

TARBIYAH AND MORAL MODERNITY IN AN URBAN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC SCHOOL

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Submission	: Feb 17, 2026
Revision	: April 18 2026
Publication	: August 30, 2026

Abstract: This article examines how Tarbiyah-oriented schooling at SIT Nurul Fikri in Depok connects Islamic piety with contemporary educational aspirations. Drawing on interpretive school ethnography conducted between July 2019 and March 2021, involving participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis, it investigates the organisation of moral expectations through everyday routines, educator roles, and school-family relationships. Moral modernity is used as an analytical lens for understanding how academic competence, independence, and social responsibility are interpreted through Islamic ethics. The analysis identifies three connected processes: the communication of moral expectations through the hidden curriculum, the positioning of educators as *Murabbi* or ethical guides, and the extension of educational responsibilities through family engagement. Together, these processes constitute an institutional project of ethical formation that connects religious commitments with participation in contemporary social life. The argument distinguishes the school's desired student profile from the practices intended to cultivate it and from students' responses. Participation in the national education system provides a context for considering civic belonging, but does not establish a uniform form of nationalism or pious citizenship. The article contributes to the sociology of religious education by explaining how moral aspirations are organised across institutional and relational settings, while treating their internalisation and longer-term civic effects as open empirical questions.

Keywords: moral modernity; tarbiyah; Integrated Islamic Schools; hidden curriculum; ethical formation

INTRODUCTION

Education is never only the transmission of academic knowledge. Schools also organise relationships, regulate conduct, establish standards of appropriate behaviour, and communicate ideas about the kind of person a society should produce. These processes are particularly visible in religious schooling, where educational achievement is connected to ethical and spiritual formation. In Indonesia, the development of Integrated Islamic Schools (Sekolah Islam Terpadu, SIT) provides an important setting for examining how religious values are incorporated into modern institutional education and

how these values are negotiated in relation to national citizenship. The hidden curriculum is one way to examine this relationship between formal instruction and the social organisation of schooling (Apple, 1979; Jackson, 1968).

Post-Reformasi Indonesia is a setting of contested Islamic authority, which forms the national backdrop for the school's project of moral formation (Arifianto, 2020).

This article examines SIT Nurul Fikri in Depok, an urban institution situated in the development of Integrated Islamic Schools. Hasan (2009) links this educational field to Tarbiyah networks and efforts to organise general education through Islamic commitments. Here, Tarbiyah refers to that historical milieu, while tarbiyah also has the wider meaning of education and personal formation. The terms do not establish uniform organisational membership or political commitments among the school's families and staff.

Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia have diversified and evolved institutionally, providing the wider setting within which integrated Islamic schools sit (Sumanti et al., 2024).

The central question is how moral modernity is imagined and pursued through Tarbiyah-oriented schooling. A related question concerns what this institutional project implies for the relationship between Islamic piety and national belonging. Moral modernity is an analytical term, rather than an expression attributed to participants. It concerns efforts to participate in contemporary social life, including formal education, professional aspirations, and national institutions, while grounding desirable conduct in Islamic ethics. The issue is therefore how a school defines worthwhile participation in the present and how it organises educational relationships around that definition.

Two research questions guide the article. RQ1: How is moral modernity imagined and pursued through Tarbiyah-oriented schooling? RQ2: What does this institutional project imply for the relationship between Islamic piety and national belonging?

Research on Islamic schooling provides several starting points for this question. Hasan (2009) situates integrated schooling within wider social and political transformations. Pribadi (2022) examines schools as expressions of urban Muslim identity in Serang; his discussion of Salafism-influenced institutions offers a comparison rather than a description of the Tarbiyah setting considered here. Qiso et al. (2025) question, at a conceptual level, whether curricular integration necessarily produces substantive integration of knowledge. These perspectives make integration a problem to investigate rather than an outcome that can be inferred from an institutional label.

