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MOTIVATION TO CHOOSE ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL EDUCATION: AWARENESS AND MOTIVATION OF GUARDIANS OF STUDENTS AT AL IMAN SINTANG ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL (PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY)

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ABSTRAK

Pendidikan pesantren memiliki posisi penting dalam pembentukan pengetahuan keagamaan, karakter, dan kemandirian peserta didik, sehingga keputusan wali santri dalam memilih pesantren menjadi fenomena yang penting dikaji, khususnya dari perspektif kesadaran dan motivasi orang tua. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis kesadaran dan motivasi wali santri dalam memilih pendidikan pesantren di Pondok Pesantren Al Iman Sintang serta memahami makna pilihan tersebut berdasarkan pengalaman dan perspektif mereka. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain fenomenologi untuk menggali pengalaman subjektif, pertimbangan, dan pemaknaan wali santri terhadap pendidikan pesantren. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik melalui tahapan reduksi data, pengelompokan tema, interpretasi, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa motivasi wali santri dalam memilih pendidikan pesantren terbentuk melalui perpaduan kesadaran keagamaan, harapan terhadap pembentukan akhlak dan karakter, kebutuhan akan lingkungan pendidikan yang religius, serta kepercayaan terhadap sistem pendidikan dan pembinaan pesantren. Pilihan tersebut tidak semata-mata didasarkan pada pertimbangan akademik, tetapi juga pada kesadaran bahwa pesantren dipandang mampu mengintegrasikan pendidikan agama, pembiasaan ibadah, kedisiplinan, dan pembentukan kepribadian. Dengan demikian, keputusan wali santri memilih Pondok Pesantren Al Iman Sintang merupakan tindakan yang memiliki makna pendidikan, religius, dan sosial, yang berorientasi pada masa depan dan pembentukan kualitas diri anak.

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Keywords:

Motivation of Guardians of Students; Parental Awareness; Islamic Boarding School Education; Selection of Islamic Boarding Schools; Islamic Education; Phenomenological Studies.

ABSTRACTS

Islamic boarding school education has an important position in the formation of religious knowledge, character, and independence of students, so that the decision of student guardians in choosing pesantren is an important phenomenon to be studied, especially from the perspective of parental awareness and motivation. This study aims to analyze the awareness and motivation of guardians of students in choosing pesantren education at Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School and understand the meaning of these choices based on their experiences and perspectives. The research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore the subjective experience, considerations, and meanings of guardians of students towards pesantren education. Data was obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed thematically through the stages of data reduction, thematic grouping, interpretation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that the motivation of guardians of students in choosing pesantren education is formed through a combination of religious awareness, expectations for the formation of morals and character, the need for a religious educational environment, and trust in the education system and pesantren development. This choice is not solely based on academic considerations, but also on the awareness that pesantren are seen as able to integrate religious education, worship habits, discipline, and personality formation. Thus, the decision of the guardian of the student to choose the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School is an action that has educational, religious, and social meaning, which is oriented towards the future and the formation of the child's self-quality.

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding school education is no longer solely understood as an educational institution oriented towards the mastery of religious knowledge, but also as a space for character formation, discipline, independence, and habituation of religious life(FathulAmin 2020). In this context, the decision of the guardian of the student to choose the pesantren is an educational phenomenon that is not simple because it is related to the consideration of values, experiences, needs, expectations, and awareness of parents for the future of the child. Nationally, pesantren have a strategic position in Indonesia's Islamic education system(Rama Nida Siregar 2024). Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs shows that there are more than 42 thousand Islamic boarding schools spread across various regions of Indonesia with the number of students reaching millions of people. This large number shows that pesantren still have a strong appeal amid the development of formal education options, religious-based schools, and alternative educational institutions. However, the academic problem is not just why the number of students continues to grow, but also why the number of students continues to grow. What really motivates guardians of students to make the decision to choose Islamic boarding school education, how this awareness is formed, and how they interpret the educational choice for the future of children(Source: Antasari Sinaga 2024). Thus, the motivation of guardians of students needs to be understood as a social and educational experience that is formed through a certain process of consideration, not just as an administrative decision when registering a child to an Islamic boarding school.

