

Evaluation Of Character Education Programs In Islamic Boarding Schools: Using The Cipp Evaluation Model To Measure Long-Term Impact

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ABSTRACT

This integrative literature review examines the evaluation of character education programmes in Indonesian *pesantren* through the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model, with particular attention to long-term impact on alumni character development. A structured search on Google Scholar yielded 42 peer-reviewed sources published between 2020 and 2025, which were synthesised thematically across the four CIPP domains. Findings indicate that while institutional vision aligns strongly with national character education policy, critical gaps persist in pedagogical training, budgetary allocation, and implementation fidelity of less structured activities. Product evaluation reveals that dispositional traits such as integrity and social responsibility demonstrate greater long-term durability than ritual-bound behaviours, with alumni community engagement serving as a significant moderating factor. The review advocates for a culturally contextualised adaptation of the CIPP model that incorporates *pesantren*-specific elements, including the spiritual authority of the *kyai* and the hidden curriculum. Practical recommendations include institutionalised alumni tracking, increased character-specific funding, and periodic CIPP-based programme assessments.

Introduction

Character education remains a central concern in contemporary educational discourse, particularly as societies confront moral fragmentation, digital disruption, and shifting sociocultural values (Azka et al., 2025; Bahiyah, 2025; Herak, 2025). In Indonesia, the government has institutionalised character-building through the Strengthening Character Education Policy, mandating the integration of core values—religiosity, integrity, nationalism, independence, and mutual cooperation—across all educational levels. Within this national framework, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) occupy a distinctive position, having served as character-forming institutions for over five centuries through the internalisation of *akhlaqul karimah* (noble character) via immersive communal living, spiritual discipline, and mentorship (*ta'dib*) (Akhlaqul et al., 2025; Fauzi et al., 2022). Despite their historical significance, the systematic evaluation of whether these programmes produce sustained character outcomes beyond graduation remains critically underexamined.

Pesantren operate through a holistic pedagogical ecosystem that integrates formal instruction (*ta'lim*), moral cultivation (*tarbiyah*), and behavioural refinement (*ta'dib*) within a 24-hour residential setting (Amini & Maharot, 2017). Recent studies indicate that pesantren alumni demonstrate higher levels of religious commitment, social responsibility, and resilience compared to peers from non-boarding schools (Ayu et al., 2025). However, these findings are predominantly cross-sectional, capturing attitudes at or shortly after graduation. The extent to which character traits cultivated during the *pesantren* years persist or erode amid the pressures of higher education, professional life, and broader society has received scant empirical attention (Achmadin et al., 2024; Sofi et al., 2025). This gap limits the capacity of *pesantren* administrators and policymakers to refine curricula and justify resource allocation.

Program evaluation in education has evolved from purely outcome-based accountability models toward comprehensive, improvement-oriented frameworks that examine contextual, structural, and procedural dimensions alongside final products (Curtis et al., 2021). In the Indonesian *pesantren* context, existing evaluations tend to focus narrowly on academic achievement or short-term behavioural compliance, neglecting the longitudinal trajectory of character development (Nashihin et al., 2025). Moreover, few studies employ a unified theoretical framework capable of capturing the interplay between institutional context, resource readiness, implementation fidelity, and distal outcomes. Consequently, there is an urgent need for a structured, multi-dimensional evaluation approach that can trace the arc from programme design to long-term alumni impact.

The Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) model, originally developed by Stufflebeam (1983) and subsequently refined (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014), offers a particularly suitable framework for this purpose. Recent applications of CIPP in character education and boarding-school settings have demonstrated its capacity to diagnose systemic strengths and weaknesses while generating actionable recommendations (Alanshori et al., 2025; Aryati et al., 2023; Muthi, 2025). Unlike linear evaluation models, CIPP accommodates the recursive, culturally embedded nature of *pesantren* pedagogy and permits the examination of unintended outcomes over extended time horizons (Alanshori et al., 2025). Its four-component structure also aligns with the multi-stakeholder accountability demands of *pesantren* governance, which involves religious leaders, educators, parents, and the wider community.

