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PAI Teachers' Strategies in Internalizing Anticorruption Values at Attayyibah Junior High School: A Case Study on the Value Ecosystem Model

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ABSTRACT

Corruption remains a serious problem that erodes public trust and the order of national life in Indonesia. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) holds considerable potential as a vehicle for instilling anticorruption values in the younger generation, although its implementation remains suboptimal. This study examined the strategies used by PAI teachers to internalize anticorruption values among students at Attayyibah Junior High School, a pesantren based integrated Islamic school in Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia, and identified the factors that support and inhibit this process. A qualitative approach with a single case study design was employed. Data were collected over a three-month period through in-depth interviews with three purposively selected informants, namely one PAI teacher as the key informant, the school principal as a supporting informant, and one Grade IX student as a complementary informant, together with participatory observation and documentation study. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The findings show three main strategies: (1) contextual curricular integration through problem-based learning and sirah nabawiyah storytelling; (2) exemplification and habituation through an honesty canteen and daily amanah reports; and (3) strengthening of religious extracurricular activities such as ROHIS and Ramadan boarding programs. Supporting factors include the principal's transformational leadership, an Islamic based school culture, and active parental involvement, while inhibiting factors include limited instructional time, a scarcity of Islamic based anticorruption references, external environmental influence, and a weak character evaluation system. Theoretically, this study contributes to the internalization model of religious based anticorruption values by proposing a value ecosystem framework that operates at three interacting levels, namely micro, meso, and macro, which is discussed explicitly in dialogue with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

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Introduction

Corruption is not merely a legal issue that can be resolved through sanctions and imprisonment. It is fundamentally a moral problem that emerges when an individual's value system, or an institution as a whole, experiences an erosion of integrity. Indonesia continues to face serious challenges in this regard. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2023 published by Transparency International (2024), Indonesia scored 34 out of 100, a result consistent with broader patterns identified in comparative research on the measurement of governance transparency (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2023). This fact underscores that a repressive approach alone is insufficient; sustained prevention efforts rooted in value education and character formation from an early age are equally essential. The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), in its training module, explicitly states that lasting behavioral change will only occur if the values of integrity are instilled from the school level, rather than being introduced only at university or campaigned incidentally (Karyanti et al., 2019). This statement positions educational institutions, and teachers in particular, at the forefront of corruption prevention, a role in which Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is especially relevant.

Substantively, PAI conveys values that are inherently anticorruptive: honesty (shiddiq), trust (amanah), responsibility, justice, and courage. However, this considerable potential has not yet been optimally utilized. Several schools have begun to integrate anticorruption values into PAI instruction (Mualif, 2022), yet implementation remains far from systematic or equitable (Nani, 2021). PAI teachers generally convey anticorruption values only incidentally within general moral material, without a structured internalization strategy (Nasri, 2020). At the same time, PAI teachers occupy a unique and strategic position: as educators who integrate spiritual and moral dimensions simultaneously, they have the potential for a more profound formative impact than teachers of other subjects. The daily example set by a religious teacher, and the consistency between what is taught and what is practiced, is among the most decisive variables in shaping students' character (Wibowo & Ok, 2023). When a PAI teacher consistently demonstrates honesty, trustworthiness, and noble conduct in every interaction, students are encouraged to internalize these values in turn (Mukhlis, 2024).

The context of this research, Attayyibah Junior High School, offers a distinctive ecosystem: an integrated Islamic school built on a pesantren model that combines formal education with intensive character development. This ecosystem presents both unique opportunities and challenges for the internalization of anticorruption values. Some students reside fully within the pesantren and receive supervision for nearly twenty four hours a day, while others commute daily and are consequently more exposed to influences outside the school. This dynamic makes Attayyibah Junior High School a compelling site for study.

