

Islamic Boarding House as a Learning-Living Lab: A Model for Building a Culture of Worship, Knowledge, and Togetherness Among Students

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Abstrak: Hunian mahasiswa bukan lagi sekadar tempat tinggal, tetapi menjadi ruang pembentukan karakter, kebiasaan, dan lingkungan belajar yang mempengaruhi perkembangan intelektual, spiritual, dan sosial penghuninya. Dalam konteks tersebut, kost islami memiliki potensi untuk dikembangkan sebagai *learning-living lab* yang mengintegrasikan budaya ilmu, ibadah, dan kebersamaan dalam satu ekosistem pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana kost islami dapat berfungsi sebagai ruang pembelajaran holistik yang mendukung pembentukan adab, produktivitas akademik, serta relasi sosial mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi kegiatan penghuni kost. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa elemen budaya ilmu, rutinitas ibadah, dan dinamika kebersamaan telah tumbuh secara alami dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, namun belum terstruktur oleh sistem pembinaan dan manajemen komunitas. Integrasi ketiga aspek tersebut terbukti mendukung perkembangan karakter dan keseimbangan akademik–spiritual penghuni. Simpulan penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa kost islami memiliki peluang besar sebagai *learning-living lab*, namun memerlukan penguatan tata kelola, program terjadwal, dan struktur komunitas untuk memastikan keberlanjutan dan efektivitasnya sebagai bagian dari penyempurnaan ekosistem pendidikan Islam modern.

Kata kunci: kost islami; learning-living lab; budaya ilmu; pembiasaan ibadah; komunitas mahasiswa.

Abstract: Student housing is no longer merely a residence, but a developmental space that shapes habits, character, and a learning environment affecting students' intellectual, spiritual, and social maturity. In this context, Islamic boarding houses (kost islami) hold potential to develop as learning-living laboratories that integrate a culture of knowledge, worship practices, and communal engagement within one educational ecosystem. This study aims to analyze how Islamic student housing functions as a holistic learning space that supports the formation of adab, academic productivity, and meaningful social relationships. This research employed a qualitative case study approach through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation of daily activities. The findings indicate that intellectual interactions, worship routines, and social bonding emerge naturally among residents, although they are not yet supported by structured management or formal community programs. The integration of these three



pillars contributes to character building and fosters balance between academic demands and spiritual well-being. The study concludes that Islamic student housing has strong potential to serve as a learning-living laboratory, yet requires strengthened management systems, structured mentorship, and programmed activities to ensure continuity and maximize its role within the framework of modern Islamic education.

Keywords: *Islamic boarding house; learning-living lab; knowledge culture; worship practices; student community*

Introduction

Higher education in the modern era places students in situations that demand independent learning, strengthening personal competencies, and the ability to build an environment that supports holistic self-development. In this context, student housing has become one of the most strategic spaces for fostering intellectual and spiritual activities (Jusuf, Tallei, & Mokodongan, 2022). Housing is no longer understood simply as a place to rest, but rather as a space that shapes students' habits, character, and social interaction patterns (Najib, 2010). In fact, various recent studies have shown that the residential environment significantly contributes to students' academic, social, and personality development (Khozaei et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2022). Therefore, there is a need to design living environments that are not only physically comfortable but also capable of functioning as integrated learning spaces.

This situation has given rise to various student housing models, ranging from structured campus dormitories and rental houses to modern, technology-based boarding houses. One model that is gaining increasing attention is the Islamic boarding house, which offers a lifestyle based on Islamic values. These residences generally provide rules, religious activities, and a religious community, attracting students seeking to align academic life with spiritual orientation. However, in recent developments, Islamic boarding houses are no longer simply understood as sharia-compliant housing. Their potential as holistic learning spaces (learning living space) began to show academic urgency to be studied more systematically.

From a modern educational perspective, learning takes place not only in formal classrooms but also through contextual and reflective everyday experiences (Jarvis, 2020; Benson, 2021). Accordingly, the approach living lab has developed as a real-life learning model that emphasizes the integration of learning activities, social environments, and everyday practices (Leminen et al., 2020; Schuurman, 2022). This approach is relevant for explaining how living spaces can be optimized as vibrant, collaborative, and sustainable learning ecosystems.