In the context of the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School, the motivation to choose pesantren education can be seen through various considerations of the guardians of the students related to religious education, moral formation, social environment, discipline, independence, and hope for the future of children. The implementation of the educational choice takes place through the process of introducing the pesantren, searching for information, family considerations, assessing education and coaching programs, and the decision to include children as students. This phenomenon is important because the choice of guardians of students is not always born from a single factor. Some parents may consider the ability of pesantren to provide intensive religious education, while others emphasize character building, supervision of the social environment, or habits of independent living. Preliminary research data obtained through observation of educational life at the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School shows that the activities of students are not only related to learning in the classroom, but also include habituation of worship, discipline, religious activities, social interaction, and boarding life. This condition provides a different educational experience compared to education that only takes place during school hours. Therefore, the academic problem of this research lies in the need to explain how the experience and awareness of the guardians of students on the character of pesantren education then develop into motivation to choose Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School. A phenomenological approach is needed so that the research does not stop at measuring motivational factors quantitatively but is able to reveal the subjective experience and meaning that the guardians give to the decision.

The extent to which this motivation plays a role in determining educational choices is also an important issue to be studied. The motivation of guardians of students can have intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions that are interconnected. The intrinsic dimension can be in the form of awareness to provide stronger religious education to children, the desire to form morals, and the hope that children will have life habits that are in accordance with Islamic values. Meanwhile, the extrinsic dimension can be in the form of the reputation of the pesantren, the educational environment, the dormitory system, learning programs, family or community recommendations, as well as considerations of social conditions outside the pesantren. In this study, the extent of motivation is not only seen from the strength or weakness of the students' guardians, but also from the role of motivation in the decision-making process, the meaning of pesantren education, and the expectations built for children' s development.Field data needs to be directed to explore the experience of guardians of students before choosing an Islamic boarding school, the main reasons when making a decision, information that influences the choice, and changes in views after the child undergoes education at the Islamic boarding school. Thus, the study can show whether these choices are dominated by religious awareness, character considerations, environmental factors, the quality of educational programs, family and community influences, or a combination of these factors. This issue is important because research on pesantren education choices often stops at the list of parents' reasons, while the subjective experiential and awareness aspects underlying the reasons have not always been explained in depth.

Furthermore, the role of motivation in choosing pesantren education can be understood as a link between Awareness of Guardian Students, Educational Considerations, and Decision to Admit Children to Islamic Boarding Schools. Motivation not only serves as an initial encouragement but can affect the level of parental trust in the Islamic boarding school, the willingness to support the child's educational process, and the way parents interpret their child's development during their time as students. In this context, the role of the guardian of the student does not end after the child is accepted into the pesantren(Hasanah and Wahyuni 2024). Moral support, communication with pesantren managers, fulfillment of educational needs, and evaluation of child development are part of the sustainability of these educational decisions. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the gap between The Decision to Choose a Pesantren, as a Real Action and awareness and experience behind the action. The phenomenological study of the guardians of the students of the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School is expected to reveal the deep meaning of the educational choice based on the direct experience of the guardians of the students. Academically, this research is important because it provides an understanding that the selection of Islamic boarding schools is not only a matter of preference of educational institutions but is a socio-religious phenomenon that involves awareness, experience, values, hopes, and the orientation of the family's future. Thus, the research focuses on three main problems, namely How the motivation and awareness of guardians of students are formed in choosing pesantren education, the extent to which this motivation influences the decision to choose Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School, and how the role of motivation in interpreting education and children's development while living a pesantren life.

Previous research shows that parents' decision to choose pesantren is influenced by various considerations, but there is still a space for study that has not been touched much. (Enggi Rayana, RinaAri Rohmah 2022) Researching the factors of parents' decision to choose Islamic boarding schools during the pandemic. The results of the study show that these decisions are influenced by ideological, educational, structural, economic, and pragmatic factors, while in the context of education in general, parents' decisions are also related to curriculum, facilities, location, educational environment, achievements, and teacher quality. Research gap: this study emphasizes more on categorical decision factors and the context of the pandemic but has not explored in depth the subjective experiences and awareness of guardians of students regarding the meaning of choosing a pesantren. The novelty of this research lies in the exploration of the experience of awareness and motivation of guardians of students phenomenologically in the context of the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School.

