

# The Formation Of Fair And Intellectual Leadership In The Future Through Islamic Boarding School Education

**Khoirun Nisa<sup>1</sup>, Ahmad Khoirun Nasir<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>MTsS Wali Songo Putri Ngabar Simant, <sup>2</sup>MAS Wali Songo Putra Ngabar Siman, Pondok Pesantren Wali Songo, Jl. Sunan Kalijaga RT.02 RW. 01, Ngabar, Siman, Ponorogo, Jawa Timur.

**Corresponding author**

<sup>1</sup>nizakhoirun8@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>ahmadnasir1325@gmail.com.

**Abstract:** The formation of fair and intellectual leadership in the future is an effort to produce leaders who are not only based on moral and spiritual values. Pesantren, as educational institutions, play a significant role in shaping character, morals, and spirituality to become leaders who can integrate social justice with critical and innovative thinking. Through a curriculum that combines religious learning and modern knowledge, pesantren prepare individuals to be competent in ethics, leadership, science, and the ability to adapt to current political developments. This study aims to examine the curriculum and learning methods in Islamic boarding schools in shaping fair and intellectual leadership character in the future through Islamic boarding school education. The method used is qualitative research using a case study approach with data collection techniques of interviews, observation, and documentation to explore the values and application of leadership in Islamic boarding schools. This research shows that the combination of spiritual and intellectual education in the pesantren environment is effective in preparing a generation of leaders who are able to lead with integrity and knowledge in the present day.

**Keywords:** formation, leadership spirit, fair, intellectual, education, Islamic boarding school.

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## Introduction

The rapid development of the current era poses considerable challenges for the world of education, which is not only required to produce fair human resources but also to produce resources that are emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually intelligent. The challenges of the current era, which is marked by a crisis of fair and honest leadership, and morally intelligent, is a sign of the need for an education system that leads to the formation of better leadership qualities. Pesantren are educational institutions that have distinctive characteristics, not only focusing on science but also encouraging character building, morals, and fostering leadership qualities in the community.<sup>1</sup> Through this integrated education system, Islamic boarding schools can shape students by producing

leaders who become scholars, community leaders, politicians, entrepreneurs, journalists, and various other professions. Through existing systems, Islamic boarding schools are expected to be able to contribute to the current global era, which is experiencing a leadership crisis.

Despite facing several challenges, such as changes in the education system due to the development of the times and shifts in political leadership, Islamic education continues to undergo changes in line with the demands of the times.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, there is a need for leaders who can see the situation and conditions and maintain the values of the pesantren even though it continues to undergo changes. The values taught in pesantren education include spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects that are connected to the daily activities of the santri. Pesantren education itself emphasizes exemplary

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<sup>1</sup> Esi Ratna Sari et al., Islamic Education Leadership Practices in Islamic Boarding Schools, *Invention: Journal of Research and Education Studies*, Vol. 06, No. 2 July 2025, 568.

<sup>2</sup> Syaifu Sagala, Management and Leadership in Islamic Boarding School Education, *Tarbiyah Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 2 July-December 20215. 207

behavior, as well as the cultivation and strengthening of religious culture.<sup>3</sup>

Pesantren itself is an educational institution that has a boarding school or cottage system with a kiai as a figure, and a mosque as the center of activities and has Islamic religious teaching led by a kiai. A pesantren can progress and develop influenced by the leadership of a kiai.<sup>4</sup> Pesantren is the oldest and largest educational institution in Indonesia, with different characteristics or types, namely salaf (traditional) pesantren and khalaf (modern) pesantren. Salaf pesantren have an educational and learning model that tends to focus on teaching classical Islamic texts and maintaining the traditional system. Then, to facilitate the sorogan system, they use the madrasah system, such as in the old model of teaching without the input of general knowledge material. Khalaf or ashriyah Islamic boarding schools are referred to as modern Islamic boarding schools that provide formal education from kindergarten to elementary school, junior high school, high school, or vocational high school, with a classical teaching system and sequential education levels with programs determined based on months, semesters, grades, and so on.<sup>5</sup> As for Islamic boarding schools themselves, their goal is to produce students with good character who are equipped with the foundations of life from the Quran and Hadith, so that they will have a spirit of obedience to Allah SWT, a good personality, strength, independence, and high intellectual ability.<sup>6</sup>

