The Quality of Learning in Mu‘adalah Boarding School

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Abstract: Recognition of Islamic boarding schools shows a stronger existence with updates and changes to the system, also supported by government policies with the term mu‘adalah. The level of learning independence that was the potential of the mu‘adalah Islamic boarding school students was the result of the construction of a comprehensive learning implementation system. The totality from the planning stage to implementation was a reflection of the quality of learning in mu‘adalah Islamic boarding schools. The transformation and modernization of the mu‘adalah Islamic boarding school were marked by the quality assurance of teaching staff starting from the aspects of qualifications and competencies aligned with government policies. The embodiment of the quality of learning mu‘adalah was competence. The reflection of this description forms the basis that the purpose of this study was to look comprehensively at the quality of learning in the mu‘adalah Islamic boarding school.

This research took place at the Baitul Arqom mu‘adalah Islamic boarding school and used a qualitative approach with the main respondents being ustadz, students, and boarding school administrators. The results of the study showed the quality of learning at Baitul Arqom Islamic Boarding School due to the evaluation of the implementation of the learning process in stages from weekly to the end of each semester. As for the evaluation of student learning, written tests, oral tests, and practice were carried out consistently with original assessments.

Keywords: learning quality; mu‘adalah; boarding school; baitul arqom

Introduction

Islamic boarding schools are a concrete illustration that education, especially in the context of Islamic education, is a social reality of the Indonesian Muslim community which has a high awareness of education and the sustainability of Islamic da’wah (Susilo &
Wulansari, 2020). Examining in more depth, typologically, boarding schools are divided into two, namely traditional and modern boarding schools. Another perspective on the typology of modern boarding narrows down to three types, namely Salafi, khalafi, and modern (Sudrajat, 2018; Arifin, 2012). Along with the modernization of boarding schools, conceptually it is no longer just instilling religious values but has a paradigm shift from a partial one to a universal direction. The renewal of the boarding school education paradigm has a metamorphosis so that its direction and objectives can be explicitly referred to as the basis of educational institutions that have a complete balance, and produce a generation of Qur’anic and qualified scientific intellectual capacity. This fact can be seen in changes in the educational system and management of boarding schools which are more modernist and progressive, but still maintain the original traditions of boarding schools (Basri, 2017; Rifai, 2017; Athoillah & Wulan, 2019; Fuady, 2020).

The adaptation and modernity side carried out by boarding schools cannot be separated from the high competitiveness of both institutions and graduates as well as the brunt of globalization which is increasingly out of control. The existence of boarding schools with its modernization model adhering to the motto “muhafadzah ‘ala al qadim al shalih, wa al akhdzu bi aljadid al aslah” is a solution for the community to obtain a conducive environment for their children (Maesaroh & Achdiani, 2018; Ranam et al., 2021). Concretely the government's acknowledgement in supporting the evolution of boarding school modernization is manifested in the existence of a government policy with the term boarding school mu’adalah. This policy area serves as the legitimacy of boarding school graduates as stipulated in the minister of religion regulation number 18 of 2014 concerning mu’adalah Education Units at Islamic Boarding Schools. This policy is a forum for and the necessity for Islamic boarding schools to carry out reforms to provide recognition and quality assurance for graduates (Setiawan & Rofi, 2020). In short, the status of mu’adalah in Islamic boarding schools that meet the qualifications is recognized and has formal legitimacy.

Islamic boarding schools are Islamic religious education units organized by and within the boarding school environment by developing a curriculum according to the peculiarities of boarding school based on the yellow book or Islamic dirasah with a tiered and structured pattern of muallimin education that can be equated with primary and secondary education levels within the ministry of religion. The emergence of the process of equalizing the mu’adalah curriculum in Islamic boarding schools has been going on for a long time since 1998 until now as a step for government recognition of the existence of education among Islamic boarding schools, which at that time had not been accommodated in the national education system. mu’adalah itself is defined as a process of equalization between educational institutions both in Islamic boarding schools and outside Islamic boarding schools by using standard criteria and quality that has been determined fairly and openly (Yusuf, 2009).