Next (Saefumillah 2021) In the research on the motivation of parents to choose Islamic boarding schools, they found two main forms of motivation, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This motivation is strengthened by the pesantren strategy in introducing the institution to the community through routine activities, competitions, seminars, social services, alumni, brochures, and online media. Research gap: the focus of the research is more on identifying the types of motivation and promotion strategies of Islamic boarding schools, so that it has not explained how student guardians form awareness, provide meaning, and experience the decision-making process subjectively. The novelty of this research is to shift the focus from just a motivational classification to the meaning of the experience of guardians of students in choosing pesantren education.

(Susan Sa'adah 2024) It also shows that face-to-face learning is one of the considerations for parents in choosing a pesantren, especially when education has changed due to the pandemic. The findings show that the decision to choose a pesantren is related to the needs of parents for an education system that is considered capable of providing more targeted learning and coaching. Research gap: the research orientation is still on certain decision factors and learning conditions, not on the construction of the awareness of guardian students after considering various experiences, values, and expectations for children. The novelty of this research lies in the disclosure of the subjective process of guardians of students in connecting pesantren education with the hope of forming religion, morals, independence, and the future of children.

Research (2024) regarding the motivational needs of the guardian in determining the choice of the pesantren examines the motivational needs of the guardians of the students in choosing the Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Situbondo pesantren with the perspective of McClelland's needs theory. The research shows that the decision of guardians of students to choose pesantren is related to certain needs and considerations that encourage them to determine educational institutions for children. Research gap: the study uses a survey approach and McClelland's needs framework, so it does not provide an in-depth picture of the life experience, awareness, and subjective meaning behind the decision of the guardian. The novelty of this research is that it uses a

phenomenological approach to understand the conscious experience of guardians of students in more depth, not just identifying their motivational needs.

Meanwhile, research (Ulum, Ruslan, and Kurniawan 2024) It shows that parents' decision to choose a pesantren is influenced by various factors and can be understood through the perspective of exchange theory, especially consideration of benefits, satisfaction, and costs incurred. Research gap: the rationality approach places parental choice primarily as a process of calculating benefits and costs, while the dimensions of awareness, emotional experience, religious values, and the meaning of student guardians on pesantren education have not been the center of the analysis. The novelty of this research is to present a phenomenological perspective that sees the decision to choose a pesantren as an experience that has personal, religious, educational, and social meaning for guardians of students.

Based on these five studies, it can be identified that studies on pesantren selection so far tend to focus on the identification of decision factors, classification of intrinsic-extrinsic motivations, motivational needs, rational considerations, or certain conditions such as pandemics. Studies that specifically integrate awareness, motivation, subjective experience, decision-making processes, and the meaning of student guardians in choosing pesantren are still relatively limited. In addition, no study has been found that specifically reveals the experience of guardians of students in choosing Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School through a phenomenological approach. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in an effort to understand in depth how the awareness of guardians of students is formed, how motivation develops into the decision to choose a pesantren, what factors they interpret as the main reason, and how these choices are understood in relation to religious education, moral formation, independence, social environment, and the future of children. Thus, this study does not only answer "what are the reasons why parents choose Islamic boarding schools", but explains "how guardians of students experience, realize, interpret, and build decisions to choose pesantren education" in the context of Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School.

This study aims to analyze and understand in depth the awareness and motivation of guardians of students in choosing education at the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School, especially regarding the process of forming motivation, considerations that underlie decisions, and the meaning of pesantren choices for religious education, moral formation, independence, and children's future. Academically, this research is expected to enrich the study of Islamic education regarding parental decision-making in choosing pesantren through a phenomenological perspective, as well as filling in the research gap that has so far identified more motivational factors in general. Practically, the results of the research are expected to be useful for the management of the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School as a basis for understanding the expectations and needs of guardians of students so that they can improve the quality of education programs, coaching, and pesantren services; for guardians of students as a material for reflection in determining education that is in accordance with the needs and development of children; and for future researchers as a

reference to develop studies on motivation, parental awareness, and pesantren education choices in different social and cultural contexts.

