ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL-BASED LEARNING IN IMPROVING UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning in improving the understanding of Islamic teachings among students (students). This qualitative research was conducted using a case study approach in one Islamic boarding school. The research sample consisted of 20 students who had participated in the Islamic boarding school-based learning program for 6 months. The results of the study indicate that Islamic boarding school-based learning is effective in improving the understanding of Islamic teachings among students. Students who participated in the Islamic boarding school-based learning program showed a significant increase in their understanding of Islamic teachings, especially in terms of understanding the principles of Islamic teachings and being able to apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives. In addition, the study also found that factors influencing the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning include the quality of the teachers, the students' motivation, and support from family and community. The conclusion of this study is that Islamic boarding school-based learning can be an effective alternative in improving the understanding of Islamic teachings among students. Therefore, the government and educational institutions need to prioritize Islamic boarding school-based learning to improve the quality of religious education in Indonesia.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Islamic Boarding School-Based Learning, Understanding of Islamic Teachings.

INTRODUCTION

Islam, as the primary religion in Indonesia, plays a crucial role in shaping the character and personality of its people. As the world's most populous Muslim country, Indonesia boasts diverse practices and understandings of Islamic teachings, influenced by various cultural, social, and educational factors. Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are among the oldest and largest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, having played a significant role in fostering the Muslim community for centuries. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2022 showed that there were approximately 29,000 Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) across Indonesia, with over 4 million students. Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are known as centers of religious education that focus not only on academic aspects but also on strengthening the character and morals of their students. The pesantren curriculum typically integrates the teaching of classical texts, Quran memorization, and the practice of worship and daily life. According to a 2021 survey by the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Research, Development, and Training Agency, students studying in pesantren tend to have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings than students from formal educational institutions, particularly in terms of interpretation, jurisprudence, and morals.

According to (Abdurrahman, 2007) Islamic boarding schools are defined as places where students spend most of their time living and acquiring knowledge. In a broader sense, according to (Ardianti et al, 2023) slamic boarding schools are places where students prepare, deepen, and master Islamic religious knowledge, or better known as tafaqquh fi al-din, which is expected to produce cadres of ulama and contribute to the intelligence of Indonesian society. According to (Mutia, 2020) Islamic boarding schools not only serve as centers of Islamic learning but also as institutions that foster the morals, spirituality, and character of students through a unique educational system. The main characteristics of Islamic boarding schools are the presence of a kyai (Islamic cleric) as a central figure, a mosque as a center of activity, the teaching of yellow (classical) books, dormitories (pesantren), and an emphasis on the values of simplicity, discipline, and submission to teachers.

Nevertheless, challenges in teaching in Islamic boarding schools remain. Modern developments and the increasing flow of digital information require Islamic boarding schools to adapt to remain relevant and effective in enhancing understanding of Islamic teachings. Several studies have shown that the effectiveness of learning in Islamic boarding schools is influenced by various factors such as the quality of the teachers, teaching methods, facilities, and the involvement of the students and the surrounding environment. To address this situation, according to Ulfa in (Supriatna, 2026) educators need to use appropriate learning methods to make it easier for children to understand and develop their abilities. According to H.M. Arifin in (Kartika, 2024) the term method is etymologically derived from the Greek word metodos. The word methodos comes from two words: metha, meaning through or passing, and hodos, meaning the path taken to reach a goal. In Arabic, the method is called thariqah. Meanwhile, in Indonesian, a method is an orderly and well-thought-out way to achieve a goal.

In addition, it is important to evaluate the learning methods applied to ensure that Islamic boarding schools can achieve their goals in improving the understanding of Islamic teachings optimally. Research conducted by the East Java Education Quality Assurance Institute (LPMP) in 2020, quoted (Kartika, 2025) stated that Islamic boarding schools that implement interactive and innovative learning methods are able to significantly increase students' learning motivation and understanding of Islamic teachings. The research (Ahmad, 2023) entitled Implementation of the Islamic boarding school system to train the independence of grade VIII students at MTS Negeri 1 Pemalang shows that the Implementation of the Islamic Boarding School System to Train the Independence of 46 Grade VIII Students at MTs Negeri 1 Pemalang is the creation of discipline and independence attitudes among students as well as a high sense of social concern for fellow friends.