There are two kinds of mu’adalah Islamic boarding schools that are known to the public, namely: first, Islamic boarding schools which are given the status of mu’adalah or the equivalent of educational institutions abroad such as al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt, Umm al-Qurra University, Saudi Arabia. Second, Islamic boarding schools are equivalent to Madrasah Aliyah in the management of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia and equivalent to high schools in the management of the National Education Department. The legitimacy of both is stated in the form of a
decision letter from the related party (Yusuf, 2009).

One of the Islamic boarding schools that have received mu’adalah status in the Jember region is the Baitul Arqom Islamic boarding school. The management of this boarding school is equated with Madrasah Aliyah. Since its inception, the Baitul Arqom Islamic boarding school has used the well-known by design modern foundation system which is affiliated with the Gontor Islamic boarding school. The existence of the Baitul Arqom Islamic boarding school as a mu’adalah Islamic boarding school adds to the attractiveness and interest of the community as an educational institution capable of producing quality output. The granting of strict mu’adalah status is evident at this time there are still 160 out of the total number of boarding schools in Indonesia reaching 37,000 institutions. This fact provides an indicator that the quality of management accountability from upstream to downstream, namely from the selection process until graduation is carried out consistently. This description reflects that the quality of the input of the students is considered since the entrance selection process by carrying out written and oral tests with religious and general knowledge material conducted by Baitul Arqom as a mu’adalah boarding school.

This phenomenon explicitly describes that input selection is a non-negotiable domain in producing quality learning as an effort to maintain the existence and recognition of Islamic boarding schools in the community. On the other hand, the quality of learning will be able to produce credible, accountable, and competitive graduates from mu’adalah Islamic boarding schools. Producing graduates who have competitive and holistic competencies. Have the quality of understanding and expertise in the field of religion (mutafaqqih fiddin), as well as intelligence in the field of science. In simple terms, it can be concluded that the quality of learning will have an impact on the existence and recognition of boarding school mu’adalah which is constructed by the quality perspective of graduates' customers and users (Hamzah, 2018; Mushollin, 2014).

Several studies on the quality of Islamic boarding school learning have been produced. Research on the "Value System-Based Entrepreneurship Learning Quality Management Model: A Qualitative Analysis Study at the Sidogiri Pasuruan Islamic Boarding School, East Java" emphasizes its entrepreneurial aspects more than the learning management system (Thoyib, 2014). The results of the study entitled "Talaqqi Method and Improving the Quality of Learning Materials on Jurisprudence at the Imam Asy-Syafi’i Islamic Boarding School, Enrekang Regency" explicitly only describes the use of methods in creating quality learning (Muallim, 2020). Research explaining the use of the yellow book to improve the quality of learning fiqh, in terms of problems focused on the quality of learning only in one field of study (Rijal, 2018). Then research the quality of learning associated with the collaboration of teachers and supervisors. The results of this study explore more about the collaboration between teachers and supervisors (Rouf & Maftukhah, 2019).

Based on the description above, this study aims to examine in more depth related to the quality of learning at the mu’adalah boarding school of Baitul Arqom starting from the planning stage to the process of evaluating the competence of students. The formulation of the research problem is how is the quality of learning at the mu’adalah Baitul Arqom Islamic Boarding School?

Method
Qualitative as the basis of the approach in this study which took place at the Baitul Arqom Balung Jember Mu’adalah Islamic Boarding School. The main research instrument used was interviews, with a secondary instrument in the form of documentation. The main source in interview activities was carried out in stages, starting with the boarding administrators, ustad, and students. This stage is intended for effectiveness in carrying out the process of verifying and validating the research data collected. Data analysis techniques use triangulation with four stages starting from data collection, display, condensation, and conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

Results and Discussion

Baitul Arqom Islamic Boarding School as an Educational Institution with Islamic nuances has quality activities in terms of learning. These quality activities are carried out consistently through several stages, starting from planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating. Baitul Arqom Islamic Boarding School is a Mu’adalah Islamic Boarding School explicitly the quality of learning is built on 3 main components, namely lesson planning, learning implementation, and learning evaluation of students’ competencies. The three components are described as follows.