This article argues that moral modernity is pursued through connected institutional practices. Moral expectations circulate through routines and relationships; educators are expected to embody them as *Murabbi*; and families become partners in extending educational responsibilities beyond school. The sociological importance of these processes lies in their coordination. Their existence does not establish that all participants understand them alike. The analysis therefore distinguishes institutional aspirations, arrangements for pursuing them, and participants' responses.

The argument develops a different analytical emphasis from Basalamah's (2022) account of everyday cultural resistance at Nurul Fikri. Whereas that publication foregrounds the maintenance of cultural boundaries, this article examines how educational competence

and ethical personhood are brought into relation. It draws on the wider research associated with Basalamah (2022) and acknowledges the related publication rather than presenting the school as a previously unstudied case. The contribution is a focused interpretation of the institution's moral project and the limits of the civic conclusions that can be drawn from it.

The article first develops the conceptual framework and describes the ethnographic basis of the study. The findings and discussion then examine the institutional moral project, the hidden curriculum, educator formation, family engagement, and national belonging. The conclusion identifies the contribution of this interpretation, and a separate Limitations section states its limits.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Moral Modernity As An Analytical Lens

Moral modernity is used here to examine how participation in contemporary educational and social institutions is interpreted through a particular ethical tradition. Eisenstadt's (2000) account of multiple modernities challenges the assumption that all societies move towards one cultural model. This does not make every form of institutional adaptation a separate modernity. For the present analysis, the concept identifies a practical problem: how actors relate educational competence, desirable conduct, and public participation to Islamic commitments.

For urban middle-class Muslims, reconciling Islam with modernity has also been discussed through Sufi idioms offered as a way of combining modernity and spirituality (Rubaidi, 2019).

The school's SMART profile (saleh, muslih, cerdas, mandiri, and terampil, rendered here as pious, socially constructive, intellectually capable, independent, and skilled) offers an entry point into this problem. These qualities express a desired student profile. They are not measures of dispositions already acquired by students. The profile makes it possible to ask how the institution relates religious commitments to competence and participation, and how its educational arrangements are intended to support that relationship.

The approach distinguishes three levels: the moral person imagined by the institution, the practices through which that ideal is pursued, and participants' responses. Mahmood (2005) helps place ethical formation at the centre of analysis without reducing religious practice to external conformity. Schielke (2009), in a different ethnographic setting, highlights the unevenness and ambiguity of moral lives. Read together, these perspectives caution against equating a coherent institutional ideal with a uniformly coherent personal experience.

Studies of integrated Islamic schools describe them as institutions that combine religious and secular knowledge while presenting themselves as modern and religious at once, with selective recruitment and supervision of teachers (Puspitasari et al., 2020).

Hidden Curriculum And Everyday Institutional Life

The concept of the hidden curriculum directs attention to what students learn beyond the formal content of lessons. Jackson's account of classroom life (1968) established the importance of everyday routines, institutional expectations, and social relations in understanding schooling. Apple (1979) further emphasised that curriculum is not neutral: it is shaped by ideological commitments, power relations, and assumptions about legitimate knowledge. From this perspective, values may be communicated through the organisation of time and space, behavioural expectations, teacher-student relations, and institutional definitions of appropriate conduct.

Curriculum restructuring towards students' moral and spiritual competence has been proposed precisely because a formal curriculum on its own has not answered moral formation (Azhar, 2022).

Not all religious practice outside an ordinary subject lesson is hidden curriculum. Explicitly scheduled Qur'anic instruction, mentoring, and religious programmes may be formal or co-curricular provision. The hidden dimension concerns less explicit lessons conveyed through everyday authority, recognition, discipline, and definitions of appropriate conduct. This distinction permits a more precise question: what do students learn about being a valued member of the school through the way institutional life is organised?

The hidden curriculum is neither wholly planned nor necessarily accepted. Repeated interactions can reinforce institutional expectations, expose inconsistencies, or provide occasions for reinterpretation. A distinction is therefore needed between a rule, the way adults enact it, and the meaning students attach to the encounter. This distinction avoids treating the existence of a moral environment as proof that its intended lessons have been internalised.

