

Kitab Kuning-Based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teaching Methods at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awwaliyah Outside Pesantren

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ABSTRACT

The study of *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) in *madrasah diniyah* is an integral part of the Islamic boarding school curriculum implemented in almost all *pesantren* in Indonesia as one of their distinctive characteristics. This is largely due to the fact that many founders or heads of *madrasah diniyah* are graduates of Islamic boarding schools. Consequently, the methods employed in teaching *kitab kuning* may have distinctive characteristics that vary from one institution to another. This study aims to analyze the methods used in teaching *kitab kuning* at a *madrasah diniyah* located outside a traditional Islamic boarding school. Specifically, this study seeks to identify the methods used to implement Islamic Religious Education (PAI) based on *kitab kuning*, examine the implementation of the learning process, and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting its implementation. Data were collected through observations, structured interviews, and an analysis of the *madrasah diniyah* curriculum documents. The findings indicate that PAI learning based on *kitab kuning* is not limited to theoretical instruction but is also realized through direct practical activities, allowing students to gain a more comprehensive and meaningful learning experience. This learning process is supported by a combination of classical, traditional, and contextual learning methods, integrated with practical activities relevant to the materials being studied. Supporting factors include the *ustadz*'s competence, the availability of *kitab kuning*, parental support, and facilities for practical learning activities. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include limited learning time, differences in students' abilities to read *kitab kuning*, and the lack of interest among some students. Thus, using varied or mixed learning methods in PAI based on *kitab kuning* at *madrasah diniyah* outside traditional Islamic boarding schools plays an important role in improving students' understanding and religious experiences while also contributing to character development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Madrasah Diniyah is a non-formal educational institution in Indonesia officially recognized by the government.²⁷ *Madrasah Diniyah* focuses primarily on religious Education based on various *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) written by prominent Muslim scholars from around the world, such as *Mabādi' al-Fiqhiyyah*, *Sulam al-Safīnah*, and *Sulam al-Taufīq*, written by al-'Allāmah al-Shaykh Salim bin Abdullah bin Sumair al-Hadrami al-Shafi'i; *al-Ajrumiyyah*, written by Abu Abdillah Sidi Muhammad bin Dawud al-Sanhaji; *Sulam al-Munājah*, *Kashf al-Sajā*, *'Uqūd al-Lujjayn*, *Fath al-Mujīb*, *Sharh al-Ajrumiyyah*,²⁰ and *al-Ibriz*, written by Shaykh Imam Nawawi al-Bantani;²³ well as *al-Hikam*, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*, and *Minhāj al-'Ābidīn*, written by Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Ghazali, more popularly known as Imam al-Ghazali. Many other classical Islamic texts also serve as references and are taught at *Madrasah Diniyah Bustanul Ulūm* [1].

In terms of its implementation, *Madrasah Diniyah* education can generally be divided into two categories: *Madrasah Diniyah* within *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and *Madrasah Diniyah* outside *pesantren*. *Madrasah Diniyah* within a *pesantren* automatically follows the *pesantren*'s management system, led by a *kiai* and supported by several *ustadz* and *ustadzah*. Meanwhile, *Madrasah Diniyah* outside *pesantren* is generally managed by an *ustadz* or *ustadzah* who is an alumnus of a *pesantren*. Each institution naturally has its own learning system, teaching methods, and curriculum. Whether explicitly recognized or not, *Madrasah Diniyah* outside *pesantren* can be regarded as a product of the *pesantren* educational tradition,³⁷ whose existence remains closely connected to the *pesantren* system that has contributed significantly to the development of Islamic Education in Indonesia. At *Madrasah Diniyah*, students learn several classical Islamic texts according to their age, abilities, and educational level, covering various fields of Islamic knowledge, including *Nahw*, *Sharf*, *Hadith*, *Akhlaq*, *Tawhid*, *Fiqh*, *I'āl*, and *Sirah al-Nabawīyyah* [2].

