

Implementation of Learning the Yellow Book Using the Classical Method (Halaqah) at the Anwarul Halimy Girl's Islamic Boarding School, Sesela, West Lombok Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the halaqah method in the teaching of classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning) and its influence on students' comprehension abilities at Pondok Pesantren Putri Anwarul Halimy in Lombok Barat. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings indicate that the halaqah method is conducted intensively and systematically, with 24 sessions held weekly and students grouped into three proficiency levels. The learning process involves text reading, grammatical explanation, makna gandul annotation, and interactive discussion. The halaqah method significantly enhances students' abilities to read unvowelled Arabic texts, understand classical Arabic structures, and interpret the content of classical Islamic books. Furthermore, halaqah contributes to character building, spiritual development, and the cultivation of discipline among students. However, a major challenge identified is the limited number of teachers, which affects the effectiveness of ability-based grouping and results in some students struggling in higher-level halaqah sessions. Thus, although the halaqah method remains relevant and effective in contemporary Islamic education, it requires sufficient instructional personnel to optimize the learning process of yellow book.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic religious education is a field of study that is inseparable from the history of education in Indonesia. One institution that oversees both fundamental and in-depth Islamic religious education is the Islamic boarding school (pesantren). Initially, Islamic boarding schools were institutions for Islamic

education and teaching, developed by a kyai (Islamic cleric) with a deep understanding of Islam. (Marwan Sarijdo: 1982).

As an educational institution, Islamic boarding schools possess distinctive characteristics and scholarly traditions that distinguish them from other educational institutions. (Andik Wahyum: 2014). One of the distinctive characteristics of Islamic boarding schools is their curriculum, which focuses on Islamic religious sciences, such as the text of the Quran, grammar, interpretation, and others. This learning typically utilizes classical literature, characterized by: 1) Arabic language; 2) the absence of punctuation or lines, even periods or commas. (Muhaimin: 1993) This literacy is what has become known as the "yellow book" or "gundul book." "Kitab kuning" or "kitab gundul" is a term used in Islamic boarding schools to refer to classic or traditional books on Islamic studies studied there. (Bruinessen: 1995). Based on historical facts, kitab kuning serves as a reference and curriculum in the educational system at Islamic boarding schools. (Munawwarah: 2001).

The use of kitab gundul has been practiced since the 16th century (Muhammad Thariqussu'ud: 2012). This makes studying kitab kuning a crucial part of the educational process at Islamic boarding schools. Considering the urgency of studying kitab kuning in Islamic boarding schools, the implementation of appropriate teaching methods is crucial.

The Anwarul Halimy Islamic boarding school for girls teaches kitab kuning using the halaqah method. Historically, this halaqah method is a classic method that has been used since the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when he taught Islam to his companions. (Syafiyurrahman, et al. Translated by Kathur Suhartdi, Sirah Nabawiyah: 2008) The word halaqah comes from the Arabic word halaqah, meaning circle. (Munawwir: 1997) In Indonesian, Hasan Alwi defines halaqah as a way of learning or teaching by sitting on a mat in a circle. (Hasan Alwi: KBBI)

Basically, the halaqah method involves a kyai (Islamic scholar) sitting on one of the mosque's pillars, surrounded by students in a circle (forming a halaqah). The kyai, or teacher, then delivers a lecture based on his or her area of expertise. (Ahmad Syalabi: 1964) Ibn Bathuthah reported that towards the end of 728 AH/1326 AD, he observed evening scholarly activities held at the Prophet's Mosque, where scholars and students formed halaqah (groups of scholars), complete with the Qur'an and other books as learning resources. (Azyumardi: 1994).

Based on the several opinions above, halaqah is a teaching and learning activity carried out by a teacher or kyai (Islamic scholar) who sits in front of his students while reading the material from the book. The students who participate in this learning sit in a semicircle and line up in rows. The kyai/ustadz always tries to read the contents of the book, word by word or sentence by sentence, then explains it in Arabic, Indonesian, or another language. According to Satria Hadi Lubis, the halaqah method is typically implemented by a certain number of students, typically forming a halaqah led by a kiyai (Islamic teacher), ustadz (Islamic teacher), or perhaps a senior student, to discuss or examine a predetermined issue. (Satria Hadi: 2014).