From the above explanation, it is clear that Islamic boarding schools, as the oldest institutions, play a significant role in education in Indonesia. In addition, the learning system emphasizes polite behavior so that students will become individuals with good character who will later become leaders and cadres of the community. Modern Islamic boarding schools instill a spirit of leadership in students by introducing them to the slogan "ready to lead and ready to be led," which can be uttered

by the kiai (religious teacher). This is proof that the character building of students is something that future leaders should possess, even today. Why must students possess a spirit of leadership? Because it is hoped that these students will become role models or examples in the future.

In other words, Islamic boarding schools continue to undergo reforms without abandoning their preserved values and traditions. The spirit of leadership expected by society today is undergoing a shift, which has become a concern with the change in the leadership system. Through the habits that exist in Islamic boarding schools, which are based on the spirit of pindok, it is hoped that the character of the students can be shaped to face the current crisis of fair and intellectual leadership.<sup>7</sup> By having a balanced intelligence between knowledge, intelligence, and spirituality, it is hoped that they will become leaders based on values. Pesantren education is not just a place for the transfer of knowledge in the learning process, but also equips each santri through the organizational leadership system, becoming ukhti kamar (female dormitory leaders) and activities outside of class hours. This habit makes pesantren alumni have a leader spirit with intelligence and a fair soul amid the current leadership problems. This study will present several things regarding the formation of a fair and intellectual leadership spirit in the future through Islamic boarding school education, including (1) Islamic boarding school education (2) the role of the Islamic boarding school curriculum in shaping a fair and intellectual leadership spirit.

## Materials and Methods

The research method used is qualitative research, which focuses on simple phenomena but has developed over time into a more complex research tool. Sugiyono explains that this research will be adjusted to the research objectives. Creswell

<sup>3</sup> Syahrul Hidayat, et al., The Role of Islamic Boarding School Values in Shaping the Social Character of Religious Education Students, Research Gate, 2025

<sup>4</sup> Rusdiono Mukri, Prototype of Kiai Leadership in Modern Islamic Boarding Schools, Dirosah Islamiyah Journal, Vol. 4, No. 1 2021, 29.

<sup>5</sup> Ruslan, The Existence of Islamic Education in the Era of Modernisation at Salafi Islamic Boarding Schools, AL-MUSTAQBAL: Journal of Islam, Vol. No.1, 2025

<sup>6</sup> Lisda Nurul Romdoni et al., Building Character Education for Santri Through the Soul of Islamic Boarding Schools, At-Thariqah Journal of Islamic Education Vol. 5, No. 2 July-December 2020, 14.

<sup>7</sup>Lisda Nurul Romdoni, 15.

explains that the qualitative approach allows researchers to seek more holistic information on existing phenomena, such as interactions between individuals, which cannot be explored using a quantitative approach. The data collected is descriptive in nature, for example, interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data from qualitative research is not fixed but can change according to the data available in the field. Therefore, this research is more open, allowing for the collection of contextual and comprehensive information that is clearer and more complex.<sup>8</sup> Results and Discussion should be written as a series of connecting sentences, however, for manuscript with long discussion should be divided into subtitles. Results should be clear and concise. This type of research uses a case study approach, which is often applied in social science research.<sup>9</sup>

This was done because this type of approach is relevant to the phenomenon of cases or issues regarding current leadership cases. This study is expected to contribute to providing guidance on the formation of fair and intellectual leadership through Islamic boarding school education. The study was conducted to strengthen the researcher's research by collecting the necessary data in September-November 2025 at the Wali Songo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School, Jln. Sunan Kalijogo, Ngabar, Siman, Ponorogo.