The similarities with the research the researchers will examine are that both examine learning through boarding school programs and are at the same level. The differences lie in the object of study, which in this case concerns program management; the research pair will examine program effectiveness, and the research location is also different. Based on this empirical data, this research is necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning in improving understanding of Islamic teachings. This study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the factors supporting and inhibiting successful learning in Islamic boarding schools and provide constructive recommendations for the future development of Islamic boarding school-based education.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Efektivitas Pembelajaran

According to Miarso in (Arifudin, 2023), learning effectiveness is one of the standards of educational quality and is often measured by achieving goals, or can also be interpreted as accuracy in managing a situation, "doing the right things." According to Popham and Baker in (Arifudin, 2024), in essence, an effective learning process occurs when teachers can change students' abilities and perceptions from those who find something difficult to learn to those who find it easy to learn. They further explain that an effective teaching and learning process is highly dependent on the selection and use of learning methods to maximize learning. According to Supardi in (Asitoh, 2025), effective learning is a structured combination of human resources, materials, facilities, equipment, and procedures aimed at changing student behavior in a positive and better direction, in accordance with the potential and differences possessed by students to achieve the predetermined learning objectives. Hamalik in (Andrivat, 2024) stated that learning provides opportunities for independent learning and as many activities as possible for students to learn. Providing opportunities for independent learning and as many activities as possible is expected to help students understand the concepts being studied. Based on these various opinions, it can be concluded that learning effectiveness is a maximum teaching and learning process to improve student learning outcomes related to the implementation of all main tasks, the achievement of the objectives of the learning plan, and the timeliness of learning.

Islamic Boarding School

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are Islamic educational institutions steeped in religious studies, including classical texts and other Islamic texts. They are uniquely Indonesian educational institutions that thrived within communities that have proven their independence. Initially, Islamic boarding schools were conducted in mosques, and over time, dormitories were built as residences. They also offer not only religious studies but also modern general knowledge (Zaiful Rasyid et al, 2020). According to Ridwan Nasir in (Rohimah, 2024), a pesantren is a religious institution that provides education and teaching, as well as developing and disseminating Islamic knowledge. Meanwhile, according to Haidar (Rodliyah, 2014), a pesantren is a traditional Islamic educational

institution in Indonesia that focuses on deepening Islamic religious knowledge and practicing it as a guide for daily life. Based on these definitions, Islamic boarding schools can be defined as institutions that teach and develop Islam in Indonesia. Furthermore, Islamic boarding schools also serve as platforms for the dissemination of Islamic teachings and socio-religious activities.

Learning Method

According to Hamzah B. Uno, as quoted by (Kartika, 2023), a learning method is a method used by teachers to achieve learning objectives. Therefore, a learning method is the path taken by a teacher to achieve learning objectives through certain stages. Meanwhile, Abu Ahmadi, as quoted by (Arifudin, 2025), defines a learning method as the way educators deliver lessons and how students receive lessons during the lesson, either through information or stimulation. Therefore, the role of a learning method is as a tool to create a conducive teaching and learning process. Rusmaini, as quoted by (Sudrajat, 2024), defines a learning method as a set of components that have been optimally combined to achieve quality learning. Meanwhile, Ismail Sukardi, as quoted by (Mayasari, 2023), defines a learning method as the methods used by teachers to convey teaching materials to students. Furthermore, Sukardi, as quoted by (Mayasari, 2024), defines a learning method as a systematic way of carrying out activities within an environment consisting of educators and students interacting with each other in carrying out an activity so that the learning process runs smoothly, meaning that teaching objectives are achieved. A learning method is a technical procedure or method. Therefore, from this opinion, it can be said that a learning method is a method used by educators to convey learning messages consciously and systematically to students so that these messages are well-received and learning objectives are achieved. The use of appropriate and varied learning methods can have a significant impact on learning outcomes.