Based on the explanation above, the researcher wishes to conduct research on the implementation of the halaqah method in the teaching of yellow books at the Anwarul Halimy Islamic boarding school for girls and its impact on the students' comprehension of yellow books. The researcher was interested in conducting this research because, considering that in this era, many learning methods are available, the Anwarul Halimy Islamic boarding school still maintains the classical method it has used since its inception. Therefore, it is important to understand how the values of the halaqah method are implemented to maintain alignment with current developments in knowledge.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Type and Approach

This study used qualitative methods. In qualitative research, the researcher is directly and continuously involved in the research process, making the research interpretive in nature. Researchers are also required to understand the social and cultural context that can influence the research results (John Creswell, 2011). According to Strauss and Corbin, qualitative research does not rely on statistical

calculations or other figures, but rather on findings obtained through the researcher's analysis of data in the form of written, spoken, and behavioral accounts (Sugiyono, 2018). Therefore, humans are the primary data source, and the resulting data consists of words or statements that describe actual conditions.

The type of research used was descriptive qualitative. This research method was chosen based on the research objective, which is to describe the phenomena that occur during the research process by analyzing, recording, describing, and interpreting the ongoing conditions, then relating them to the variables studied (Mardalis, 2014). Through this study, the researchers sought to understand and assess the implementation of the halaqah method of learning at the Anwarul Halimy Sesela Islamic Boarding School for Girls in West Lombok Regency.

2.2 Time and Place of the Research

The research was conducted at the Anwarul Halimy Sesela Girls' Islamic Boarding School, West Lombok Regency. The study took place from July to November during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques / Research Procedures

Data collection was conducted through interviews, documentation, and direct observation at the Anwarul Halimy Sesela Girls' Islamic Boarding School, West Lombok Regency. The data collection techniques were as follows:

2.3.1 Interviews

An interview is a form of communication between two or more people to obtain necessary information (Deddy, 2006). Interview techniques are divided into two types: structured and unstructured (Ulber, 2010). Structured interviews are conducted using a complete guide of questions and answers (Sugiyono, 2018). Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, are conducted freely using general guidelines containing the main issues to be explored.

In this study, the researcher used unstructured interviews. This technique was chosen based on its flexibility, allowing researchers to adapt questions to the situation and conditions in the field. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain specific information from informants. Prior to conducting the interviews, researchers prepared a list of questions related to the research topic. If an informant was less open, researchers sought other informants to obtain more accurate data.

This study also utilized observation as a data collection technique. Observations were conducted by systematically observing and recording symptoms related to the research object (Cholid, 2006). The observation technique used was non-participant observation, meaning the researcher was not directly involved in the activities being observed (Muri Yusuf, 2014).

2.3.2 Documentation

The documentation method was used to supplement and strengthen data obtained through interviews and observations. This technique does not directly address the research subjects but instead utilizes various documents such as reports, case notes, books, meeting minutes, agendas, and other documents (Suharsimi, 2010). Documents can be written works, photographs, or drawings that record an event that has occurred (Sugiyono, 2012).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Overview of the Al-Halimy Girls' Islamic Boarding School

The caretakers at the Ridwan Anwarul Halimy Girls' Boarding School possess strong competencies in religious education and character development. These skills significantly support the female students' educational process, which is directed not only at mastering religious material but also at

developing attitudes, discipline, and independence. Ustazah Hj. Hikmah and the other caretakers possess profound Islamic insight and are skilled at implementing effective learning methods, thereby optimizing the students' potential.

In the context of Islamic boarding schools, caretakers function not only as educators but also as mentors who are closely involved in the students' lives. They provide ongoing attention, direction, and motivation, both in learning and in daily activities. Caretakers are actively involved in teaching the yellow books, developing morals, and training in practical skills relevant to the students' lives.