## Results and Discussion

Before the 1960s, Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia were called pondok. The word pondok refers to a dormitory for santri, or a place of residence for santri, which is made of woven bamboo. In Arabic, it is known as funduq, which means dormitory. Professor Johns said that the word santri comes from the Tamil language and means Quran teacher. C.C. Berg interpreted the

word santri as coming from Shastri, which in Indian means a person knowledgeable about the holy books of Hinduism.<sup>10</sup> Sudjoko Prasajo explained that Islamic boarding schools are Indonesian Islamic educational institutions for studying Islam and practicing it as a guide for daily life. In other words, they are institutions for tafaquh fiddin.<sup>11</sup> In terms of language, the word pesantren originates from the word santri, preceded by the prefix pe- and followed by the suffix -an. It refers to a place of residence for santri. In Indonesia, the term pesantren is commonly used in conjunction with the phrase pondok pesantren, which differs from pondok, which is more commonly known as a building.

An institution is considered a pesantren if it has several components, including a mosque, santri (students), kyai (teachers), classical Islamic teachings, and pondok or asrama (dormitories). The purpose of pesantren education is to develop the santri's inner qualities so that they become pious individuals with noble character who are beneficial to the surrounding community. It can be concluded that as an Islamic educational institution, pesantren play a significant role as a place for moral development to become better individuals.<sup>12</sup>

### Islamic boarding school education

Islamic boarding schools are synonymous with closed traditional cultural systems. Over time, however, these schools have developed and updated their learning systems, each with their own teaching models, while still using the Quran and Hadith as guidelines. Islam is the guiding principle for the lives of the students. The teaching system has been regulated by the foundation with the assistance of the teaching and care departments in order to manage the pesantren by instilling life values through the five principles of the pesantren, which are sincerity, simplicity, independence,

<sup>8</sup> Hanif Hasan, *Qualitative Research Methods*, Tri Edukasi Ilmiah Foundation, 2025, 5

<sup>9</sup> Hasan Syahrizal, *Types of Research in Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, Qosim; *Journal of Social & Humanities Education*, Vol. 1, No. 1 May, 2023, 21.

<sup>10</sup> Muthmainnah, *The Urgency of Islamic Boarding School Education in Preparing Qualified and Moral Leaders for the Nation*, *Mumtaz Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 2021, 67.

<sup>11</sup> Adi Fadli, *Islamic Boarding Schools: Their History and Development*, *El-Hikma: Journal of Education and Islamic Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, January-June 2012, 32.

<sup>12</sup> Hariya Toni, *Islamic Boarding Schools as a Potential for Developing Islamic Da'wah*, *Journal: Da'wah and Communication*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2016, 100.

Islamic brotherhood, and freedom.<sup>13</sup> According to the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs in Regulation No. 3 of 1979, there are four types of Islamic boarding schools: 1) pre-students study and live in dormitories with a traditional learning system, 2) use a classical teaching system and are taught directly by a kiyai, 3) students live in dormitories and study formal education outside the ma'had, 4) a learning system that includes boarding schools and formal education. However, it is not easy to distinguish between salaf and modern Islamic boarding schools if only one aspect is considered. This is because not all salaf Islamic boarding schools teach modern aspects.

Modern Islamic boarding schools are boarding schools that teach a blend of traditional and modern education with a formal teaching system and adopt an integrated curriculum that combines Islamic knowledge with formal education. However, religious education remains dominant with the Mu'alimin education system. Barnawi stated that modern education has undergone a significant transformation, starting from administration, management, a teaching system that is in line with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and general education, as well as the use of language in daily activities. As for the differences with Salafi education, M. Sulthon Mashud and M. Khusnuridhlo conveyed the differences in the management system, organizational administration, and transparent financial system.<sup>14</sup>

This is in line with the results of research conducted by researchers at the Wali Songo Ngabar Islamic boarding school, which found that the boarding school system itself prioritizes the formation of morals and manners. However, it still provides education and teaching through education and teaching in the morning. In the educational system at Islamic boarding schools, every student is required to use Arabic and English alternately for one week. This aims to develop students' proficiency in foreign languages and serve as a unifying tool within the cultural diversity that exists

