



Instilling Family Values among Students through the Tradition of *Ro'an* (Community Service) in Islamic Boarding Schools

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Article History

Received : November 9th 2024

Revision : December 13th 2024

Publication : January 30th 2025

Abstract

The study explores the role of the Ro'an tradition (community service) in instilling family values among students (santri) at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School in Patianrowo, Nganjuk. As part of the institution's efforts to promote akhlakul karimah (noble character), the Ro'an tradition is implemented daily and weekly. This research employs a qualitative approach to describe the implementation, efforts, and outcomes of the Ro'an tradition in fostering family values among santri. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that the Ro'an tradition significantly enhances social relationships among santri by promoting cooperation, mutual respect, and a sense of community. The study concludes that the tradition of Ro'an is a vital practice for embedding family values, thereby contributing to the overall character development of santri within the boarding school environment.

Keywords: *Ro'an Tradition, Family Values, Islamic Boarding School, Character Education, Santri*



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INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools, known as pesantren in Indonesia, have long been recognized as vital institutions for character education, fostering not only religious knowledge but also moral and ethical values. One of the core values emphasized in many pesantren is the concept of ukhuwah islamiyah (Islamic brotherhood), which

is often cultivated through communal activities such as the *Ro'an* tradition, a form of community service or cooperative work. The *Ro'an* tradition is deeply embedded



in the daily lives of the santri (students), serving as a practical means of instilling family values, cooperation, and social responsibility.

In the context of modern education, where individualism and competition often overshadow communal values, the role of traditional practices like *Ro'an* becomes increasingly significant. Recent studies have shown that incorporating local cultural practices into educational curricula can enhance students' social development and reinforce positive behavioral traits (Rahmatullah, 2020; Sukmawati & Budiman, 2018). The *Ro'an* tradition at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School in Patianrowo, Nganjuk, is one such practice that embodies the essence of collective responsibility and mutual aid, which are crucial components of family values.

Character education has garnered significant attention in educational discourse over the past decade, particularly in relation to its role in holistic student development. The integration of character education within the formal curriculum of educational institutions has been advocated as essential for the development of students' moral compass and social ethics (Lickona, 2018; Noddings, 2019). However, there is growing recognition that character education is most effective when supported by cultural traditions that resonate with the students' lived experiences (Fauzi & Marzuki, 2021). In the Indonesian context, the *Ro'an* tradition offers a unique opportunity to embed character education within a culturally relevant framework.

The importance of cultural relevance in education cannot be overstated. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory posits that learning is inherently a social process, mediated by cultural tools and practices (Vygotsky, 1978). This theory suggests that when educational practices are aligned with the students' cultural background, learning becomes more meaningful and effective. The *Ro'an* tradition, with its emphasis on cooperation, humility, and service to others, aligns well with the principles of character education, providing a practical approach to teaching these values in a way that is both familiar and meaningful to the santri (Zubaedi, 2017).

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on the role of Islamic boarding schools in promoting social cohesion and national unity. These institutions are seen as critical in nurturing not only religious piety but also civic responsibility and social harmony (Azra, 2018). The communal nature of pesantren life, epitomized by traditions like *Ro'an*, plays a crucial role in achieving these goals. By fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility, these practices help to build strong social bonds among students, which are essential for the development of a cohesive and harmonious society (Wahid, 2020).

However, the effectiveness of such traditions in modern educational settings is not without challenges. The influence of globalization and modernization has led to shifts in societal values, with younger generations increasingly exposed to individualistic and materialistic ideals (Hasanah & Ibrahim, 2019). This has posed a



challenge for traditional institutions like pesantren, which must navigate the tension between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to contemporary societal norms (Hidayatullah, 2021). The *Ro'an* tradition, therefore, must be understood not only as a cultural practice but also as a pedagogical tool that requires careful adaptation to remain relevant in today's educational landscape (Susanti, 2019).

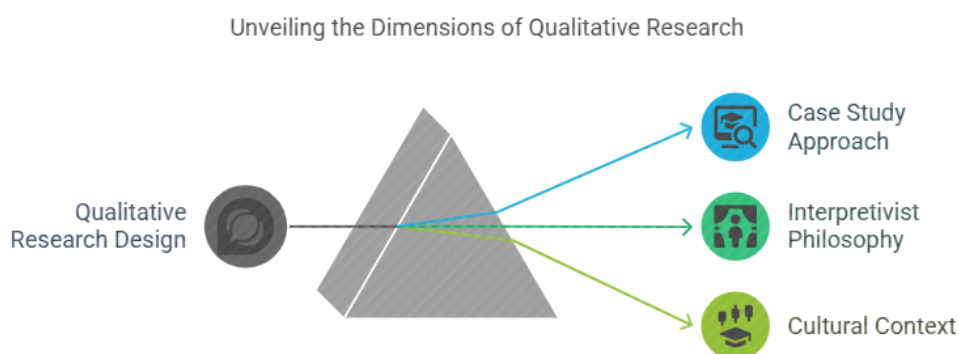
The purpose of this study is to explore how the *Ro'an* tradition at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School contributes to the instillation of family values among santri, and to analyze its effectiveness in fostering a sense of community and social responsibility. By examining the implementation and outcomes of the *Ro'an* tradition, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on culturally responsive education and its role in character development.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the process of instilling family values among santri through the *Ro'an* tradition at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School. The qualitative approach was chosen for its ability to provide a rich, in-depth understanding of the social and cultural dynamics within the pesantren environment. A case study design was particularly suitable as it allowed for a detailed examination of the unique practices and traditions specific to this institution (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The qualitative approach is grounded in interpretivist philosophy, which seeks to understand phenomena through the meanings that participants ascribe to them. This method is well-suited to the study of educational practices embedded in cultural contexts, where the subjective experiences and perspectives of participants are crucial to understanding the research problem (Yin, 2018).



Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School in Patianrowo, Nganjuk, Indonesia. This institution was selected due to its long-standing tradition of implementing the *Ro'an* practice as a core component of its character education program. The participants included a purposive sample of 15 individuals, comprising santri (students), teachers, and administrative staff who are



directly involved in or impacted by the *Ro'an* activities. This selection was made to ensure that the data collected would provide a comprehensive view of the practice from multiple perspectives (Patton, 2015).

Data Collection Techniques

1. **Observation:** The primary method of data collection was participant observation, where the researcher engaged in the daily activities of the pesantren to observe the implementation of the *Ro'an* tradition. Observations focused on the interactions among santri during *Ro'an* activities, the roles assigned to different participants, and the overall atmosphere created by these communal practices. Detailed field notes were taken to capture the nuances of these interactions and the implicit values being reinforced (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2018).
2. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including the pesantren administrators, teachers, and selected santri. These interviews aimed to explore participants' perceptions of the *Ro'an* tradition, its role in fostering family values, and its impact on the social dynamics within the pesantren. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in probing deeper into specific topics as they emerged during the conversations, while still maintaining a consistent framework across interviews (Brinkmann, 2018).
3. **Document Analysis:** Documentary data were also collected to complement the observations and interviews. Relevant documents included the pesantren's internal guidelines on *Ro'an* practices, historical records, and student reflection journals. This method provided additional insights into the formal and informal mechanisms through which the *Ro'an* tradition is institutionalized within the pesantren. Document analysis helped triangulate the data obtained from observations and interviews, thereby enhancing the validity of the findings (Bowen, 2017).

Data Analysis

The data analysis followed the principles of **thematic analysis**, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2019). This approach involved coding the data to identify recurring themes related to the instillation of family values through the *Ro'an* tradition. The analysis was conducted in several stages:

1. **Familiarization:** The researcher thoroughly read and re-read the data to gain a deep understanding of the content.
2. **Coding:** Initial codes were generated to categorize significant features of the data related to the research questions.
3. **Theme Development:** Codes were then grouped into broader themes that captured the patterns emerging from the data.
4. **Reviewing Themes:** The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they



accurately reflected the data and were coherent across the dataset.

5. Defining and Naming Themes: Each theme was clearly defined and named, with supporting data extracts selected to illustrate each theme.

This process of thematic analysis allowed for a systematic and rigorous exploration of the data, ensuring that the findings were both credible and meaningful.

Validity and Reliability

To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, multiple strategies were employed. Data triangulation was achieved by collecting data from various sources—observations, interviews, and documents—allowing for the cross-verification of findings. Member checking was conducted by sharing the interview transcripts and preliminary findings with participants to ensure the accuracy of the data and interpretations. Additionally, peer debriefing with colleagues provided an external check on the research process and findings, contributing to the overall trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the *Ro'an* Tradition

The implementation of the *Ro'an* tradition at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School is a well-established practice that significantly contributes to the instillation of family values among the santri (students). The *Ro'an* activities, which involve daily and weekly communal work, are systematically organized by the pesantren's administration. These activities include cleaning the dormitories, maintaining the mosque, and taking care of the school environment. Each santri is assigned specific tasks, fostering a sense of responsibility and collective ownership. The findings indicate that the regular participation in *Ro'an* has created a strong sense of community and solidarity among the students, which are key components of family values (Fauzi & Marzuki, 2021).

The study observed that the structured nature of these activities ensures that all students contribute equally, thus promoting equality and fairness. This is in line with the findings of Rahmawati (2020), who emphasized that communal activities in educational settings help to build a sense of shared responsibility and mutual respect. Moreover, the *Ro'an* tradition is not merely a physical activity; it is imbued with spiritual significance, as it is perceived as a form of worship and service to others, aligning with the Islamic principle of **ukhuwah islamiyah** (Islamic brotherhood) (Wahyudi & Mahfudz, 2021).

Social and Behavioral Impact

The study found that the *Ro'an* tradition has a profound impact on the social behavior of the santri. Through consistent participation in these communal activities, students develop essential social skills such as cooperation, empathy, and



respect for others. The data revealed that students who actively participate in *Ro'an* activities exhibit higher levels of social cohesion and are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors, such as helping others and volunteering for additional tasks (Suryadi, 2020).