This role reflects the concept of ideal caregiving as described by experts, encompassing aspects of care, protection, education, and socialization. Through a comprehensive approach, the caretakers strive to shape the female students into knowledgeable, independent, well-mannered individuals who are ready to contribute to society.

The parenting style implemented at the Ridwan Anwarul Halimy Girls' Boarding School focuses on nurturing the students through love, motivation, and the instilling of religious values. Caretakers act as surrogate parents while the students are at the boarding school, and their duties include spiritual education, character development, enforcing discipline, and providing personal guidance.

The approach employed consists of several key aspects, namely:

3.1.1. Religious-Based Parenting

Religious-based parenting at the Islamic boarding school is evident in the systematic, in-depth, and continuous learning process of the yellow books. The caretakers and mudabbirah (leaders) serve not only as teachers but also as spiritual guides, ensuring each student understands the textual and contextual content of the books. Subjects such as tafsir (interpretation of the Islamic text), fiqh (jurisprudence), morals, and Sufism (Sufism) are discussed comprehensively so that the students can internalize Islamic values in their daily lives.

This approach makes studying the Islamic texts not merely an academic activity, but a process of moral and spiritual transformation. Female students are guided to connect the teachings they learn with everyday behavior, such as awareness of worship, politeness toward teachers, and social etiquette. Thus, religious parenting becomes the primary foundation for developing a knowledgeable, moral, and religious Muslim woman.

3.1.2. Character-Oriented Parenting

Parenting in Islamic boarding schools also focuses on character development, particularly that rooted in Islamic moral values. Honesty, simplicity, responsibility, and discipline are taught not only through the subject matter but primarily through the example of the caregivers. This role model is an effective educational method because female students can directly observe how these values are practiced in real life.

This role model-based approach fosters a positive culture that is embedded in daily life, such as habits of maintaining cleanliness, adhering to schedules, respecting friends and teachers, and avoiding actions inconsistent with Islamic boarding school values. An atmosphere of mutual respect and mutual reminders is a hallmark of life in the Islamic boarding school environment. Through this process, female students not only understand the concept of character theoretically, but also become accustomed to practicing it consistently.

3.1.3. Family-Friendly Approach

One of the main strengths of parenting in Islamic boarding schools is the use of a family-friendly approach. Caregivers, who live in the same neighborhood as the students, create a warm, close, and caring atmosphere. Daily interactions, whether through study, worship, or leisure activities, strengthen the emotional bond between the caregivers and the students.

The relationship established is not merely formal, like that of a teacher and student, but resembles that of a parent and child. The students feel valued, cared for, and treated with empathy. This approach makes the educational process more humane, making it easier for the students to accept guidance,

correction, and motivation from the caregivers. This closeness also helps the students develop self-confidence and emotional security, which are essential for their psychological growth.

3.1.4. Collaborative Parenting

Care is carried out collaboratively between caregivers and mudabbirah, whose roles complement each other. This collaboration allows each student to receive attention tailored to their individual needs and character. The Mudabbirah, who interact more intensively with the female students on a daily basis, provide important information to the supervisors so that the guidance provided is more focused and effective.

The collaborative approach is also realized through regular motivational and counseling sessions. Group discussions, religious studies, and experience-sharing sessions provide a space for the female students to express problems, receive guidance, and improve themselves. This approach allows the students' academic potential, morals, and life skills to develop in a more balanced manner.

3.1.5. Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are designed to support the holistic development of the female students. Programs such as religious discussions in various languages, Islamic competitions, and Islamic arts activities provide a space for the female students to express their academic abilities, creativity, and interpersonal skills.

Through these activities, the female students not only hone their rhetorical, leadership, and teamwork skills but also strengthen their Islamic identity. Extracurricular activities serve as a means of self-actualization, essential for the development of their personalities, enabling them to become creative, communicative, and competitive individuals, without abandoning the values of the Islamic boarding school.