in Islamic boarding schools. The afternoon activities consist of informal activities in the form of organizational activities that shape the personalities of the students so that they can face the current competition for human resources. Then, in the pesantren, there are also activities that support the spiritual development of the students in the form of reciting the Quran together after praying and listening to sermons delivered directly by the kiyai.<sup>15</sup> The educational system at Islamic boarding schools has been structured and organized into daily, weekly, and annual activities. The educational process at Islamic boarding schools is carried out 24 hours a day through these activities, which are expected to foster self-management among students so that they do not feel empty while in the dormitory. Not only that, but in-depth interactions between teachers or utadzah and kiai can lead to interactions between educators and students, resulting in the development of a system of mutual respect, sincerity, and humility. This strengthens the formation of the students' character and replaces the role of parents while they are in the pesantren. This process of formation through interaction would be difficult to achieve in schools that do not have boarding facilities. Not only that, pesantren education is also complemented by a non-formal education system and provided with facilities such as extracurricular activities, calligraphy, self-expression, literature, and others.<sup>16</sup> This pesantren education system is proof that there are continuous changes in the system while still maintaining traditional Islam amid the development of globalization. The Wali Songo pesantren is proof that it continues to teach religion but also teaches general knowledge and applies traditional and formal education systems. This pesantren educational institution also prepares students to become leaders who are ready to face the challenges of national identity through the formation of pesantren educational character, as

<sup>13</sup> Fauzi Ridwan, The Quality of Islamic Boarding School Education, *Alacrity: Journal of Education*, Vol. 2, No. 1, February 2022, 50.

<sup>14</sup> Abdul Tolib, Education at Modern Islamic Boarding Schools, *Risalah: Journal of Education and Islamic Studies*, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Wiralodra University, Indramayu, Vol. 1, No. 1, December 201, 63.

<sup>15</sup> Observation results, September 10, 2025

<sup>16</sup> Hodiri Adi Putra, et al., Time management counseling to improve the discipline of students at the Amanah Islamic boarding school in Bantul, *Multidisciplinary Service Bulletin*, Vol. 01, No. 01, 2023, 103.

well as preparing students to become useful cadres of the ummah in the future.

### **The role of the Islamic boarding school curriculum in shaping fair and intellectual leadership in the future**

The curriculum can be defined as a set of plans and regulations regarding the structure of education and teaching. From the perspective of education system management, the curriculum itself is used to regulate the national education system, which is structured based on education levels. The development process aims to improve faith, morals, intelligence, interests, talents, instill values of love for the country, and pay attention to global developments. The development of the Islamic education curriculum prioritizes our usefulness in society. Not everything is planned in the application of the curriculum; this is called the hidden curriculum, which plays a significant role in personality formation. This curriculum is not given much attention by other formal schools because teachers usually only pay attention to students during face-to-face meetings, and after school activities are not the teachers' responsibility.

Based on the explanation above, the hidden curriculum is not written down by schools in implementing their programs. This curriculum emerges when students are able to develop what is within themselves.<sup>17</sup> As for the curriculum system in formal Islamic boarding schools, it divides the two education systems into Islamic sciences, such as Arabic language, imla, tafsir, hadith, fiqh, al-Quran mutolaah, mahfudzot, and exact sciences, such as natural sciences, social sciences, mathematics, physics, chemistry, English, and grammar. Pesantren are the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia and play a significant and positive role in shaping good leadership character. In their development, pesantren have adapted to technological advances while still maintaining their traditional values. Based on an interview with one of the female teachers in charge of the dormitory, she said:

“For activities other than formal learning activities, the students remain in the dormitory and then in the afternoon attend a study session with the kiai to listen to lectures. On Mondays, the students learn about manners and etiquette from the Al-Uswah organization, which is an organization in the girls' boarding school, and then the LIS organization, which regulates language in the boarding school as a unifying tool for cultural differences.”<sup>18</sup>

Based on the interview results, in addition to the formal education curriculum implemented at the Wali Songo Islamic Boarding School, there are activities that serve to shape the character of the students, starting from tolerance between different ethnic groups and different languages. In addition, the Islamic boarding school fosters a sense of togetherness between students through a boarding system, which allows the students to interact with one another. These activities also provide guidance to shape good morals and manners for the students. The guidance from the kiai proves that the students continue to be guided as a substitute for their parents at home. Organizational activities in Islamic boarding schools are under the guidance of the Student Advisory Council (MPS), including: OSWAS, Al-Uswah, LIS, and Leksentri, which provide a platform for students to develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility. In addition, female teachers and caregivers also play a significant role in shaping the character of students. They are responsible for instilling religious values and good social ethics to be applied outside the Islamic boarding school environment. This can be reflected through aspects of behavior or conduct that can be directly exemplified, such as being fair and polite in guiding students. In this way, the behavior of leaders who have intellectual integrity in terms of knowledge and religion and are fair in their attitudes will be reflected.