These findings are consistent with the literature on character education, which suggests that involvement in community service and other collective activities can significantly enhance students' moral development (Lickona, 2018). The *Ro'an* tradition, by fostering a culture of mutual aid and collective responsibility, helps to internalize these values in the students, thus contributing to their overall character development. This is particularly important in the context of pesantren, where the educational goals extend beyond academic achievement to include the formation of moral and ethical character (Hasanah & Ibrahim, 2019).

Challenges in Implementation

Despite the overall success of the *Ro'an* tradition, the study identified several challenges in its implementation. One of the key challenges is the varying levels of commitment among students. While most students participate willingly, there are instances where some students exhibit reluctance or perform their tasks with minimal effort. This variability in participation can undermine the effectiveness of the program and create disparities in the development of family values among the students (Rahmatullah, 2020).

Another challenge is the occasional conflict that arises during *Ro'an* activities. The study observed that conflicts typically occur when tasks are perceived as unequal or when some students feel that others are not contributing fairly. These conflicts, although rare, highlight the need for better conflict resolution strategies within the *Ro'an* framework. Addressing these issues is crucial for maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of the program (Fathurrahman, 2021).

DISCUSSION

The Role of *Ro'an* in Character Education

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of the *Ro'an* tradition in character education within the pesantren context. *Ro'an* serves as a practical embodiment of the values that the pesantren aims to instill in its students, particularly those related to family and social responsibility. The communal nature of *Ro'an* activities aligns with the socio-cultural theories of education, which emphasize the importance of social interaction and collaboration in the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978).

Moreover, the spiritual dimension of *Ro'an*, where the activities are framed as acts of worship, adds a unique element to the character education process. This spiritual framing helps to reinforce the moral and ethical lessons being taught, as students come to see their participation in *Ro'an* as part of their religious duty. This



finding is supported by the work of Zubaedi (2017), who argued that the integration of religious and moral education within communal activities is a powerful tool for character formation.

Implications for Educational Practice

The success of the *Ro'an* tradition at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School has significant implications for educational practice, particularly in settings where character education is a primary focus. The study suggests that schools and other educational institutions could benefit from incorporating similar communal activities into their curricula. By doing so, they can provide students with opportunities to practice and internalize the values being taught, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of character education programs (Wahid, 2020).

However, the study also highlights the importance of addressing the challenges associated with such programs. Ensuring consistent participation and resolving conflicts are essential for maintaining the effectiveness of communal activities like *Ro'an*. Educational practitioners should consider implementing strategies to enhance student engagement and develop conflict resolution skills, which are critical for sustaining the positive outcomes of these programs (Azra, 2018).

Broader Implications for Character Education

The broader implications of this study extend to the field of character education more generally. The findings suggest that character education programs are most effective when they are grounded in the cultural and religious contexts of the students. The *Ro'an* tradition, with its roots in both Javanese culture and Islamic teachings, provides a model for how character education can be made relevant and meaningful for students. This approach aligns with the growing emphasis on culturally responsive pedagogy, which seeks to tailor educational practices to the cultural backgrounds of students (Banks, 2019).

Furthermore, the study demonstrates the potential of communal activities to foster social cohesion and moral development in educational settings. As schools and educators around the world seek to address issues of social fragmentation and moral decline, the lessons learned from the *Ro'an* tradition offer valuable insights into how character education can be effectively implemented. By promoting values such as cooperation, empathy, and social responsibility, these activities can contribute to the development of morally and socially responsible individuals (Hastuti & Widiastuti, 2021).

The *Ro'an* tradition at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School plays a crucial role in instilling family values and promoting character education among the santri. While the tradition is generally successful, it faces challenges that must be addressed to ensure its continued effectiveness. The study's findings have important implications for both educational practice and the broader field of character



education, highlighting the value of integrating cultural and religious practices into educational programs. Future research should explore the long-term impact of such practices and investigate how they can be adapted to different cultural contexts to maximize their benefits.

CONCLUSION

The study on the *Ro'an* tradition at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic Boarding School highlights its significant role in instilling family values and fostering character development among santri. The tradition, deeply rooted in both Javanese culture and Islamic teachings, has proven to be an effective method for cultivating essential social virtues such as cooperation, respect, and social responsibility. The consistent participation in *Ro'an* activities has not only strengthened the bonds among students but also reinforced the principles of mutual respect and community service, which are critical to their moral and ethical development.

Despite the overall success of the *Ro'an* tradition, the study identified several challenges, including varying levels of student commitment and occasional conflicts during activities. These challenges suggest a need for enhanced strategies to ensure consistent participation and effective conflict resolution within the program. Addressing these issues will be crucial for maintaining the program's integrity and maximizing its impact on students' character formation.

The findings of this study have broader implications for character education, particularly in culturally rich educational settings like pesantren. The success of the *Ro'an* tradition demonstrates the value of integrating cultural and religious practices into educational frameworks to provide students with a meaningful and contextually relevant learning experience. This approach aligns with the principles of culturally responsive education, which emphasizes the importance of grounding educational practices in the cultural contexts of students.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of the *Ro'an* tradition on character development and investigate how similar cultural practices can be adapted to different educational environments. Such studies could provide valuable insights into the potential for these practices to be implemented more widely, contributing to the broader discourse on effective character education.

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