B. METHOD

This type of research is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. This research is directed to deeply understand the subjective experience, awareness, and motivation of guardians of students in choosing pesantren education at Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School. The phenomenological approach is used to reveal the direct experience of guardians of students, the considerations that underlie the decision to choose a pesantren, and the meaning they give to pesantren education for the development of religion, morals, independence, and the future of children(John W. Creswell 2009).

The research data is in the form of primary and secondary data about the awareness and motivation of guardians of students in choosing education at Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School, including reasons for choosing a pesantren, experience and considerations before making a decision, understanding of the education program and coaching of the pesantren, expectations for children's development, and experience after the child participates in pesantren education. Secondary data in the form of pesantren profile documents, educational programs, disciplines, coaching activities, and documentation of student activities relevant to the research focus(Ratnaningtyas et al. 2023).

Data collection techniques were carried out with semi-structured in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation(Stuart 2013). Interviews were conducted with guardians of students as the main informants to obtain their experience and meaning regarding the decision to choose an Islamic boarding school. Observations were made on the environment and educational activities of the pesantren to obtain contextual data, while documentation was used to complete and test the information from interviews and observations(March 2024). The validity of the data is checked through triangulation of sources and techniques.

Data analysis is carried out interactively through data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion withdrawal and verification(Grave et al. 2022). The researcher identifies the main themes regarding the awareness, motivation, consideration, experience, and meaning of guardian students, then conducts a critical analysis of the findings using relevant discourses on motivation, educational choices, awareness, and phenomenology, and juxtaposes them with the results of previous research to find similarities, differences, and the position of research novelty(John W. Creswell 2009). Thus, the analysis not only describes the reasons why the guardians of the students chose the Islamic boarding school but also explains how these experiences and awareness shaped the motivation and decision to choose the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings (can be in form of subheading) (1500 – 2500 words)

The results of the study on the motivation to choose pesantren education: the awareness and motivation of guardians of students at the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School show that the decision of guardians of students to choose pesantren education is formed through several interrelated considerations. The findings of the research are grouped into five main units, namely awareness of the importance of religious education, the formation of morals and character, the pesantren education environment, expectations for the future of children, and trust in the pesantren coaching system. The five findings illustrate that the choice of guardians of students is not only related to academic aspects, but also to the needs of religious education and the formation of children's personalities.

No.	Units of Discovery	Research Findings
1	Awareness of religious education	Guardians of students have an awareness that religious education needs to be provided more intensively through an educational environment that supports religious learning and habituation.
2	Formation of morals and character	The motivation for choosing a pesantren is related to the expectations of the guardians of the students for the formation of morals, discipline, responsibility, and independence of children.
3	The educational environment of the pesantren	The pesantren environment is seen as an educational space that can integrate learning, worship habits, discipline, and social life of students.
4	Hope for the future of the child	The choice of pesantren is related to the expectations of the guardians of the students so that the child has religious provisions, character, knowledge, and the ability to live life better.
5	Trust in the pesantren coaching system	The decision of the guardian of the students is also influenced by the trust in the education, coaching, nurturing, and environmental programs organized by the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School.

Source: Data from the author's research (2026).

1. Awareness of the Importance of Religious Education

The findings of the study show that awareness of the importance of religious education is one of the bases in the decision of guardians of students to choose pesantren education. This awareness can be seen from the attention of guardians of students to the needs of children to obtain religious learning which not only takes place in formal learning activities, but also through the habituation of daily life. Islamic boarding schools are seen as having an environment that allows religious education to take place more intensively through the regularity of activities, coaching, and religious activities. Thus, the choice of pesantren education emerged as part of the efforts of the guardians of the students to provide an educational environment that is assessed in accordance with the religious needs of the child.