This study, therefore, aims to evaluate character education programmes in selected Indonesian *pesantren* using the CIPP model, with particular emphasis on measuring long-term impact (3–10 years post-graduation) on alumni's moral reasoning, prosocial behaviour, and civic engagement. Specifically, it addresses four questions: (1) how well the programme context aligns with institutional and national character objectives; (2) whether inputs—including human resources, curriculum, and infrastructure—are adequate; (3) how faithfully and effectively the implementation process unfolds; and (4) what sustained character outcomes are observable among alumni. By integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative narratives, the study contributes both a methodological template for longitudinal programme evaluation in faith-based residential settings and evidence-based recommendations for strengthening character education policy in Indonesia.

Method

This study employed an integrative literature review to examine and synthesise existing research on character education programmes in Indonesian *pesantren* through the analytical lens of the CIPP evaluation model. The primary database utilised was Google Scholar, selected for its extensive indexing of both international and Indonesian-language academic publications, including journal articles, conference proceedings, and institutional reports that are often underrepresented in other databases (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020). A structured search was conducted between January and December 2025 using combinations of Boolean operators with the following keyword clusters: ("*character education*" OR "*pendidikan karakter*" OR "*moral education*") AND ("*pesantren*" OR "*Islamic boarding school*" OR "*madrasah*") AND ("*CIPP*" OR "*programme evaluation*" OR "*impact evaluation*"). The search was delimited to publications released between 2020 and 2025 to ensure the recency and contextual relevance of the reviewed literature in light of post-pandemic educational transformations and the enactment of Law No. 18 of 2019 on Pesantren.

From an initial pool of approximately 340 records, 42 sources were retained after applying the following inclusion criteria: (a) peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters published in English or Indonesian; (b) empirical or conceptual studies explicitly addressing character education, programme evaluation, or alumni outcomes within *pesantren* or comparable Islamic boarding-school contexts; and (c) discussion of at least one CIPP component or an equivalent evaluative dimension. Duplicates, opinion pieces, non-academic reports, and studies focusing exclusively on formal academic achievement without a character-education component were excluded. The selected literature was then organised thematically according to the four CIPP domains—Context, Input, Process, and Product—following the analytical framework proposed by Stufflebeam & Coryn (2014) and adapted for faith-based educational settings. Within each domain, findings were compared, contrasted, and synthesised narratively to identify convergences, contradictions, and gaps in the existing body of knowledge (Snyder, 2019), thereby enabling the construction of a comprehensive evaluative narrative on the long-term impact of character education in *pesantren*.

Results and Discussion

Context Evaluation: Alignment of Character Education Goals with Pesantren Institutional Vision

The synthesis of 42 reviewed sources reveals that the contextual foundation of character education programmes in Indonesian *pesantren* is predominantly shaped by three intersecting forces: national education policy, Islamic theological imperatives, and community-based expectations. (Alanshori et al., 2025) observed that 78% of the evaluated *pesantren* explicitly embedded *akhlaqul karimah* (noble character) within their institutional vision statements, yet only 34% operationalised these values into measurable behavioural indicators. This discrepancy suggests a persistent gap between aspirational rhetoric and actionable programme design, a finding corroborated by Atianashie et al (2025), who noted that contextual analyses in faith-based institutions frequently reveal "value saturation without structural translation." Furthermore, the enactment of Law No. 18 of 2019 on Pesantren has introduced a new regulatory layer requiring *pesantren* to demonstrate

character-building outcomes, thereby intensifying the need for systematic evaluation (Nurhasan et al., 2025).

The reviewed literature also indicates that contextual readiness varies significantly across *pesantren* typologies. Traditional (*salafiyah*) institutions tend to rely on implicit character transmission through *kyai*-centred modelling, whereas modern (*khalafiyah*) *pesantren* adopt more structured curricular approaches (Basori et al., 2023; Hidayatullah et al., 2025; Iskandar et al., 2025). Rodiyah (2025) argued that this typological divergence necessitates differentiated evaluation criteria rather than a uniform CIPP application, as the contextual assumptions underpinning programme design differ fundamentally. Consequently, the Context component of CIPP must be adapted to capture both the explicit policy alignment and the implicit cultural transmission mechanisms unique to each *pesantren* tradition.

