



Innovative Methods to Learning Kitab Kuning at Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

Islamic education, with its predominantly Arabic literature, presents a challenge for educators to effectively guide their students in understanding Islam through its primary literature. Curriculum development, learning models, strategies, time allocation, and educators' abilities are among the agendas that demand innovation and enhanced abilities. At SD Unggulan Assunniyyah Kencong Jember, there is an innovation in Kitab Kuning learning that aims to improve students' understanding of Islam. We implement this program for students who have completed the final exam of the Qur'an by grouping the Tahfidz class and the Kitab Kuning class. This study employs a qualitative approach of a descriptive nature. Field observation is used to collect data. This study found that implementing a learning model that stimulates students' understanding can reduce the time it takes to learn the Kitab Kuning. The learning models used are the probing-prompting learning model and the expository learning model, which emphasizes active interaction and practical understanding. We also teach students how to read the Kitab Kuning in the context of Indonesian and pesantren traditions, including the reading of nadzom. The results of this study demonstrate learning innovations that accelerate students' understanding of Arabic grammar, allowing them to master the Kitab Kuning more efficiently.

Keywords: Learning Innovation, Learning Model, Kitab Kuning

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Islam yang literturnya pokoknya berbahasa Arab merupakan sebuah tantangan bagi pendidik apakah mampu mengantarkan peserta didiknya untuk memahami agama Islam dari literatur pokoknya. Pengembangan kurikulum, model pembelajaran, strategi, alokasi waktu dan kemampuan pendidik menjadi agenda yang memerlukan inovasi dan peningkatan kemampuan. Di SD Unggulan Assunniyyah Kencong Jember terdapat sebuah inovasi pembelajaran kitab kuning yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman agama Islam peserta didik. Program ini diterapkan bagi peserta didik yang sudah menyelesaikan ujian akhir alquran dengan pengelompokan kelas tahfidz dan kelas kitab kuning. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis deskriptif. Adapun pengumpulan datanya menggunakan observasi lapangan. Dalam penelitian ini ditemukan fakta bahwa pembelajaran kitab kuning yang membutuhkan waktu lama bisa dipangkas dengan menerapkan model pembelajaran yang memacu pemahaman peserta didik. Model pembelajaran yang digunakan adalah model pembelajaran probing-prompting dan model pembelajaran ekspositori yang menekankan pada interaksi aktif dan pemahaman praktis. Siswa juga diajarkan cara membaca kitab kuning dengan makna bahasa Indonesia dan tradisi pesantren seperti membaca nadzom. Temuan penelitian ini berkontribusi menunjukkan inovasi pembelajaran yang mempercepat pemahaman siswa terhadap gramatika Arab sehingga memungkinkan untuk menguasai kitab kuning dengan lebih efisien.

Kata Kunci: Inovasi Pembelajaran, Model Pembelajaran, Kitab Kuning

INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamental in advancing and developing a nation toward a higher level of civilization. In the context of rapid information advancements and intense competition, innovation has become integral to maintaining educational quality. Educational innovation is characterized by the development of new ideas that address emerging needs and effect substantial changes in pedagogical methods, curricula, technology, and learning strategies. In Indonesia, the education system encounters several challenges, including disparities in educational access, insufficient educational quality, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, and limited community engagement. Consequently, innovation is essential for enhancing competitiveness, improving human resource quality, and facilitating adaptation to rapid changes.

In Islamic education, the foundational literature predominantly derives from the Quran and Hadith, which are inherently in Arabic. Additionally, many scholarly works and treatises authored by Muslim intellectuals are composed in Arabic, although some have been translated into local languages. Achieving mastery in Islamic literature necessitates a comprehensive understanding of these primary sources. Proficiency in Arabic grammar, including syntax (*nahwu*), morphology (*saraf*), rhetoric (*balaghah*), and logic (*mantiq*), is essential for the study of Arabic literature. Formal educational institutions often encounter challenges due to the extensive time required for Arabic grammar instruction and comparatively less emphasis on grammar teaching relative to *pesantren*. Nonetheless, an in-depth understanding of Islamic education is fundamentally connected to the primary Islamic texts, which are exclusively written in Arabic.