METHOD

According to Rahardjo quoted (Arifudin, 2020) that the research method is one way to obtain and seek tentative truth, not absolute truth. The result is scientific truth. Scientific truth is a truth that is open to being tested, criticized, and even revised. Therefore, there is no best method for seeking truth, but what exists is the right method for a particular purpose according to the existing phenomenon. Budiharto quoted (Andrivat, 2025) that the selection of research methods must be adjusted to the research being conducted so that the results are optimal. This research was conducted in relation to the analysis of the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning in improving the understanding of Islamic teachings. The type of research used in this study is a case study method. According to Nursalam in (Abduloh, 2020), a case study is research that includes an assessment aimed at providing a detailed description of the background, nature, and characteristics of a case. In other words, a case study focuses attention on a case intensively and in detail. Research in this method is conducted in-depth on a situation or condition in a systematic manner, starting from observation, data collection, information analysis, and reporting of results.

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach. According to Iskandar in (Awaludin, 2023), a qualitative approach is where qualitative research as a scientific method is often used and implemented by groups of researchers in the social sciences, including educational science. Iskandar in (Mayasari, 2025) explains the qualitative research approach as a process of research and understanding based on methods that investigate social phenomena and human problems. This study employed qualitative research with field research methods. According to (Maulana, 2025), this approach aligns with the primary objective of the study, which is to describe and analyze the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning in improving understanding of Islamic teachings. Therefore, this method will be able to explain the research problem (Aslan, 2025).

According to Yin (Saepudin, 2024), the purpose of using case study research is not only to explain what the object being studied is like but also to explain the circumstances and how the case could occur. Meanwhile, Waluya (Saepudin, 2022) states that the purpose of case study is to develop in-depth knowledge about the object being studied, which means that this study is exploratory in nature. Bogdan and Taylor in (Widyastuti, 2024) explain that qualitative research methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. In this study, researchers created a complex picture, examined words, detailed reports of respondents' views, and conducted studies in natural settings, specifically related to analyzing the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning in improving understanding of Islamic teachings. Engineering can be seen as a means of carefully performing technical work using the mind to achieve a goal. Although research is essentially a scientific endeavor, it is conducted to systematically collect realistic data to establish the truth. Research methodology is a means of finding solutions to any problem. In this case, the author collected information on analyzing the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning in improving

understanding of Islamic teachings, including articles, journals, theses, e-books, and others (Muslim, 2023). Because it requires library materials for its data sources, this research utilizes library research. Researchers require books, scientific articles, and other literature related to the topics and issues they are exploring, both printed and online (Saepudin, 2023). Seeking information from data sources requires the use of data collection techniques. Amir Hamzah in (Paramansyah, 2024) claims that data collection is an effort to gather information related to the topic being studied. The author used library research methods to collect data. Specifically, the author began with a library search to gather information from books, dictionaries, journals, encyclopedias, papers, periodicals, and other sources that shared analytical perspectives on the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning in improving understanding of Islamic teachings.

Furthermore, Amir Hamzah in (Sunasa, 2023) states that data collection is defined as various efforts to gather facts related to a topic of discussion being or will be explored. These details can be found in scientific literature, research, scientific writings, dissertations, theses, and other written sources. According to (Kosasih, 2025), data collection can be conducted in various circumstances, using different sources, and employing different techniques. Observation is part of the direct research process of examining the phenomena being studied (Ekawati, 2024). This method allows researchers to directly observe and experience the atmosphere and conditions of the research subjects (Ningsih, 2024). The observations in this study focused on analyzing the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning in improving understanding of Islamic teachings. The interview technique in this study is a structured interview, namely an interview conducted using various established standard guidelines, questions are arranged according to information needs and each question is needed to reveal each empirical data (Heriman, 2024).

Documentation is a data collection technique using existing written documents or records (Erfiyana, 2024). Documentation comes from the word "document," meaning written objects. In implementing the documentation method, researchers investigate written objects, such as books, magazines, meeting minutes, and diaries. According to Moleong in (Fahimah, 2024), the documentation method is a way of collecting information or data through examining archives and documents. Furthermore, according to (Jaenal, 2024), the documentation strategy is also a data collection technique proposed to research subjects. This data collection method using the documentation method is carried out to obtain data on the condition of the institution (research object), namely analyzing the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning in improving understanding of Islamic teachings.