Meanwhile, in the Islamic educational tradition, human development is not only carried out through the transfer of knowledge, but also through the process of developing morals and personality rooted in fundamental values. Within this framework, the concept of correction which was put forward by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas as the main foundation, which emphasized that education must start from instilling manners before knowledge (Yanti & Hayani, 2023; Hashim & Langgulong, 2020). Correction emphasizes not only the cognitive aspect but also the integration of knowledge, practice, and morals as a whole that forms a complete human being (Haris, 2024). In this case, the environment plays a strategic role as a medium for value formation, because through habits, the rhythm of worship, and daily social interactions, these values are continuously internalized (Rachmadiani & Haryanto, 2025; Azra, 2021).

In practice, the process of forming these manners does not take place individually, but rather through interaction in a learning community (learning community) is vibrant and dynamic. Recent research shows that learning communities contribute significantly to the formation of students' character and social engagement through collaborative interactions and shared experiences (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020; Dede et al., 2022). The Islamic educational tradition itself has long reflected this concept through the practice of halaqah, ribath, zawiyah, and the homes of scholars, which serve as learning centers and residences (Mahmudah, 2021; Mulyadi et al., 2025). These communities serve not only as spaces for knowledge transfer but also as spaces for the inculcation of values and character formation.

Furthermore, these values are not always taught formally, but rather are transmitted through what is known as hidden curriculum, namely the process of internalizing values that occurs through daily practices, environmental culture, and implicit social interactions. Recent studies show that hidden curriculum has a significant influence in shaping students' attitudes, ethics, and identities through unstructured social experiences (Alsubaie, 2020; Giroux, 2020). In this context, the living environment becomes a crucial space, as it presents life experiences that continuously shape students' ways of thinking, acting, and behaving.

The framework finds its relevance in the approach living lab, which positions the real environment as a space for integrative learning implementation. This approach enables the co-creation of knowledge through interactions between individuals, communities, and the environment in real-life situations (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Ståhlbröst, 2020; Leminen et al., 2021). In this context, student housing,

particularly Islamic boarding houses, can be developed as a learning-living lab, namely a space that not only functions as a residence, but also as a social and spiritual laboratory that integrates correction as a foundation of values, learning community as a social practice, as well as a hidden curriculum as a mechanism for internalizing values in everyday life.

However, in the context of modern students living in an urban and digital environment, conventional housing models, especially public boarding houses, often fail to provide a conducive ecosystem for developing a culture of knowledge or cultivating religious practices. A tendency toward individualism, limited intellectual discussion spaces, and a weak learning community are challenges students frequently face. In practice, many Islamic boarding houses are still limited to implementing basic religious-tinged rules, such as gender segregation or obligatory religious practices, without supporting the development of a culture of knowledge, academic mentoring, or structured community management.

From an academic perspective, this condition indicates a research gap (research gap). Studies on living-learning community So far, research has focused more on the context of campus dormitories and academic-social integration (Friswold-Atwood, 2018; Utari, Sutapa, & Rahmawati, 2015; Kasedu & Kudubun, 2023; Roskina, Sukung, & Abdjul, 2025). Meanwhile, research on Islamic boarding houses tends to emphasize aspects of comfort, facilities, and compliance with sharia principles. Studies that specifically integrate Islamic boarding houses as a learning-living lab Integrating the dimensions of worship, cultural knowledge, and togetherness within a single non-formal education ecosystem remains very limited. However, from an Islamic educational perspective, the integration of knowledge, practice, and morals is at the heart of a holistic educational process (Halstead, 2021; Sahin, 2023) and has been shown to contribute to the development of students' character and religious habits (Zahra & Fitri, 2021; Rahman & Setiawan, 2022).

Based on this gap, this research is important to examine in more depth how Islamic boarding houses can function as living learning laboratories (learning-living lab) This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how an Islamic boarding house environment can foster a culture of knowledge through intellectual activities that are naturally built into daily life, strengthen the habit of worship as a spiritual foundation, and build harmonious and collaborative social relations among residents.