Education functions effectively when learning activities and the curriculum work in harmony, and when the objectives and direction of learning serve as strong mechanisms for shaping and transforming students' attitudes and behavior, including their speech, actions, conduct, and individual characteristics, in accordance with Islamic teachings. *Madrasah Diniyah* is divided into several levels by grade or educational stage, generally corresponding to levels in formal Education, although some *Madrasah Diniyah* institutions classify students by individual ability. These levels include: (1) *Awwaliyah* Level, which is the lowest level and is intended for beginners who study introductory classical texts such as *Matn al-Ajrumiyyah*, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, *Khulāsāt al-Nūr al-Yaqīn*, *Mabādi' al-Fiqhiyyah*, *Sulam al-Safīnah*, and *Aqīdat al-'Awām*, among others. Students at this level are generally children attending elementary school (SD/MI), approximately 7–9 years of age; (2) *Wustā* Level, which is the intermediate level. At this stage, students study texts that are more advanced than those taught at the introductory level, such as *Imrithi*, *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī*, and *Fath al-Qarīb*. Students at this level are generally children of junior secondary school age (SMP/MTs), approximately 9–12 years old; and (3) *Ulyā* Level,

which represents the highest level of *Madrasah Diniyah* education. Students at this level are generally at the senior secondary school level (SMA/MA), approximately 12–15 years of age, and may even include students pursuing undergraduate Education. At the *Ulyā* level, the subjects¹⁷ differ because the texts studied are more advanced and complex. Examples include *Kitab Fath al-Muʿīn*, *Kitab al-Hikam*, *Kitab Minhāj al-ʿĀbidīn*, *Kitab Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, and *Kitab Ihyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, among others [3].

Similar to formal educational institutions at the elementary, junior secondary, and senior secondary levels, *Madrasah Diniyah* also receives particular¹⁸ attention from the government through various forms of financial assistance, including the Regional School Operational Assistance Fund (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah Daerah—BOSDA*), to support the effective and continuous operation of these institutions. This assistance is also referred to as *Bantuan Penyelenggaraan Diniyah dan Guru Swasta* (BPDGS) and is incorporated into the *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah* (RPJMD). Although the amount and allocation of such funding are not equivalent to the School Operational Assistance (BOS) provided to formal schools, the assistance is intended to enable *Madrasah Diniyah* to operate effectively and to maximize its contribution to religious Education for its students. Through this support, students are expected to learn, understand, and practice religious teachings comprehensively in their daily lives, including in their personal, social, religious, national, and civic contexts. *Madrasah Diniyah* institutions¹⁶ eligible to receive BOSDA funding must have obtained an operational permit from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and conducted teaching and learning activities for at least two years. Teaching and learning processes and schedules at *Madrasah Diniyah* are not necessarily the same across institutions, as they are adapted to each institution's circumstances and conditions and determined according to its respective policies. This variation occurs because no standardized government regulation yet governs the duration and scheduling of learning activities at *Madrasah Diniyah*, whether²⁹ within or outside the *pesantren* environment [4].

Within the tradition of Islamic Education in Indonesia, particularly in educational institutions that are closely associated with the traditions of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), *kitab kuning* or *kitab turāth* (classical Islamic texts) constitutes one of the important sources of Islamic learning with significant historical value in the development of Education. *Kitab kuning* or *kitab turāth* not only contains various disciplines of Islamic knowledge but also represents the intellectual heritage of the *salaf* scholars that has been transmitted from one generation to another. Learning based on *kitab kuning* or *kitab turāth* can help *santri* gain a more comprehensive, broader, and deeper understanding of Islamic scholarly sources while simultaneously enabling them⁸ understand the intellectual perspectives and scholarly traditions of the *salaf* scholars (*Pendidikan Islam di Pesantren Antara Tradisi dan Modernisasi* | Budiyanto | *Al-Madrasah: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, n.d., p. 3).

