



Teachers' Efforts to Preserve Classical Pesantren Traditions through a Meaningful Learning Approach

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Received: July 2025; September 2025; December 2025

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.33852/jurnalin.v9i2.627>

Abstract:

This study investigates teachers' efforts to preserve classical pesantren traditions within meaningful learning in the Religious Program of MAN 1 Probolinggo. Despite the growing influence of digitalization in education, teachers remain committed to maintaining traditional pedagogical practices such as sorogan, bandongan, and kitab kuning study that embody the intellectual legacy of salaf scholars. These practices serve not only as channels for transmitting knowledge but also as frameworks for shaping students' character, moral discipline, and spiritual awareness. In this process, teachers function as designers of learning experiences who integrate cognitive understanding with emotional and spiritual engagement between teachers, students, and classical texts. This research employs a qualitative approach using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data were obtained through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of interactions between teachers and students. The findings show that teachers play a crucial role in sustaining pesantren traditions within formal schooling. Through traditional methods and the cultivation of adab, they create profound, value-oriented, and culturally rooted learning experiences. The study concludes that educational modernization does not rely solely on digital technologies but can also be pursued by revitalizing values, exemplars, and the scholarly heritage of pesantren.

Key Words: *Teacher Roles, Classical Pesantren Traditions, Meaningful Learning, Kitab Kuning*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini mengkaji upaya guru dalam mempertahankan tradisi klasik pesantren dalam pembelajaran bermakna pada Program Keagamaan MAN 1 Probolinggo. Di tengah meningkatnya digitalisasi pendidikan, guru tetap konsisten menerapkan praktik pembelajaran tradisional seperti sorogan, bandongan, dan pengkajian kitab kuning yang merepresentasikan warisan intelektual ulama salaf. Tradisi ini tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai sarana transfer pengetahuan, tetapi juga sebagai kerangka pembentukan karakter, kedisiplinan moral, dan kesadaran spiritual peserta didik. Dalam proses ini, guru berperan sebagai perancang pengalaman belajar yang mengintegrasikan pemahaman kognitif dengan keterlibatan emosional dan spiritual antara guru, siswi, dan teks klasik yang dikaji. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan model Miles dan Huberman, mencakup reduksi data, penyajian data,

dan penarikan kesimpulan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru memiliki peran sentral dalam menjaga keberlanjutan tradisi pesantren di lingkungan sekolah formal. Melalui metode tradisional dan penanaman adab, guru berhasil menciptakan pembelajaran yang mendalam, bernilai, dan berakar pada budaya keilmuan pesantren. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa modernisasi pendidikan tidak semata bergantung pada digitalisasi, tetapi juga pada revitalisasi nilai dan warisan keilmuan pesantren.

Kata Kunci: *Peran Guru, Tradisi Klasik Pesantren, Pembelajaran Bermakna, Kitab Kuning*

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has significantly transformed educational practices worldwide. Rapid advancements in information and communication technologies have reshaped how teachers and students interact, bringing learning environments into virtual spaces facilitated by Learning Management Systems (LMS), online platforms, and social media. These tools promise efficiency, accessibility, and interactivity, enabling students to learn beyond traditional classrooms. Despite widespread adoption, many scholars argue that digital innovation alone does not guarantee the quality of learning. Meaningful learning occurs when students connect new knowledge with prior understanding, enabling deep conceptual internalization and practical application. Thus, in contemporary education, teachers must shift from merely transmitting knowledge to designing learning experiences that nurture understanding, critical thinking, and personal growth. This shift aligns with global pedagogical trends emphasizing learner-centered approaches, authentic learning, and holistic development. Ultimately, the digital revolution presents both opportunities and challenges, highlighting the essential role of educators in ensuring that technological tools serve pedagogical goals rather than overshadow them. While the digital shift is inevitable, ensuring meaningful, value-oriented learning remains the central mission of education in the twenty-first century.