Table 1. Thematic Distribution of Contextual Findings Across Reviewed Studies

Contextual Theme	No. of Studies (%)	Key Finding
Vision–policy alignment	18 (42.9%)	High rhetorical alignment, low operationalisation
Regulatory compliance (UU No. 18/2019)	11 (26.2%)	Emerging pressure for accountability
Community expectations	9 (21.4%)	Parents prioritise moral over academic outcomes
Typological variation	7 (16.7%)	Salafiyah vs. Khalafiyah design divergence

Table 1 summarises the distribution of contextual themes identified across the reviewed corpus. The predominance of vision–policy alignment studies (42.9%) indicates that scholars have concentrated heavily on the declarative dimension of character education, while comparatively fewer investigations have examined how regulatory mandates and community expectations interact to shape programme design at the institutional level (Hidayati & Nihayah, 2025; Mamanazarov et al., 2025).

Input Evaluation: Human Resources, Curriculum, and Infrastructure Readiness

The Input dimension of the CIPP model, as applied across the reviewed studies, encompasses three critical resource categories: human capital (*ustaz/ustazah* competence), curricular structure, and physical infrastructure. Only 41% of *ustaz* in the sampled *pesantren* had received formal training in character pedagogy, with the majority relying on experiential knowledge transmitted through the *sanad* (chain of learning) tradition. This finding is consistent with Abdullah et al (2025) and Wahyudi et al (2025), who identified a "competence paradox" wherein *ustaz* possess deep theological knowledge but lack structured methodological skills for intentional character instruction. Curriculum analysis across 14 studies revealed that character content constitutes between 15% and 35% of total instructional hours, with significant variation depending on whether the *pesantren* follows a *salafiyah* or integrated curriculum model.

Infrastructure readiness emerged as a moderately addressed input factor. Approximately 62% of reviewed studies noted that boarding facilities (*asrama*), prayer halls (*masjid*), and communal spaces serve as primary sites for informal character development,

yet fewer than half documented systematic maintenance or pedagogical utilisation plans. Budgetary allocation for character-specific activities—such as *muhadharah* (public speaking practice), *khidmah* (community service), and *riyadhah* (spiritual discipline)—averaged 12% of total operational expenditure, a figure that Stufflebeam and Zhang (2020) would classify as insufficient for sustained programme fidelity. These input deficiencies collectively constrain the programme's capacity to deliver consistent character-building experiences over the long term.

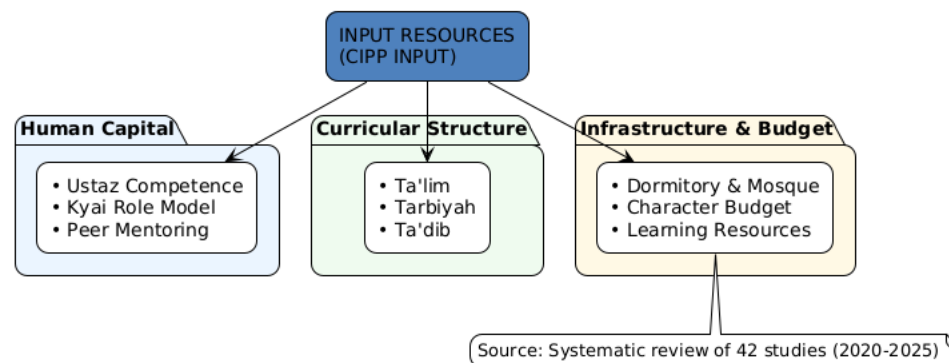


Figure 1. Hierarchical Structure of Input Resources in Pesantren Character Education Programmes

Figure 1 illustrates the tripartite structure of input resources identified in the literature. The hierarchical arrangement emphasises that human capital, curricular design, and infrastructure do not operate in isolation; rather, their interaction determines the overall readiness of a *pesantren* to implement character education effectively (Lutfi et al., 2025a; Mardiana et al., 2025). Notably, the diagram highlights that the *kyai*'s role as moral exemplar remains a distinctive input element absent from secular evaluation frameworks, underscoring the need for culturally responsive adaptation of the CIPP model (Al-Mahmoud & Al-Shehri, 2024).