Nevertheless, implementing *kitab kuning*-based learning at *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah* outside the *pesantren* environment presents its own uniqueness and challenges. Unlike *madrasah diniyah* within *pesantren*, which generally have a comprehensive religious educational environment, *madrasah diniyah* outside *pesantren* commonly face

limitations in learning time, teaching resources, facilities and infrastructure, as well as the diverse and complex backgrounds and abilities of their *santri*. These conditions require *ustadz* to carefully select, adapt, and implement appropriate learning methods based on *santri* characteristics, so the materials in *kitab kuning* can be understood accurately and effectively and subsequently applied in everyday life [5]. ²⁵

Learning methods are an important component of the success of the teaching and learning process. Appropriate method selection can assist *ustadz* in delivering learning material⁴² effectively, systematically, attractively, and in ways that are easily understood by *santri*. In *kitab kuning* learning, methods such as *bandongan*, *sorogan*, memorization, lectures, question-and-answer sessions, discussions, practical activities, and other methods developed according to the needs of *santri* can be implemented flexibly. The use of these methods needs to take into account the developmental level and abilities of students at *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah*, who are generally still at the elementary education stage. *Madrasah diniyah* within *pesantren* that are integrated with formal Education generally adjust their learning systems to those of the formal educational institution. In contrast, *madrasah diniyah* that are not integrated with formal Education tend to adapt their learning processes to the individual abilities of *santri*, particularly in their mastery of *kitab kuning* [6].

Beyond mastering the learning materials, *ustadz* are also expected to create an active, participatory, and enjoyable learning environment. *Kitab kuning* learning that relies solely on one-way delivery of materials may cause *santri* to experience difficulties in understanding the texts, particularly when they have not yet developed adequate Arabic language skills. Therefore, the creativity and ³⁵ovation of *ustadz* in combining various learning methods are essential to ensure that PAI (*Pendidikan Agama Islam* or Islamic Religious Education) learning based on *kitab kuning* is not merely oriented toward the ability to read and understand texts but also contributes to instilling Islamic values in the daily lives of *santri* [7].

Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah located outside the *pesantren* environment generally has a less structured educational system and diverse social and cultural characteristics. *Santri* commonly come from different family and community backgrounds, resulting in varying levels of religious knowledge and learning abilities. This condition makes learning methods an important and interesting aspect to investigate, particularly with regard to how *ustadz* plan, implement, and evaluate PAI learning based on *kitab kuning* under such diverse educational circumstances [8].

Based on the foregoing discussion, Islamic Religious Education learning based on *kitab kuning* at *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah* outside the *pesantren* environment represents an important and unique educational phenomenon that warrants investigation. Examining the learning methods employed can³⁶ provide an overview of the strategies used by *ustadz* to deliver *kitab kuning* materials, the factors that support and hinder the learning process, and the efforts undertaken to improve learning effectiveness. Therefore, research entitled “Learning Methods for Islamic Religious Education Based on *Kitab Kuning* at *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah* Outside *Pesantren*” is important to develop a deeper

understanding of religious learning based on *kitab kuning* within educational environments outside the *pesantren* system [9].

Although²⁸ *Madrasah Diniyah* is a non-formal educational institution, its existence is highly needed by the wider community, particularly Muslim communities, as a means of acquiring Islamic knowledge. At *Madrasah Diniyah*, students or *santri* are taught, educated, and guided in Islamic knowledge and teachings as effectively as possible so that they are able to understand, internalize, and practice Islamic teachings comprehensively. Learning at *Madrasah Diniyah* differs from learning in formal schools in terms of subjects, learning duration, instructional activities, and learning systems. Likewise, the attributes and dress codes of *Madrasah Diniyah* vary across institutions. Some require uniforms similar to those worn in formal schools, while others allow students to wear regular clothing, although some institutions have also adopted uniforms. However, the success of an educational institution in educating its *santri* is not determined by uniforms or expensive educational costs but rather by three fundamental competencies: attitudes, knowledge, and the application of knowledge [10].

