

Time Management Strategies for Boarding School Students: The Role of Boarding School Programs and Support from Musrifah in Maintaining Academic and Organizational Balance

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Abstract

Female students in an Islamic university dormitory balance their academic and organizational roles within an institutionally structured daily routine, in which dormitory advisors, known as musrifah, help shape how they manage that balance. This qualitative descriptive-interpretive study is based on semi-structured interviews with 16 participants (8 female students, 8 Musrifah) conducted between January 2026 and April 2026, and analyzed thematically across six phases. Three themes emerged. Time management functions as a negotiated priority within a scheduled institutional rhythm: female students delegate scheduling decisions to dormitory routines, thereby freeing up cognitive effort for the substance of academic tasks. The dormitory program functions as a disciplinary infrastructure, transforming imposed routines into internalized habits through the gradual and measured withdrawal of support by the musrifah. The relationship between the musrifah and the students forms a multi-layered, dual-role support system that combines formal supervision with residential guidance, providing emotional, informational, instrumental, and evaluative support from a single trusted source. These findings challenge individualistic assumptions in existing time management theory and expand the typology of social support by identifying a unique configuration of dual-role support. Residential institutions do more than enforce time management; they redistribute regulatory tasks through institutional rhythms, measured guidance, and formal support embedded within the domestic environment. These findings provide insights for the design of residential programs, the professional development of Musrifah, and the validity of individual-oriented time management measurement instruments.

Keywords: time management; boarding program; Musrifah; social support; Islamic university.

Introduction

Students living in dormitories lead more demanding lives than non-dormitory students because they juggle multiple roles simultaneously. In addition to academic demands, they are generally involved in organizational activities and bound by scheduled, structured, and ongoing dormitory programs. This intensity creates direct competition for the most limited resource, time: every hour allocated to organizational activities has the potential to reduce study time, a pattern referred to in the literature by Greene & Maggs as a “*time trade-off*.”¹ Without adequate time-management strategies, students with dual roles are vulnerable to role conflict, academic burnout, and a decline in academic achievement.² Therefore, the ability to balance academic and non-academic demands is central to the academic success of residential students.

Several studies, including Khabbache et al., Masnan et al., Meeuwisse et al., and Waldeyer et al.,³ confirm that time management skills contribute to academic achievement and reduced academic stress. Within Macan’s classical framework,⁴ these benefits operate through *perceived control of time*, which has long been assumed by Kljajic & Gaudreau,⁵ and Limone et al.,⁶ and is generated by individual behaviors such as planning, setting priorities, and exercising self-control to avoid procrastination. Consequently, the dominant time management instruments and interventions, ranging from *the Time Management Behavior Questionnaire*⁷ to standalone learning skills, have

¹ K M Greene and J L Maggs, “Revisiting the Time Trade-off Hypothesis: Work, Organized Activities, and Academics during College,” *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 44, no. 8 (2015): 1623–37, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-014-0215-7>.

² A J Onwuegbuzie et al., “A Critical Dialectical Pluralistic Examination of the Lived Experience of Select Women Doctoral Students,” *The Qualitative Report* 19, no. 3 (2014): 1–35.

³ J Waldeyer et al., “A Moderated Mediation Analysis of Conscientiousness, Time Management Strategies, Effort Regulation Strategies, and University Students’ Performance,” *Learning and Individual Differences* 100 (2022): 102228.

⁴ T H Macan, “Time Management: Test of a Process Model,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 79, no. 3 (1994): 381–91, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.79.3.381>.

⁵ K Kljajic and P Gaudreau, “Does It Matter If Students Procrastinate More in Some Courses than in Others? A Multilevel Perspective on Procrastination and Academic Achievement,” *Learning and Instruction* 58 (2018): 193–200, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2018.06.005>.

⁶ P Limone et al., “Examining Procrastination among University Students through the Lens of the Self-Regulated Learning Model,” *Behavioral Sciences* 10, no. 12 (2020): 184, <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs10120184>.

⁷ R García-Ros and F Pérez-González, “Spanish Version of the Time Management Behavior Questionnaire for University Students,” *The Spanish Journal of Psychology* 15, no. 3 (2012): 1485–94, https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_sjop.2012.v15.n3.39432.

led to research that focuses on individual scheduling behaviors and has largely been developed and validated on samples of non-residential college students.⁸

In addition to individual factors, social support plays a crucial role in alleviating academic stress and sustaining academic progress. Referring to House's typology,⁹ Guo et al.,¹⁰ Li et al.,¹¹ MacGeorge et al.,¹² Note that social support in the form of emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support has been shown to reduce stress and enhance student engagement in learning. However, most studies still focus on support within informal relationships, such as peers and family, so the role of formal, institutionally embedded mentors, particularly those living in the same residence as students, has not been extensively explored. In fact, it is precisely this configuration of support that is a defining characteristic of the dormitory environment and distinguishes it from the context of non-dormitory students.

Studies by Hodges et al.,¹³ Lase,¹⁴ show that dormitory life provides a distinct context. Dormitory programs that regulate daily routines, foster character development, and supervise activities can instill discipline, order, and a sense of responsibility. In the context of Islamic college dormitories, this mentoring role is largely carried out by the *musrifah* as a formal mentor who lives with the students. The *musrifah* oversees the program's implementation while providing emotional, informational, and instrumental support through a personal and empathetic approach.¹⁵ This position places the *musrifah*

⁸ D Simón-Grábalos et al., "Systematic Review of the Literature on Interventions to Improve Self-Regulation of Learning in First-Year University Students," *Education Sciences* 15, no. 3 (2025): 372, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15030372>.