Despite the widespread integration of digital technology into classrooms, a critical problem persists: ensuring that learning remains meaningful and deeply connected to students' lived experiences. Many technological innovations are adopted superficially, focusing on content delivery rather than fostering understanding, reflection, and personal engagement. As a result, students may receive information rapidly yet fail to develop the depth of comprehension required to apply knowledge contextually. Scholars emphasize that meaningful learning depends on teachers' pedagogical decisions, not on technology itself. Teachers must carefully design learning experiences that integrate cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions to promote internalization of knowledge. However, many educators struggle to balance technological demands with pedagogical authenticity, leading to instructional practices that prioritize digital trends over educational substance. This issue becomes increasingly complex in contexts where cultural, religious, and traditional learning practices remain

integral to identity formation. The tension between innovation and tradition thus raises fundamental questions: How can teachers maintain meaningful learning amid rapid digitalization? Moreover, to what extent must technology be integrated before it begins to overshadow the values and wisdom embedded in long-standing educational traditions?

The Religious Program at MAN 1 Probolinggo presents a unique and compelling phenomenon within this global shift. While most educational institutions embrace digital technologies to support teaching and learning, this program consciously maintains classical pesantren traditions as the core of its instructional practices. Rather than utilizing digital media, teachers rely on methods such as sorogan, bandongan, intensive study of kitab kuning, and the cultivation of adab as integral elements of students' daily learning experiences. In this setting, teachers act as mursyid who guide students through complex classical texts, helping them interpret linguistic nuances, contextual meanings, and ethical wisdom embedded within Islamic scholarly heritage. This approach enables students to develop discipline, perseverance, intellectual sharpness, and spiritual depth qualities often overlooked in technology-driven learning environments. Additionally, the interpersonal relationship between teacher and student extends beyond academic instruction, emphasizing humility, respect, and moral formation. The steadfast commitment of teachers to prioritize traditional methods amid widespread digital transformation demonstrates that meaningful learning can be achieved through authenticity, relational engagement, and the preservation of cultural and religious heritage.

Previous studies have highlighted the pivotal role of teachers in shaping meaningful learning. Syifaurrehman et al. (2025) emphasize that learning becomes meaningful when teachers employ strategies aligned with learners' characteristics, enabling them to relate new concepts to prior knowledge. Effective teachers serve as facilitators who guide students to develop deep, contextual understanding rather than passive memorization. Harmathilda et al. (2024) similarly highlight that teachers and kiai in pesantren environments act as custodians of classical traditions, particularly in sustaining the study of kitab kuning, sorogan, and bandongan, while simultaneously navigating educational transformation. These scholars underscore that the teacher's role extends beyond instructional tasks to encompass moral-spiritual mentorship and character formation. Adzhar (2025) further asserts that educators must understand the nature of learning to design responsive pedagogical systems that remain aligned with contemporary developments. Complementing these findings, international studies (e.g., Fernández & Moliner, 2023; Al-Khalifa, 2022) reinforce that meaningful learning requires relational, value-based engagement, demonstrating that teacher-student interaction plays a decisive role regardless of technological advancement.

Beyond the teacher's central role, scholars have explored the relevance of traditional Islamic learning models in modern education. Classical pesantren methods, with their emphasis on deep textual engagement and moral formation, continue to shape learners holistically. Studies by Mukti et al. (2023) and Yusuf & Hasanah (2021) indicate that kitab kuning pedagogy cultivates intellectual rigor, linguistic competence in Arabic, and spiritual refinement attributes that remain essential even in the digital age. Other researchers, such as Rahmawati (2024), argue that the pesantren tradition fosters learning dispositions that strengthen students' resilience, humility, and ethical awareness. These studies collectively highlight that meaningful learning cannot be separated from the cultivation of values, character, and interpersonal connectedness. Furthermore, scholars of contemporary Islamic education emphasize the importance of integrating tradition with the demands of modern schooling. Thus, the literature provides a theoretical foundation indicating that classical pedagogical traditions are not only compatible with but also capable of enriching the goals of meaningful learning within formal educational institutions.

Building upon the existing literature, this study introduces a novel perspective by examining how classical pesantren traditions are preserved within a formal, state-regulated institution such as MAN 1 Probolinggo. While prior research primarily investigates pesantren-based learning in non-formal settings, few studies explore how traditional methods operate within a standardized curriculum framework. This study reveals that teachers in the Religious Program intentionally design learning experiences centered on kitab kuning engagement, sorogan practices, and character cultivation, yet do not integrate digital media. The novelty lies in demonstrating how meaningful learning can emerge from value-driven pedagogy rather than technological sophistication. It also highlights teachers' role as experience designers who foster emotional, social, and spiritual connectedness between learners and classical texts. By situating pesantren traditions within a modern institutional context, the study expands the discourse on how indigenous pedagogical heritage can coexist with contemporary educational demands, thereby making a distinctive contribution to Islamic education scholarship.