Whole-School Formation And The Murabbi

A whole-school approach places educational values within the organisation of the institution rather than assigning them solely to one subject. Raihani's (2011) proposal for tolerance education in Indonesia directs attention to connections among leadership, teaching, school culture, and the wider educational environment. In this article, that perspective helps locate Tarbiyah-oriented formation across teacher development, student activities, institutional expectations, and family relationships. The framework is used to examine coordination; it does not establish that the school has achieved tolerance or inclusion.

The figure of the *Murabbi* adds a more specific ethical dimension to this institutional approach. In the Tarbiyah tradition described in the research, a *Murabbi* is not simply a subject specialist. The role involves guidance, mentoring, personal example, and attention to students' moral and spiritual development. The educator's conduct becomes part of the pedagogical process. The teacher is therefore both a transmitter of knowledge and a visible embodiment of the values the school seeks to cultivate.

The ideal *Murabbi* has been characterised as combining intellectual mastery, moral integrity, and spiritual guidance, a role conceptually distinct from mere instruction (Amir et al., 2025).

In the classical Sufi tradition, the *Murabbi* has been framed through four pillars of knowledge, piety, exemplary conduct, and wisdom, presenting the teacher as a holistic educator of intellect and soul rather than only a transmitter of knowledge (Munzirin, 2025).

These concepts connect institution, relationship, and personhood. Moral modernity identifies the ethical interpretation of educational participation. The hidden curriculum directs attention to implicit lessons about conduct and authority, while the whole-school approach identifies the settings in which expectations are coordinated. The *Murabbi* ideal specifies a relational responsibility assigned to educators. Together, they provide a framework for interpreting the school's moral project without assuming that its desired effects have already occurred.

Table 1. Framework lenses and the indicators traced in the findings.

Framework lens	Indicator traced in the findings
Desired moral person (SMART profile)	The qualities saleh, muslih, cerdas, mandiri, and terampil as the desired student profile, not measures of dispositions already acquired
Practices through which the ideal is pursued	Routines, rules, school-day organisation, extracurricular activities, and parent programmes
Participant responses	How students and families interpret, comply with, reinterpret, or negotiate expectations
Hidden curriculum	Implicit lessons conveyed through authority, recognition, discipline, and definitions of appropriate conduct
<i>Murabbi</i>	Educator guidance, mentoring, personal example, and attention to moral and spiritual development
School-family engagement	Meetings, seminars, and religious gatherings through which responsibilities circulate beyond the school gate

METHOD

The study uses an interpretive ethnographic approach to examine SIT Nurul Fikri in Depok, an urban area adjacent to Jakarta. The wider institutional setting provides the context, while SMA IT Nurul Fikri is the main school environment identified in the observation period discussed here. This distinction locates the analysis within one institution rather than treating observations as representative of all educational levels or of the wider SIT network. Ethnography is appropriate to the examination of situated relationships, everyday routines, and meanings that formal curricula alone cannot establish (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019).

The broader fieldwork extended from July 2019 to March 2021 and included participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis.

Observation covered school life, learning activities, interactions with educators and parents, and parent-related meetings and gatherings. During the COVID-19 period, the research also included online learning and school activities. The inclusion of these settings enables attention to institutional activity across different modes of schooling, but should not be interpreted as continuous observation of students' home lives or private digital interactions.

The broader research involved 33 informants, including school founders and foundation administrators, teachers, students, parents, and alumni. Participants were recruited purposively and through snowball contacts, with attention to their sustained experience of the institution. The research forms part of the dissertation-based study discussed in Basalamah (2022). The present article offers a focused interpretation of that wider qualitative material, concentrating on moral expectations, educator roles, and school-family relationships rather than presenting a statistically representative account of the school community.

The interpretation is organised around the relationship between institutional aspirations, educational arrangements, and participants' understandings. Descriptions of the desired student and curriculum are read as statements of institutional purpose. Accounts of routines, educator expectations, and family engagement are considered in relation to the settings through which that purpose is pursued. Literature provides a conceptual frame rather than an additional source of field observations. Findings are presented in paraphrased form; no verbatim testimony is used. The analysis does not treat school rules as sufficient evidence of students' internal commitments, and its discussion of citizenship remains an interpretive extension rather than a measured outcome.