2. Motivation for Shaping Children's Morals and Character

The next finding is related to the desire of the guardians of the students so that children's education is not only oriented to academic achievement but also produces changes in behavior and character. Pesantren was chosen because the education in it pays attention to the habit of discipline, responsibility, independence, manners, and religious behavior. These findings show that the motivation of student guardians has a broader orientation than just acquiring knowledge. Islamic boarding school education is expected to be able to become an environment for the formation of children's personalities through an educational process that takes place in a sustainable manner.

3. Consideration of the Islamic Boarding School Education Environment

The educational environment is an important part of the consideration of student guardians. The life of the pesantren that regulates learning activities, worship, discipline, and social interaction provides a different educational pattern from education that only takes place during school hours. The environment is seen as able to help direct children's activities through rules, coaching, and mentoring that take place in a structured manner. These findings show that the choice of guardians of students is not only aimed at institutions as a place of learning, but also on the social environment that is considered to support the process of forming children's behaviors and habits.

4. Hope for the Future of Children

The motivation of the guardians of the students is also related to the orientation to the future of the child. Islamic boarding school education is expected to provide provisions that include religious knowledge, character, discipline, independence, and the ability to live a social life. This hope shows that the decision to enroll children in Islamic boarding schools is a long-term oriented educational decision. Guardians of students not only consider the current condition of children's education but also relate it to the quality of the child's personality and ability to face life in the future.

5. Trust in the Education System and the Development of Islamic Boarding Schools

The latest findings show that there is a consideration of the education and coaching system organized by the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School. This belief is related to the existence of educational programs, student development patterns, pesantren-based life arrangements, and an environment that supports the educational process. Trust in the institution is one of the elements that strengthens the decision of guardians of students in choosing a pesantren. Thus, the motivation to choose pesantren education is formed from the relationship between the awareness of guardian students of the child's educational needs, expectations for character formation, environmental considerations, future orientation, and assessment of the pesantren coaching system.

Overall, the findings of the study show that the motivation of guardians of students to choose Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School is multidimensional. This

motivation does not stand alone, but is formed from the relationship between religious awareness, the need for character formation, considerations of the educational environment, future hopes, and trust in Islamic boarding schools. These findings are the basis for entering the discussion section, which is by analyzing the findings using relevant theories and comparing them with the results of previous research.

The results of this study present empirical findings regarding the awareness and motivation of guardians of students in choosing education at the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School. The research data was compiled based on the focus of the research and grouped into main themes that described the reasons, considerations, and orientation of student guardians in determining pesantren as an educational option for children. The presentation of results is carried out systematically through tables and descriptive descriptions of each theme, without including theory or conceptual interpretation, so that empirical findings can be clearly distinguished from the analysis and discussion of the research.

The results of the study on *the Motivation to Choose Islamic Boarding School Education: Awareness and Motivation of Guardians of Students at Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School (Phenomenological Study)* show that the decision of guardians of students in choosing pesantren education is formed through a process of consideration related to religious education awareness, assessment of the pesantren environment, expectations for child development, and trust in the coaching system. To provide a systematic overview, the research findings are grouped into four main units as shown in the following table.

No.	Research Findings Unit	Focus of Discovered Data
1	**Awareness of Santri Guardians on Islamic Boarding School Education**	Guardian students' understanding of the importance of religious education, moral formation, discipline, and children's independence through the pesantren environment.
2	**Considerations and Decision-Making Process**	The consideration of the guardian of the students before choosing a pesantren includes the child's educational needs, pesantren program, environment, coaching patterns, and conformity with family expectations.
3	**Motivation for Choosing Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School**	Religious encouragement, education, character building, social environment, and expectations for the future of children are the basis for choosing Islamic boarding schools.
4	**The Meaning and Expectations of Wali Santri for Islamic**	The meaning of guardians of students towards pesantren as an environment for religious education, character formation, development of

	Boarding School Education	independence, and preparation for children's future.

Source: Data from the author's research (2026).