⁹ J S House, *Work Stress and Social Support* (Addison-Wesley, 1981).

¹⁰ W Guo et al., "The Impact of Teacher Emotional Support on Learning Engagement among College Students Mediated by Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Resilience," *Scientific Reports* 15, no. 1 (2025): 3670.

¹¹ H Li et al., "Social Support and Emotional Well-Being among Boarders and Day School Students: A Two-Wave Longitudinal Study," *Children and Youth Services Review* 155 (2023): 107217, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2023.107217>.

¹² E L MacGeorge, W Samter, and S J Gillihan, "Academic Stress, Supportive Communication, and Health," *Communication Education* 54, no. 4 (2005): 365–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520500442236>.

¹³ J Hodges, J Sheffield, and A Ralph, "Staff and Boarders Perspectives of the Boarding Environment," *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 25, no. 4 (2016): 1045–56, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-015-0287-3>.

¹⁴ R H Lase, "Perbedaan Karakteristik Mahasiswa Asrama Dengan Mahasiswa Luar Asrama Kampus 1 IAKN Tarutung," [*Nama Jurnal Belum Lengkap - Mohon Verifikasi*] 32, no. 3 (2021): 167–86.

¹⁵ A Karim et al., "Islamic Spiritual Leadership of Kyai in Fostering Santris' Entrepreneurial Spirit and Independence in Boarding School," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 12 (2025): 101817, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101817>.

simultaneously as both an institutional authority figure and a daily mentor, a relational configuration that has rarely been examined analytically.

Nevertheless, the way the literature explains the contribution of the boarding school environment still leaves conceptual gaps. Studies by Habibi et al.,¹⁶ Latif & Hafid,¹⁷ Suresman et al.,¹⁸ In Islamic boarding schools and dormitories, the environment is framed as a space that inherently shapes character, discipline, and independence. Such interpretations tend to give credit to the institution without elucidating its mechanisms: “boarding school discipline” is treated as a singular, uniform, and positive outcome, without distinguishing between superficial compliance and internalized responsibility, and without considering the tension between compliance and autonomy that accompanies a highly regulated environment.¹⁹ At the same time, neither an individual-centered time management framework nor a social support framework centered on informal relationships is sufficient to explain how institutional rhythms and formal mentors collectively shape, or fail to shape, students’ time management capacities.

Time management and social support are often studied separately, but few studies treat dormitory programs and peer support as a single formal mentoring system that shapes students’ time management strategies. Most studies focus solely on individual students, without examining how the dormitory’s institutional-relational architecture distributes the work of time regulation itself. This study treats Islamic college dormitories as *a limiting case* that tests the hidden assumptions in Macan’s theory of time management,²⁰ and House’s typology of social support.²¹ Assuming that self-regulation is an individual endeavor in a neutral setting, these two frameworks allow the unique experiences of dormitory students to be articulated without detaching them from broader theoretical discourse.

¹⁶ A Habibi et al., “Investigating EFL Classroom Management in Pesantren: A Case Study,” *Qualitative Report* 23, no. 9 (2018): 2105–22.

¹⁷ M Latif and E Hafid, “Multicultural Attitudes in an Islamic Boarding School of South Sulawesi-Indonesia,” *Cogent Education* 8, no. 1 (2021): 1968736, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2021.1968736>.

¹⁸ E Suresman, A Faqihuddin, and M Abdullah, “From Sorogan to Digital Learning: A Systematic Literature Network Analysis of Pesantren Learning Models,” *Cogent Education* 12, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2580776>.

¹⁹ Zelmy A Manindjo, Vidya Anindhita, and Fitri Ariyanti Abidin, “Parental Psychological Control, Autonomy Frustration, and Psychological Well-Being among Boarding School Adolescents,” *Journal of Education and Learning* 17, no. 2 (2023): 262–70, <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v17i2.20734>.

²⁰ Macan, “Time Management: Test of a Process Model.”

²¹ House, *Work Stress and Social Support*.

This study aims to understand how time management unfolds for female dormitory students who juggle academic and organizational roles simultaneously at an Islamic university, and how the dormitory program and the guidance provided by the *musrifah* shape this process. Using the daily routine of dormitory life as its context, this study is guided by three questions: (1) what strategies do students use to balance academic and organizational demands within their scheduled activities; (2) how do dormitory programs shape students' discipline and regularity over time, from imposed routines to internalized habits; and (3) how does the guidance provided by the *musrifah*, as a formal support figure living in the same residence, contribute to students' ability to manage the demands of their dual roles. Through a qualitative approach, this study offers a contextual portrait of the dynamics of dormitory life while specifying the institutional-relational architecture that shapes time management, discipline, and support, aspects that have long been overlooked in studies treating "dormitory discipline" as a singular entity. This specification serves as a reference for the development of student guidance systems in higher education institutions.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-interpretive design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study's primary objective is to develop an in-depth, contextual understanding of how dormitory students manage their time and how the dormitory program and the guidance provided by the *Musrifah* shape that experience. This phenomenon is inherently subjective, relational, and embedded in the reality of dormitory life.²² Qualitative methodology is well-suited to examining complex social processes in educational settings because it enables researchers to capture the nuances of participants' experiences, meanings, and strategies in their natural contexts.²³ A descriptive-interpretive design was employed to systematically describe phenomena from the informants' direct perspectives while also allowing for interpretations grounded in a theoretical framework during the subsequent analysis phase.²⁴ This choice is in line with established practices in research on Islamic boarding schools and dormitories, where qualitative investigations, including in-depth interviews and case studies, are widely used

²² John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018).

²³ Latif and Hafid, "Multicultural Attitudes in an Islamic Boarding School of South Sulawesi-Indonesia."