3.1.6. Implementation of Punishments and Rewards

The punishment and reward system at Islamic boarding schools is implemented with the principle of education, not merely punishment. Reprimands are given to guide female students to recognize their mistakes and improve their behavior. For more serious violations, the boarding school applies strict discipline to maintain order and create a conducive learning environment.

Conversely, awards are given to female students who excel or demonstrate positive changes, whether in academics, discipline, or morals. These awards serve as a form of appreciation and motivation, encouraging female students to be more enthusiastic about improving themselves. The combination of educational punishment and motivating rewards helps create a balanced, fair, and constructive disciplinary culture.

3.2 Implementation and Impact of Classical Method (Halaqah) Learning of Yellow Books at Al-Halimy Girls' Islamic Boarding School

Research on learning yellow books using the halaqah method at Halimy Islamic Boarding School shows that the learning process is intensive and organized. Halaqah activities are held four times daily, with a different book being studied in each session. In one week, students participate in activities for six days, totaling 24 meetings. Lessons run from noon to 9:00 p.m., according to the Islamic boarding school's daily schedule.

Each halaqah (Islamic study group) is divided into three ability levels. The first level is for beginners, those who have just entered the Islamic boarding school in grade 1 of Islamic Junior High School (MTs) or Islamic Senior High School (MA), while subsequent levels are for students with more advanced abilities. This grouping helps educators tailor the methods and depth of the material presented.

Research shows that the learning process of the yellow book (kitab kuning) through the halaqah method follows a consistent pattern at each meeting. The activity begins with students sitting in a circle

around the kiai (religious teacher). The teacher reads the text slowly, then explains grammatical aspects, vocabulary, and content. At the same time, the students interpret the text and note important points.

Interaction in halaqah is two-way and very close, where the teacher not only delivers material but also provides spiritual guidance and character development for the students. The informal learning atmosphere, while maintaining ethical standards, makes students feel comfortable asking questions and discussing. This close interaction has been shown to enhance their understanding of classical texts.

Research data shows a significant improvement in students' abilities, particularly in reading Arabic texts without vowels, understanding classical Arabic sentence structure, and drawing conclusions about Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) from readings.

This progress is most evident in students who regularly attend halaqah (Islamic study groups) and actively engage in discussions. They also expressed that the halaqah method makes it easier for them to connect the text's content to real life, especially when the teacher includes relevant examples. Overall, this research confirms that the halaqah method is not only effective in conveying the material on the yellow books but also contributes to character development, spiritual strengthening, and improving students' ability to understand and apply the text's content in everyday life.

The implementation of yellow book learning using the classical halaqah method demonstrates the continuity of the Islamic boarding school educational tradition, which emphasizes a close relationship between teacher and student.

Research findings show that the learning process takes place through teachers presenting the material directly, then providing opportunities for students to ask questions throughout the activity. This interaction pattern reflects the main characteristics of halaqah (Islamic study groups), namely closeness, open dialogue, and direct guidance in understanding the text.

Pedagogically, the halaqah method creates a more communicative and personal learning environment. The intense relationship between teacher and students allows understanding of the yellow books to extend beyond the textual aspects to broader contexts. Students can readily request clarification on vocabulary, grammar and grammar structures, and the context of Islamic jurisprudence, tafsir, or balaghah (religious argument). This approach aligns with the principles of Islamic boarding school education, which positions the teacher as the primary guide, continuously guiding the internalization of knowledge.

The halaqah method has also proven to remain relevant in the modern era. Its distinctive features lie in its role model, emotional closeness, and flexible discussion space. Unlike the formal classroom model, which tends to be one-way, halaqah encourages two-way dialogue. Sitting in a circle in a halaqah also has symbolic significance: an egalitarian atmosphere while still respecting the teacher's scholarly authority.

In terms of effectiveness, learning the yellow books through halaqah can increase the active involvement of students. They not only receive explanations but also participate in interpreting the text through a question-and-answer process. The interactions that occur demonstrate that halaqah can deepen understanding while instilling important values such as politeness toward teachers, humility, and sincerity in learning.