Ethnographic work inside Islamic institutions has likewise treated everyday practices, such as language use, as sites where devotion, discipline, and self-expression are continuously negotiated (Indrasanti & Wita, 2023).

The researcher's previous parental connection to the school provided contextual familiarity and access to relationships relevant to the study. Such familiarity can also make institutional expectations appear self-evident and shape what participants are willing to discuss. The analysis therefore distinguishes institutional aspirations from claims about their effects. Its single-institution scope supports a situated interpretation rather than generalisation to all Integrated Islamic Schools. The article identifies the school but does not name individual participants or reproduce identifying interview details.

Ethics approval and consent procedures are not reported in this article; the article states only that individual participants are not named and identifying interview details are not reproduced.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From Tarbiyah To An Institutional Moral Project

Integrated Islamic Schools developed within efforts to connect general education and Islamic formation. Hasan (2009) places this development within Tarbiyah-related educational activity and wider transformations in Indonesian Muslim public life. This history provides context for Nurul Fikri. It does not establish a uniform political orientation among teachers, students, and families, nor does it explain every contemporary institutional practice.

At Nurul Fikri, integration is articulated through the combination of the national curriculum with Islamic educational content and activities. Religious provision includes Qur'anic memorisation, Arabic, Islamic personal development, and Islamic history. The institutional project also encompasses the organisation of the school day, rules, extracurricular activities, and parent programmes. These arrangements provide repeated settings in which moral expectations can be communicated. Their significance lies in the distribution of educational responsibility across school life rather than the addition of religious subjects alone.

The SMART profile gives this arrangement a future-oriented purpose. Piety and social contribution appear alongside intellectual development, independence, and practical competence. As an institutional ideal, the profile defines the kind of person the school seeks to cultivate. It places religious commitment in a relationship with capacities valued in contemporary educational and social settings, thereby making participation in those settings part of the moral project itself.

This configuration is the first basis for the moral modernity argument. Competence is presented as a quality to be ethically directed, while piety is associated with responsibilities extending beyond religious knowledge. The finding concerns the relationship among institutional aims. It does not establish that each aim is realised consistently or that students assign the same meaning to the profile. Curricular integration thus names an educational undertaking whose enactment must remain distinct from its institutional promise.

The Hidden Curriculum And Moral Formation

Moral expectations at Nurul Fikri extend beyond explicitly religious lessons. Rules, routines, behavioural expectations, and adult conduct organise the environment in which learning takes place. The hidden curriculum concerns the less explicit lessons communicated through these arrangements, including the authority to define appropriate behaviour and the relationship between compliance and recognition. It is therefore useful to distinguish the scheduled content of religious education from the meanings attached to participation in everyday school life.

Routine components such as congregational prayer, book study, public speaking, discussion, student life, and daily interaction have likewise been described as a hidden curriculum that forms character through habituation and internalisation in Islamic boarding schools (Salim et al., 2024).

The importance of consistency between formal ideals and daily conduct is apparent in the expectation that educators demonstrate the values they teach. Honesty, respect, discipline, and responsibility become matters of institutional credibility when students encounter them in adult behaviour. The teacher's manner of communicating and exercising authority forms part of the educational relationship. This does not make every interaction a deliberate lesson; it makes the organisation of ordinary relationships relevant to an account of moral formation.

Character education in an integrated Islamic elementary school has been described as organised paradigmatically through teacher exemplarity and habituation across the whole school community, including parents (Wasehudin et al., 2024).

The organisation of the school day and extracurricular activities extends the settings in which these expectations can recur. Leadership, teacher development, student activities, and school management help define the environment within which particular forms of conduct are encouraged. Parent seminars, religious gatherings, and meetings connect that environment with family relationships. These explicit programmes are not themselves hidden simply because they occur outside an ordinary lesson. Their implicit dimension concerns the expectations about membership, responsibility, and legitimate conduct that accompany participation.