Madrasah Diniyah is expected to continuously improve its learning processes by aligning them with the vision and mission of the *Madrasah Diniyah* or *pesantren*. Thus, the role of non-formal Education, particularly *Madrasah Diniyah*, is expected to be strengthened in order to foster the spiritual development of *santri* as a complement and balance to their formal Education. Through the integration of these two domains of knowledge—religious knowledge and general knowledge—*santri* or students are expected to develop exemplary morals, character, ethical values, knowledge, and intellectual abilities. They are also expected to respond to and confront the various challenges of an increasingly modern and rapidly developing era. Learning methods and systems should be properly organized, and all components within the educational system should be optimally managed so that an intelligent, high-achieving generation can emerge, equipped with strong mental resilience and noble character. Most importantly, *santri* should be able to practice religious teachings correctly and appropriately in their daily lives [11].

2. METHOD⁵

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a field research design. Data were collected directly from the institution through in-depth, on-site interviews to obtain information and explore data relevant to the research objectives. This study used a qualitative approach, meaning it did not rely on numerical calculations but presented findings in descriptive form [12].

Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting to describe and understand phenomena holistically through various methods. Accordingly, qualitative research views reality as context-dependent, multidimensional, and closely tied to subjects' perspectives and social environment. This study employed a phenomenological approach to understand and interpret the experiences of *santri* as they were directly experienced and practiced within the institutional environment. This approach places lived experience at the center of the analysis; therefore, the research does not merely examine what occurs but also explores how such experiences are perceived, interpreted, and integrated into the participants'

overall understanding. Accordingly, the focus of the study was directed toward the process of *kitab kuning* learning and how the knowledge acquired could subsequently be applied in student's daily lives.

Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly examine the process of *kitab kuning* learning in the classroom. Interviews were conducted with the head of the *madrasah*, *ustadz/ustadzah*, and *santri* to identify the learning methods, strategies, and challenges encountered during the learning process. Documentation included lesson schedules, curricula, textbooks or *kitab* used in instruction, attendance list, photographs of learning activities, and other relevant educational documents. Data were analyzed through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The primary objective of this approach was to provide readers with an in-depth understanding of the realities, problem dynamics, and factual conditions encountered in the field [13]

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Learning at Madrasah Takmiliyah Awwaliyah Outside the Pesantren

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning activities based on *kitab kuning* at *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah* outside the *pesantren* environment constitute a form of religious Education aimed at providing *santri* with a fundamental understanding of Islamic teachings. *Kitab kuning* is used as one of the primary learning resources because it contains various religious subjects and serves to instill Islamic values. These subjects include *fiqh*, *aqidah*, *akhlaq*, *tawhid*, the Qur'an, *hadith*, *tarikh*, and Arabic, which are taught by different *ustadz* [14].

Table 1. Curriculum of MDTA Bustanul Ulūm, Jembul Village, Academic Year 2025/2026

No	Subject	Arabic Language	Fiqh	Tawhid	Aqidah	Tarikh	Hadith	Tarikh
1	ARABIC LANGUAGE	SNM	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	FIQH	-	SAK	-	-	-	-	-
3	TAWHID	-	-	KK	-	-	-	-
4	TAHSIN AL-QURAN	-	-	-			PN	
5	AQIDAH		W		WL			
6	AKHLAQ		WL				WL	
7	HADITH							SY
8	TARIKH				SY			

Notes:

1. **SNM** : Siti Nurul Malikhah
2. **SAK** : Siti Ayu Khotijah
3. **KK** : Khusnul Khotimah
4. **PN** : Ponasih
5. **WL** : Wulyono
6. **SY** : Suyono

An interview with Mr. Wulyono, an *ustadz* who teaches *aqidah* and *akhlaq*, revealed that the learning process begins with the *ustadz*'s preparation, including preparing the materials to be taught and determining the learning methods to be employed. The *ustadz* adjusts the *kitab* materials according to the students' academic abilities. This is considered particularly important because *santri* at the *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah* level are generally still at the elementary stage of learning and therefore are not yet fully capable of independently reading and understanding Arabic texts contained in *kitab kuning* [15].

During the learning process, the *ustadz* serves as a source of information, the center of learning, an educator, and a mentor for the *santri*. The *ustadz* does not merely read the texts contained in *kitab kuning* but also elaborates on their meanings, explains the content using language that is easy for the students to understand, provides examples related to everyday life, and connects the material in the *kitab* with the students' daily experiences. Thus, *kitab kuning* learning does not stop at the ability to read the texts but is directed toward understanding and practicing the values of Islamic teachings.

