Evaluation of Learning as an Effort to Strengthen Students' Character in a Modern Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract
This study examines the implementation of holistic learning evaluation in the context of strengthening students' character in modern Islamic boarding schools (pesantren modern). Holistic evaluation is viewed as a comprehensive approach that assesses not only students' cognitive aspects but also their affective and psychomotor domains in an integrated manner. The purpose of this study is to analyze the implementation of holistic learning evaluation in strengthening students' character in modern Islamic boarding schools and to describe the contribution of this assessment system to the deep internalization of character values. The method employed is library research, involving an analysis of various relevant primary and secondary literature sources. The findings indicate that holistic learning evaluation in modern Islamic boarding schools encompasses authentic assessment, observation of daily behavior, self- and peer-assessment, as well as portfolios documenting character development. The implementation of holistic evaluation contributes significantly to the internalization of character values such as religiosity, honesty, responsibility, discipline, and social awareness. It can be concluded that holistic learning evaluation serves as a strategic instrument in fostering students' character in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.
Keywords: Evaluation, Character, Modern Islamic Boarding School, Comprehensive.

INTRODUCTION

Character education has become one of the primary focuses of Indonesia's national education system, particularly in response to the challenges of globalization and modernization that have contributed to the moral degradation of the younger generation (Kesuma, Triatna, & Permana, 2018). *Pesantren*, as the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, play a strategic role in shaping students' character through their distinctive and comprehensive educational systems (Dhofier, 2011). The long-established tradition of *pesantren* education emphasizes not only the mastery of religious knowledge but also the cultivation of noble character (*akhlaq al-karimah*) as the foundation of students' personal development (Syafe'i, 2017).

Contemporary developments require *pesantren* to adapt to changing times without abandoning the fundamental values that have been inherited across generations (Azra, 2012). The emergence of modern *pesantren* represents a

response to the need for an educational model that integrates classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary competency demands. Modern *pesantren* combine traditional Islamic boarding school systems with formal education curricula, enabling students to acquire both religious knowledge and general academic competencies necessary to navigate life in the modern era (Qomar, 2015). This integration aims to produce students who are not only well-versed in Islamic sciences but also equipped with the academic knowledge and skills required in contemporary society (Mastuhu, 2014).

In the context of character formation, modern *pesantren* face the challenge of ensuring that educational processes effectively cultivate students with strong character. This condition necessitates an evaluation system that goes beyond measuring cognitive achievement alone and encompasses affective and psychomotor dimensions in a comprehensive manner (Arifin, 2016). Holistic learning evaluation emerges as a relevant approach, as it provides a comprehensive portrayal of students' development across multiple dimensions (Fadlillah, 2019). A sound evaluation system functions not only as a tool for measuring competency attainment but also as a learning medium that facilitates the internalization of character values (Mulyasa, 2018).

Evaluation represents an assessment paradigm that views learners as whole individuals possessing diverse potentials and developmental dimensions (Miller & Nakagawa, 2002). This approach does not focus solely on final learning outcomes in the form of academic scores, but also emphasizes learning processes, attitudinal development, skills acquisition, and the internalization of character values. Previous studies have demonstrated that learning evaluation has a significant influence on students' character formation (Lickona, 2013). Nevertheless, research that specifically examines the implementation of holistic learning evaluation within the context of modern *pesantren* and its contribution to strengthening students' character remains limited (Rahmat, 2019).

Modern *pesantren* exhibit unique characteristics in their evaluation systems, integrating traditional *pesantren* assessment methods with more structured and systematic modern evaluation approaches (Sudrajat, 2019). This integration results in a distinctive evaluation model that assesses not only mastery of academic content but also religious observance, daily moral conduct, social skills, and students' social contributions (Wiyani, 2018). Therefore, it is essential to conduct an in-depth analysis of how holistic learning evaluation is implemented in modern *pesantren* and how it contributes to strengthening students' character (Sutrisno, 2020). Based on the aforementioned background, the research problems addressed in this study are: (1) How is holistic learning evaluation implemented in strengthening students' character in modern *pesantren*? and (2) How does the holistic learning evaluation system contribute to the internalization of students' character values in modern *pesantren*?

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the implementation of holistic learning evaluation in strengthening students' character in modern *pesantren* and to describe the contribution of this assessment system to the deep internalization of character values. Specifically, this research seeks to identify the components of holistic evaluation applied in modern *pesantren*, analyze the mechanisms of its implementation in daily learning activities, and explain how holistic evaluation systems contribute to the formation of students who are faithful, knowledgeable, and possess noble character.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative library research method (Zed, 2014). Library research refers to a series of activities related to the collection of bibliographic data, reading and note-taking, and the processing of research materials without conducting fieldwork. This approach was selected because the study aims to analyze and synthesize various existing concepts, theories, and research findings related to holistic learning evaluation and character strengthening in modern Islamic boarding schools (pesantren).