This distinction clarifies the limits of repetition as an explanation. Recurrent expectations can make a moral language familiar, but familiarity does not demonstrate personal conviction. Students can comply with a rule while understanding it differently from adults or applying it differently in other settings. The presence of a full-day programme therefore supports a claim about the organisation of opportunities for formation, not a conclusion that religious values have been uniformly internalised. The hidden curriculum is best understood here as a relational process whose reception remains open.

Everyday resistance in schools has been described as taking quiet, ambiguous forms, such as noise and silence, that fall short of open opposition, a restraint that parallels this article's caution about claiming student negotiation without evidence (Zhang, 2022).

Moral modernity concerns the educational and religious meanings that these arrangements bring together. Discipline and self-management are capacities associated with participation in formal education and professional life. Within the school's moral project, they are also interpreted through Islamic responsibility. The contribution of the case is to identify this connection within institutional practice, while keeping the strength and durability of students' commitments separate from the existence of the practices themselves.

Educator Formation And The Murabbi Ideal

The school's moral project depends on educators. If students are expected to embody particular values, teachers are also expected to demonstrate them. The Tarbiyah concept of the *Murabbi* captures this expectation. The *Murabbi* is a guide and mentor whose responsibility extends beyond the explanation of subject matter to the cultivation of students' ethical and spiritual development. The role gives the teacher a relational and exemplary function within the institution.

In the Nurul Fikri case, institutional alignment between leadership and teachers is important. The school expects educators to share its vision, mission, values, and behavioural orientation. Teacher formation is consequently not separate from the curriculum. It is part of the process through which the school attempts to create continuity between what it teaches and how it operates. The educator becomes a visible reference point through which students interpret institutional ideals.

This expectation has significant implications. First, it broadens the meaning of pedagogical competence. Teaching involves not only subject knowledge and classroom management but also the ability to build trust, guide conduct, and model the ethical dispositions promoted by the school. Second, it makes the educator's everyday behaviour consequential. Students encounter institutional values through ordinary interactions, including the manner in which teachers communicate, respond to problems, and exercise authority. Third, it connects teacher identity to a wider institutional project: educators are expected to help sustain a moral environment rather than merely deliver a prescribed curriculum.

Islamic education teachers have been described as acting simultaneously as educators, role models, facilitators, motivators, and evaluators in students' character formation, with school-teacher-parent collaboration strengthening that work (Hilda et al., 2025).

The *Murabbi* ideal also creates questions about the boundaries of educational authority. Expectations that teachers embody institutional values can extend beyond subject expertise and place demanding standards on their personal conduct. Guidance and student independence may require careful judgments rather than straightforward conformity to a rule. These are implications of the role, not evidence that teachers misuse authority or that students lack agency. Their importance lies in identifying relationships through which the institution's moral aspirations are interpreted.

The second basis for the moral modernity argument is therefore the connection between professional work and ethical personhood. Educators are expected to support academic learning while modelling the conduct associated with piety and social responsibility. Their position makes the relationship between educational competence and religious formation visible within ordinary teaching. The institutional expectation is clear, while its credibility and effects depend on how teachers and students experience specific relationships.

School-Family Relationships And The Extension Of Moral Formation

The school's moral project does not end at the school gate. Parent meetings, seminars, religious gatherings, and other forms of engagement create channels through which educational expectations can be communicated to families. These activities help connect the institution's aims with the everyday environments in which students live. The relationship between school and family is therefore part of the process through which values are reinforced, interpreted, and sometimes negotiated.

Parental engagement in Islamic schooling has been described as multifaceted, encompassing aspirations, emotional support, pride, optimism, and participation in school activities, rather than only school-visible participation (Wardani et al., 2025).

Parents' school choice gives this relationship a particular significance. Choosing an Integrated Islamic School can involve selecting a moral environment as well as an academic programme. In the wider ethnographic account, concerns about children's social relationships, popular culture, and the urban environment are associated with parents' interest in the school as a partner in upbringing (Basalamah, 2022). These concerns explain why the relationship between formal education and everyday conduct matters to the institution's appeal. They should not be assumed to describe every family or to imply uniform motivations.