Empirical attention to anticorruption education at the junior secondary level, and particularly within Islamic educational settings, remains limited. A review of the recent literature identifies several relevant strands. First, studies at the university level and in civic education (PKn) dominate the anticorruption education literature, with comparatively little attention paid to Islamic Religious Education at the junior secondary level (Kholid et al., 2025). Second, several studies have examined the integration of anticorruption values into general school activities and curricula (Komalasari & Saripudin, 2015) and through dialogic methods in civic education classrooms (Montessori et al., 2021), yet these studies were conducted in secular public schools rather than Islamic boarding institutions. Third, research on teacher exemplification in anticorruption education has emphasized responsibility formation through civic education programs (Cahyono et al., 2020) and teacher training curricula at the primary level (Indawati, 2015), without extending to the pesantren based junior secondary context or examining how curriculum, exemplification, and religious extracurricular activity interact as a combined strategy. Taken together, this body of literature, spanning approximately 2015 to 2025, suggests that although anticorruption education has received growing scholarly attention, systematic empirical accounts of how PAI teachers operationalize anticorruption values through an integrated combination of curriculum, exemplification, and religious culture within a pesantren based junior high school remain scarce.

This research addresses that gap by examining the strategies employed by PAI teachers in internalizing anticorruption values through learning, exemplification, habituation, and religious activity at Attayyibah Junior High School. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the model of internalizing Islamic based anticorruption values; practically, its findings may serve as a reference for PAI teachers and policy makers in designing more effective anticorruption education programs.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical strands inform the analytical model developed in this study. The first concerns how moral and religious values come to be internalized by an individual. Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964) proposed that value internalization proceeds through a hierarchy of affective engagement, beginning with merely receiving and responding to a value, then valuing it, organizing it within a value system, and ultimately allowing it to characterize one's conduct. This affective taxonomy suggests that anticorruption values such as honesty and trust are not internalized through cognitive transmission alone; they require repeated affective engagement through exemplification, habituation, and reflective practice, a pattern that corresponds closely to the three strategies identified among PAI teachers in this study.

The second theoretical strand concerns the social and ecological context in which values are internalized. Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed an ecological systems theory of human development, arguing that development is shaped by nested and interacting environmental systems, including the microsystem of immediate settings such as the classroom and family, the mesosystem of interactions between these immediate settings, such as the relationship between school and home, and broader systems that encompass cultural values and norms. This framework has been widely applied to explain how immediate relationships and broader institutional and cultural context jointly shape a child's moral and behavioral development.

Building on these two strands, this study conceptualizes the internalization of anticorruption values as operating at three interacting levels, namely micro (teacher student interaction and learning strategy), meso (school culture and institutional system), and macro (family and community environment). Unlike Bronfenbrenner's original ecological model, which centers on the developing child as the unit of analysis and additionally includes an exosystem and a chronosystem, the value ecosystem framework proposed here centers on the teacher initiated strategy as the unit of analysis, and specifically models how a religiously grounded curriculum, an institutional culture of exemplification and habituation, and family and community involvement interact to reinforce a specific, Islamically framed set of moral values. In this sense, the value ecosystem framework is best understood as a context specific application and extension of ecological systems theory to religious anticorruption character education, rather than as an entirely novel general theory. This theoretical positioning is revisited in light of the empirical findings in the Discussion section below.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a single case study design. The qualitative approach was selected because the primary aim of the research is to understand and interpret the strategies employed by PAI teachers within their natural context, rather than to measure variables statistically (Akbar, 2024). The case study design was selected because the research focuses on one distinctive entity, namely Attayyibah Junior High School, a private integrated Islamic school in Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province, known for its active integration of Islamic values into school culture.

Research subjects were selected through purposive sampling (Adhimah, 2020), based on the relevance and depth of experience of prospective informants. Three informants were purposively selected: one PAI teacher as the key informant, the school principal as a supporting informant, and one Grade IX student as a complementary informant. This composition reflects a deliberate scope decision that is common in single case, in depth qualitative designs, where analytical depth achieved through a small number of information rich informants is prioritized over numerical breadth. Nonetheless, the authors acknowledge that this sample composition constrains the extent to which claims about family level (macro) influence, and the reported gap between boarding and day students, can be triangulated from multiple independent sources. This constraint, and its implications for the transferability of the value ecosystem model proposed in this study, is discussed explicitly as a limitation in the Conclusion.

Data were collected over a three month period through three techniques: semi structured in depth interviews (two sessions with each informant), participatory observation of classroom learning and daily school routines, and documentation study covering lesson plans, syllabi, and school character education policy documents.