Therefore, the results of this study confirm that the application of the halaqah method in learning the yellow books not only maintains Islamic boarding school traditions but also offers an effective, dialogical, and humanistic learning model. This method is worthy of being maintained and developed to meet the needs of contemporary Islamic education.

The results indicate that one of the main obstacles in implementing the yellow books learning using the halaqah method is the limited number of teachers. This condition results in a lack of flexibility in grouping students into halaqah levels. Some students who are not yet ready to attend a certain level of discussion must still attend the halaqah because there are no additional teachers available to open new groups. This situation makes it difficult for some students to pursue a higher level of understanding of the scriptures.

In the context of Islamic boarding school education, halaqah (Islamic circle) ideally groups students based on their mastery of the material, particularly their ability to read bare Arabic texts,

understand the structure of grammar and grammar, and analyze Islamic jurisprudence or tafsir (Islamic interpretation). A shortage of teachers hinders this ideal system, creating gaps in understanding among students within a halaqah.

Consequently, students who are not yet ready at a certain level tend to fall behind. They require repetition of the material and more intensive guidance, which is unavailable due to a shortage of teachers. According to Dhofier, the structure of Islamic boarding school education relies heavily on the role of the kiai (Islamic teacher) and ustaz (Islamic teachers) as centers of scholarly authority. Teachers function not only as transmitters of material but also as mentors who personally monitor the students' progress. A shortage of teachers means a reduction in this mentoring function. Because halaqah requires intensive interaction, a shortage of teachers reduces the effectiveness of this method.

Martin van Bruinessen also emphasized that successful comprehension of the yellow books is greatly influenced by the quality and availability of teachers capable of guiding students in reading and understanding classical texts step by step. This suggests that the number of teachers is directly proportional to the quality of yellow book teaching.

In a modern learning approach, Tomlinson explains the concept of differentiated instruction, namely learning that adapts to students' initial abilities and development. This principle has long been practiced in Islamic boarding schools through the halaqah (school) level system. However, a shortage of teachers hinders the implementation of this differentiation. When students with varying abilities are grouped together in one halaqah due to the lack of additional teachers, learning becomes less effective. This theory supports research findings that optimal learning occurs when grouping is based on ability, and this is only possible if teacher resources are sufficient.

Vygotsky stated that students can only understand new material if they are within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a condition where the material is not too difficult but challenging to understand with teacher assistance. If students are in a halaqah with material that is too high a level, they move outside their ZPD, making the learning process less effective.

A shortage of teachers forces unprepared students to attend advanced halaqah (Islamic study groups), thus depriving them of sufficient guidance to maintain their optimal development. Consequently, some students' mastery of the yellow books is delayed.

Based on research and theoretical analysis, it can be concluded that a shortage of teachers is a significant obstacle to implementing the halaqah method. This limitation results in student grouping, mismatching ability levels with the material, reduced personal interaction, and hampered deepening of the yellow books. Theoretical implications indicate that the halaqah model requires an adequate supply of teachers to implement mentoring, differentiated learning, and intense interaction, consistent with its original characteristics.

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the halaqah method for teaching yellow books at the Anwarul Halimy Islamic Boarding School for Girls is running well and remains highly effective. The halaqah method helps female students understand classical Arabic texts, read books without vowels, and understand their language structure and content. The close and dialogical learning environment makes it easier for students to ask questions, discuss, and understand the material. In addition to improving academic abilities, the halaqah method also shapes the students' character. Values such as discipline, respect for teachers, and good study habits are fostered through the example and parenting styles of the caretakers at the boarding school.

However, the research also found that the limited number of teachers is a major obstacle. Due to insufficient teachers, some students must join halaqahs at a higher level than their abilities. This makes it difficult for some students to follow the lessons. Overall, the halaqah method remains relevant and beneficial in Islamic boarding school education. To optimize learning outcomes, Islamic boarding schools need to increase the number of teachers so that halaqah sessions can be tailored to the students' abilities.

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