²⁴ Onwuegbuzie et al., "A Critical Dialectical Pluralistic Examination of the Lived Experience of Select Women Doctoral Students."

to explore dimensions of students' lives, social dynamics, and learning processes that are difficult to measure quantitatively.

The study was conducted in the women's dormitory at an Islamic university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from January 2026 to April 2026. This dormitory implements a structured mentoring program that includes a daily schedule (wake-up time, prayer, religious instruction, Quran memorization, and study activities), character-building activities, and supervision of student activities overseen by a *musrifah*, a formal mentor who lives in the dormitory with the students. This unique institutional context combines academic demands, organizational involvement, and a scheduled dormitory program, making it a relevant setting for examining how time management unfolds within an institutionally regulated environment. The research was intentionally limited to a single location and a single gender (female) to achieve contextual depth; the implications of this for the generalizability of the findings are discussed in the limitations section.

There were 16 research informants: 8 female college students living in the dormitory and 8 female dormitory supervisors. Selection was conducted using purposive sampling, a non-probability technique commonly used in qualitative research to identify individuals best able to explain the phenomenon under study.²⁵ Inclusion criteria included: (1) being actively registered as a dormitory resident with a minimum stay of one academic semester; (2) for student informants, active involvement in at least one organizational structure in addition to dormitory life; and (3) for female dormitory supervisors, active involvement in formal mentoring and supervisory roles within the dormitory.

This composition of informants with dual perspectives was deliberately designed: collecting data from students as participants and from *Musrifah* as a formal mentor allows for the triangulation of two viewpoints within the same institutional setting, enabling the researcher to obtain a more comprehensive and cross-validated picture of the dormitory's dynamics. This methodological approach is consistent with similar studies on boarding school and *pesantren* environments, which show that combining the perspectives of students and staff yields more diverse data. The number of informants, following Lincoln & Guba, was not determined by statistical requirements but by the principle of

²⁵ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*.

informational sufficiency, in accordance with qualitative research norms, in which data collection continues until thematic saturation is approached.²⁶

Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face in Indonesian, lasting approximately 45–75 minutes. The semi-structured format was chosen because it combines focus and consistency across interviews through a prepared interview guide with the flexibility to explore emerging insights, follow up on unexpected revelations, and allow participants to articulate their experiences in their own words.²⁷ This format has been widely validated in qualitative studies on student life, time management, and the environment.

The interview guide was developed based on four areas of focus aligned with the research objectives: (1) the daily activity patterns of dormitory students; (2) time management strategies employed to balance academic and organizational demands; (3) the contribution of the dormitory program to the development of discipline and structured habits; and (4) the forms of support provided by the *musrifah* in helping students maintain a balance between academic and organizational responsibilities. The guide was designed as an open-ended framework so that informants could elaborate on topics most relevant to their individual experiences. All interviews were audio-recorded with the informants' consent and then transcribed verbatim to preserve the integrity of the language and meaning and to minimize interpretive distortion in the early stages of analysis. The quotations presented in this article were translated into English while retaining their original meaning.

The analysis was conducted using thematic analysis following the procedural framework of Braun and Clarke,²⁸ through the following iterative stages: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated readings of the transcripts; (2) initial open coding, labeling data segments according to their semantic content; (3) grouping codes into categories based on semantic similarity; (4) developing main themes that represent coherent patterns across the entire dataset; and (5) reviewing, refining, and naming the themes in relation to the research questions.

²⁶ Yvonna Lincoln and Egon G Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage publications, 1985).

²⁷ A B Soares et al., "Time Management: What Do University Students Think about It?," *Revista de Estudios e Investigación En Psicología y Educación* 10, no. 1 (2023): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.17979/reipe.2023.10.1.9468>.

²⁸ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77–101.

The analytical process is iterative and comparative: data from student informants and musrifah informants are explored, both separately and in relation to one another, to identify common ground and differences in perspective. The analysis proceeds in two complementary phases. First, the inductive phase involves constructing codes and themes directly from the data without imposing predefined categories. Second, the abductive-interpretive phase, in which the identified patterns are interpreted through established theoretical frameworks, namely the concept of perceived control over time,²⁹ and the typology of social support,³⁰ to refine the interpretation without reducing the specificity of the context. This inductive yet directed logic is suitable for studies aimed at describing phenomena while developing data-driven interpretations that engage with theory,³¹ and aligns with qualitative methodological practices in pesantren research, where repeated coding and theme development have yielded coherent findings transferable to comparable contexts.³²

Data validity is established through four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, following Lincoln and Guba's framework for assessing rigor in qualitative research.³³ Credibility is maintained through source triangulation, that is, comparing and cross-validating narratives from two distinct groups of informants (students and Musrifah), as well as through member checking, in which selected informants review a summary of the findings to verify the accuracy and appropriateness of the researcher's interpretations. Triangulation across types of informants is a well-established strategy in research on boarding schools to ensure that findings reflect a broader institutional reality rather than a single perspective.

Generalizability is supported by providing in-depth, context-rich descriptions (*thick descriptions*) of the research setting, informant characteristics, and data collection conditions, enabling readers to assess the relevance of the findings to other boarding school contexts. Reliability is maintained through a systematic *audit trail* that documents all stages of the research, from initial data collection to the development of the final themes. This documentation allows for an independent evaluation of the study's logical

²⁹ Macan, "Time Management: Test of a Process Model."

³⁰ House, *Work Stress and Social Support*.

³¹ Karim et al., "Islamic Spiritual Leadership of Kyai in Fostering Santris' Entrepreneurial Spirit and Independence in Boarding School."