Thus, the main contribution of this research lies in the development of a conceptual model of Islamic boarding houses as learning-living lab. An integrative model that connects the dimensions of the residential environment, religious practices, and academic culture into a unified learning ecosystem. This model is expected to be relevant not only for the development of student housing but also to contribute to the development of Islamic education that is contextual, applicable, and responsive to the challenges of the times.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because it can capture the dynamics of boarding house residents' lives in depth and naturally, particularly in understanding the cultural practices of knowledge, worship, and togetherness in everyday life (Nowell et al., 2017; Busetto et al., 2020). The case study is used to provide a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon of Islamic boarding houses as a learning-living lab in a specific and real context (Yin, 2018).

The research location was an Islamic boarding house that actively implements Islamic values in the lives of its residents, through rules, program activities, and community development. The location was selected purposively, considering the characteristics of the boarding house, which includes scholarly activities, congregational worship, and structured social interactions.

Data collection techniques were conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation as a form of technical triangulation to increase data validity (Fusch et al., 2018). Observation was used to directly observe the activities of residents in carrying out cultural practices of knowledge, such as discussions, studies, and academic activities, as well as religious practices and social togetherness. In-depth interviews were conducted with residents and boarding house managers to explore their experiences, motivations, and perceptions of the living environment and the learning process that occurs. Meanwhile, documentation was used to supplement the data through activity archives, program records, and evidence of relevant community activities.

To strengthen the qualitative findings, this study was also supplemented with a simple quantitative survey aimed at obtaining an overview of the level of resident participation in activities, perceptions of environmental comfort, and the effectiveness of integrating Islamic values in daily life.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques with the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2019). This approach is considered effective in organizing complex qualitative data and systematically identifying emerging patterns and themes. To maintain data validity, this study utilized triangulation of sources and techniques and conducted member checking to informants to ensure the accuracy of interpretation (Stahl & King, 2020).

Through this approach, the research is expected to be able to produce a deep understanding of how Islamic boarding houses can be formulated as a learning-living lab which not only supports academic development, but also strengthens the spiritual and social dimensions of students.

Discussion

The Concept of Learning-Living Lab from the Perspective of Islamic Education

The idea of Islamic boarding houses as a learning-living lab starts from the understanding that education takes place not only through formal processes in the classroom, but also through the living environment that accompanies students' daily activities. This concept has deep roots in the Islamic educational tradition, where the living space functions as a locus of education that unites the dimensions of knowledge, manners, and spirituality (Harun, 2018). Since the classical era, institutions such as Riath, zawiyah, to the point that the homes of scholars became integrative spaces where students lived, studied, worshipped, and interacted intensively within the scholarly community (Emroni, 2016). In this context, the educational process did not take place in isolation, but rather was naturally interwoven through the practice of living together.

In recent developments, the concept of a living lab is understood as a real context-based learning model (real-life setting) which emphasizes the active involvement of individuals in their social environment. This model integrates the physical environment, academic activities, and social interactions into a holistic learning ecosystem. Recent research shows that a living lab is capable of encouraging contextual, collaborative, and reflective learning through direct experience (Nurdiansyah, 2025), and serves as an integrative space that connects academic activities with students' social lives (van der Wee et al., 2024). Furthermore, this approach has been shown to support transformational learning that not only develops

cognitive aspects but also shapes social awareness and character through engagement in real-life practices (Morales et al., 2024).

When linked to Islamic education, this concept aligns with the principle of integration between knowledge, manners, and life practices. The environment serves not only as a place to live but also as a space for character formation through habituation, social interaction, and collective experience. Within this framework, Islamic boarding houses have the potential to become spacesituated learning, where the learning process occurs through active participation in everyday life, while also being a mediumhidden curriculumwho internalize values through community customs and culture.

However, field findings show that the implementationlearning-living labIslamic boarding houses are still informal and unstructured. Interviews with Rifqi revealed that religious practices, study habits, and social interactions depend more on individual awareness than on an organized system. He stated that "if not for self-awareness, our boarding houses would be too free-flowing because there are no coordinators or owners." This data shows that although elements of Islamic boarding houses areliving labhas emerged naturally, but there is no institutional design capable of collectively directing and optimizing this process.