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from textbooks, scholarly journals, and research articles that specifically discuss holistic learning evaluation, character education, and the educational system of modern pesantren. Secondary data were derived from supporting literature such as popular articles, research reports, and educational policy documents (Sukmadinata, 2015). Data collection was conducted through a documentation study, involving the collection, reading, and analysis of various pieces of literature relevant to the research focus. The collected literature was then selected based on its relevance, source credibility, and the currency of the information. Data analysis in this study utilized content analysis with a descriptive-analytical approach. The stages of data analysis included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, raw data obtained from various sources were selected, simplified, and transformed. In the data presentation stage, the reduced information was systematically organized to facilitate understanding of the research findings. Finally, in the conclusion drawing stage, interpretations were made based on the presented data to address the research questions. To ensure data validity, this study applied source triangulation by comparing and verifying information obtained from different literature sources (Sukmadinata, 2015).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Holistic Learning Evaluation: Conceptual Framework

Holistic learning evaluation is a comprehensive and integrative assessment approach that addresses students' overall development (Arifin, 2016). Unlike conventional evaluation methods that primarily measure cognitive aspects

through written tests, holistic evaluation views learners as whole individuals whose various developmental dimensions are interrelated (Popham, 2014). The holistic concept in learning evaluation emphasizes the importance of assessing not only what students know, but also how they think, behave, and demonstrate attitudes within real-life contexts (Budiman, 2020). According to Miller and Nakagawa (2002), a holistic approach to learning and evaluation focuses on the development of the entire human personality, encompassing intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative, and spiritual dimensions. In this regard, holistic learning evaluation does not merely measure factual knowledge or technical skills, but also assesses character development, values, attitudes, and students' ability to apply their knowledge in solving everyday life problems. Tilaar (2015) asserts that holistic education requires comprehensive evaluation across all dimensions of human development to ensure learners grow optimally and in a balanced manner.

The main characteristics of holistic learning evaluation include several key aspects (Arifin, 2016). First, it is comprehensive, integrating assessments of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Second, it is authentic, evaluating students' abilities within meaningful real-life situations (Popham, 2014). Third, it is continuous, conducted throughout the learning process rather than solely at the end of a specific period (Sudjana, 2017). Fourth, holistic evaluation employs a variety of assessment methods and instruments to obtain a complete picture of students' development. In practice, holistic learning evaluation utilizes diverse assessment techniques and instruments, such as systematic observation of students' behavior and attitudes in various contexts, portfolio assessments that document developmental progress over time, performance assessments that measure students' ability to demonstrate specific competencies, project-based assessments that evaluate complex task completion, as well as self- and peer-assessments that foster reflective and evaluative skills (Arifin, 2016). This diversity of methods enables more accurate and comprehensive measurement of students' multifaceted development.

Philosophically, holistic learning evaluation aligns with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through interaction with their environment (Hamalik, 2015). Holistic evaluation recognizes learning as a complex and multidimensional process, thus requiring comprehensive and contextual assessment of learning outcomes (Sanjaya, 2016). This approach is also consistent with the theory of multiple intelligences, which posits that individuals possess diverse forms of intelligence that should be developed and assessed proportionally (Yaumi, 2016).

Character Education in Modern Islamic Boarding Schools
Pesantren, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, have a long history of shaping students' character through distinctive educational systems (Dhofier,

2011). Since their inception, pesantren have functioned not only as centers for religious knowledge acquisition but also as institutions for intensive moral and spiritual development. Traditional pesantren education emphasizes the cultivation of noble character through the exemplary conduct of kyai, the study of classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning), and boarding school life that instills discipline, simplicity, independence, and social responsibility (Mastuhu, 2014).

Societal changes and the demands of modernity have led to the emergence of modern pesantren, which integrate traditional Islamic education with modern formal education systems (Qomar, 2015). While maintaining fundamental pesantren values—such as respect for teachers, deep religious instruction, and communal boarding life—modern pesantren adopt national curricula, contemporary teaching methods, and improved educational facilities (Azra, 2012). This integration aims to produce students who excel not only in religious knowledge but also in academic competence and skills required in the modern era. Character education in modern pesantren exhibits distinctive features compared to general educational institutions (Syafe'i, 2017). First, it is holistic and continuous, encompassing all aspects of students' lives over a 24-hour period (Madjid, 2013). Second, it relies heavily on direct role modeling by kyai and ustadz who live alongside students (Dhofier, 2011). Third, character values are rooted in comprehensive Islamic teachings that regulate vertical relationships with God and horizontal relationships with fellow humans and the environment (Mujib & Mudzakkir, 2017). Fourth, character education methods are diverse, ranging from formal classroom learning and religious study circles to congregational worship and daily dormitory life (Zuhairini & Ghofir, 2015).

The character values emphasized in modern pesantren are broad and comprehensive (Kesuma, Triatna, & Permana, 2018). Religiosity forms the core foundation, encompassing faith, piety, and obedience to religious teachings (Tafsir, 2014). Honesty is instilled through activities that encourage truthfulness and integrity (Lickona, 2013). Responsibility is fostered through entrusted roles in student organizations (Samani & Hariyanto, 2017). Discipline is shaped through strict daily schedules (Zubaedi, 2017). Simplicity is cultivated through modest lifestyles (Dhofier, 2011), while independence is developed through habituation of self-care (Madjid, 2013). Social awareness is nurtured through community service and social engagement programs (Wahid, Saifullah, & Ma'arif, 2018).