Family engagement distributes moral responsibility across settings. Teachers guide students within the institution, while parents can interpret and reinforce expectations at home. Parent relationships also allow educational concerns to circulate beyond individual households. This arrangement provides a basis for understanding moral formation as relational rather than confined to classroom instruction. Its existence does not, however, demonstrate lasting effects among alumni or the transmission of identical values to a subsequent generation.

This connection between curriculum integration and parental involvement is also noted in discussions of integrated Islamic schools, where family engagement is treated as part of the integrated model rather than an addition to it (Dardiri & Su'aidi, 2024).

The terms of this partnership also require attention to differences among families. Parents bring their own expectations and resources to the school. Pribadi's (2022) discussion of Islamic schooling and urban identity makes the relationship between educational choice, identity, and social position a useful comparative question. It does not establish the socioeconomic composition of Nurul Fikri's families. Participation in the same school or meeting likewise cannot be treated as evidence that parents have equal influence or share the same interpretation of moral education.

Parental involvement in Indonesian Islamic schooling has also been analysed as religiously framed responsibility, organised through gendered caregiving labour in which mothers are central at home but hold less authority in formal school structures (Faoziah, 2025).

The third basis for the argument is the extension of the institution's moral project through school-family engagement. Communication creates occasions for coordinating expectations; negotiation is a stronger claim that requires evidence of positions, responses, and possible changes in practice. The analysis identifies channels through which educational responsibilities circulate. Whether those channels produce agreement, adaptation, or unresolved disagreement remains dependent on particular interactions rather than the mere existence of parent programmes.

Piety And The Question Of National Belonging

The relationship with national education introduces a further analytical question. Nurul Fikri participates in Indonesia's national education system while seeking to interpret schooling through Islamic ethical commitments. This institutional position provides a context in which religious and civic expectations can be brought into relation. It does not, on its own, establish the content or strength of students' national identification.

Participation in a national framework and a demonstrated disposition towards national belonging are different kinds of evidence.

The national curriculum can provide a setting for considering common institutions and responsibilities, but an account of citizenship also requires attention to actual teaching and participants' interpretations. Parker's (2014) discussion of religious education and peaceful coexistence makes relations across religious differences relevant to this inquiry. The presence of national subjects cannot establish how students understand disagreement, equal membership, or obligations towards people outside their immediate moral community.

Pious citizenship is consequently used here as a provisional interpretation of an ideal linking religious commitment with responsibility towards wider society. It extends beyond personal piety because citizenship concerns relations among members of a shared public world. The SMART aspiration towards social contribution makes this connection relevant to the school's moral project. It does not settle whether that contribution is understood in inclusive civic terms or how it operates across social and religious boundaries.

The case supports the narrower conclusion that Islamic formation and participation in national institutions are brought together within one educational setting. It neither establishes a uniform civic orientation among students and parents nor demonstrates how all SITs understand nationalism. Keeping this boundary clear makes it possible to study piety and national belonging together without claiming that their relationship has already been resolved.

Moral modernity directs attention to the work involved in connecting these orientations. A school can define social competence through religious commitments while remaining situated within a national institutional framework. How participants interpret that relationship in specific situations is a question for direct inquiry. The civic discussion therefore extends the analytical significance of the case while remaining distinct from its findings about institutional organisation.

Moral Modernity As An Ongoing Institutional Project

Taken together, the findings describe a moral project organised through aspirations, routines, educator responsibilities, and family engagement. The SMART profile articulates a desired person; the organisation of school life supplies settings for pursuing that ideal; the *Murabbi* expectation assigns educators an exemplary role; and family relationships extend the scope of educational responsibility. Their connection gives the project institutional continuity without establishing agreement among all participants.

The distinction between coordination and outcome is central. Formal ideals may be coherent while their interpretation varies across relationships. A demand for discipline can coexist with an aspiration towards independence, just as exemplary guidance can raise questions about the scope of authority. These are analytical tensions within the educational project, not claims that particular conflicts have been documented. Schielke's (2009) attention to the uneven character of moral life helps keep such possibilities visible without treating inconsistency as evidence that ethical commitments are unreal.