Despite the growing interest in integrating tradition within modern schooling, research gaps persist regarding how classical pesantren methods can be sustained meaningfully within state-run institutions. Existing studies often focus on pesantren or Islamic boarding schools, overlooking how such traditions function in institutions guided by a formal curriculum and subject to state policies. Moreover, limited attention has been given to how teachers design learning experiences that prioritize relational, emotional, and spiritual dimensions without relying on digital tools. This gap raises critical questions about the position of classical pedagogy in the era of digital transformation. Accordingly, this study investigates how teachers in the Religious Program at MAN 1 Probolinggo preserve classical traditions, what strategies they employ to

maintain meaningful learning, and how these practices shape students' intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. By addressing these gaps, the study offers new insights into sustaining pedagogical authenticity within technologically driven educational landscapes.

This study is essential for understanding how traditional Islamic pedagogical models continue to play a transformative role in contemporary education. By examining the Religious Program at MAN 1 Probolinggo, the research demonstrates that meaningful learning does not depend solely on digital innovation but can be achieved through relational engagement, value-oriented pedagogy, and deep textual interaction. The findings contribute to theoretical debates on meaningful learning, teacher agency, and the integration of cultural and religious traditions within formal schooling. In practice, this study offers a model for educators seeking to balance modernization with tradition, demonstrating how classical methods can enrich character formation, intellectual maturity, and spiritual development. Furthermore, the study strengthens the discourse on Islamic education by highlighting the relevance of pesantren heritage in addressing modern challenges. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of safeguarding pedagogical authenticity amid digital transformation, offering valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers alike.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore in depth the role of teachers in preserving classical pesantren traditions within the Religious Program of MAN 1 Probolinggo. A qualitative design was considered appropriate because the research focuses on meaning, values, and lived practices that cannot be captured numerically and must be interpreted through language, interaction, and sociocultural experience (Nasution, 2023; Safarudin et al., 2023). Qualitative inquiry is also widely used in contemporary research on education and Islamic studies to understand complex pedagogical traditions embedded in local culture and spiritual practices (Hendriana & Hidayat, 2022; Kamal & Wirawan, 2023). This design allowed the researcher to interpret teachers' efforts, classroom practices, and students' experiences in learning kitab kuning through traditional modes such as sorogan and bandongan. By prioritizing contextual understanding, this study aimed to uncover how classical practices are maintained despite the rapid digitalization of education, aligning with Creswell and Poth's (2021) argument that qualitative research is essential for exploring culturally embedded pedagogical phenomena.

The study was conducted at MAN 1 Probolinggo, specifically within its Religious Program, which was purposively selected because the institution maintains a strong commitment to preserving classical pesantren traditions within a formal schooling environment. This location is a unique case in which kitab kuning, sorogan, and bandongan continue to be practiced amid modern

digital learning reforms, making it an ideal setting for investigating meaningful learning rooted in tradition. The research subjects consisted of teachers of the Religious Program and female students actively engaged in kitab kuning study. Informants were selected using purposive sampling (Magnone & Yezierski, 2024; Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025) based on criteria such as teachers who consistently teach classical texts and students who participate intensively in traditional learning practices. This sampling technique is appropriate for studies seeking information-rich participants (Rahardjo, 2021; Tam & Hassan, 2022). The list of informants is presented below:

Table 1. Table of Research Informants

No.	Informant Initials	Position / Role
1	KY	Fiqh Subject Teacher
2	SS	Akhlak (Ethics) Subject Teacher
3	KY	Head of Religious Program Department
4	IM	Grade XII Religious Program Student

Data were collected using three primary techniques to ensure comprehensive and in-depth exploration. First, participatory observation was conducted to examine classroom interactions, teacher–student relationships, and the implementation of traditional methods such as sorogan and bandongan. Second, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, students, and institutional stakeholders to understand their perceptions, experiences, and strategies for preserving the classical learning tradition. Third, documentation analysis included reviewing academic records, photographs of learning activities, lesson schedules, and classical Islamic texts (Kitab Kuning) used in instruction. These techniques align with standard qualitative methods, emphasizing triangulation of multiple data sources to enhance depth and credibility (Ary et al., 2021; Sunardi & Kartikasari, 2023). Such a combination strengthens the robustness of qualitative findings in studies involving cultural, religious, and pedagogical traditions.