This study received ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kerinci prior to data collection. Because one of the informants was a minor student, written informed consent was obtained from the student's parent or legal guardian in addition to the student's own assent, and the student's identity has been disguised using the pseudonym “R” throughout this manuscript to protect confidentiality, consistent with ethical standards for research involving children (American Psychological Association, 2020; Committee on Publication Ethics, 2021).

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), comprising four stages: data condensation, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. The trustworthiness of the findings was established through triangulation of sources, comparing accounts from the teacher, the principal, and the student, and of techniques, comparing interview data against observation and documentation, member checking, and a systematic audit trail, consistent with the criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba (Maulina & Prasojo, 2026). Member checking was conducted by returning interview transcripts and preliminary thematic summaries to the PAI teacher and the school principal for verification approximately two weeks after data collection; both informants confirmed the accuracy of the transcribed statements, and no substantive revision to the interpretation was required as a result of this process.

Results

Anticorruption Values Integrated by PAI Teachers

In an in-depth interview, the PAI teacher at Attayyibah Junior High School stated:

> *"Anticorruption values in PAI learning include honesty (shiddiq), trust, responsibility, discipline, and fairness. These values are already contained in Islamic teachings, so the teacher's task is to relate them to the real life of students so that behaviors such as cheating, lying, or taking away the rights of others do not occur" (Interview, 2025).*

This statement is reinforced by observations showing that the teacher consistently associated moral material with examples of anticorruption behavior in daily learning, a pattern confirmed through documentation study of lesson plans and syllabi.

These values can be grouped into three clusters: (1) self oriented values, including honesty (shiddiq), trust, and qana'ah; (2) values oriented to social relations, such as justice, care, and responsibility; and (3) values oriented to work ethic, including discipline, hard work, and courage. This grouping is broadly consistent with the KPK's (2021) mapping of nine anticorruption core values, all of which find their equivalents in the Islamic tradition (Sayyi, 2020).

Strategy 1: Contextual Curricular Integration

The first strategy identified is the integration of anticorruption values into the PAI curriculum through a contextual, critically oriented learning approach. The PAI teacher explained:

> "*I integrate anticorruption values through learning materials, especially when discussing commendable and reprehensible conduct, then relate them to real examples in daily life such as honesty during exams and not cheating. I also insert moral messages directly during the learning process" (Interview, 2025).*

The most commonly used methods are discussion, question and answer, and case examples. The teacher also uses storytelling techniques based on sirah nabawiyah to bring anticorruption values to life narratively:

> *"I use stories or exemplary accounts from Islamic history so that students can more easily understand the value of honesty and emulate it in daily life" (Interview, 2025).*

This approach is consistent with research showing that narrative-based instruction, including storytelling grounded in religious tradition, can serve as an effective tool for moral education among young learners in Indonesian Islamic educational settings (Rahiem et al., 2016). In addition, the teacher developed self-reflection sheets (muhasabah) that students complete periodically as a formative assessment instrument (Fadhilla & Jasiah, 2025).

Strategy 2: Exemplification and Habituation

The second, and most determinant, strategy is the example (uswah hasanah) set by PAI teachers in their daily conduct. The PAI teacher stated:

> *"I try to set an example by being honest, disciplined, and fair when interacting with students. I also accustom students to being honest in every activity, both inside and outside the classroom. If a student cheats, I give reprimands and guidance so that they understand their mistake" (Interview, 2025).*

The impact of this example was felt directly by the student informant, who stated:

> *"The ones who affect me the most are the teachers and my parents. The teacher always advised us to be honest in everything" (Interview, 2025).*

The student, referred to here by the pseudonym "R", added that he tries to practice honesty, for example by not cheating during exams even when the questions are difficult, and by honestly admitting mistakes to teachers or friends (Interview, 2025). This account is consistent with social cognitive theory, which holds that modeling by a credible and consistently observed authority figure, such as a teacher, is often a more powerful mechanism for behavior change than verbal instruction alone (Bandura, 2018), and aligns with findings on the role of teacher exemplarity in strengthening honesty as a character value (Rahma & Istanto, 2025).