Analytically, this condition shows that Islamic boarding houses are at a stageemerging living lab, namely a learning environment that develops spontaneously but is not yet supported by strong governance and pedagogical design. Recent studies confirm that one of the main challenges in implementingliving labis the weakness of the structure, coordination, and integration aspects between the learning system and real-life practices (van der Wee et al., 2024). Without these elements, the potentialliving labas a transformational learning space cannot develop optimally.

Thus, Islamic boarding houses have great potential aslearning-living labHowever, it is still at the conceptual stage and has not yet developed into a systematically managed education system. Therefore, a transformation from a social phenomenon to a structured educational design is needed through strengthening learning communities, integrating Islamic values, and establishing a sustainable development system. The contribution of this research lies in its effort to connect the concepts ofliving labup-to-date with Islamic educational traditions, resulting in a student housing model that is not only functional, but also educational, transformative, and value-based.

Conceptual Model of Islamic Community-Based Learning-Living Lab

The learning-living lab model in this study is understood as a contextual learning ecosystem that integrates the learning process with everyday life within a dynamic social system. This approach allows for direct interaction between values, actors, and practices in a real-world environment, ensuring that learning is not only cognitive but also experiential and collaborative (van der Wee et al., 2024; Leal Filho et al., 2022). Within this framework, the learning-living lab serves not only as a physical space but also as a social space that facilitates collective learning through community interaction.

To clarify the system's working mechanism, this study developed a conceptual model based on input, process, output, and outcome flows. At the input stage, the system is shaped by Islamic values such as brotherhood, etiquette, and modesty, the characteristics of residents as individual learners, as well as the physical environment and community norms that govern communal life. From a social learning perspective, values and social context are important determinants that influence the direction of interaction and learning within the community (Didham & Ofei-Manu, 2015). Furthermore, the living lab approach emphasizes the importance of real-life settings as a medium for integrating theory and practice, thus making learning more relevant and applicable (Zen, 2019).

The process stage is at the heart of this model, with community management serving as a key variable linking inputs to expected outcomes. Community management encompasses activity planning, role organization, social interaction implementation, and social guidance and control mechanisms. In the context of a living lab, the quality of the process is largely determined by the level of actor involvement and the effectiveness of collaboration within the community (Matschoss et al., 2021). Structured interactions through collective activities enable co-creation and reflective learning, strengthening the learning experience (Hughes et al., 2019). Thus, community management functions as a mediator, transforming normative values into concrete social practices in everyday life.

This process produces outputs in the form of social cohesion, improved interaction between residents, and the development of social skills such as communication, empathy, and cooperation. Previous studies have shown that collaborative interactions in living labs can enhance individuals' capacity to build social relationships and share knowledge collectively (Matschoss et al., 2021; Hughes

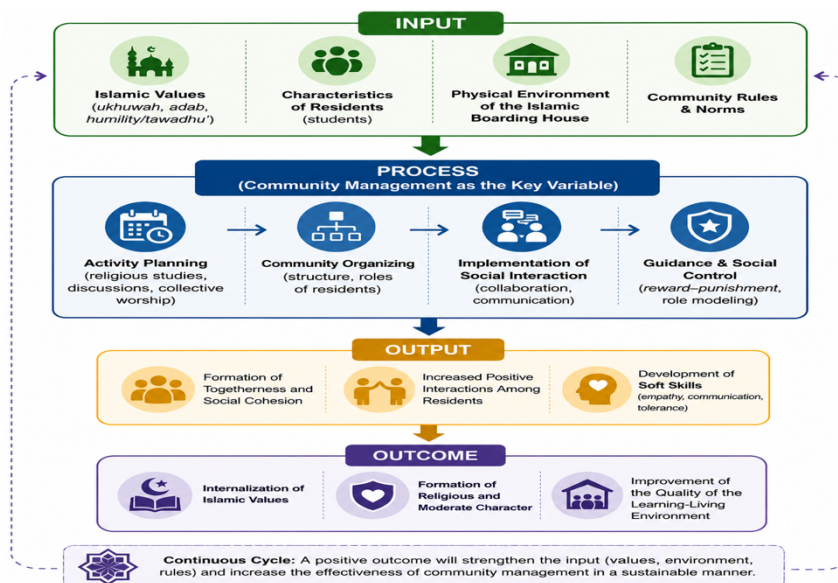
et al., 2019). These outcomes demonstrate that learning within a community not only impacts individuals but also strengthens overall social dynamics.