³² Habibi et al., "Investigating EFL Classroom Management in Pesantren: A Case Study."

³³ Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*.

and procedural coherence. Confirmability is upheld by ensuring that findings, interpretations, and conclusions are grounded in the data rather than in researcher bias; the iterative and cross-comparative nature of the analysis, combined with the triangulation procedures described above, provides a basis for tracing research conclusions back to the collected empirical material.

Results

The thematic analysis yielded three themes, which, together with a description of daily activity patterns as a foundation, answer the four research questions. The description of activity patterns answers the first question and serves as the empirical backdrop for the three interpretive themes: time management as “negotiated triage” within the rhythm of scheduled activities, answering the second question; the dormitory program as a disciplinary infrastructure that transforms imposed routines into internalized habits, answering the third question; and the musrifah–student relationship as a multi-layered support system with dual positions, addressing the fourth research question. The activity patterns are presented first, not as a separate theme, because their form is nearly uniform across all informants and they serve as the context for the analysis, rather than as standalone analytical findings.

Each theme was developed as a shared pattern of meaning and supported by verbatim illustrations from students (M1–M8) and Musrifah (Mus1–Mus8). In accordance with the triangulation design (see Methods), the narratives of both groups of informants were analyzed separately and in relation to one another to identify points of convergence and differences in perspective. Quotes were edited as necessary for readability, and pseudonyms were used to protect the informants’ identities.

Daily activity patterns as a shared context

The students’ accounts describe a day in the dormitory following a uniform routine. Classes and academic assignments coexist with mandatory dormitory programs, namely, ta’lim, tahfidz, language conversation practice, and group worship mentoring, as well as organizational commitments for those involved, and daily routines such as meals, rest, and maintaining the cleanliness of shared rooms. Wake-up times, worship, developmental programs, and study schedules are set externally and repeat daily. What distinguishes the students’ accounts is not this list of activities, which is nearly identical across all

informants, but rather the way they integrate them into a single, manageable day. It is this issue of integration that the following three themes address.

Theme 1: Time Management as Negotiated Triage

Students do not describe time management as neat scheduling but rather as a continuous process of triage among competing loyalties, in which commitments are constantly at risk of being sidelined. They actively raise and lower the priority of commitments when they conflict:

"If a deadline and a dorm program fall on the same night, I'll work on the assignment due tomorrow first, then catch up on the program material afterward. Over time, you get a feel for what can be postponed." (M3)

Students who have internalized the rules regarding what is permissible report feeling in control of their days, whereas the absence of such rules is described as feeling overwhelmed.

The structured rhythm of dorm life is experienced as an external scaffold, not merely as an obstacle. Because wake-up times, prayer times, programs, and study schedules are set externally, some students offload part of their self-regulation efforts onto the institution:

"At home, I have to force myself to start studying. Here, the schedule is already set for me: after Maghrib is study time, so I no longer have to argue with myself about it." (M6)

This shift in regulatory burden is described as a reduction in cognitive load. Students no longer expend effort deciding when to start studying, because that decision has been externalized to the institution.

The use of interstitial time complements this pattern. Students turn the gaps between fixed commitments, such as waiting for class or breaks before a program, into study time:

"The twenty minutes before the ta'lim session is when I reply to messages from the organization, so that when it's time to study, I won't be distracted by them." (M5)

At a subtle level, triage channels low-value tasks into the gaps to keep the study schedule on track. The strategy is not merely to fill free time, but to protect and learn by shifting light tasks into the gaps around it. In this pattern, digital tools emerge as secondary supports: useful as reminders, but subject to the institutional schedule that has already structured the day.

Theme 2: Residential programs as disciplinary infrastructure

Theme 1 examines how students navigate a structured rhythm; Theme 2 examines how that rhythm affects them over time. Both students and the dormitory supervisor

describe the dormitory program not as a collection of separate activities, but as an infrastructure that gradually transforms imposed routines into internalized habits. Discipline begins as an external obligation and, for many students, becomes a self-sustaining habit.

Students narrate this transition as a change within themselves, not in the rules:

"During the first month, my wake-up schedule and programs felt like I was constantly being monitored. By the second semester, I was waking up on my own before the bell rang. Somehow, the routine had become a part of me." (M2)

This account is developmental in nature: the same external structure was initially experienced as supervision and later as self-direction. Spiritual and character-building programs, namely, ta'lim, tahfidz, and worship mentoring, were repeatedly cited by the informants as anchors in this journey.

Musrifah's remarks reveal the tension inherent in this process. The mentors realize that the very structure that builds habits can result in mere compliance, rather than internalized responsibility, if enforced too rigidly:

"My job isn't just to make sure they show up. If I only focus on attendance, they'll obey me, but they won't grow. The hard part is knowing when to enforce the rules and when to let them manage themselves." (Mus4)

Musrifah describes the development of discipline as a gradual withdrawal of the framework, so that regulation shifts from the mentor to the student. The disciplinary infrastructure appears to function when a structured rhythm is combined with the mentor's judgment about when to relax it, thereby risking hollow compliance if that judgment is absent.

Theme 3: The mentor–student relationship as layered support with dual roles

The third theme addresses the relationship between the musrifah and the students. The structuring of support codes through four functions reveals that the musrifah provides all four types of support simultaneously from a dual position: both as an appointed supervisor and as an older sister living among the students she mentors.