In an amendment to Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution, Law No. 20 of 2003 was issued, explaining the National Education System in Article 3 of the National Education System Law, which states that the function of developing abilities and

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Ismail, *Modern Islamic Boarding School Education System: A Case Study of Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo*

*Modern Islamic Boarding School, At-Ta'dib Journal, At-Ta'dib Journal, At-Ta'dib Journal, Vol. 6, No. 1 June 2011, 57*

<sup>18</sup> Interview results 11/13/2025

shaping the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the nation is to develop the potential of students to become people who believe in God Almighty, healthy, knowledgeable, civilized, creative, and capable of becoming democratic and responsible citizens. Sudrajat stated that the strategies used to facilitate the implementation of character education in Islamic boarding schools are (1) teaching, (2) modeling, (3) reinforcing, and (4) habituating.<sup>19</sup> The cooperation of all components within the Islamic boarding school has a significant impact on shaping the character of the students. Not only that, in the world of Islamic boarding schools, the five spirits of the boarding school play an important role in reminding everyone of the vision and mission to be carried out.

In a guest lecture held at the Wali Songo Islamic boarding school on religious studies, Prof. DR. K.H Nasaruddin Umar, MA said that Islamic boarding schools must join forces to revive the scholarly tradition of *baitul hikmah*, but Indonesia is the most prepared to become the epicenter of modern scholarship in the future of the Islamic world. He also added that Islamic boarding schools have a strategic position in nation building. He sees that Islamic boarding schools are not only institutions for the transfer of knowledge, but also centers for moral and spiritual formation. Then, at the event, Kiai Dr. KH. Heru Saiful Anwar, MA, also said that we should be intellectual scholars, not intellectuals who know religion, and gave guidance to always balance worldly knowledge and knowledge of the hereafter.<sup>20</sup>

Beyond education outside Islamic boarding schools or formal education, the process of character education in Islamic boarding schools is carried out through a strategy of modelling or imitating the behaviour of educators or female teachers. Through a curriculum implemented at the Wali Songo Islamic Boarding School, namely the *Mu'alimin* and *Mu'alimat* curriculum, the educational objective is to prepare students to have the spirit of a teacher. The supporting activities for character building are practical teaching activities where final-year students are guided to become teachers and teach in

front of their younger classmates like a teacher. This activity serves as a platform for students to develop the qualities of being trustworthy and respected. Not only that, through leadership education via organisational activities and the provision of facilities without regard to social status, it has succeeded in producing a golden generation that is in line with national education objectives. Not only that, but the regular time management in pesantren education makes students disciplined and punctual, thereby shaping their self-management skills. Furthermore, through the existing curriculum education process in Islamic boarding schools, it is hoped that they can become a solution amid the current leadership crisis by possessing the qualities of fairness, honesty, a strong sense of social responsibility, and the ability to take responsibility for the positions they are given, as well as a balance between religious and general knowledge. With the values taught during education in Islamic boarding schools, it is hoped that students will become leaders or cadres of society and be beneficial to the nation and the surrounding community.

### Discussion

Islamic boarding schools, as the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia, are synonymous with a closed traditional cultural system. However, over time, they have developed their own learning models while still adhering to the Qur'an and Hadith. The learning system has been developed by the foundation with the assistance of the teaching and care departments to regulate the management of the boarding school. The values instilled are based on the five principles of the pesantren, which are sincerity, simplicity, independence, Islamic brotherhood, and freedom. These values are expected to instill in the students a sincere spirit in worship and independence in living their lives. In the life of the Islamic boarding school, students are taught about traditional and modern life through a formal education system, as well as a classical system that combines an integrated curriculum and connects Islamic knowledge with formal education, while still focusing on religious education. The education system at the Wali Songo Islamic

<sup>19</sup> Eko Eddy Supriyanto, *The Contribution of Islamic Boarding Schools to Character Education in Indonesia*, Nusantara Education

Journal: *Studies in Education and Social Humanities*, Vol. 1, No. 1, August 2020, 19.