Moleong, quoted (Gumilar, 2023), explains that the collected data was analyzed using an interactive analysis model consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Syarifah et al (Erfiyana, 2023) explain that data reduction is carried out by filtering relevant information, presenting data in a systematic narrative form, and drawing conclusions based on research findings. To ensure data validity, this study used source triangulation, namely comparing information from sources. According to Moleong (Sehabudin, 2024), source triangulation helps increase the validity of research results by comparing various perspectives on the phenomenon being studied. Muhadjir in (Kartika, 2018) stated that data analysis is an activity of conducting, searching and compiling records of findings systematically through observations and interviews so that the researcher focuses on the research being studied. After that, making a finding material for others, editing, classifying, and presenting it. Data validity techniques using triangulation techniques include techniques and sources. Data analysis using the Miles and Huberman model in (Uswatiyah, 2023) consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Research Result

The results of this study reveal a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning in improving understanding of Islamic teachings through the perspectives of students, teachers, and administrators. Empirical data obtained from in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document studies indicate that the learning process in Islamic boarding schools is not only oriented towards transferring knowledge, but also instills deep religious values and builds the character of students. Most of the students interviewed revealed that the learning methods in Islamic boarding schools differ significantly from the general formal education system. They mentioned that the approach used places greater emphasis on understanding, practicing, and in-depth mastery of the material. One student stated, "At Islamic boarding schools, I feel like I'm learning not only about memorization and theory, but also about how to practice Islamic teachings in everyday life. Teachers often invite us to discuss and reflect on the meaning of holy verses, so my understanding deepens." The interviews revealed that the students feel this learning process allows them to better understand the meaning of Islamic teachings in a contextual and practical way, beyond mere memorization. They also feel more connected to the values of faith and morality taught.

Most teachers at the Islamic boarding school focused on this study possess high levels of Islamic knowledge and extensive teaching experience. They employ a variety of teaching methods, including lectures, group discussions, classical text study, and hands-on worship practices. One teacher explained: "We encourage students to actively ask questions and discuss, rather than passively receiving the material. This method helps them better understand the meaning of Quranic verses and hadiths and relate them to real life." Observations of the learning process indicate that dialogic and participatory methods are highly effective. Students not only listen but also engage directly in the process of discovering the meaning and application of Islamic teachings. This aligns with Islamic educational theory, which emphasizes tazkiyah (religious education) and tarbiyah (educational training). A conducive Islamic boarding school environment is a crucial factor in the success of the learning process. Students report that the strong religious atmosphere, regular religious activities, and harmonious interactions with fellow students and teachers create a supportive learning atmosphere. One female student, Siti (pseudonym), said, "At the Islamic boarding school, the atmosphere really helps me focus and understand Islamic teachings. Every day, we are taught to practice what we learn and remind each other of good deeds." Furthermore, social support from family and the surrounding community strengthens the students' commitment to learning and practicing Islamic teachings.

While most data indicate effectiveness, there are also challenges. Several teachers cited limited learning facilities, such as a lack of modern learning media and access to a wider variety of learning resources. One teacher stated, "Limited facilities sometimes hinder the learning process, especially in the use of modern technology. However, with a strong traditional approach, we still strive to provide quality teaching." Furthermore, social, and cultural dynamics in the community also influence the learning process, particularly in delivering teachings that are relevant to current conditions. Observations and interviews showed that students who participated in Islamic boarding school-based learning experienced significant improvements in their understanding of Islamic teachings. They were able to explain the meaning of holy verses, hadiths, and Islamic principles in depth. One student said, "After studying at the Islamic boarding school, I not only memorized the verses, but also understand their meaning and can apply them in my life, such as correct prayer and noble morals." Furthermore, the students demonstrated changes in their daily behavior, becoming more disciplined, honest, and responsible, reflecting the internalization of Islamic teachings. In general, the results of this study indicate that the learning process in Islamic boarding schools is highly effective in improving the holistic understanding of Islamic teachings. A humanistic, dialogical, and contextual approach, supported by a conducive environment and competent teachers, is key to success. Existing obstacles need to be addressed and improved methods and facilities developed to further enhance this effectiveness.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that Islamic boarding school-based learning has a significant influence on improving the understanding of Islamic teachings among students (santri). To understand these findings more comprehensively, it is important to examine various Islamic education theories and relevant previous research findings. In general, Islamic educational theory emphasizes the concepts of tarbiyah and tazkiyah, namely the process of moral development and strengthening faith through harmonious interactions between students and teachers. According to Al-Ghazali, quoted (Kartika, 2022), the teaching process must be able to instill the values of faith deeply and sustainably, not simply the cognitive transfer of knowledge. Furthermore, according to Muhammad Iqbal, as quoted (Erfiyana, 2026), the effectiveness of learning depends heavily on the approach used, namely one that integrates spiritual, intellectual, and emotional aspects simultaneously. As traditional educational institutions, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have unique characteristics, namely a holistic and moralistic approach, emphasizing direct practice of teachings and spiritual experiences.