Character education methods in modern pesantren adopt an integrative and holistic approach (Muhaimin, 2015). Exemplary modeling is the primary method, whereby kyai and ustadz demonstrate desired behaviors in daily life (Tafsir, 2014). Habituation is reinforced through consistent religious, academic, and social routines (Zubaedi, 2017). Moral guidance is provided through advice

and counseling (Megawangi, 2016). Reward and punishment systems reinforce positive behaviors and deter negative ones (Mulyasa, 2018). Self-reflection is cultivated through muhasabah practices that encourage introspection (Daulay, 2018). Modern pesantren also implement structured character development programs, including moral development through regular religious studies, leadership training through student organizations, entrepreneurship programs to foster economic independence, community service initiatives, and soft skills development to prepare students for professional life (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). These programs are integrated with both formal and informal curricula to ensure comprehensive and sustainable character formation (Mustofa, 2019).

Implementation of Holistic Learning Evaluation in Modern Pesantren
The implementation of holistic learning evaluation in modern pesantren is a complex process involving multiple assessment dimensions (Rahmat, 2019). Modern pesantren integrate traditional evaluation practices with structured and systematic modern assessment methods (Sutrisno, 2020). This evaluation system measures not only academic achievement but also character development, spirituality, and life skills essential for success in contemporary society (Wiyani, 2018).

The first component is cognitive assessment, covering mastery of both religious and general subjects (Arifin, 2016). Cognitive evaluation employs written exams, oral tests, presentations, discussions, and project-based tasks (Sudjana, 2017). Religious assessments include Qur'anic recitation, hadith comprehension, mastery of classical texts, and understanding of Islamic sciences such as fiqh, tafsir, and aqidah (Muhaimin, 2015). General subjects follow national curriculum standards (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). The second component is affective assessment, which evaluates students' attitudes, values, and character (Arifin, 2016). This is conducted through continuous observation of daily behavior, including worship discipline, adherence to regulations, social interactions, and moral conduct (Rahmat, 2019). Core values assessed include honesty, responsibility, empathy, patience, and respect for teachers and parents (Kesuma et al., 2018). The third component is psychomotor assessment, measuring practical skills (Arifin, 2016). These include worship practices, daily life skills, organizational and leadership competencies, and vocational skills taught within the pesantren (Mastuhu, 2014).

Assessment instruments are diverse, including observation checklists, self- and peer-assessment tools, and developmental portfolios (Popham, 2014). Portfolios document students' academic work, achievements, activities, and self-reflections, serving both evaluative and developmental purposes (Sudjana, 2017). Evaluation is conducted systematically and continuously through daily,

weekly, monthly, and semester-based assessments (Rahmat, 2019). Semester evaluations produce comprehensive reports encompassing academic performance, character, spirituality, and skills development (Sudjana, 2017).

Contribution of Holistic Evaluation to Character Strengthening

Holistic learning evaluation significantly contributes to strengthening students' character through constructive feedback, value internalization, self-reflection, continuous improvement culture, and comprehensive documentation (Budiman, 2020). It fosters self-awareness, accountability, and intrinsic motivation, enabling students to internalize character values authentically and sustainably (Lickona, 2013). Moreover, holistic evaluation supports personalized guidance, quality assurance in character education, and the creation of a supportive educational community (Wiyani, 2018). Despite challenges such as complexity, subjectivity, resistance to change, and integration of traditional and modern systems, strategic efforts—such as capacity building, standardized rubrics, technological support, and stakeholder engagement—can enhance effective implementation (Mulyasa, 2018). Best practices from institutions such as Pesantren Modern Darussalam Gontor and Pesantren Tebuireng demonstrate that strong leadership commitment, stakeholder involvement, methodological diversity, effective communication with parents, and consistent follow-up are key success factors in implementing holistic learning evaluation for sustainable character development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature on holistic learning evaluation and character education in modern pesantren, several conclusions emerge. Holistic evaluation is a comprehensive approach assessing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development, aligned with the pesantren philosophy of nurturing students as whole individuals. Its implementation integrates traditional and modern methods, including observation, portfolios, self- and peer-assessment, and performance evaluation. This approach strengthens character by providing constructive feedback, fostering value internalization, promoting self-reflection, encouraging continuous improvement, and building accountability. Despite challenges such as complexity, subjectivity, and balancing tradition with modernity, strategies like technological support, educator training, evaluation teams, and positive evaluation culture can enhance effectiveness. Modern pesantren experiences highlight the value of comprehensive, participatory, and continuous evaluation, offering lessons for broader education. Ultimately, holistic evaluation serves not as an end but as a means to develop knowledgeable, virtuous, and socially responsible students, supporting their growth toward moral excellence the essence of pesantren education.

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