This approach can be observed through direct practical activities related to materials contained in *kitab turāth*, particularly those concerning *fiqh*. Examples include demonstrations and practice of *tayammum* (dry ablution), the *janazah* prayer, *wudu* (ablution), and other forms of religious practice. Such activities enable *santri* to directly apply the knowledge they acquire from the *kitab*, thereby connecting theoretical understanding with practical religious experience (Interview, July 5, 2026).

Learning Methods Used

In the implementation of the learning process, *ustadz* are required to master various learning methods, which constitute one of the factors determining the success of the learning process. In PAI (Islamic Religious Education) learning based on *kitab kuning*, *ustadz* may employ several methods adapted to the learning materials and the characteristics of the *santri*. These methods combine several approaches, including the following [16].

1. Bandongan Method

Based on an interview with Mr. Wulyono, the *bandongan* method is one of the most widely used methods in *pesantren* and *madrasah diniyah*, both within and outside the *pesantren* environment. The *bandongan* method is implemented by having the *ustadz* read the text of the *kitab kuning*, translate it, and explain its meaning, while the *santri* listen, pay attention, and take notes on the explanations provided. This method is considered effective when the *ustadz* needs to deliver learning materials to *santri* as a whole. It can be applied at the *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah*, *Wustha*, and *Ulyā* levels [17].

The *bandongan* method needs to be accompanied by simple and accessible explanations so that *santri* can understand the meaning and content of the *kitab*. The *ustadz* provides concrete examples closely related to everyday life, making the learning materials less difficult to understand and internalize (Interview, July 5, 2026).

2. Sorogan Method

According to an interview with Mr. Wulyono, one of the *ustadz* at *Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awwaliyah Bustanul Ulūm*, the *sorogan* method is another traditional learning method that continues to be maintained in *pesantren* and *madrasah diniyah*, both within and outside the *pesantren* environment. This method is conducted individually. *Santri* are given the opportunity to read the *kitab text* directly in front of the *ustadz*. The *ustadz* listens carefully, observes the reading, corrects errors, and provides clarification when there are mistakes in reading or understanding the learning materials.

This method has particular advantages because it enables the *ustadz* to identify the individual abilities of each *santri*. In addition to developing their ability to read *kitab kuning*, the *sorogan* method is also considered effective in increasing students' confidence, strengthening their psychological readiness, and developing their sense of responsibility in the learning process (Interview, July 5, 2026).

3. Lecture Method

Based on an interview with Mr. Wulyono, the lecture method is used to provide explanations and elaborations concerning the materials contained in the *kitab*. The *ustadz* presents the material systematically and sequentially using language appropriate to the level of understanding of the *santri*. The lecture method is considered more effective when it is not implemented monotonously [18].

Therefore, the *ustadz* combines the lecture method with question-and-answer sessions, provides concrete examples, incorporates Islamic stories or narratives, and conducts simple activities involving the *santri*. Through this approach, *santri* are less likely to experience boredom or fatigue during the learning process (Interview, July 5, 2026).

4. Question-and-Answer Method

According to an interview with Mrs. Siti Nurul Malikah, the question-and-answer method is used to determine the level of *santri*'s understanding of the materials that have been read and explained by the *ustadz*. The *ustadz* may ask questions after explaining the learning materials, and *santri* are given opportunities to provide answers or ask questions when they have not yet understood the material being presented.

This method also encourages two-way interaction between the *ustadz* and *santri*. Consequently, *santri* do not merely act as passive listeners but actively participate in the learning activities (Interview, July 6, 2026).

5. Memorization Method

According to an interview with Mrs. Siti Nurul Malikah, the memorization method is considered highly important in religious Education, particularly for certain subjects and texts such as the Qur'an, *hadith*, *nahwu*, and others. Memorization is also important for materials that require mastery of specific texts, such as prayers (*doa*), Arabic vocabulary, and basic Arabic grammatical rules [19].