1. Awareness of Wali Santri on Islamic Boarding School Education

The findings of the study show that the awareness of guardians of students towards pesantren education is closely related to the need to provide religious education and character formation to children. Pesantren are seen not only as a place to acquire religious knowledge, but also as an environment that allows religious values to be applied in daily life. This awareness is reflected in the attention of the guardians of the students to the habit of worship, discipline, manners, responsibility, and independence of children. Thus, awareness becomes the initial basis that directs guardians of students to consider pesantren as an educational option.

2. Considerations and Decision-Making Process

The decision to choose the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School did not appear suddenly, but through a process of consideration of various aspects of children's education. Guardians of students consider the needs of the child, the educational environment, learning programs, coaching patterns, discipline, and the suitability of pesantren education with family expectations. The process shows that the choice of pesantren is a decision that is preceded by an assessment of the child's educational conditions and needs. These considerations then led to the decision to provide education in the pesantren environment.

3. Motivation for Choosing Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School

The findings of the study show that the motivation of guardians of students in choosing Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School is diverse and interrelated. These motivations include the desire to obtain more intensive religious education, form morals and character, create a supportive social environment, and foster children's discipline and independence. In addition, there is an orientation towards the future of children, especially the hope that children have religious provisions and character that can be the basis for living life. Thus, the motivation to choose a pesantren is not only based on current educational needs, but also on expectations for the child's development in the long term.

4. The Meaning and Expectations of Wali Santri for Islamic Boarding School Education

Islamic boarding school education is interpreted by the guardian of students as an educational process that integrates knowledge, habituation, coaching, and social life in one environment. This meaning can be seen from the hope that children will experience development not only in the aspect of religious knowledge, but also in behavior, discipline, responsibility, and independence. The guardian of the students also placed pesantren education as part of an effort to prepare children for life in the future.

Therefore, the decision to choose Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School has a broader meaning than just choosing an educational institution, namely as a form of family awareness and expectations for the formation of children's self-quality.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of the research "Motivation to Choose Islamic Boarding School Education: Awareness and Motivation of Guardians of Students at Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School (Phenomenological Study)" is directed to explain the meaning behind the empirical findings that have been presented, not just repeating the results of the research. The findings show four main constructions, namely awareness of pesantren education, the process of consideration in making decisions, motivation to choose pesantren, and the meaning and expectations of student guardians. The four findings show that the decision of the guardian of the student is a complex process because it brings together religious, educational, moral, social, and future orientation considerations for the child.

1. Awareness of Wali Santri on Islamic Boarding School Education

The findings of the study show that the awareness of guardians of students towards pesantren education is mainly built by the view that children's education is not enough to only provide academic knowledge but needs to be accompanied by the formation of religiosity, morals, discipline, and independence. Pesantren is understood as an environment that allows education to take place more thoroughly because religious learning does not stop at the material, but is continued through habituation in daily life(Misnatun 2022). Thus, the awareness of guardians of students in this study is not just the awareness that pesantren has religious education, but awareness of the needs of children for an educational environment that is able to unite knowledge, habituation, and personality formation.

These findings can be dialogued with the phenomenological thought of Edmund Husserl, especially the idea that human experience needs to be understood based on how a phenomenon is present and interpreted in the consciousness of the subject(Edmund Husserl 2013). In the context of this study, pesantren is not just an object of choice that is judged from its external characteristics. Pesantren is present in the awareness of guardian students as an experience and educational possibility that is considered in accordance with the needs of children. This means that the decision to choose a pesantren derives meaning from the way the guardian of the student understands the child's educational experience, religion, family, and future. This perspective strengthens the reason for using the phenomenological approach because what is the focus of attention is not only what factors cause choices, but how those choices are experienced and interpreted by the guardians of the students(Nasyirudin and Al-Kattani 2023).

These findings are in line with (Sopwandin 2024) which found that the motivation of parents to choose pesantren is related to the desire for children to be pious, understand religious knowledge, have good character, be independent, and be

protected from the negative influence of technological developments. Research also shows that concerns about children's morals, association, and the need for moral coaching are part of the motivation of parents to choose Islamic boarding schools. These similarities show that religious education and moral formation are relatively consistent motives in family choices for pesantren(Ermianto 2022).