Emotional support is the most prominent thread on both sides. Students turn to the musrifah when their burdens become personal:

"When I felt like crying because I was so exhausted, I knocked on my older sister's door, not the counseling room. She already knew what my week had been like." (M7)

Informational and instrumental support went hand in hand in the form of concrete academic assistance, namely, advice on managing study time as well as direct help with assignments and exam preparation:

"She sat with me and broke down one chapter of my thesis into small steps over the course of a week. Without that, I would have definitely been at a loss." (M1)

Appreciative feedback, that is, feedback that boosts students' sense of competence, emerges when Musrifah reflects students' progress in a way that recalibrates their self-assessment:

"She said I was actually keeping up better than I thought. Hearing that from someone who sees me day in and day out made me believe it." (M4)

Musrifah attributes their effectiveness to a closeness that formal services lack, while also describing the burden of bearing both authority and intimacy at the same time:

"Since I live on the same floor, I can tell when someone is struggling before they even say so. But this is tough. I'm their friend in the middle of the night and the person who checks in on them in the morning. I take on both roles." (Mus2)

It is this position that allows all four types of support to emerge from a single, trusted, and ever-present source, without the friction of referrals typical of separate services. However, this relationship is not without its costs. The mentors speak of the emotional burden, blurred boundaries, and the difficulty of dividing their attention among many students:

"There are nights when I have my own homework and three children are waiting outside my room. I want to help them all, but I'm also a student. There's no one to support the caregiver." (Mus6)

Musrifah's support is thus a form of relational work that, in turn, requires support for the musrifah herself.

When considered together, the three themes, namely, the triage of time within the rhythm of the dormitory (Theme 1), the infrastructure of discipline (Theme 2), and dual-role support (Theme 3), depict time management in the dormitory as an achievement distributed across three mutually supportive sites: the externally scheduled institutional rhythm, the framework calibrated by mentors, and mentoring that blends formal authority with domestic intimacy. The significance of these three patterns for theories of time management and social support is elaborated in the discussion section.

Table 2. Summary of Thematic Analysis

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes	Representative quotation	Source
Theme 1: Time Management as	Priority triage amid competing loyalties	Competing commitments; urgency-based priority ranking;	"If a deadline and a boarding program fall on the same night, I do the assignment due tomorrow first, then	M3

Negotiated Triage		deadline-driven displacement	catch up on the program material afterward. Over time, you can tell which one can wait."	
Theme 1: Time Management as Negotiated Triage	Institutional rhythm as an external scaffold	Cognitive offloading to the schedule; reduced decision fatigue; externally imposed structure experienced as support	"At home, I had to force myself to start studying. Here, the schedule decides for me: after Maghrib is study time, so I no longer argue with myself about it."	M6
Theme 1: Time management as negotiated triage	Utilization of interstitial time	Gap-filling strategy; displacement of low-value tasks; protecting high-value study blocks from organizational interruptions	"Twenty minutes before ta'lim is when I reply to organizational messages, so that when study time comes, I am not distracted by them."	M5
Theme 2: Boarding program as a disciplining infrastructure	Imposed routine → internalized habit	Habit formation trajectory; developmental shift from compliance to self-direction; internalization of rhythm	"In the first month, the wake-up schedule felt like constant supervision. By the second semester, I was waking up on my own before the bell. The routine somehow became a part of me."	M2
Theme 2: The Boarding Program as Disciplining Infrastructure	Gradual withdrawal of scaffolding	Musrifah calibration; graduated autonomy; balance between enforcement and self-regulation; distinction between compliance and growth	"My job isn't just to make sure they attend. If I only focus on attendance, they'll obey me, but they won't grow. The challenge is knowing when to enforce the rules and when to let them regulate themselves."	Mus4
Theme 2: The boarding program as a disciplinary framework	Spiritual and character program as an anchor for internalization	Ta'lim; tahfidz; communal worship mentoring; spiritual rhythm as an anchor of identity	Repeatedly cited across all student and Musrifah accounts as the primary anchor in the transition from an externally imposed routine to a self-sustaining habit.	M1–M8; Mus1–Mus8
Theme 3: The Musrifah–student relationship	Emotional support	Sharing personal burdens; the advantage of closeness; informal disclosure; non-	"When I was about to cry from exhaustion, I knocked on her door, not the counseling office. She	M7

as layered, dual-positioned support		formal accessibility.	already knew how my week had been."	
Theme 3: The Musrifah–Student Relationship as Layered, Dual-Positioned Support	Informational & instrumental support	Academic guidance; task breakdown; concrete assistance; collaborative study planning	"She sat with me and broke down one chapter of my thesis into small daily steps for the week. Without that, I would have been paralyzed."	M1
Theme 3: The Musrifah–Student Relationship as Layered, Dual-Positioned Support	Appraisal support	Self-efficacy recalibration; feedback on observed progress; credibility of the co-resident assessor	"She said I was actually keeping up better than I thought. Hearing that from someone who sees my daily life made me believe it."	M4
Theme 3: The Musrifah–Student Relationship as Layered, Dual-Positioned Support	Tension from dual roles & relational labor costs	Role conflict, blurred boundaries, a hybrid of authority and intimacy, risk of burnout, unacknowledged burden	"I'm her friend at midnight and the person who checks her attendance in the morning. I juggle both roles. There are nights when I have my own assignments and three students are waiting outside my door. No one mentors the mentor."	Mus2; Mus6
Note: Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke (2006). Quotations were translated from Indonesian; meaning was preserved throughout the translation. M = student participant; Mus = Musrifah participant. Source codes correspond to Table 1.				

Discussion

This study examines how female dormitory students at an Islamic university manage their time under dual pressures of academic and organizational demands, and how the dormitory program and the guidance provided by Musrifah shape these experiences. Data analysis yielded three main themes. First, time management unfolds as a negotiated triage within a scheduled rhythm. Second, the dormitory program functions as a disciplinary infrastructure that transforms routines into habits. Third, the musrifah–student relationship forms a layered support system with dual roles. Taken together, these findings indicate that time management in the dormitory is not an individual skill developed in a vacuum but rather a collective achievement. This achievement is shaped by three factors simultaneously: institutional rhythms, calibrated adjustments to the mentoring structure, and mentoring itself.