Furthermore, these outputs develop into long-term and transformational outcomes, namely the internalization of Islamic values in behavior, the formation of moderate religious character, and the improvement of the quality of a sustainable learning-living environment. Within the social learning framework, changes in values and behavior occur through repeated and reflective interactions within the community (Didham & Ofei-Manu, 2015). Furthermore, living labs have also been shown to foster character development such as resilience, agency, and social engagement through real-life experiences (Belfield, 2025).

Based on the overall model, this study confirms that community management is the main determinant of success. learning-living lab Islamic community-based. This role is not only as an activity manager, but also as a mediator between values and practices, a facilitator of collaborative learning, and a regulator of social dynamics within the community. Thus, the main contribution of this research lies in confirming the success of learning-living lab is not solely determined by the existence of values or the environment, but rather depends heavily on the quality of systematic, participatory and sustainable community management.

To clarify the relationship between these components, the conceptual model of this research is visualized in the following diagram which describes the flow of relationships between input, process, output, and outcome in an integrated manner.

Diagram of the Conceptual Model of the Learning-Living Lab Based on the Islamic Community



This model works systematically through four main stages, namely input which includes Islamic values (brotherhood, courtesy, humility), characteristics of residents, physical environment, and community rules as the initial foundation; process which places community management as a key variable through planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling value-based activities; output in the form of the formation of social cohesion, increased positive interactions, and the development of residents' social skills; to outcome which results in the internalization of Islamic values, the formation of a moderate religious character, and the creation of learning-living environments sustainable, thus confirming that community management plays a role as a determining factor that connects values with practice, facilitates collaborative learning, and regulates social dynamics in determining the success of the entire system. learning-living lab.

Culture of Knowledge in the Islamic Boarding House Environment

The culture of science is one of the main pillars that differentiates the concept learning-living lab from typical student housing. Within this framework, the living space serves not only as a resting place but also as a learning ecosystem that allows for natural intellectual processes through discussions, academic studies, reading habits, and scientific dialogue in everyday life. This aligns with the concept living lab which places the real environment as a contextual learning space based on social interaction and direct experience (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Ståhlbröst, 2020), as well as being part of an open innovation network that encourages participatory knowledge exchange (Leminen et al., 2021).

Research findings indicate that the culture of knowledge in Islamic boarding houses has been formed informally, yet it has significantly contributed to the intellectual development of its residents. The diversity of the residents' academic backgrounds is a crucial factor in enriching the dynamics of knowledge. Muhammad Fahad revealed that the boarding house environment provides opportunities for broad cross-disciplinary discussions, thus encouraging horizontal knowledge exchange. He stated that "there are quite a lot of opportunities, being able to discuss with friends from different backgrounds, sharing more in terms of learning knowledge." This condition reflects the practice of co-learning in learning communities, where social interaction becomes the main medium for knowledge

formation (Nurdiansyah et al., 2025), while strengthening the collaborative character in the ecosystem.living lab(Leminen et al., 2021).

However, this potential has not been fully realized optimally due to challenges related to consistency. Intense academic activities cause physical and psychological fatigue, which results in decreased participation in discussion activities. Muhammad Fahad stated that "sometimes we are tired from the outside and want to rest quickly, sometimes we feel awkward reminding each other." This condition indicates a gap between the potential of a culture of knowledge and its practical realization. Student fatigue has been shown to affect learning motivation and academic engagement (Alwi et al., 2024), so that intellectual activity does not occur sustainably. Furthermore, the irregular frequency of interactions, as expressed by Moh. Ilham Wahyudi, indicates that the culture of knowledge still operates sporadically, even though continuity and rhythm are essential elements in building transformational learning inliving lab(Morales et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the boarding house environment continues to show significant potential in building a culture of learning through organic social mechanisms. The presence of senior residents encourages the formation of informal mentorship relationships that enrich the learning process. Nafiza Ziski Aulia stated that "there are many opportunities to learn from seniors; it just depends on our willingness." This phenomenon confirms that learning occurs not only through formal structures but also through social interactions that shapelearning community And hidden curriculum, where values, knowledge, and character are transmitted through shared life experiences (Morales et al., 2024).