In terms of habituation, the principal explained how school culture is built systematically:

> *"School culture is built through daily habituation, such as time discipline, honesty in the learning process, and routine religious activities such as dawn da'wah and moral development sessions. If a student behaves dishonestly, such as cheating during an exam, that student's exam sheet will not be accepted" (Interview, 2025).*

This strict sanction affirms that honesty is treated as a firm commitment rather than merely an option, a practice that trains students to internalize values from within themselves (Saeful, 2021).

Strategy 3: Strengthening through Religious Extracurricular Activities

The third strategy strengthens anticorruption values through extracurricular activities with religious content in the pesantren ecosystem. The PAI teacher stated:

> *"Because this school is a pesantren based junior high school, almost every day there are religious activities that support the cultivation of anticorruption values, including dawn da'wah, moral development sessions, and various other religious activities. Through these activities, students become accustomed to being honest, disciplined, and responsible in daily life" (Interview, 2025).*

This was confirmed by the student informant:

> *"Activities such as dawn da'wah and moral development at the pesantren taught me to be honest. Strict school rules also make us used to being disciplined and honest" (Interview, 2025).*

The intensity of coaching within the pesantren environment appears to produce a considerably deeper affective impact than ordinary classroom learning alone (Endaryono et al., 2020), because it engages the spiritual dimension that appears, in this context, to be a fundamental source of motivation for anticorruption behavior.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

This study identified four main supporting factors. The principal emphasized:

> *"Supporting factors in instilling anticorruption values include support from the school, a religious environment because the school is boarding based, and cooperation with students' parents" (Interview, 2025).*

These four factors are: (1) transformational leadership of the principal, consistent with research showing that transformational leadership practices strengthen organizational culture and staff commitment within schools (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005); (2) a cohesive school culture grounded in Islamic values; (3) active support from students' parents; and (4) the intrinsic competence and motivation of PAI teachers.

On the other hand, this study identified significant inhibiting factors. The PAI teacher acknowledged:

> *"The inhibiting factors include limited learning time, the influence of the environment outside the school, and the lack of specific references related to Islamic based anticorruption materials" (Interview, 2025).*

The principal added a structural challenge specific to pesantren based schools:

> *"Not all students live at the pesantren. Some students commute daily and are not required to stay overnight. This is a challenge because students who do not reside at the school have a greater chance of being influenced by the environment outside it" (Interview, 2025).*

Day students, who do not reside in the boarding school, receive only limited guidance compared to boarding students, who receive almost continuous supervision. This gap in the duration of supervision is consistent with research showing that residential status shapes the intensity of adult guided socialization and the degree of psychological separation from parental influence among adolescents (Blau & Blau, 2019).

Analysis: Three Level Value Ecosystem Model

From the findings above, an analytical model can be formulated to describe how the internalization of anticorruption values operates in the context of PAI at Attayyibah Junior High School. The model operates at three interacting levels: the micro level (teacher student interaction in the classroom), the meso level (school culture and system), and the macro level (family and community environment). At the micro level, effectiveness is largely determined by the ability of learning strategies to activate three domains identified by Krathwohl et al. (1964): cognitive understanding, affective appreciation, and conative motivation to act. At the meso level, a cohesive school ecosystem is a necessary condition rather than an optional feature. At the macro level, parental involvement appears to function as a multiplier factor that strengthens how firmly values become internalized, a pattern consistent with the family's role as a proximal microsystem in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework. Evaluation of success, as explained by the principal, is carried out through observation of students' daily behavior:

> *"Evaluation is carried out through observation of student behavior in daily life, both within the school environment and at the boarding facility" (Interview, 2025).*

This change was also felt by the student informant, who remarked:

> *"If we get used to being honest from now on, we will become trustworthy individuals who are trusted by others in the future," said the student, referred to here by the pseudonym "R" (Interview, 2025).*

Discussion

The findings above extend prior research on Islamic Religious Education and anticorruption values in several respects, while also standing in tension with parts of the existing literature that emphasize different mechanisms of value transmission.