This interpretation develops the discussion beyond an account centred on cultural resistance (Basalamah, 2022). It asks how participation in contemporary educational and social institutions becomes morally desirable, and how the school seeks to cultivate the person capable of that participation. The shift in emphasis locates aspiration and competence within the same field of analysis as boundaries and discipline. Its value lies in clarifying the relationships to be examined, rather than treating a new conceptual term as evidence of a new fieldwork corpus.

The resulting framework relates moral aspiration, institutional practice, and participant interpretation. It can guide examination of discrepancies between what schools promise and what they organise, between adult expectations and students' understandings, or between moral identity and wider civic relationships. This contribution is analytical rather than a causal claim about the effects of religious education. Establishing those effects would require closer evidence of reception, variation, and change over time.

This bounded interpretation is consistent with accounts of young Muslims' piety as negotiated with modernity and other non-Islamic idioms, resisting reduction to a single label (Khotimah & Rosidi, 2020).

Framing pious citizenship as lived religious citizenship, something young people navigate in practice rather than a finished civic identity a school can be shown to produce, fits this bounded reading (Laksana & Wood, 2019).

Citizenship claims in religiously framed settings have likewise been described as capable of remaining dormant or soft rather than uniform, which supports reading national-curriculum participation as something other than proof of a uniform nationalism (Ichwan et al., 2020).

The convergence of nation and Islam in contemporary Indonesia provides the wider context for relating a school's Islamic project to national belonging without equating the two (McCoy, 2020).

LIMITATIONS

The study is limited to one institution and to the qualitative material used in this interpretation. It does not measure student dispositions, compare religious and non-religious schools, or establish lasting effects after graduation. The transition to online activity also changes the settings available to observation; continuity of institutional aims should not be equated with continuity of students' experiences. The researcher's prior familiarity with the institution remains relevant to the interpretation of these limits.

The analysis does not treat school rules as sufficient evidence of students' internal commitments, and its discussion of citizenship remains an interpretive extension rather than a measured outcome.

Reasoning from hidden transcripts carries its own limits, concerning whose transcripts are visible, to whom, and what they can and cannot prove about internalisation (Massoumi & Morgan, 2024).

CONCLUSION

RQ1 asked how moral modernity is imagined and pursued through Tarbiyah-oriented schooling. Tarbiyah-oriented schooling at SIT Nurul Fikri articulates Islamic piety alongside educational competence, independence, and social contribution. This article has interpreted that relationship as a project of moral modernity pursued through the hidden curriculum, educator formation around the *Murabbi* ideal, and school-family engagement. The central finding concerns how the institution organises its ethical aspirations across connected relationships and settings.

RQ2 asked what this institutional project implies for the relationship between Islamic piety and national belonging. The relationship between piety and citizenship remains a bounded interpretation. Participation in national education provides a setting for investigating national belonging, but does not demonstrate nationalism, inclusive civic practice, or a common form of pious citizenship. The stronger conclusion is that the school relates Islamic ethical formation to participation in contemporary institutions. The civic effects of that relationship require evidence about students' judgments and practices.

The analysis has three implications for the study of religious education. Moral formation must be examined through the implicit lessons of institutional life as well as formal religious content. Educators' expected conduct belongs within the analysis of curriculum because the credibility of moral guidance depends on relationships. Family engagement extends the scope of educational responsibility, while leaving open how expectations are interpreted beyond school. These implications locate moral modernity in institutional work rather than in a simple classification of the school as modern or traditional.

The limits of this interpretation are stated in the Limitations section.

Comparative research could examine how other schools organise religious formation alongside educational competence and public responsibility. Longitudinal work could explore which expectations students retain, reinterpret, or contest after leaving school. Direct attention to students' accounts and relationships across social differences would also clarify the civic dimension. Moral modernity offers a framework for these questions by distinguishing the person an institution seeks to cultivate from the practices through which that aspiration is pursued and the outcomes that remain to be established.

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