Interpretation of Findings: Regulatory Work Shifting to the Rhythm of Institutions

The interpretation of this data that must be rejected is the assumption that dormitory students are better at managing their time because they are more diligent in creating schedules. Students do not describe themselves as disciplined schedulers; rather, they describe a shift in regulatory control from the individual to the institutional rhythm. When the times for waking up, prayer, religious instruction, Quran memorization, and studying are externally determined, the cognitive effort required to decide when to study is taken over by the schedule, allowing students to allocate their regulatory capacity to completing their own assignments. Through Macan's framework,³⁴ This is the mechanism that produces a perception of control over time: control is achieved not by creating to-do lists, but by existing in an environment that prioritizes students' interests. Prioritization continues, but outside this framework, it serves only as a minor adjustment. The use of downtime is best understood as a strategy to reinforce work, not to replace it.

The second theme highlights the temporal dimension of this process. Discipline in the dormitory is not an immediate product of rules, but rather the result of following a specific trajectory as students internalize the imposed schedule. Interpreting development in this way is important because it dissolves the false dichotomy between coercion and autonomy that has long overshadowed writings about dormitories. However, Musrifah's voice complicates this picture. The issue lies in calibration: rigid enforcement results in presence without growth. At the same time, premature relaxation allows students to fall into the very disorganization that the rhythm is intended to prevent. Thus, discipline is co-produced by the structure and the mentors' judgment regarding when to relax it.

The third theme provides a relational mechanism that unifies the entire system. Musrifah provides emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support through the House's four typological functions from a single, trusted, and ever-present source. This concentration is not a matter of the mentor's personality but rather a consequence of her structural position.³⁵ Musrifah serves as both a formal supervisor and an older sister living under the same roof. It is this hybrid role that allows a student to knock on the mentor's door in the middle of the night, and it is this same role that generates the relational friction that the musrifah themselves acknowledge. When these three themes

³⁴ Macan, "Time Management: Test of a Process Model."

³⁵ House, *Work Stress and Social Support*.

are considered together, the dormitory does not “improve” time management; rather, it redistributes the work of time management across three sites: the institutional rhythm, gradual pedagogical withdrawal, and dual-role mentoring. The real costs of this system lie in the last site, and most of these costs go unacknowledged.

Reexamining Apologetic Narratives in Pesantren Studies

The findings of this study intersect with various bodies of literature, but Indonesian-language studies on Islamic boarding schools require careful reexamination. Lase,³⁶ Latif & Hafid,³⁷ Suresman et al.,³⁸ Kusuma,³⁹ Rondonuwu & Ratag,⁴⁰ Junaidin & Purwanti,⁴¹ position the boarding school as an environment that inherently shapes character, discipline, and independence. Although written with good intentions to protect the values of the pesantren institution from reductive interpretations, these studies leave room for three analytical corrections to this data.

First, apologetic studies treat “dormitory discipline” as a single, uniform, and positive outcome, without distinguishing between superficial compliance and internalized responsibility. The Musrifah’s explanations in this data show that this distinction is real: the same schedule can produce either of two outcomes, depending on whether the structure is phased out gradually or enforced until the end. The claim that boarding schools “build character” remains tentative; this assumption needs to be calibrated with the perspectives of those involved. Excluding such questions from the analysis constitutes a form of methodological apologetics: the institution is given credit without being required to demonstrate its mechanisms.

Second, apologetic studies tend to romanticize the figure of the companion. Whether the companion is a kiai, an ustaz, or a musrifah, they are portrayed as exemplary figures without considering the consequences of the relational work they must undertake. This data actually shows that the effectiveness of the female mentor is rooted in the hybrid

³⁶ Lase, “Perbedaan Karakteristik Mahasiswa Asrama Dengan Mahasiswa Luar Asrama Kampus 1 IAKN Tarutung.”

³⁷ Latif and Hafid, “Multicultural Attitudes in an Islamic Boarding School of South Sulawesi-Indonesia.”

³⁸ Suresman, Faqihuddin, and Abdullah, “From Sorogan to Digital Learning: A Systematic Literature Network Analysis of Pesantren Learning Models.”

³⁹ D Kusuma, “Hubungan Prestasi Akademik Mahasiswa Dengan Kualitas Lingkungan Sosial Di Asrama Mahasiswa Bima Kota Mataram Tahun 2024,” *Jurnal Diferensiasi* 1, no. 1 (2025): 24–34.

⁴⁰ T M Rondonuwu and L P Ratag, “Interaksi Sosial Dalam Mewujudkan Kasih Persaudaraan Antar Mahasiswa Asrama Perempuan Fakultas Teologi UKIT,” *Educatio Christi* 5, no. 2 (2024): 275–83, <https://doi.org/10.70796/educatio-christi.v5i2.143>.

⁴¹ Junaidin and S I Purwanti, “Hubungan Antara Spiritualitas Dengan Kebahagiaan Mahasiswa Asrama Universitas Teknologi Sumbawa,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling* 4, no. 2 (2022): 1–7.

nature of her position. That hybridity has consequences: blurred boundaries and overlapping roles, as the mentor's own academic duties take a back seat to the three students waiting outside her office. By failing to address these consequences, previous studies implicitly treat academic advisors as an unlimited resource, an assumption that cannot be sustained when the advisors' experiences are presented as data.