First, the finding that exemplification was perceived by all three informants as the most determinant strategy is broadly consistent with social cognitive accounts of modeling (Bandura, 2018) and with prior Indonesian research on teacher exemplarity (Rahma & Istanto, 2025; Saeful, 2021). However, this finding also departs from strands of literature that foreground structural and policy level interventions, such as formal anticorruption curricula or civic education programs, as the primary drivers of anticorruption attitudes among adolescents (Komalasari & Saripudin, 2015; Montessori et al., 2021). Where these studies suggest that structured, cognitively oriented instruction is largely sufficient to build anticorruption awareness, the present findings suggest that in a pesantren based Islamic school, affective and relational mechanisms, namely daily exemplification and habituation embedded within a religious lifeworld, may play a comparatively larger role than curricular content alone. This divergence may be explained by the intensity and duration of teacher student contact characteristic of the pesantren setting, which considerably exceeds that of the conventional public-school contexts examined in much of the existing anticorruption education literature.

Second, the coaching gap identified between boarding and day students complicates a straightforward reading of the pesantren ecosystem as uniformly advantageous for value internalization. While the intensity of pesantren based coaching has been associated with deeper affective engagement (Endaryono et al., 2020), the present findings, read alongside research on residential status and adolescent development (Blau & Blau, 2019), suggest that the same intensive supervision that benefits boarding students may simultaneously produce inequity in value internalization outcomes between boarding and day students within the same institution. This nuance is not well addressed in prior pesantren based character education research, which has generally treated the pesantren student population as homogeneous.

Third, in relation to the value ecosystem framework proposed in the Literature Review, the present findings offer partial support for, alongside one notable point of divergence from, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. Consistent with ecological systems theory, informants consistently described micro level classroom instruction as insufficient on its own, requiring reinforcement from the meso level of school culture and institutional sanction and the macro level of family involvement, echoing the ecological premise that

development is shaped by the interaction between nested systems rather than by any single system in isolation. The point of divergence is that Bronfenbrenner's original model was developed to explain general child development and includes an exosystem and a chronosystem that are not required to explain the present findings, whereas the value ecosystem framework proposed here is a more parsimonious, religiously grounded adaptation that focuses specifically on the interaction between religiously informed curriculum, institutional habituation, and family religiosity as reinforcing mechanisms for a particular set of moral values. The contribution of this study is therefore best understood as a contextual and substantive specification of ecological systems theory for Islamic anticorruption character education, rather than as an entirely new general theory of value internalization.

Conclusion

This study found that PAI teachers at Attayyibah Junior High School applied three main strategies in internalizing anticorruption values among students. First, contextual curricular integration through problem based learning, sirah nabawiyah storytelling, and self reflection. Second, exemplification and habituation shown by teachers in daily conduct, strengthened by a firm school discipline system. Third, strengthening through religious extracurricular activities within the pesantren ecosystem. Among the three, teacher exemplification proved to be the most determinant component. Supporting factors include the principal's transformational leadership, an Islamic based school culture, and active parental involvement. Inhibiting factors include limited instructional time, a lack of Islamic based anticorruption references, external environmental influence, and the coaching gap between boarding and day students.

Theoretically, this research contributes to enriching the Islamic based internalization model of anticorruption values by proposing a value ecosystem framework that operates at three levels, namely micro, meso, and macro, and by situating this framework explicitly within, and as a specification of, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. This model emphasizes that the internalization of anticorruption values cannot proceed effectively without synergy between learning strategies, school culture, and family involvement. Practically, the findings of this study may serve as a reference for PAI teachers and policy makers in designing anticorruption education programs that are more systematic, effective, and sustainable in Islamic secondary schools.

This study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the single case study design, combined with a small number of informants (one PAI teacher, one principal, and one student), limits the transferability of the findings beyond the specific pesantren based context of Attayyibah Junior High School; readers should exercise caution in generalizing the value ecosystem model to schools with different institutional cultures or student populations. Second, because the key informant and the supporting informant described their own practices and institutional culture, the findings may be subject to social desirability bias, particularly regarding the principal's account of leadership practices and the teacher's account of personal exemplification; future research incorporating a larger and more diverse set of student and parent informants would help to triangulate these self reports. Third, the single student informant, while offering a valuable complementary perspective, cannot represent the full range of experience among boarding and day students at the school; the coaching gap identified in this study should therefore be treated as a hypothesis warranting confirmation through research with a larger and more heterogeneous student sample. Future research is encouraged to extend this value ecosystem framework to multiple pesantren based schools, to incorporate parent informants directly, and to examine the framework's applicability using quantitative or mixed methods designs.

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