**Learning Planning at Muaddalah Boarding school of Baitul Arqom**

Learning planning at the Baitul Arqom Islamic boarding school begins with the teacher making learning tools. This learning tool is called *madatut tadr* or *i’dad at-tadris* or a popular term in formal schools is called a lesson plan or RPP in Indonesia. The learning implementation plan refers to the syllabus made by the Islamic boarding school. Ustadz who teaches at the Baitul Arqom boarding school prepares *i’dad at-tadris* in Arabic for all subjects except English subjects and general subjects that do not have Arabic handbooks.

Correction of *i’dad at-tadris* is the authority of the caregivers and leaders of the Baitul Arqom Islamic boarding school. Other parties who provide corrections and checks on *i’dad at-tadris* are senior ustadz appointed by the leadership of the Baitul Arqom Islamic boarding school who have served more than ten years. Five aspects must be clearly described in the *i’dad at-tadris* made by the ustadz including themes, learning materials, methods, media, and *naqd*. Overall these aspects in the context of implementing learning can be described as follows.

![Diagram of Learning Planning Process]

- **Theme**
- **Material**
- **Methods**
- **Media**
- **Naqd**
- **Correction**
- **Learning Implementation**

*Note: Not Agree*
The process of correcting *i’dad at-tadris* or lesson plan or RPP in Indonesia education term is carried out every week according to the material being taught. This is the realm of the policy of the leadership of the Baitul Arqom mu’adalah Islamic boarding school, that *i’dad at-tadris* is compiled every week, not all at once in one semester. This fact is following the results of interviews with the leadership of the Baitul Arqom mu’adalah Islamic boarding school, who clearly explained that the intent and purpose was to supervise the ustadz every week as an evaluation of the process of preparing and implementing learning. Concerning learning materials, ustadz can rewrite, and make summaries in *i’dad at-tadris* according to the material to be taught.

**Implementation of Learning at the Muaddalah boarding school of Baitul Arqom**

Based on the *i’dad at-tadris* that has been approved by the caregiver or boarding school leader, the ustadz can carry out learning in class. The implementation of learning at the mu’adalah boarding school of Baitul Arqom has several stages, including:

**First, preliminary activities**

Activities in the preliminary activities that are often carried out by ustadz ask for the material from last week. Preliminary activities are often used by ustadz to evaluate the achievements of previous material learning by rote memorization or explanation. This description was raised by the ustadz in the interview session as follows.

“...yes, usually before the subject matter is given, the ustadz appoints the students to memorize or explain the previous week’s study material. Usually, the ustadz points to the students who are asleep or look sleepy... if not the designated students must still stand until the designated students can then memorize or explain.”

The results of the interview, the researcher explored the question of whether all ustadz did this in each preliminary activity. This question was answered by one of the teachers as follows.

“….yes no sir, usually it’s done so that students don't feel sleepy later. In the first lesson, we rarely do it because the students are still fresh and enthusiastic...”

Based on these data, the core activities with special treatment were carried out by the ustadz to restore the enthusiasm and motivation of the students in participating in the learning process.

**Second, core activities.**

The core acts as the main stage in the learning process, the ustadz carries out following the i’dad at-tadris that has been prepared. Concerning the method of implementing learning, lectures are more widely used than other methods. The lecture method functions in providing explanations of learning material to students accompanied by writing important points on the blackboard. The language of communication in the explanation of learning materials uses Arabic and English specifically for English lesson subjects. This fact was unravelled during an interview with one of the ustadz who teaches Islamic calendar subjects as follows.

“....if use Arabic in explaining because it teaches Islamic dates. For English subjects, use English ... most of the material is in Arabic and the students' handbooks are also in Arabic...”
The essence of the core activities of implementing learning at the mu’adalah boarding school of Baitul Arqom is the process of transferring the knowledge of the ustadz to the students. The plurality of methods is not widely used in the implementation of learning, only the lecture method which has a high frequency of use by ustadz. On the other hand, taking notes, summarizing, and providing information in handbooks is the dominant activity of students in implementing learning.