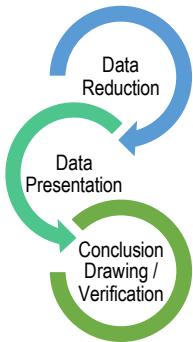


Figure 1. Miles and Huberman Qualitative Data Analysis Model

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During data reduction, the researcher summarized and selected essential information related to the research focus. In the data display stage, the reduced data were organized into narrative descriptions, tables, and excerpts to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified through repeated checking to ensure accuracy, consistency, and meaningful interpretation of findings (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). To ensure data validity, this study employed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability techniques in accordance with Lincoln and Guba's qualitative trustworthiness framework. Credibility was ensured through triangulation of methods and sources; dependability was strengthened through detailed documentation of research procedures; and confirmability was achieved by maintaining transparency in data interpretation (Zainal & Hidayat, 2022; Akhir & Samad, 2023). These validation steps ensured that the findings accurately represented the realities of classical learning practices within the Religious Program of MAN 1 Probolinggo.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this study reveal that the Religious Program at MAN 1 Probolinggo effectively integrates academic learning with the moral and spiritual development of students. Teachers serve not only as instructors but also as ethical and spiritual mentors, applying classical pesantren methods such as sorogan and bandongan and utilizing kitab kuning to impart values. This approach nurtures disciplined, morally conscious learners who connect knowledge with practical, everyday ethical behavior.

Teachers as Moral and Spiritual Mentors

The first major finding reveals that teachers in the Religious Program at MAN 1 Probolinggo are perceived not only as academic instructors but also as moral and spiritual mentors. Students reported that teachers serve as exemplary figures whose conduct, attitudes, and decisions are imbued with educational significance. Beyond delivering subject matter, teachers guide students in ethical and spiritual matters, emphasizing patience, sincerity, humility, and moral responsibility. Practices such as lowering one's gaze in front of teachers, speaking politely, and starting lessons with prayer are consistently reinforced. Students indicated that these practices encourage them to internalize virtues such as discipline, perseverance, and emotional regulation, demonstrating that moral and spiritual development is an integral part of their learning process. Teachers also stress the importance of purifying intentions and avoiding envy, helping students cultivate sincere engagement with knowledge.

Students highlighted that these teacher-student interactions shape both personal and academic growth. They learn to connect intellectual achievement with ethical and spiritual development, understanding that knowledge alone is insufficient without moral grounding. The mentorship extends beyond the classroom through guidance on daily conduct and reflections on sincerity in learning. Students noted that teachers' emphasis on character and spirituality motivates them to pursue knowledge not merely for grades but as a holistic practice, combining intellectual comprehension with moral refinement. This dual function establishes teachers as central figures in shaping well-rounded, ethically responsible learners who embody the pesantren ethos in their daily lives.

Application of Classical Pesantren Methods

The second finding concerns the implementation of classical pesantren learning methods, including sorogan and bandongan, which remain central to the Religious Program. Sorogan involves individualized instruction, where students read texts aloud to the teacher and receive immediate corrections on pronunciation, grammar, and comprehension. Students reported that this method fosters close teacher-student interaction, encourages patience, discipline, and self-reflection, and ensures a deep understanding of classical texts. Teachers supplement these sessions with historical, linguistic, and contextual explanations, helping students relate lessons to real-life situations. Students noted that sorogan also cultivates personal responsibility, perseverance, and focus, making the learning experience both intellectually rigorous and morally formative.

The bandongan method complements sorogan by facilitating collective learning. Teachers read and explain classical texts to a group of students, allowing for shared reflection and discussion. Students reported that this method enhances their comprehension, critical thinking, and ability to connect textual knowledge with practical experiences. Moreover, bandongan fosters a sense of community, solidarity, and respect for scholarly authority. Together, these classical methods provide students with both individual mastery and collaborative learning opportunities, ensuring that intellectual, emotional, and ethical dimensions of education are addressed simultaneously. Students highlighted that the combination of sorogan and bandongan strengthens their discipline and reinforces values central to the pesantren tradition.