However, this study places a different emphasis. Previous research tends to identify reasons or motivational factors, while the findings in Al Iman Sintang show that these reasons need to be understood as part of the awareness of guardians of students towards children's educational needs. In other words, motivation does not stand as a separate encouragement but develops from the way the guardian of the student interprets the child's educational problems. The antithesis that can be put forward is that choosing a pesantren cannot always be explained as a response to parents' concerns about the outside environment. In the context of Al Iman Sintang, this choice can also be read as a positive orientation to obtain an educational model that is considered more integrative.

2. Considerations and Decision-Making Process

The second finding shows that the decision of the guardian of the student did not take place spontaneously. The guardian of the students considers the needs of the child, the educational program, the pesantren environment, the coaching pattern, discipline, and the suitability of the pesantren with the expectations of the family. This shows that education decisions are a selection process that involves assessing various aspects at once. The pesantren is chosen after the guardian of the students establishes a certain assessment of what the child needs and the extent to which the institution is able to meet these needs.

These findings can be explained through James S. Coleman's perspective on rational action, specifically the relationship between actors, resources, and action choices(Coleman 1988). Guardians of students can be positioned as actors who have a specific goal, while pesantren is one of the educational resources considered to achieve these goals. However, the findings of the study show that the rationality of student guardians is not economical. Their considerations concern not only material costs or gains, but also include religious values, character, environmental safety, discipline, and the future of the child(Ahmad Husen Ma'ruf 2022). Therefore, rationality in the selection of pesantren has an instrumental dimension as well as value.

These findings have a close affinity to the research (Hillaludin 2025) which indicates that parents consider various factors when determining the pesantren and that the choice can be explained through consideration of benefits, satisfaction, and costs. The findings also intersect with the research (Habibi 2022) regarding parental preferences in choosing Islamic educational institutions which shows that there is a relationship between parental characteristics, institutional selection factors, and expectations for children's education.

However, this study shows that the decision to choose an Islamic boarding school is not appropriate if it is reduced to a mere calculation of benefits and costs. Guardians of students do make considerations, but the object of consideration is the values that they consider important for the child's life. Thus, the analytical novelty of this research lies in the understanding that the decision-making process is a meeting between practical rationality and value awareness. Parents do not just ask whether the pesantren is "profitable", but whether the education is meaningful and in accordance with the image of the child they expect.

3. Motivation for Choosing Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School

The third finding shows that the motivation of guardians of students is multidimensional. These motivations include the desire to obtain more intensive religious education, form morals and character, provide a supportive social environment, build discipline and independence, and prepare for children's future. These findings show that the motivation to choose pesantren cannot be limited to intrinsic and extrinsic categories rigidly. Religious motivations, educational needs, environmental influences, and future expectations interact with each other to form a complete decision.

In Abraham Maslow's perspective, human needs move from basic needs to higher needs, including the need for security, belonging, appreciation, and self-actualization(Zebua 2021). If this perspective is dialogued with research findings, the pesantren environment is perceived by the guardians of students to be able to provide several needs at once: a sense of security through a structured environment, a sense of belonging through an educational community, appreciation through the formation of competencies and character, and actualization through the development of religious abilities and independence. However, the findings of the study also show limitations if the motivation of the guardians of students is only explained using a hierarchy of needs. The choice of pesantren contains normative and religious dimensions that cannot be fully explained as fulfilling individual needs(Rifqy 2024).

Research results (Robyan E. Bafadal 2023) It shows a combination of intrinsic motivation in the form of a desire to form a pious, religious, characterful, and independent child with extrinsic motivations such as location, environment, and pesantren education patterns. Findings (Suprapto 2024) It also shows that parents' internal and external motivations are related to children's moral development. Meanwhile, research (Maulidiyah 2023) It shows that parents' choice of pesantren is also related to cultural and economic capital as well as the social structure of parents.