Third, the process of implementing learning

The process of implementing learning in class according to the data from observations and interviews, the leader or senior ustadz who is appointed to monitor each class (teacher on duty). This monitoring activity is an effort to directly observe the implementation of learning activities, especially for ustadz with a period of service. As for ustadz who have served a long period of service and have teaching experience, they are only occasionally monitored specifically by the leadership.

Usually, the leader or ustadz on picket will give naqd to the ustadz who teaches after the learning process is completed directly if deficiencies are found when teaching. Preliminary activities, core activities, and naqd are processes that are integrated as a whole into one complete implementation of learning in the classroom. An overview of these activities can be seen in the following figure.

![Figure 2. Chart of Learning Implementation at the mu’adalah boarding school of Baitul Arqom](image)

Naqd activity as an evaluation activity in the implementation of learning which is carried out directly by the leader or picket teacher has a fundamental difference where the habit of evaluating teachers is carried out in a certain period. Confirmation related to naqd activities, researchers conducted data mining by conducting interviews. As for the respondents who were interviewed, there were two parties, namely the leadership and the ustadz. Excerpts of interviews related to this are presented as follows.

“...yes, that's how it is, we as leaders must direct and guide ustadz in teaching and those who are supervised specifically, service ustadz. They have just graduated, and even though they are not yet undergraduates, they are required to teach because they have to do service, here or at another boarding school...”

The excerpts from the interview results were strengthened by the results of data confirmation with the ustadz. In line with conveyed by the leadership of the mu’adalah boarding school of Baitul Arqom, one of the ustadz conveyed the following information.

".. that's true, the ustadz is evaluated directly by the cleric or senior ustadz who is
on the care schedule. When the cleric is walking around and observing the ustadz, sometimes the ustadz is nervous, even though the cleric is silent..."

Naqd is an activity that is carried out directly and evaluation of the implementation of learning is also carried out weekly. This activity was attended by all ustadz and the director of the Baitul Arqom Islamic boarding school. The implementation of this evaluation is an effort to find deficiencies and weaknesses in the implementation of one week of learning experienced and faced by all ustadz. Are these deficiencies related to methods, strategies, explanations, and class conditions that are not good, so that solutions to these problems can be found solutions? These activities can be visualized in the following figure.

![Figure 3. Learning Implementation Evaluation Period](image)

The results of the description of the data above, regarding the implementation of learning, it can be understood that the teacher has a central role in the process. The implementation of learning uses more of the lecture method. As for the evaluation process, it becomes a small sketch that this activity illustrates the comprehensiveness of the implementation of learning at the mu’adalah boarding school of Baitul Arqom.

Efforts to support the successful implementation of learning, class activities, or afternoon courses are carried out by the management of the santri organization. This activity is specifically for students from grades 1 to grade 4, with teachers from grades 5 and 6 under the implementation of the teaching section (qismu ta’lim) in the santri organization. This activity also has a test, but the subjects taught are subjects studied by students in the morning/formal class. The position of the afternoon class or course as a support to increase the learning success of students in formal/morning classes.

**Evaluation of Learning at the Muaddalah boarding school of Baitul Arqom**

The learning evaluation format at the mu’adalah Islamic Boarding School is carried out in two forms, namely written and oral based. This activity is carried out at the end of each semester. The oral exam takes precedence over the written exam. Examiners for the oral exam are a collaboration of senior and junior ustadz specifically for grades one through grade 3. Meanwhile, for grades 4 and 5 all of the examiners are senior ustadz.

The implementation of the oral exam (syafahi) is carried out in a minimum of five days, with a scheduling system that has been arranged by the boarding school teaching staff. Some of the materials used for examinations such as muthola’ah, mahfudzot, interpretation, hadith, and several other lessons have the characteristics of memorization and explanation. Oral exam
activities in which each student takes turns facing the examiner who will give random questions. The meaning is that the exam material is the entire material that has been studied by the students.