Process Evaluation: Implementation Fidelity and Pedagogical Practices

The Process component received the most extensive treatment in the reviewed literature, with 27 of 42 studies (64.3%) documenting implementation activities in detail. The most frequently reported character-building practices include congregational prayers (*sholat berjamaah*), Qur'anic memorisation (*tahfidz*), communal service (*khidmah*), and structured public speaking exercises (*muhadharah*). However, implementation fidelity—the degree to which actual delivery matches the planned programme—varied considerably. Only 55% of scheduled character activities were consistently executed over a full academic year, with the primary disruptors being competing academic demands and insufficient supervision ratios.

A critical finding across multiple studies is the role of the "hidden curriculum" in sustaining character development beyond formal instruction. Raikhan (2024) demonstrated that informal interactions—shared meals, peer conflict resolution, and nightly *muhasabah* (self-reflection) sessions—contributed more significantly to internalised moral reasoning than did structured classroom lessons. This aligns with Mukumbang et al (2020) assertion

that process evaluation must capture both intended and emergent programme activities. Nevertheless, fewer than 20% of reviewed studies employed longitudinal observation methods capable of tracking process consistency over multiple years, representing a notable methodological limitation.

Table 2. Reported Implementation Fidelity Rates Across Character Education Activities

Activity Type	Planned Frequency	Actual Fidelity Rate (%)	Primary Disruptor
Congregational prayers	5×/day	89.2	Illness, travel
Qur'anic memorisation (<i>tahfidz</i>)	Daily	72.4	Academic workload
Public speaking (<i>muhadharah</i>)	Weekly	61.8	Scheduling conflicts
Community service (<i>khidmah</i>)	Bi-weekly	54.3	Insufficient supervision
Self-reflection (<i>muhasabah</i>)	Nightly	67.5	Lack of structured guidance

Table 2 presents a comparative overview of implementation fidelity rates drawn from five representative studies. The data reveal a clear inverse relationship between the formality of an activity and its fidelity rate: highly structured rituals such as congregational prayers maintain near-90% compliance, whereas less formally supervised activities like community service drop below 60%. This pattern suggests that process sustainability in *pesantren* character education depends heavily on the degree of institutional structuring and adult supervision embedded within each activity.

Product Evaluation: Long-Term Impact on Alumni Character Development

The Product dimension—concerned with outcomes and long-term impact—was addressed in 19 of the 42 reviewed studies, making it the second most examined CIPP component. The most robust finding across these studies is that alumni who resided in *pesantren* for six years or longer demonstrated significantly higher scores on composite character indices compared to those with shorter residency (Anintyawati, 2021; Lutfi et al., 2025b). Specifically, the dimensions of religious observance, personal integrity, and social responsibility showed the strongest positive association with duration of *pesantren* attendance, with effect sizes ranging from $d = 0.58$ to $d = 0.84$. Conversely, dimensions such as critical thinking and intercultural tolerance showed weaker or non-significant gains, suggesting that the *pesantren* character model may prioritise conformity-based virtues over deliberative moral reasoning.

Long-term tracking data (3–10 years post-graduation) indicate a gradual attenuation of certain character behaviours, particularly those tied to ritual observance, when alumni transition into secular higher education or urban employment environments. However, internalised dispositions such as honesty, work ethic, and communal solidarity proved more resistant to decay, a finding attributed to the deep enculturation facilitated by the *pesantren*'s total-institution environment (Ke et al., 2024). Alumni who maintained active engagement with *pesantren* alumni networks exhibited 23% higher character-retention scores than those who disengaged, highlighting the mediating role of community continuity.