This research offers an antithesis to the view that places motivation as a stand-alone list of factors. In the context of Al Iman Sintang, motivation is more accurately understood as the construction of meaning formed from the relationship between children's educational needs, family values, social experiences, and future projections. Therefore, parents do not simply choose pesantren because "the religious education is good", but because these qualities are interpreted as a means to achieve the expected condition of the child(Raharjo 2024). Motivation is thus dynamic: it starts from

awareness, develops through consideration, and then manifests into educational decisions.

4. The Meaning and Expectations of Wali Santri for Islamic Boarding School Education

The fourth finding shows that the guardians of the students interpret the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School as an educational environment that integrates knowledge, habituation, coaching, and social life. This meaning shows that pesantren is positioned not only as an institution that provides religious education, but as a space for human formation. The expectations of guardians of students for children include the development of religious knowledge, behavior, discipline, responsibility, independence, and readiness to face the future. Thus, the meaning of pesantren for guardians of students is multidimensional and goes beyond instructional functions.

From a phenomenological perspective, the meaning of an experience does not lie solely in its object, but in how the subject experiences and experiences the object(Rasid, Djafar, and Santoso 2021). This view helps explain why Islamic boarding schools that institutionally certain educational programs have can acquire different meanings for each family. For the guardians of Al Iman Sintang students, pesantren is meaningful because it is connected to their experiences, values, concerns, needs, and expectations for their children. Therefore, "choosing a pesantren" is an experience that has a subjective as well as a social dimension.

The findings also have relevance to the research (Fandy Ahmad 2022) regarding parents' understanding of children's education in Islamic boarding schools through phenomenological studies. The research explicitly places the experience and understanding of parents as an important part of understanding pesantren as an educational option. More recent research on parents at the Al Huda Jati Agung Islamic Boarding School also found that the motivation for choosing a pesantren is related to religion, character, a safe and disciplined environment, independence, family traditions, recommendations of religious leaders, alumni reputation, and trust in the manager and the quality of the curriculum.

The difference is that this study places the meaning and expectations of the guardians of the students as the end of the awareness and motivation process, not just as a selection factor. This means that the choice of Al Iman Sintang can be understood as a process that moves from awareness, consideration, motivation, decision, meaning and hope. This model is a conceptual contribution to the research because it shows that educational decisions do not stop when children are accepted into pesantren. These decisions continue to gain meaning through parents' expectations of change and development of children.

Discussion Synthesis

Based on the overall discussion, the findings of the study show that the motivation of guardians of students to choose Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School is an awareness process that develops into an educational decision through

consideration of values, needs, environment, and future orientation. These findings extend previous research that generally mapped motivation into religious, moral, environmental, economic, security, or institutional quality factors. In this study, these various factors were not treated as stand-alone variables but were understood as part of the conscious experience of the guardians of the students in giving meaning to pesantren education. Theoretically, phenomenology helps explain the dimensions of experience and meaning, while the perspective of rational choice helps explain the process of consideration that precedes decision. The main idea of this study is that the guardians of students choose pesantren not only because the pesantren has a certain program, but because the program, environment, and values of the pesantren are interpreted as a path that suits their description of education and the future of the child. Thus, the novelty of the research lies in the explanation of the relationship between awareness, motivation, consideration, decision, and meaning of guardians of students in a series of phenomenological experiences in the context of the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the motivation of guardians of students in choosing education at the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School is formed through awareness of the importance of religious education, the formation of morals and character, the need for a supportive educational environment, and hopes for the future of children. The selection process of the pesantren does not take place spontaneously, but through consideration of the educational program, coaching patterns, discipline, social environment, and the suitability of the institution to the needs and expectations of the family. This motivation then gives the meaning that pesantren is not just a place to acquire religious knowledge, but an educational environment that integrates learning, habituation, character building, and independence. Thus, the choice of guardians of students for the Al Iman Sintang Islamic Boarding School is a multidimensional educational decision, because it brings together religious awareness, educational considerations, social experiences, and the future orientation of children. These findings confirm that understanding the motivation of guardians of students needs to be done by looking at their experiences and meanings, not just based on external selection factors.

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