Use of Kitab Kuning and Value-Based Learning

The third finding underscores the pivotal role of kitab kuning as a medium for transmitting both knowledge and moral and spiritual values. Texts such as Fathul Qarib, Lubabul Hadits, Idhohul Qawa'id al-Fiqhiyyah, and Ta'limul Muta'allim are integral to the curriculum. Students reported that these texts are approached not merely as academic references but as guides for cultivating ethical behavior, spiritual reflection, and sincere intentions. A key principle from Ta'limul Muta'allim advises:

فَعَلَى الْمُتَعَلِّمِ أَنْ يُصَفِّي قَلْبَهُ عَنْ كُلِّ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ وَيُطَهِّرَهُ مِنَ الْحِقْدِ وَالْحَسَدِ لِيَسْهُلَ عَلَيْهِ تَلَقِّي الْعِلْمِ وَالْإِنْتِفَاعُ بِهِ

(Students must cleanse their hearts from other than Allah, and stay away from envy and hasad so that they can easily receive knowledge and benefit from it.)

Teachers integrate this guidance with historical context, explaining that KH. Hasyim Asy'ari wrote the book for Tebuireng students, emphasizing sincerity and purity of heart as prerequisites for effective learning. Students reflected that this instruction helps them consider the purpose of learning beyond grades or rankings, reinforcing ethical intentions and emotional stability.

For students in MAN 1 Probolinggo's Religious Program, teachers' efforts to preserve classical traditions significantly shape their views on learning. Knowledge is not seen merely as a means to achieve academic performance but as a process of character cultivation. Students perceive teachers as role models who teach both knowledge and virtue. Through classical methods, students not only understand texts but also internalize noble values such as humility, discipline, and perseverance. Maintaining classical pesantren traditions within a formal institution like MAN 1 Probolinggo is far from simple. Teachers must employ strategic approaches to ensure that traditional methods remain relevant within a modern educational system. The strategies implemented by teachers in applying classical pesantren methods are illustrated in the diagram below;

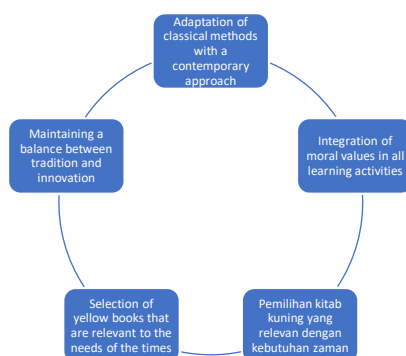


Figure 2. Classic Traditional Strategy of Islamic Boarding Schools

Moreover, students highlighted the importance of emotional and spiritual bonding with teachers in reinforcing meaningful learning. The relational aspect of instruction, characterized by respect, affection, and mentorship, strengthens students' motivation, patience, and persistence in learning. They reported that teacher guidance fosters self-discipline and moral awareness, encouraging students to connect knowledge to practical, everyday ethical behavior. Overall, the use of kitab kuning, combined with the cultivation of adab, ensures that

students acquire academic knowledge while simultaneously developing spiritual and moral virtues, thereby fully reflecting the pesantren philosophy.

Discussion

The findings suggest that teachers at MAN 1 Probolinggo effectively preserve classical pesantren traditions while operating within a formal education system. Their dual role as knowledge transmitters and moral-spiritual guides aligns with previous studies emphasizing the importance of teacher character in Islamic education (Kartiwan & Alkarimah, 2023; Choliq et al., 2024). The respect and trust demonstrated by students reflect the traditional murobbi concept, where educators are responsible for shaping both the intellectual and ethical dimensions of learners' development (Ferihana & Rahmatullah, 2023). Teachers serve as living models of pesantren values, demonstrating exemplary conduct through both words and actions. The cultivation of adab in daily classroom interactions, alongside the consistent application of sorogan and bandongan methods, demonstrates that classical pedagogy supports holistic learning encompassing cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. This approach ensures that students not only acquire knowledge but also internalize virtues such as humility, patience, and discipline. Structured teacher-student interactions further foster meaningful relationships that enhance comprehension and personal growth, confirming that pedagogical traditions grounded in moral guidance remain highly effective within formal Islamic education contexts.