As for the written or formative exam, it is carried out within one week. The characteristics of written exam questions are more focused on the ability of students to memorize and explain, as well as to improve students’ skills in answering and writing Arabic. The type of questions is more about answering questions with a description model and answer sheets for questions using plain paper without lines. Supervised the implementation of written exams, each class is supervised by 3-4 ustadz with a random and mixed seating system, so that each room has a distribution of students from grade one to grade five. The learning evaluation chart can be described as follows.

Figure 4. Test Forms at the Muaddalah Boarding School of Baitul Arqom

The authority and centrality of the role of the Kyai as leaders in boarding schools can effectively encourage the realization of quality learning. Based on the research results, the quality control process for the planning and implementation of concrete learning is a central role under the authority of the kyai. The necessity for ustadz to make \( i’dad \) at-tadris, which is corrected and evaluated both before and after the implementation of learning is a form of total quality control of learning carried out by the kyai as the leader of the Muaddalah Islamic boarding school Baitul Arqom (Anas, 2019; Lukman & Effendi, 2020; Syafi’i, 2019).

The implementation of a process of evaluating the implementation of learning which is carried out periodically at the Baitul Arqom mu’adalah Islamic Boarding School, weekly and monthly, is a real form of consistency in realizing the quality of learning. On the other hand, the process of making \( i’dad \) at-tadris which is gradual according to the learning material to be given has a positive influence on the ustad’s performance in presenting quality learning. The main impact of this context is that ustadz will always study learning material gradually and continuously as an integral part of the process of making \( i’dad \) at-tadris or learning implementation plans.

The dimension of totality in learning planning is supported by \( naqd \) or criticism which is carried out directly after the implementation of learning is complete. Criticism or \( naqd \) given to ustadz results of observing the implementation of learning by the kyai or ustadz on picket, being a keyword reflecting continuous quality improvement in producing tools and consistently implementing quality learning (Supriyanto, 2015).
The aspects that need to be observed in the implementation of learning at the mu'adalah boarding school of Baitul Arqom are the preliminary activities carried out by the ustaz in increasing and reviving the students’ motivation to learn. Evaluate abilities by asking questions in the preliminary activities and apperception which are carried out consistently by the ustaz. The active process of conditioning activities can encourage students to be constructed in a conducive physical and psychological situation (Baharuddin & Suyadi, 2020). Implementation of pre-instructional activities in a good and complete manner will have an impact on the results of implementing effective and efficient learning.

Concerning learning methods, although more on the use of lectures, the other hand, it is also supported by quality input and the independence of students' learning. It is a general perspective, that the learning methods used in implementing learning at Islamic boarding schools are still less varied and look modern (Adib, 2021). Nonetheless, the strength possessed by boarding schools is that the level of awareness and independence of students in learning makes a significant contribution to the success of the learning process (Shaliha & Sawitri, 2020).

In the realm of learning evaluation, in the research data, it has been described that two kinds of tests are used in its implementation, namely oral and written. This concept is the policy of the Baitul Arqom mu’adalah Islamic Boarding School. The main objective of learning evaluation by collaborating the two test models is to improve and develop students’ active abilities in the fields of Arabic and English. As for the written test with a question style that is descriptive answers can be grouped into the restricted response test type (Arifin, 2012). Muaddalah boarding school of Baitul Arqom has the vision to strengthen the language field as a competitive advantage for students (Syamsiah, 2019). Simply, the learning evaluation carried out by the Baitul Arqom mu’adalah Islamic Boarding School is comprehensive and reflects the authentic abilities of the students.

**Conclusion**

Based on the research problem, a conclusion can be constructed that the quality of learning at the mu’adalah boarding school of Baitul Arqom can be analyzed through, first, the stages of learning planning through making i’dad at-tadris which are arranged in stages according to learning material and must obtain approval from the leadership; second, the implementation of learning that has met the aspects of the implementation mechanism of the preliminary, core, and evaluation of the implementation of learning with the existence of naqd. The process of evaluating the implementation of learning is also carried out on a weekly and monthly basis; third, the learning evaluation used includes two types of tests, namely orally and in writing.

**Reference**


https://doi.org/10.19109/tamaddun.v20i2.6676