Third, the study treats the *pesantren* model as culturally unique, thus rendering it unnecessary to compare it with other boarding school models. This interpretation shields the *pesantren* from criticism but also isolates it from broader comparative discourse. The findings of this study, however, suggest the opposite. The mechanisms at work in *pesantren*, the transfer of regulatory burdens to the institution's rhythms, the relinquishment of support structures, and dual-positioned support, can be articulated within the theories of Macan, House, and Simón-Grábalos without losing the distinctiveness of their context. *Pesantren* and Islamic boarding schools are not exceptions to theories of time management and social support; rather, they are limiting cases that reveal the hidden assumptions within these theories, particularly the assumption that self-regulation is an individual endeavor against a neutral backdrop.

These findings extend those of Reardon et al. and Hodges et al. by specifying a relational mechanism that incorporates developmental weights. The interpretation⁴² of the *in loco parentis* principle remains general. In contrast, this data identifies specific configurations in which formal supervisors are also close to students and shoulder this burden at Indonesian Islamic universities. Meanwhile, in the time management literature by Khabbache et al.,⁴³ Masnan et al.,⁴⁴ García-Ros & Pérez-González,⁴⁵ and Limone et al., these findings are consistent with the association between time management and academic achievement but differ in their implicit conclusion that time management is carried out primarily through individual devices. In an institutionally structured context, the digital tools that dominate the literature are secondary in nature: they serve as reminders and are subject to institutional schedules. Consequently, time management

⁴² Hodges, Sheffield, and Ralph, "Staff and Boarders Perspectives of the Boarding Environment."

⁴³ Khabbache et al., "The Contribution of Subjective Wellbeing to the Improvement of the Academic Performance of University Students through Time Management as a Mediator Factor: A Structural Equation Modeling."

⁴⁴ Masnan et al., "The Role of Sense of Purpose, Time Management, Attendance, Sleep and Self-Esteem in Academic Performance among University Students in Malaysia."

⁴⁵ García-Ros and Pérez-González, "Spanish Version of the Time Management Behavior Questionnaire for University Students."

measurement instruments based on individual behavior have the potential to systematically overlook the contribution of environmental structures.

An examination of the research findings from Greene and Maggs' perspective,⁴⁶ , which documents the time trade-off between organizational activities and study time, offers an important qualification. Within the structured rhythm of dormitory life, this trade-off persists but is managed through triage and the protection of study time from distractions. This interpretation links the findings of Greene and Maggs.⁴⁷ with those of Guilmette et al.,⁴⁸ , who found that participation in extracurricular activities predicts adaptive goal regulation. Thus, the findings of this study point to an institutional condition that transforms extracurricular participation from a threat to academic achievement into a training ground for self-regulation. Analyses of informal networks have dominated the literature review to date: MacGeorge et al.,⁴⁹ ; Abomah,⁵⁰ ; Churchill & Freire,⁵¹ ; and Permata & Laili.⁵² These findings introduce a new category: formal-yet-domestic support that cannot be reduced to either professional guidance or peer support.

Theoretical Implications

Three theoretical implications follow from these findings. First, this study refines the construct of perceived time control. In structured institutional settings, control is primarily produced by externally designed rhythms, rather than by individual scheduling behaviors. The analytical focus of time management theory, therefore, needs to shift from individual tools, calendars, to-do lists, and time management scales to the institutional ecology where regulation is distributed. Consequently, models of student time

⁴⁶ Greene and Maggs, "Revisiting the Time Trade-off Hypothesis: Work, Organized Activities, and Academics during College."

⁴⁷ Greene and Maggs, "Revisiting the Time Trade-off Hypothesis: Work, Organized Activities, and Academics during College."

⁴⁸ M Guilmette et al., "Past and Present Participation in Extracurricular Activities Is Associated with Adaptive Self-Regulation of Goals, Academic Success, and Emotional Wellbeing among University Students," *Learning and Individual Differences* 73 (2019): 8–15, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2019.04.006>.

⁴⁹ MacGeorge, Samter, and Gillihan, "Academic Stress, Supportive Communication, and Health."

⁵⁰ P W Abomah, "The Influence of Social Support on the Academic Performance/Self-Efficacy of Students in Methodist University College Students, Ghana," *Texila International Journal of Public Health* 9, no. 3 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.21522/TIJPH.2013.09.03.Art023>.

⁵¹ A J Churchill and D S Freire, "A Longitudinal Examination of Types of Natural Mentor Support and College Adjustment among Underrepresented Students," *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 32, no. 3 (2024): 272–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2024.2334564>.

⁵² N G Permata and N Laili, "The Role of Social Support and Time Management on Academic Stress of Final Year Students Muhammadiyah University Sidoarjo," *[Nama Jurnal Belum Lengkap - Mohon Verifikasi]* 8, no. 1 (2025): 101–12.

management built on non-dormitory samples may underestimate the contribution of environmental structures and overestimate the contribution of individual planning.

Second, this study expands House's typology of social support by identifying dual-position support as a distinct configuration, in which formal authority and domestic intimacy converge in a single agent. This configuration is neither a variant of peer support nor a variant of professional counseling. It allows a single source to provide all four support functions without the referral friction typical of fragmented systems. Naming this configuration opens it to theoretical and comparative analysis, rather than merely to incidental features within a specific cultural context.

Third, these findings reframe "boarding school discipline" as an outcome co-produced by the structure and the mentors' calibrated considerations, rather than as an inherent characteristic of the schedule itself. This reframing dissolves the coercion–autonomy dichotomy that structures much of the scholarship on pesantren and boarding schools (cf. Manindjo et al., 2023, on the frustration of autonomy), while simultaneously repositioning mentors as active calibrators in students' developmental trajectories.