Analytically, this situation indicates that the culture of learning in Islamic boarding houses has developed as a vibrant social practice, but remains informal and not yet systematically organized. The lack of structure, weak collective mechanisms, and the lack of a focused learning design are factors that hinder the optimization of the boarding house's function as a learning environment.learning-living lab. In fact, the literature shows that successliving labis largely determined by the integration of social interaction, learning design, and structured governance within a sustainable ecosystem (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Ståhlbröst, 2020; Leminen et al., 2021). Therefore, a transformation from a spontaneous culture to a more planned and sustainable collaborative learning system is necessary through strengthening learning communities and consistent academic habits (Nurjanah et al., 2024). Thus, the culture of knowledge in Islamic boarding houses will not only persist as a social phenomenon

but also develop into a strategic instrument in creating a transformative, consistent, and effective learning environment.

Worship Habits as the Spiritual Rhythm of Residents

Worship plays a central role in shaping the rhythm of life and spirituality of Islamic boarding house residents. Theoretically, congregational worship, dhikr (remembrance of God), tilawah (recitation of the Koran), and other religious activities serve as a balance between academic activities and students' emotional states, thereby maintaining psychological stability while increasing focus on learning (Tri Wiharti & Hanif, 2025). From an Islamic educational perspective, habituating worship also strengthens discipline, peace of mind, and forms the character of manners necessary in social life, as consistent worship practices contribute to the formation of character and individual self-control (Tri Wiharti & Hanif, 2025).

The results of the study indicate that worship in Islamic boarding houses takes place primarily at night when the residents are all present. Hanna Maulid stated that "usually only at night can we gather and pray together, outside of that we pray according to each person's condition." This shows that congregational worship does not take place throughout the day in a structured manner, but rather depends on the situation of the residents, indicating that spiritual rhythms have not been systematically institutionalized in daily life (Tri Wiharti & Hanif, 2025). In addition to prayer, there are activities such as jamiyahan and other spiritual togetherness that strengthen relationships between residents, where collective religious practices have been shown to increase social cohesion and a sense of togetherness within the community (Astuti et al., 2025). Hanna Maulid added that these activities serve as a medium for strengthening social relationships, so that worship has not only a vertical dimension but also a horizontal one.

The biggest challenge in cultivating religious practices is the lack of binding rules. "There are almost no rules in this boarding house; we are required to have a high level of self-awareness," said Hanna Maulid. This situation indicates that cultivating religious practices is more of a personal endeavor than a structured collective practice, so its sustainability depends heavily on the intrinsic motivation of each individual (Tri Wiharti & Hanif, 2025). This situation can have a positive impact by fostering spiritual awareness within the individual, but on the other hand, it also has the potential to create inconsistencies if not supported by a sustainable community system or program. When asked about the impact of religious practices,

Rifqi explained that consistent practices provide comfort, serenity, and foster mutual respect, indicating that religious practices have a direct influence on the quality of interpersonal relationships within the community (Astuti et al., 2025). Thus, religious practices impact not only the individual's relationship with God but also the quality of social relations among residents.

Analytically, the practice of worship in Islamic boarding houses serves as a pillar of spiritual stabilization in students' lives, but it still tends to be informal and not systematically managed. However, within the framework of learning-living lab structured and sustainable rhythm of activities is key to building a holistic and transformative learning environment, including spirituality (Leminen et al., 2021). Therefore, strengthening efforts are needed through collective development, establishing a rhythm of communal worship, and creating a consistent spiritual culture so that worship functions not only individually but also becomes an integral part of the social and character learning system in Islamic boarding schools (Astuti et al., 2025).

Dynamics of Togetherness and Social Relations Between Residents

Togetherness is an important element in creating a healthy educational environment, because intensive social interaction can create a supportive and conducive learning climate for student development (Pransiska et al., 2023). Within this framework, learning-living lab, togetherness functions as a container for formation of soft skills such as empathy, tolerance, interpersonal communication, and conflict resolution skills, which are important competencies in social and professional life (Pransiska et al., 2023). Research findings indicate that Islamic boarding houses provide a space for the formation of positive community dynamics despite facing various internal challenges. Rifqi mentioned several activities that strengthen togetherness, such as communal meals, evening discussions, jamiyahan (group gatherings), and congregational prayers, which collectively play a role in building emotional closeness among residents. These activities create a sense of belonging, strengthen emotional bonds, and help residents cope with academic burdens through social support from peers (Natasya et al., 2025).