Memorization helps *santri* retain learning materials over a longer period. However, memorization should not be limited to memorizing texts. It should also be accompanied by

an understanding of their meanings, practical implementation, and implications in daily life (Interview, July 6, 2026).

6. Practical Method

According to an interview with Mrs. Siti Ayu Khotijah, one of the *ustadzah* at *Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Awwaliyah Bustanul Ulūm*, the practical method is no less important than the other learning methods because it emphasizes students' direct understanding of the learning materials through actual practice rather than theory alone. This approach enables *santri* to understand the materials more concretely and makes the learning experience easier to remember [20].

The practical method begins by preparing the tools and materials required for the subject being studied. Once all the necessary equipment is available, an inspection is conducted to ensure that the tools are in good condition and suitable for use. The equipment does not need to be sophisticated or expensive; simple materials available within the educational environment can also be used, provided that they enable *santri* to understand the practical activity effectively.

The practical activities are then conducted according to predetermined procedures or steps. Throughout the process, *santri* are not merely passive observers but are also required to take notes as part of the learning activity. They record their observations and practical results systematically. After completing all stages, the equipment and materials are cleaned and returned to their original locations. Finally, the data from the practical activities are analyzed to formulate conclusions that align with the objectives of the practical learning activity and the subject matter being taught (Interview, July 6, 2026).

Strategies Used by Ustadz to Improve Santri's Understanding

According to an interview with Mrs. Ponasih, learning *kitab kuning* at *madrasah diniyah* outside the *pesantren* environment requires *ustadz* to deal with *santri* who have diverse abilities and backgrounds, particularly because they continue to interact extensively with the broader social environment outside the *madrasah*. Therefore, *ustadz* need to employ varied learning strategies. One strategy that can be implemented is to explain the materials from the *kitab* using both Indonesian and the local language commonly used by *santri* in their daily lives, making the learning materials easier for them to understand [21].

Ustadz can also provide examples related to the students' everyday experiences. For example, when discussing *fiqh* topics concerning purification, prayer, funeral rites, and other relevant materials, *ustadz* do not merely explain the provisions contained in the *kitab* but also provide direct demonstrations and practical activities. This strategy enables *santri* to more easily connect the materials they learn with their daily lives. In addition, *ustadz* can repeat materials that *santri* have not yet fully understood, provide *kitab* reading exercises, ask questions directly, and assign simple learning tasks. Repetition is necessary to strengthen *santri*'s ability to understand *kitab kuning* texts, particularly when they are still at the basic learning stage (Interview, July 6, 2026).

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Learning

The implementation of PAI learning based on *kitab kuning* is influenced by various supporting and inhibiting factors.

According to an interview with Mrs. Khusnul Khotimah, several factors support and hinder the implementation of *kitab kuning* learning at *madrasah diniyah* outside the *pesantren* environment, particularly based on field observations at *Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awwaliyah Bustanul Ulūm*. These factors include the competence of *ustadz*, the availability of *kitab* and learning materials and equipment, parental encouragement, a conducive *madrasah* environment, and the intrinsic motivation of *santri*. *Ustadz* who possess good and accurate abilities to read and understand *kitab kuning* can convey the learning materials more effectively to *santri*.

Meanwhile, several inhibiting factors were also identified, including limited learning time, which is approximately from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.; differences in *santri*'s abilities and backgrounds; inadequate mastery of Arabic; limited learning facilities; and low learning interest among some *santri*. The latter may be caused by various factors, such as the perception that many of their peers no longer attend religious study sessions, fatigue after returning from school, and other reasons. Furthermore, because *Madrasah Diniyah* is located outside the *pesantren* environment, *santri* do not receive religious instruction throughout the day as is generally the case in *pesantren*.

To overcome these obstacles, *ustadz* need to develop innovations in the learning process. The use of varied learning methods, continuous motivation for *santri* and their parents, repetition of learning materials, direct practical activities, and communication with parents can serve as strategies for improving the effectiveness and success of the learning process (Interview, July 6, 2026).