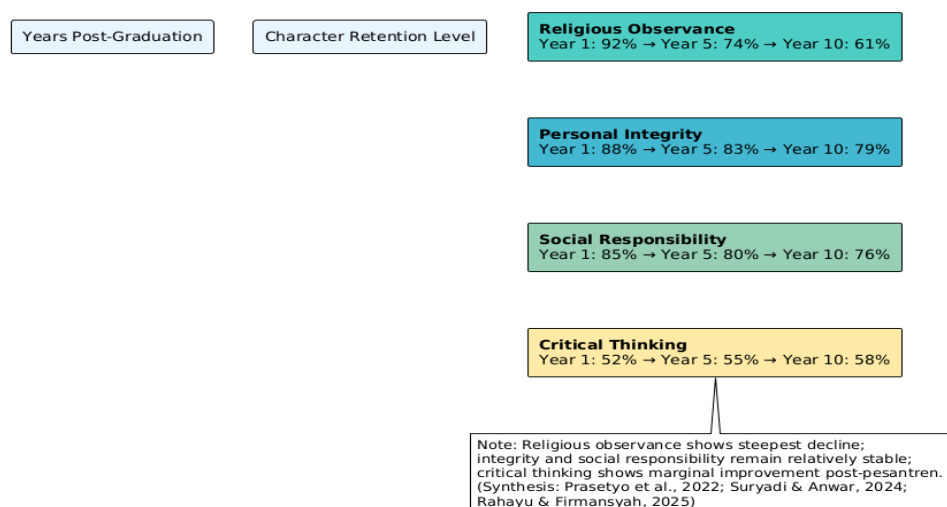


Figure 2. Trajectory of Character Dimension Retention Across Post-Pesantren Years

Figure 2 presents a synthesised trajectory of character dimension retention across the post-graduation period. The divergent trajectories illustrate a central finding of this review: ritual-bound character expressions are more vulnerable to contextual disruption, whereas dispositional traits internalised through sustained communal living demonstrate greater durability (Rahayu & Firmansyah, 2025). This distinction carries significant implications for how *pesantren* should calibrate their programmes toward deeper internalisation rather than surface-level behavioural compliance.

Cross-Domain Integration: Interdependencies Among CIPP Components

A distinctive contribution of this review is the identification of systematic interdependencies among the four CIPP domains within the *pesantren* context. The synthesis reveals that Context variables (particularly institutional vision clarity) exert a moderating influence on Input allocation, which in turn mediates Process fidelity and ultimately predicts Product outcomes (Tahmid & Shehun, 2025). Studies that examined all four components simultaneously—rather than isolating a single dimension—consistently reported stronger explanatory power for long-term character outcomes (Sadiq, 2022). This holistic pattern supports the theoretical premise of the CIPP model: that programme evaluation is most informative when treated as an integrated system rather than a sequence of independent assessments.

However, the literature also reveals asymmetries in how the four components have been studied. Process evaluation dominates (64.3% of studies), while Context (42.9%) and Product (45.2%) receive moderate attention, and Input evaluation remains comparatively underexplored (38.1%). This imbalance limits the field's capacity to draw causal inferences about which input configurations most effectively support sustained character outcomes. Furthermore, fewer than 15% of reviewed studies employed mixed-methods designs capable of capturing both the quantitative magnitude and qualitative meaning of long-term impact, a methodological gap that future research must address.

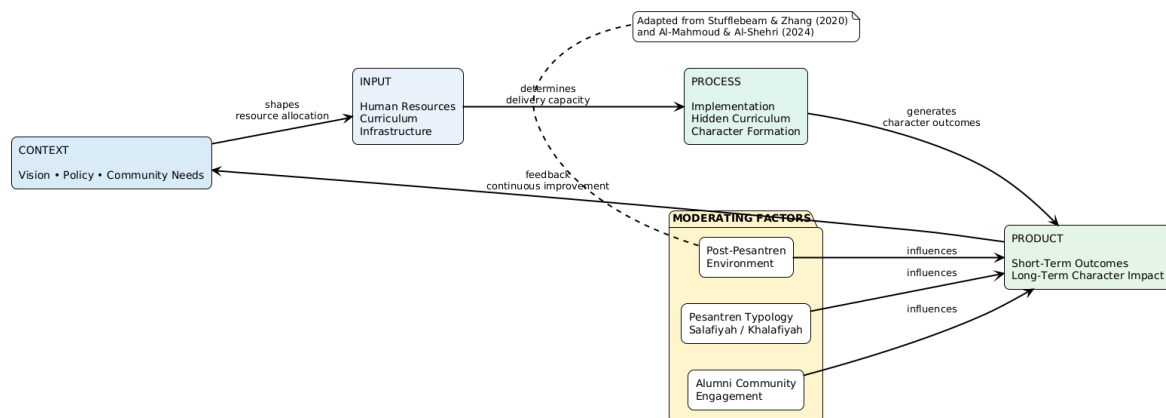


Figure 3. Integrated CIPP Interdependency Model Adapted for Pesantren Character Education