However, togetherness does not always run harmoniously. Differences in character, cultural background, and lifestyle among residents often give rise to minor friction that is unavoidable in communal life (Budijarto, 2018). Selma Khalidah said that "sometimes there are attitudes or behaviors that are not in accordance with our

personalities, but we are required to continue to respect each other." This situation shows that minor conflicts in communal life are actually part of the social learning process, where individuals learn to understand differences, manage emotions, and develop an attitude of tolerance in daily interactions (Budijarto, 2018). Thus, the dynamics of togetherness not only produce harmony but also provide an important learning space in shaping students' social maturity.

Another challenge faced is the low frequency of meetings due to academic commitments. Rifqi stated that "we rarely get together due to the many busy schedules and campus assignments," indicating that academic pressure can reduce the quality of social interactions between residents. This condition results in poorly maintained social relationships and suboptimal implementation of routine community activities (Pransiska et al., 2023). Despite this, the boarding house environment is still seen as an effective social learning space. Rifqi stated that boarding houses are a miniature society, where residents learn to respect, interact, and live side by side with others. This finding confirms that the dynamics of togetherness in Islamic boarding houses function as a social laboratory for students, where they develop social adaptation skills, build interpersonal relationships, and practice the values of brotherhood in real life (Natasya et al., 2025).

Analytical analysis reveals that the dynamics of togetherness and social relations among residents demonstrate that Islamic boarding houses have significant potential as contextual social learning spaces. Despite facing challenges in the form of interpersonal conflict and limited interaction time, togetherness still plays a role in shaping students' social character. Therefore, strengthening these togetherness efforts through more structured and sustainable management of joint activities is necessary so that the function of togetherness is not merely spontaneous but also becomes an integral part of the learning system. learning-living lab (Pransiska et al., 2023).

Integration of Knowledge, Worship, and Togetherness as a Learning-Living Lab Ecosystem

The integration of these three elements is the core of the learning-living lab concept. Research shows that all three are present simultaneously in Islamic boarding houses, yet they operate naturally without structured management. Intellectual learning is achieved through discussion, worship strengthens inner peace, and togetherness enriches residents' social skills.

Hanna Maulida explained that the boarding environment helps foster the ability to appreciate differences, strengthen social values, and enhance experiences of

community life. She stated, "Boarding houses are a place where we practice living in society... building brotherhood... and gaining knowledge and life experience" This proves that the learning-living lab was indeed formed as an integrative experience even though it had not been formally designed by the boarding house management.

The integration of these three dimensions makes boarding houses more than just a place to live, but also a space for character development, encompassing intellectual, spiritual, and social skills. However, without community management, this integration cannot function optimally in the long term.

Challenges of Implementing Islamic Boarding Houses as Learning-Living Labs

The research found a number of key challenges that hinder the optimization of Islamic boarding houses as learning-living labs:

1. The absence of an internal management structure means that worship activities, discussions and interactions take place without coordination.
2. Individual awareness becomes the sole support for the culture of worship and knowledge, which makes community activities prone to inconsistency.
3. The high level of campus activity results in low frequency of meetings.
4. Lack of structured coaching programs, such as study schedules, academic mentoring, or activities to cultivate good manners.
5. The diverse characters of the residents, which sometimes give rise to small conflicts.
6. The lack of reminder mechanisms and enforcement of values means that religious and scientific activities do not receive adequate social support.

Rifqi believes that the most effective strategies are self-awareness, mutual respect, and constant reminders. Although simple, these three strategies form the foundation for building an Islamic community.