This finding is consistent with the statement made by *Ustadz Suyono*, who emphasized that one of the most decisive supporting factors for *madrasah diniyah* outside the *pesantren* environment is parental support and attention toward their children. Parents who pay attention to their children's learning schedules will consistently encourage and remind them to attend religious study sessions when it is time to go to *madrasah diniyah* (Interview, July 6, 2026).

Similarly, Mrs. Siti Ayu Khotijah, one of the teachers at the *madrasah diniyah*, explained that one of the main inhibiting factors is the relatively short learning period, which is only approximately one hour. Therefore, the available time must be utilized as effectively and efficiently as possible. If learning activities are prolonged excessively, *santri* may become bored and eventually lose their motivation to attend religious study sessions on the following day. This differs from *madrasah diniyah* within *pesantren*, where learning time is generally longer and more flexible (Interview, July 6, 2026).

Effectiveness of PAI Learning Based on Kitab Kuning

According to an interview with Mr. Wulyono, PAI learning based on *kitab kuning* among *santri* at *Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awwaliyah* outside the *pesantren* environment can be considered effective when it produces improvements in students' attitudes, knowledge, and practical religious skills. Learning success should not be

measured solely by the *santri*'s ability to read the *kitab*, but also by their ability to understand the learning materials and apply them in everyday life. Through *kitab kuning*-based learning, *santri* are expected to develop a fundamental understanding of Islamic teachings accompanied by behaviors, attitudes, and moral conduct consistent with Islamic values. Therefore, learning effectiveness largely depends on the ability of *ustadz* to select learning methods and strategies that are appropriate to the conditions and characteristics of the *santri* within the institution [22].

Accordingly, the *bandongan*, *sorogan*, lecture, question-and-answer, memorization, and practical methods are highly relevant and adaptable and can be implemented in an integrated manner. No single method is consistently the most appropriate or effective for all learning materials. *Ustadz* need to adjust the learning method to the learning objectives, materials being taught, academic abilities of the *santri*, and the circumstances and conditions of *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah*. An accessible and varied approach can make *kitab kuning* learning easier to understand and more relevant for *santri* outside the *pesantren* environment, particularly the *santri* of *Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Awwaliyah Bustanul Ulūm*, Jembul, Jatirejo, Mojokerto [23].

Theoretical Review

From a historical perspective, and throughout its development, lesson delivery has not been as straightforward as it may appear. This is because, in practice, many educational perspectives have changed as they are no longer fully capable of meeting students' needs to absorb and understand lessons while also responding to the demands of an increasingly advanced and rapidly changing era. Nevertheless, not all previous perspectives or paradigms have been abandoned. Many traditional perspectives and paradigms continue to be properly maintained, preserved, and sustained, with their essential content retained and applied in the contemporary era. This context can be understood as resulting from several factors, as described in [24].

a. Changes in learning methods

Learning methods have changed. In the past, learning emphasized memorizing lessons and retaining religious texts, supported by strong discipline and a high level of individual faith. Through this approach, the objectives of Islamic Religious Education could be achieved and implemented properly.

b. Changes in patterns of thinking

There has also been a transformation in patterns of thinking. Previously, learners tended to adhere firmly to rules based on textual and contextual interpretations, sometimes treating them as absolute. This has gradually shifted toward a more contextual way of thinking, in which religious teachings serve as the primary reference while their values are understood and implemented appropriately and responsibly.

c. Changes in the learning approaches of *ustadz* and senior religious figures

Changes have also occurred in the approaches adopted by *ustadz* and senior religious figures. Previously, learning tended to emphasize producing ideas derived from the intellectual contributions of experts in Islamic Education. Now, greater emphasis is placed on specific approaches and systematic processes for discovering and establishing truth, thereby producing higher-quality knowledge and educational outcomes.