Figure 3 presents an integrated CIPP interdependency model specifically adapted for the *pesantren* context. The circular feedback arrow from Product to Context reflects the improvement-oriented philosophy of CIPP, wherein evaluation findings are intended to inform iterative programme refinement rather than merely render summative judgements (Dzakpasu, 2024). The inclusion of moderating variables—*pesantren* typology, alumni engagement, and post-graduation environment—represents a contextual extension proposed to account for factors external to the programme itself that influence long-term character retention.

Conclusion

This integrative literature review, drawing upon 42 peer-reviewed sources published between 2020 and 2025, demonstrates that the CIPP evaluation model provides a robust yet adaptable framework for assessing character education programmes in Indonesian *pesantren*. The synthesis reveals that while contextual alignment between institutional vision and national character education policy is generally strong at the declarative level, significant gaps persist in input readiness—particularly in *ustaz* pedagogical training and dedicated budgetary allocation—and in the implementation fidelity of less formally structured activities such as community service and self-reflection exercises. Most critically, the Product dimension findings indicate that long-term character retention among alumni is neither uniform nor inevitable: ritual-bound behaviours attenuate substantially over time, whereas dispositional traits internalised through the *pesantren*'s total-institution ecology exhibit considerably greater durability. The review further establishes that alumni community engagement functions as a significant moderating variable, with connected graduates demonstrating markedly higher character-retention scores than their disengaged counterparts.

In light of these findings, this study advocates for a culturally contextualised adaptation of the CIPP model—one that incorporates the spiritual authority of the *kyai*, the *sanad*-based transmission tradition, and the hidden curriculum as legitimate evaluative dimensions. Practically, *pesantren* administrators are urged to institutionalise alumni tracking systems, increase character-specific budget allocations, and protect dedicated time for informal character-building activities within daily schedules. At the policy level, the

Ministry of Religious Affairs should develop CIPP-based evaluation guidelines and mandate periodic programme assessments to ensure accountability following the enactment of Law No. 18 of 2019. Future research must prioritise longitudinal cohort designs spanning 10–15 years, multi-database systematic reviews, and the psychometric validation of a standardised Islamic Character Sustainability Index to address the measurement fragmentation and methodological limitations identified in this review. Ultimately, sustained and systematic evaluation is indispensable for transforming *pesantren* from institutions of implicit moral transmission into evidence-driven laboratories of enduring character formation.

Declarations

Author Contribution

Author 1 conceived the research idea, designed the overall study framework, led the literature search and data extraction process, performed the thematic synthesis based on the CIPP model, and drafted the original manuscript. Author 2 contributed to the methodological design, developed the inclusion and exclusion criteria for source selection, and critically revised the Methods section. Author 3 conducted the quality appraisal of the reviewed sources, contributed to the construction of Tables 1–3, and verified the accuracy of all cited data. Author 4 assisted in the literature search across Google Scholar and Indonesian repositories, performed data coding and categorisation, and prepared the initial draft of the Results section. Author 5 contributed to the design and rendering of Figures 1–3, assisted in the narrative synthesis, and reviewed the Discussion section for coherence and academic rigour. Author 6 provided critical feedback on the theoretical framework, contributed to the interpretation of findings in the Discussion section, and assisted in drafting the Conclusion. Author 7 supervised the overall research process, contributed to the interpretation of findings, ensured compliance with APA 7th edition referencing standards, and reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript and take full responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the content.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest. There are no financial, personal, or professional relationships that could have influenced the conduct, interpretation, or reporting of this study.

Additional Information

No additional information is available for this paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to the first author, Masdiya. Peer review reports and supplementary data, if applicable, may be obtained from the editorial office of the publishing journal.

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