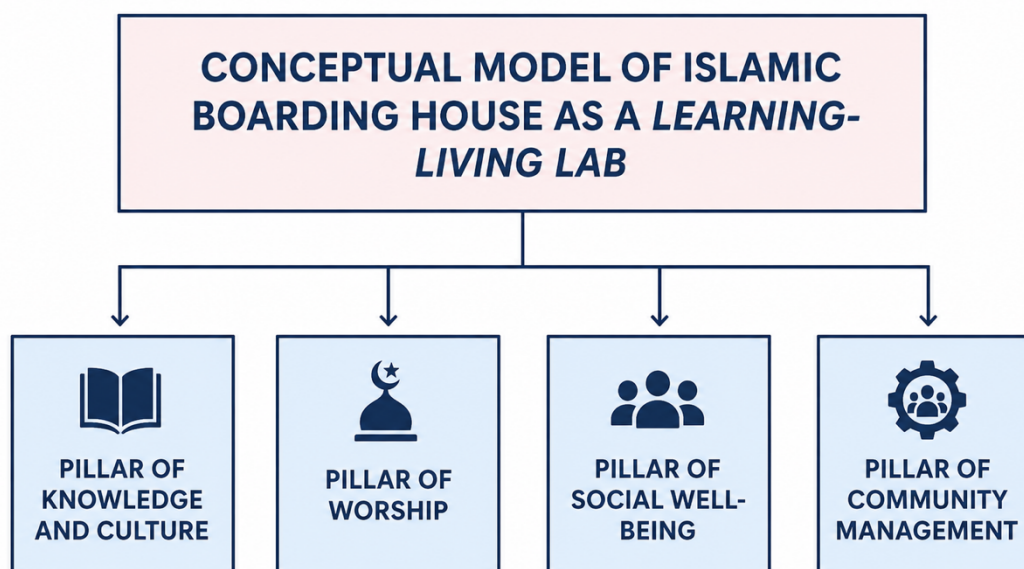
Conceptual Model of Islamic Boarding House as a Learning-Living Lab

Based on field findings, a conceptual model can be compiled which is expected to become a framework for developing Islamic boarding houses:

1. The Pillar of Scientific Culture, Highlighting the need for an academic mentoring system, scheduled discussion forums, and scientific activities that encourage the development of cross-disciplinary insights.

2. Pillars of Worship and Spirituality, Worship needs to be formalized through congregational schedules, role models from senior residents, and habituation programs such as recitation or regular study.
3. Pillars of Togetherness and Social Relations, Brotherhood needs to be brought to life through routine communal activities, monthly meetings, and collaborative programs such as cooking together or community service.
4. Community Management: This is the weakest pillar currently. A dormitory leader, a grades guidebook, a manners reminder mechanism, and minimal regulations are needed to ensure the learning-living lab runs smoothly.

This model is expected to be the basis for the development of Islamic boarding houses that not only provide physical facilities, but also create a holistic learning environment as part of a comprehensive Islamic education system.



Conclusion

This research shows that Islamic boarding houses have great potential to be developed as a learning-living lab which integrates the culture of knowledge, worship, and togetherness within a single student life ecosystem. These three aspects have naturally grown through the daily interactions of residents, although not yet systematically managed by the internal management structure. The culture of knowledge is evident through informal discussions, spontaneous academic mentoring, and the diversity of the residents' academic backgrounds, which creates a

space for knowledge exchange. The habit of worship serves as a spiritual rhythm that supports emotional stability while strengthening discipline and etiquette. Meanwhile, the dynamics of togetherness serve as a social laboratory that fosters tolerance, cooperation, and maturity in interpersonal relationships.

However, the research findings also revealed several challenges, including the absence of a formal community management structure, a lack of scheduled development programs, and a heavy reliance on individual awareness. This situation has led to a suboptimal consistency in the culture of knowledge, congregational worship, and shared activities. Therefore, a strengthened values-based governance model is needed, encompassing internal leadership, development regulations, a mechanism for reminding students of etiquette, and routine programs that connect the intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions. The conceptual model offered in this study serves as a first step in developing a model for Islamic student housing that serves not only as a place to live but also as a space for holistic character and competency development.

Thus, Islamic boarding houses as learning-living lab has the potential to become a vital part of the transformation of modern Islamic education, particularly in addressing the needs of a generation of students who require a learning environment that supports a balance between academics, spirituality, and social life. Further research is expected to expand the measurement of this model's implementation across various types of Islamic boarding houses and evaluate its long-term effectiveness on student character development, academic achievement, and social preparedness.

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