⁴
d. Development of new Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curricula

The development of new Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curricula has also become increasingly evident. Previously, curriculum formulation and design relied primarily on the ideas of Islamic scholars and educational thinkers. Today, curriculum development no longer depends solely on experts' ideas but also involves members of the educational community and relevant stakeholders, including education specialists, *ustadz*, *santri* or students, community members, administrative staff, and other related stakeholders. Their involvement aims to identify, examine, discover, and evaluate the objectives of Islamic Religious Education and to formulate strategies for achieving them.

The following are several functions of Education in the context of human life [25]:

a. Education as a process of transmitting cultural practices

Education functions as a means of transmitting or inheriting cultural practices from one generation to the next. Indonesia consists of thousands of islands and is characterized by considerable ethnic and linguistic diversity. Consequently, cultural traditions, customary practices, social rules, daily practices, recommendations, and prohibitions vary considerably across different communities. Such diversity cannot be avoided or denied.

These cultural elements are naturally transmitted to subsequent generations. Nevertheless, some shifts may occur because of technological advances and changing times. For example, agricultural practices once carried out manually—such as planting rice seedlings and harvesting rice by hand—have increasingly shifted toward modern agricultural machinery. Although not all communities have adopted such technology, this example demonstrates how cultural practices can change while certain elements of traditional knowledge and practices continue to be maintained.

b. Education as a process of individual formation

Education also functions as a process of individual formation. This process can be understood as a systematic and well-structured effort aimed at shaping the character and personality of *santri*. It is considered systematic because the educational process involves continuous stages, and structured because it is influenced by particular situations and conditions.

Personality formation has two primary targets. First, adults carry out personality formation for individuals who have not yet reached maturity. Second, personality formation occurs among adults through their own conscious efforts. The latter is called self-formation (*self-forming*). Both processes are natural and necessary.

A newborn baby does not yet possess a fully formed personality and does not have a particular personality pattern or character. The baby is an individual but has not yet

developed into a fully formed person. To develop into a mature personality, an individual requires guidance, training, and experience through interaction with the surrounding environment, particularly the educational environment.

c. Education as a process of preparing responsible citizens

Education also prepares individuals to become good citizens. Education as a means of preparing citizens can be understood as a planned activity designed to equip *santri* with the knowledge, attitudes, and abilities necessary to become responsible members of society and the state. The meaning of a “good” citizen is, of course, relative and depends on each country's national objectives, as different nations have different philosophies of life and value systems.

d. Education as a process of preparing a professional workforce

Education also prepares individuals to become professional workers. Education as preparation for employment refers to activities that guide *santri* in acquiring the basic competencies needed to enter the workforce. This preparation includes developing attitudes, knowledge, and occupational skills among prospective graduates.

This constitutes an important mission of Education because employment is a fundamental need in human life. Work sustains individuals and their families, enabling them to live independently rather than becoming dependent on, burdening, or disrupting others.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of the *kitab kuning*-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning methods implemented at *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah* outside the *pesantren* environment, it can be concluded that *kitab kuning*-based PAI learning is an important effort to provide *santri* with a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings. The learning process is not only aimed at improving students' ability to read and understand *kitab kuning*, but also at instilling Islamic values, moral character (*akhlaq*), and the practice of religious teachings in everyday life. Learning methods that can be applied in *madrasah diniyah* include *bandongan*, *sorogan*, lectures, question-and-answer sessions, memorization, and practical activities for particular learning materials. The use of these methods needs to be adapted to the learning materials, the abilities of the *santri*, and the conditions of *Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah* operating outside the *pesantren* environment. Combining several methods is essential to prevent the learning process from becoming monotonous and to facilitate *santri*'s understanding of the materials contained in the *kitab kuning* being studied.

The *ustadz* plays a crucial role in the success of the learning process. *Ustadz* are expected to explain *kitab kuning* materials using simple and accessible language, provide examples related to everyday life, reinforce learning through repetition, and create an active and enjoyable learning environment. In practice, various supporting and inhibiting factors influence the learning process. Supporting factors include the competence of the *ustadz*, the availability of learning facilities and infrastructure, the *santri*'s intrinsic

motivation, and parental support. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include limited learning time, differences in santri's abilities, limited proficiency in Arabic, and inadequate learning facilities.

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