<sup>20</sup> Observation Results 09/15/2025.

boarding school uses the Mu'alimin education system. The teaching system is standardized with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and combines general education with other supporting activities, such as the use of two languages as communication tools, namely Arabic and English, as well as other non-formal activities in the form of daily, weekly, monthly, or annual activities.

The education system at the Wali Songo Islamic boarding school does not only assess students based on their intelligence, but also on their manners and politeness, which are among the criteria for evaluating students. The formal teaching process at the Wali Songo Islamic boarding school begins in the morning and is followed by activities that support the formation of character and leadership skills through organizations within the boarding school. To support spiritual development, students participate in group recitation of the Quran, pray five times a day in congregation at the mosque, and listen to sermons together. Educational activities at the boarding school are conducted 24 hours a day without interruption. The teachers and caregivers also influence the educational system and character building of the students. The interaction between the two parties fosters mutual respect and sincerity among the students and instills a sense of gratitude towards their teachers.

Then, in the context of the pesantren curriculum, pesantren often use the hidden curriculum in implementing their programs because this arises from the development within the santri. However, in formal learning, religious education is still applied in combination with other subjects; this is called the integrated curriculum. The implementation of character education in pesantren is (1) teaching, (2) modeling, (3) reinforcing, and (4) habituating. This opinion is in line with the data found that the process cannot be separated from the behavioral examples set by educators. Islamic boarding schools themselves are expected to not only be used as a place for the transfer of knowledge, but also to be able to unite cultural and linguistic diversity through their programs and management. Through boarding school education, students are able to interact with one another through the use of Arabic and English as a unifying means of communication. In addition,

organizational activities within the pesantren as a forum for channeling the creativity of students can foster a sense of leadership, responsibility, and fair behavior in leading activities. Not only that, through the reflection of the behavior of the kiai, ustadz, and ustadzah, they become guidelines for shaping the character of santri as a substitute for the role of parents at home. Then, the formation of a sense of fairness in the souls of santri is achieved through the equal distribution of facilities provided by the pesantren without any differences in ethnicity, race, or economy, with the granting of equal rights and behavior or services without distinguishing social status. This is proof that Islamic boarding schools, which are often considered closed and backward, provide a solution amid public fears about a future leadership crisis. Through integrated education that does not emphasize religion or formal education, it is evident that the desired character building can be realized through pesantren education, so that in the future, leaders with character, fairness, politeness, and courtesy will emerge. This pattern leads students to a balanced way of thinking, based on science while maintaining religious knowledge and fairness in attitude.

### **Conclusions**

Islamic boarding schools, as the oldest educational institutions in Indonesia, are synonymous with a closed traditional cultural system. However, over time, they have developed their own learning models while still adhering to the Qur'an and Hadith. The learning system has been developed by the educational foundation with the assistance of the teaching and mentoring departments to regulate the management of the boarding school. This involves instilling values based on the five principles of the boarding school, which are sincerity, simplicity, independence, Islamic brotherhood, and freedom. In the life of the Islamic boarding school, traditional and modern life is taught through a formal education system, as well as a classical system that combines an integrated curriculum and connects Islamic scholarship with formal education, but still focuses on religious

education. The education system at the Wali Songo Islamic boarding school uses the Mu'alimin education system. The education system at the Wali Songo Islamic boarding school does not only assess intelligence, but also manners and politeness as one of the criteria for assessing students. The implementation of character education at the Islamic boarding school is (1) teaching, (2) modeling, (3) reinforcing, and (4) habituating.

This opinion is consistent with the data found that the process will inevitably involve examples of behavior from educators, the implementation of a boarding school system, the equalization of facilities, and organizational activities as a forum for leadership development. With the implementation of this Islamic boarding school education system, it is hoped that it will become a solution amid public fears about a future leadership crisis. It is also hoped that it will be able to compete with human resources in the future and foster a spirit of leadership that is fair, polite, responsible, does not discriminate based on social status, and has a balanced intelligence between religious knowledge and general knowledge.

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