *tathawwu'*. The student must read Al-Qur'an and must finish it quarterly.
- b) The akhlaktul karimah discipline  
The akhlaktul karimah must behave by the student. In the boarding school, the student is prohibited hang out freely, related to the opposite sex such as sending mail, telephone, sending text and goods, etc. the student is prohibited to make the yearbook between man and woman. The student is prohibited to make fun in the mosque, class, and assembly. The student is prohibited to make a birthday party. The student is prohibited to meet such as the consul, management, and committee meetings but accompanied by the teacher.  
In the manner field, the student must wear polite clothes. The man student must have short hair and the woman student is prohibited to resemble the man's hair. The student should give a name tag to their clothes. The student is prohibited from wearing jeans. The student is prohibited to borrow clothes. In a table manner, the student should eat in time and place determined with the sharia.
- c) The learning discipline  
the student must wear the school uniforms in the learning process in the school. If five minutes bell ringing and the teacher were not there in class, the head class must report to the office. The student is prohibited to cheat in the examination. The student can't attend or leave class they must have permission from the teacher. The student must attend 5 minutes in class before the class is started. The student must have a book and the school supplies. The student is prohibited to leave the book carelessly. The student must take the book in the learning process. The student is recommended to read the book in the library.
- d) The organizational discipline  
In the organizational the student must be a member of Organisasi Pelajar Pondok Pesantren Modern Islam Assalaam (OPPPMIA). The student must follow rule management. They should join the student organization activity. And all organizations in that school will be under the OPPPMIA including the consulate organization. It is the student organization as a representative from their region. Every consulate must have an advisor and its establishment must be approved by the pesantren leadership.
- e) The Official Language  
Language is the priority major in Assalaam. Arabic and English are a language that's used in Assalaam and the student must join the language activity such as the language league, the arts festival, and the language speech competition.
- f) The environmental safety discipline  
The student has a responsibility to safety in Assalaam, to report suspicious things to the security or the teacher. If you are lost your item or found the thing you can say to security or the teacher. If you have a guess you can meet them in the living room. You must be polite in every service.  
The student must keep the environment clean. In the pandemic period, the student must wear a masker, to keep distant, and to wash her hands. The student dry clothes in the space provided. They have to take care of themselves, their bedroom, and the environment. They are prohibited from writing on the wall, mattress, door, table, etc. they are prohibited to have a pet.
- g) The healthy discipline  
The healthy aspect is an important part of Assalaam, especially in COVID-19. The student has to take care in themselves and environment. If they got sick they must go to the Assalaam medical center.
- h) In the dormitory discipline  
The student must obey the rules in the dormitory. They have to manage the mattress, cupboard, shoe rack in the space provided. They are prohibited to change the room without the officer's permission. They are prohibited from meeting a guest in the dormitory without the officer's permission.  
To get in and out of the Assalaam Complex must have official permission from the office. The students have to get in and out through the door provided and must show permission. During Covid-19 they are prohibited to get out of the complex.

i) The discipline of financial management

In the financial, the students have to manage their finances independently. They paid the syahriyah cost and the other cost on time. They are prohibited to cheat the syahriyah cost. They have to save their money in the bank provided by Assalaam. They are prohibited to borrow and lend their money, to make money in pondok. All the rules are to the student both communally and individually.

If there is negligence to implement the pondok rules, the students will get punishment. There are following some punishment to the student that broke the rules:

- a) To the light mistakes are to find the mufradat, to memorize, to make a resume, to wake up the student in the morning, to sweep, to ask advice and a signature to the teacher or the senior student to read Qur'an and hadist in the space provided.
- b) To the middle mistake are to make the statement letter, to throw garbage, to clean the bathroom, the social service, brooch haircut, prohibited out of the complex for three months, to ask advice to the teacher and the senior student, to write Qur'an and hadist according to the mistake and to wear hijab and uniform special for the student that makes a mistake.
- c) The heavy mistake is to change the damage, suspension, or returned to their parents.

## **2. *The trouble of the discipline character building in PPMI Assalaam Surakarta during pandemic Covid-19***

Some troubles appear frequently to implement the character building of discipline in Assalaam. The observation and interview result stated that Assalaam realize to develop character building that's not all students could do it. Several students leave the discipline character when they have been graduated in Assalaam even they are drop out in Assalaam. That thing has happened because they come in Assalaam, not of their own volition. This is according to the head dormitory's statement:

"Generally, the trouble that we found in to develop the character building is they come in Assalaam, not because of their desire" (the interview/ the head dormitory/ 5 April 2021).

The parent has various reasons to send their children coming in Assalaam, one of the reasons that are they feel can't educate their child or they don't want to their child coming into the promiscuity and they expect their child could have the discipline character. The next trouble is the lifestyle outside of Assalaam to the student. That's happened because they are too much contact outside of the Assalaam life, both they often go out of Assalaam and they use the handphone where it's prohibited in Assalaam. That thing is according to the observation and interview result with the student's head

"This situation makes us confused because there is no problem with that. We allow the parent to visit with the strict visiting hour, not long after that, all was changed. There are some covid-19 cases. We are panic, the parents are panic too so we have to decide to abolish the visiting hours added with some boarding schools return the student to their homes because of the high number of covid-19. There is the arrival delay of students because of Solo government ban, Solo is in the red zone. (the interview/ the student head/ 1 April 2021)

The difficulty among students to adapt to each other is because they are from various regions even from Malaysia and Qatar. The adaptation difficulty is because of the student character that's introvert. Before the Pandemic, there are so many offenses conducted by students such as smoke, going outside the dormitory, bringing handphones, fighting with friends, don't use the official language, etc. the head student said the offenses are rare occurred during the Pandemic.