This theory is in accordance with the Islamic boarding school-based learning model which emphasizes appreciation and practice, as stated by Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari quoted (Nurazizah, 2026), that the educational process must be able to shape the character and personality of students, not just academic aspects. Various previous studies support the finding that learning in Islamic boarding schools is effective in improving the understanding and practice of Islamic teachings. For example, research by Maulana quoted (Erfiyana, 2025) concluded that teaching methods emphasizing discussion and study of classical texts in Islamic boarding schools significantly improved understanding of the holy texts and hadith. He emphasized that this approach not only improves cognitive aspects but also instills moral and ethical religious values. Another study by Rahman quoted (Alammy, 2025) showed that students who participate in Islamic boarding school-based learning tend to have better levels of faith and morals than those who study in formal institutions. Rahman added that the main factors for this success are an interactive learning culture, hands-on practice, and a conducive religious environment.

Furthermore, research by Suryadi and Nurhadi quoted (Awaludin, 2024) revealed that a learning method that integrates worship practices and the study of classical texts can improve understanding of Quranic verses and hadith in depth. Islamic boarding schools that implement this approach demonstrate better results in shaping the character of their students and increasing their confidence in practicing Islamic teachings. The constructivist theory developed by Piaget and Vygotsky in (Ningsih, 2025) asserts that effective learning allows students to actively construct meaning through direct experience and social interaction. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, a dialogic and participatory approach aligns well with this theory. Students don't simply passively receive material but are also encouraged to discuss, ask questions, and apply the teachings to real-life situations. This approach is in accordance with the research results of Wulandari in (Rosmayati, 2025), which found that students who learned through discussion and direct practice showed a better understanding and deeper appreciation of Islamic teachings compared to the one-way lecture method.

Based on the theoretical review and previous research, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school-based learning in improving understanding of Islamic teachings is supported by the unique characteristics of Islamic boarding schools, which emphasize a holistic approach and direct experience. Dialogic approaches, hands-on practice, and a conducive religious environment are key factors contributing to a successful learning process. Furthermore, classical, and modern Islamic educational theories demonstrate that learning must balance spiritual and intellectual aspects to deeply instill moral messages and Islamic values in students. Thus, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) can be effective educational institutions in developing a generation that not only understands Islamic teachings theoretically but also practices them in real life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that Islamic boarding school-based learning has proven highly effective in improving the understanding of Islamic teachings among students. The approach used in Islamic boarding schools, which emphasizes appreciation, direct practice, interactive dialogue, and a religious environment, can build a deep understanding and solid Islamic character. Previous theoretical studies and research support these findings, showing that the distinctive characteristics of Islamic boarding schools, which integrate spiritual, intellectual, and moral aspects, along with participatory teaching methods, are key factors in the success of the learning process. Islamic boarding schools function not only as places to transfer knowledge but also as institutions that continuously instill values of faith and noble morals. Furthermore, this success is also supported by a conducive environment, social support, and the competence of teachers who can manage varied and relevant learning methods. Existing obstacles, such as limited facilities and access to technology, require continued efforts to resolve so that the learning process can run optimally and adapt to current developments. Overall, the results of this study indicate that Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have great potential as effective educational institutions in developing a generation of Muslims who not only understand Islamic teachings theoretically but are also able to practice and live those teachings in real life. Going forward, the development of innovative learning methods and facilities is essential to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of Islamic education in Islamic boarding schools.

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