Practical Implications

These findings indicate that the intensity of the schedule alone is not a determining factor. What matters is whether the schedule is combined with a gradual phasing out of the support structure as students progress. Program designers must therefore treat the schedule as a pedagogical tool, not merely a policy. The transfer of responsibility from the institution to the students must be explicitly planned throughout the academic cycle; without such planning, a "structured residential program" will only yield temporary compliance. Criticisms of this nature are rarely raised in the apologetic literature regarding this type of residential model.

For Musrifah's training and the institution's human resources policies, holding dual roles has direct operational consequences. Musrifah needs to be equipped with two things: first, the competence to gauge when to enforce structure and when to relax it; second, the resilience to cope with the emotionally demanding nature of these dual roles. Institutions also need to establish support systems for mentors, including workload limits, a humane mentor-to-student ratio, peer supervision, and access to mental health services. A remark by one mentor that "no one mentors the mentors" is an operational finding, not merely a rhetorical statement. The sustainability of this boarding school model depends on the

institutional response to these signals; ignoring them will reproduce patterns of mentor burnout that, in apologetic literature, are glossed over as “dedication.”

For self-regulation learning interventions in Islamic universities, these findings support integrating time management instruction into dormitory routines rather than delivering it through standalone workshops. This approach is consistent with Simón-Grábalos et al., ⁵³ and offers a culturally embedded delivery pathway, thereby avoiding the low participation rates typical of extracurricular programs. For students juggling multiple roles, these findings suggest that organizational involvement should not be framed as a threat to academic time (cf. Greene & Maggs). Within the institution's structured rhythm and with support for those holding multiple roles, participation in the organization is better framed as an opportunity to practice and consolidate self-regulation skills.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Several limitations constrain the interpretations offered. First, this study is qualitative in nature, limited to a single location, a single gender, and 16 informants. This type of design allows for analytical transferability, not statistical generalization. The findings regarding the role of the *musrifah* in the early stages apply to women's dormitories at Indonesian Islamic universities; whether the role of the *musrif* in men's dormitories results in a similar dual-position mechanism is an empirical question that falls outside the scope of this study.

Second, the study design was cross-sectional. The developmental trajectory from the imposed schedule to internalized habits was inferred from students' retrospective accounts, while *Musrifah's* decision to adjust the schedule was reconstructed *ex post facto*. A longitudinal or diary-based design is needed to strengthen causal claims regarding the timing and mechanisms of internalization.

Third, reliance on self-reports opens the possibility of social desirability bias, particularly among *Musrifah*, whose institutional positions give them a stake in how the boarding school system is represented. Triangulation with observational data, time-use diaries, and records of academic achievement will strengthen the empirical basis for future studies.

⁵³ Simón-Grábalos et al., “Systematic Review of the Literature on Interventions to Improve Self-Regulation of Learning in First-Year University Students.”

Fourth, the findings regarding relational work and the sustainability of Musrifah's role are analytically significant but have not been empirically explored in this study. The interviews brought these phenomena to light; to measure their prevalence, the risk of burnout, and their structural determinants, more targeted follow-up studies are needed.

Future research will focus on four avenues. First, a longitudinal or diary-based design that tracks the transfer of regulatory tasks from the schedule to students over the course of an academic year, ideally accompanied by time-use logs. Second, a comparative design across male dormitories, between Islamic universities based on pesantren and non-pesantren models, and within secular dormitory contexts, to examine the boundary conditions of dual-position mechanisms. Third, an intervention study that operationalizes "calibrated withdrawal" as a trainable competency for female dormitory supervisors, accompanied by an evaluation of internalized discipline rather than superficial compliance. Fourth, a specialized study on the well-being, workload, and organizational support for female dormitory supervisors that treats relational work as a primary phenomenon, rather than merely as a background factor.

These four approaches shift the focus of study from a description of the dormitory as a generally "supportive" environment toward a specification of institutional-relational architecture, in which the dormitory actually produces the outcomes of time management, discipline, and well-being that have long been attributed to it.

Conclusion

This study examines how female dormitory students at an Islamic university in Yogyakarta manage their time while balancing academic and organizational roles, and how the dormitory program and the guidance provided by the musrifah shape their experience. A thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with 16 informants yielded three findings. First, time management functions as a negotiated triage within a scheduled institutional rhythm. Students do not view themselves as disciplined schedulers; they delegate the cognitive work of determining when to study to the institutional schedule, allowing them to devote their self-regulation to the substance of their assignments. Free time is used to safeguard high-value learning, not to replace individual planning.

Second, the dormitory program functions as a disciplinary infrastructure that gradually transforms imposed routines into internalized habits. This trajectory depends on the timing of withdrawal, calibrated by the musrifah: rigid enforcement results in

compliance without growth, while withdrawal that occurs too early allows students to fall into disorganization. Discipline is co-produced by the structure and the mentors' relational considerations. Third, the relationship between the *musrifah* and the students forms a multi-layered support system with dual roles. As both a formal supervisor and an older sister living under the same roof, the *musrifah* provides emotional, informational, and instrumental support, as well as guidance, all from a single trusted and ever-present source. This arrangement minimizes referral friction but results in a heavy relational workload that is not institutionally recognized.

These three findings reframe the effectiveness of boarding schools: time management is a distributed achievement, shaped by the institution's rhythm, calibrated withdrawal, and dual-role mentoring, rather than an individual skill practiced in a neutral setting. In practical terms, these findings suggest that boarding school programs should treat schedules as a pedagogical tool, equip students with calibration skills, and build support systems for mentors.

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