"We saw that the discipline character of the student is increasing during the Pandemic and the offenses are rare happened. It's occurred because there are no visiting hours, they can't go outside from Assalaam. The student discipline is increasing too much. There is great wisdom in this pandemic period. (the interview/ the students head/ 1 April 2021)

Besides that, there are also heavy offenses such as a smoke many times, dating, stealing, and humiliating the teacher. It will be processed by the applicable regulations like before the pandemic period. This is like the student's head said

"Generally, the punishment was set for the student broken the rule is the same before the pandemic period such as the student who is found out of dating, we will return to their parent. Now, because of the Pandemic, we must implement a healthy protocol. If there broke the rule we give a punishment." (The interview/ the student head/ 1 April 2021)

The obstacle to the discipline character building in Assalaam during the Pandemic is a limited number of student tutors. The student head state

"The next obstacle is the limited number of a tutor because there is the quantity limitation of tutor and the teacher in Assalaam during two months and we have to handle it all." (the interview/ the student head/ 1 April 2021).

The quantity limitation of the tutor and the teacher living in the Assalaam complex during the pandemic period has become an obstacle to developing character building in the Assalaam environment. It's because of the interaction control of the student with the people living outside the Assalaam complex and to cut the virus spread.

### ***3. The effort to overcome the obstacle of the discipline character building in Assalaam during Pandemic***

The effort to overcome the obstacle of the discipline character building in Assalaam during the Pandemic and before the Pandemic is generally the same. The school uses the psychology approach to understanding the family background, the home habit, and to communicate with their parent (documentation of the based value education document in Assalaam). By understanding the student's character, the tutor could take action on how to face the student. To face the student who often broke the rule and the new one is different. The media used to overcome their cases are a court and the irsyad (the mentoring) for them. The dormitory head said

"a court and the irsyad are consists of the school tutor and dormitory tutor factor having a task to give the recommendation of the case decision to the head school. Eventually, the head school has the right to make a decision. The student is always taught to be responsible with their action so they could be independent and grown. (the interview/ the dormitory head/ 5 April 2021.)

There are the special rules made by the head school as the support efforts of the character-building the student PPMI Assalaam during the Pandemic from the student learning rules, (the time, the clothes, the curriculum, and the teacher) the student activities rules (the time, the place, and the interaction), the student worship rules (the place, the support tools) and the task force of the student to support the discipline implementation. The value of the discipline character is important had by the human being and it will rise the good character else, (hartini, 2017). It's like with the Assalaam secretary statement to the researcher.

"There is the special ruler that we made to support the character building of the Assalaam student during the pandemic covid-19. The student learning rules: the times, the clothes, the curriculum, the teacher. The student activities rule: the times, the places, and the interaction. The student worship rules: the places and the support tools. The task force of the students supports the discipline implementation. (the interview/ the Assalaam secretary/ 14 April 2021). The effort is making some decisions to support the character building of the students. One of the efforts is the deletion of the visiting hour to the students. (the interview/ the student head/ 1 April 2021).

The school leader made the special rules during the Pandemic as the support effort to develop the discipline character building of the student. That rule is content the student learning rules: the times, the clothes, the curriculum, the teacher. The student activities rule: the times, the places, and the interaction. The student worship rules: the places and the support tools. The task force of the students supports the discipline implementation. The discipline implementation in Assalaam has a purpose that all students and school residents follow the rules willingly and without force. According to Kurniawan (2014) stated that the values will cause an effect in the form of the conducive situations, the tidy behavior both to the regulations and the constitutions else and there is the willingly feeling to implement the instruction and prohibition of the regulation.

"The boarding school model like Assalaam is the combination of the regular school system and the pesantren system where the student gets the education for 24 hours. This education model offers the advantage that the student is ready to be a believer and pious person and be an independent person in society (Yusuf et al., 2006). From the study result, the researcher has a conclusion that to overcome the obstacle of the discipline character building in Assalaam during the Pandemic that is the school leader makes the special decision to their student. That thing according to Wuryandani (2014) stated that the character education is the important thing to develop character building, so the discipline character value will create a good character such as responsibility, honesty, and teamwork (Curvin & Mindle, 1999)

The regulation that's implemented in Assalaam during the Pandemic is the deletion of the visiting hours to the student to cut the virus spread, the deletion of some activities, and to make the new curriculum from the student learning rules: the times, the clothes, the curriculum, the teacher. The student activities rules: the times, the places, and the interaction. The student worship rules: the places and the support tools. The task force of the students supports the discipline implementation. To reach the success of the discipline character building in Assalaam, besides having a strategy, the school regulation was trying to integrate with all-party both the school leader, headmaster, teacher, staff, and student so the character building of the student could be reached. That's like Prijodarminto's (1994) statement that discipline is the behavior in obedience, adherence, and discipline through the family, school, and environment.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the result about the discipline character building in Assalaam during Pandemic has conclusion that is the discipline character building during the Pandemic could be through the strategy, the making of the based rules for the student, and the making of the special rules during the Pandemic. The strategy and the decision were implemented in Assalaam that have an obstacle in the implementation of the discipline character building. The obstacles are from the student, the teacher, the parent, and the student's background and environment. To overcome the obstacle, Assalaam conduct some decisions are made special rules during the Pandemic, to make the task force and deletion the visiting hours.

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