The study highlights that the sorogan and bandongan methods are instrumental in achieving meaningful learning outcomes. Individualized sorogan sessions enable students to engage actively with classical texts, receive immediate feedback, and connect their textual understanding with prior knowledge and personal reflection. Collective bandongan sessions, by contrast, foster intellectual solidarity and respect for scholarly authority, encouraging active listening, note-taking, and collaborative comprehension. These methods align with findings in previous research showing that pesantren pedagogical techniques cultivate perseverance, attentiveness, and deep understanding (Nafis & Laila, 2025; Ramayanti, 2025). The integration of kitab kuning, particularly moral-spiritual texts such as Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, emphasizes the inseparability of knowledge, ethical conduct, and spiritual development.

فَعَلَى الْمُتَعَلِّمِ أَنْ يُصَفِّيَ قَلْبَهُ عَنْ كُلِّ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ وَيُطَهِّرَهُ مِنَ الْحَقْدِ وَالْحَسَدِ لِيَسْهُلَ عَلَيْهِ تَلَقِّي
الْعِلْمِ وَالْإِنْتِفَاعُ بِهِ

(Students must cleanse their hearts from anything other than Allah, and stay away from envy and hasad so that they can easily receive knowledge and benefit from it).

Reflects the pesantren notion that moral purification is a prerequisite for effective learning. Teachers contextualize this principle by connecting classical ideas with students' real-life experiences, fostering intellectual comprehension

alongside moral internalization. This demonstrates how traditional Islamic pedagogy contributes to holistic student development even within a formal educational framework.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that classical pesantren traditions can be integrated with formal curricular objectives without compromising authenticity. While the national curriculum emphasizes measurable cognitive achievement, the pesantren approach prioritizes ethical formation, spiritual grounding, and character development. Teachers act as mediators, bridging the gap between classical and formal educational frameworks, ensuring that students remain academically competent while maintaining moral and spiritual integrity. The selective use of technology shows that meaningful learning can occur without full reliance on digital tools; technology is employed to enrich reading resources and support comprehension, but does not replace teacher-guided interaction, textual study, or adab cultivation. These results confirm that the classical pesantren tradition, when thoughtfully implemented, fosters transformative learning experiences that are enduring, relevant, and ethically grounded (Hafidzhoh et al., 2023; Adzhar, 2025; Asmaraneti et al., 2024).

This study also aligns with recent research demonstrating that integrating pesantren values into contemporary Islamic schooling enhances student character, academic competence, and social responsibility (Komala & Sukandar, 2025; Rosyid et al., 2024; Sarwadi & Raihan, 2024). By combining disciplined textual study, moral-spiritual formation, and relational mentorship, teachers cultivate well-rounded students who master academic content while developing spiritual resilience, ethical awareness, and social competence. This approach illustrates that classical pedagogical methods remain highly relevant in the digital era, proving that meaningful learning emerges not merely from technology but from value-rich interactions, careful guidance, and holistic educational practices.

CONCLUTION

The findings of this study highlight that teachers play a pivotal role in preserving classical pesantren traditions within MAN 1 Probolinggo's Islamic Studies Program while fostering meaningful learning in the context of modern education. A key lesson derived from this research is that effective Islamic education requires educators to serve not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral exemplars, spiritual mentors, and custodians of scholarly traditions. Through the implementation of sorogan and bandongan methods, teachers successfully integrate classical learning patterns into a formal curriculum, emphasizing discipline, perseverance, and close relational bonds between teachers and students. The use of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*), including *Fathul Qarib*, *Lubabul Hadits*, *Idhohul Qowa'idul Fiqhiyah*, *Ta'limul Muta'allim*, *Nuruddzolam*, *At-Tadzhib*, and *Bulughul Maram*, ensures the continuity of intellectual depth while embedding ethical and spiritual values,

demonstrating that authentic knowledge can be both contextually relevant and morally enriching.

From a scholarly perspective, this study contributes to the field of Islamic education by providing empirical evidence on how classical pedagogical traditions can be harmonized with formal curricula to achieve holistic learning outcomes. The study underscores the importance of teacher character, instructional methods, and relational dynamics in nurturing students' cognitive, moral, and spiritual development, while demonstrating that preserving classical educational values can serve as a strategic response to the challenges posed by the digitalization of education. Despite its contributions, the study has limitations: it focuses on a single institution and primarily on teachers' perspectives. Future research could examine student outcomes over time, compare multiple pesantren-based formal programs, and explore the integration of digital tools with classical pedagogy to assess broader applicability and effectiveness.

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