A study by Ahmadi et al. investigating innovative strategies for teaching classical Islamic texts, commonly referred to as *Kitab Kuning* in *Pesantren*, at MI Mambaul Ulum I Bata-bata Pamekasan, revealed that effective learning of the *Kitab Kuning* is achievable even with extended instructional periods (Ahmadi & Badri, 2023). This research applied a range of pedagogical strategies, including learner-centered approaches, mastery learning techniques, and active learning methods, which were pivotal in enhancing students' understanding of the *Kitab Kuning*. These instructional innovations address contemporary educational challenges and reduce the potential for monotony in the learning process (Daulay, Siregar, & Panggabean, 2024; Ruslan & Ummah, 2022; Zulheddi, Muammar, & Said, 2024). Previous studies on *Kitab Kuning* teaching innovations have primarily focused on *Pesantren*, such as the work by Lutfi (2019), and other scholars (Bashori, Novebri, & Salabi, 2022; Munifah & Purwaningrum, 2022). In contrast, this research is significant for its examination of an alternative educational setting, specifically an elementary school, SD Unggulan Assuniyyah, thereby expanding the scope of understanding regarding *Kitab Kuning* instructional innovations.

To address contemporary challenges, SD Unggulan Assunniyyah has embarked on innovative approaches to enhance understanding of Islamic education through the implementation of *Kitab Kuning* learning. The curriculum design, time allocation, and teacher competencies have been meticulously structured to facilitate accelerated comprehension of the *Kitab Kuning* within a condensed timeframe. This study aims to investigate the implementation of *Kitab Kuning* learning as an advancement of the Islamic

education curriculum. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study utilizes a descriptive approach. Data was collected through observations, interviews with educators and students, and analysis of the instructional modules employed.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore phenomena as experienced by research subjects through naturalistic observation and scientific methods. This approach was selected for several reasons: first, the problem under investigation remains inadequately defined; second, to gain insight into the actual occurrences; and third, to understand the social interactions and contexts within which the research is situated (Sugiyono, 2018). Consequently, the present study employs a qualitative approach to produce descriptive data, consisting of written narratives and statements from credible sources or informants, subjected to rigorous analysis and validation (Lexy, 2017). The research is situated at SD Unggulan Assunniyyah Kencong Jember, providing context-specific insights into the phenomena under examination.

This study aims to acquire comprehensive and detailed insights into the innovation of Kitab Kuning learning, specifically within the class of Kitab Kuning at SD Unggulan Assunniyyah, utilizing interview and observation techniques for data collection. The gathered data will be systematically processed and analyzed. The data analysis will proceed through three key stages: data reduction, data display, and verification (Hardani dkk., 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Essence of Educational Innovation

Innovation, as defined by the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, is the introduction of new concepts or discoveries that diverge from existing knowledge or practices, encompassing novel ideas, methods, or tools (Tim Penyusun Kamus Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa, 1989, p. 333). In the context of education, innovation refers to a qualitatively distinct change from previous practices, intentionally implemented to enhance capabilities and achieve specific educational goals (Santika, Ahmad, & Muniroh, 2023).

The term “innovation” originates from the Latin word “innovatio,” which denotes renewal and transformation. The corresponding verb “innovo” implies the actions of renewing and changing. Consequently, innovation is characterized as a deliberate process of introducing new changes aimed at improvement (Idris & Lisma Jamal, 1992, p. 70). While the concepts of “change” and “renewal” exhibit both distinctions and commonalities, the primary difference lies in the intentionality inherent in renewal, whereas their similarity is rooted in the introduction of novel or divergent elements compared to previous states (Alfiat, 2019; Syafira dkk., t.t.).

Innovation encompasses an idea, object, event, or method that is recognized as novel by an individual or a collective group (such as society), which may result from an invention (the development of a new form) or a discovery. It is typically introduced with the intention of achieving specific goals or addressing particular issues (Rusdiana, 2014).

Numerous scholars have articulated diverse perceptions, definitions, and interpretations of innovation, using varying terminology and emphases while conveying a

consistent fundamental concept. Notable contributions include those by Kennedy (1987), White (1987), and Kouraogo (1987). White (1987, p. 211) asserts that innovation ... is more than just change, although all innovations involve change (Rusdiana, 2014).

The aforementioned perspectives collectively underscore that innovation encompasses the introduction of novel ideas, products, services, and methods that offer enhanced benefits to human life. In this regard, innovation is essentially linked to human creativity. The essence of innovation is captured in the term “to innovate,” which denotes the act of making changes or introducing new elements (Syafaruddin, Asrul, & Mesiono, 2012).

In conclusion, educational innovation pertains to the introduction of novel approaches or improvements within the educational sector, specifically aimed at addressing educational challenges. Educational innovation encompasses an idea, product, or method that is perceived as novel by individuals or groups (such as society). This can result from either an invention (the creation of entirely new concepts) or a discovery (the modification of existing elements), and is employed to achieve educational goals or to address educational problems.

Principles of Educational Innovation

Peter M. Drucker, as cited by Hadi, Syaifullah, & Yusuf (2022), defines several principles of educational innovation: (1) Innovation necessitates a thorough analysis of available opportunities and possibilities, implying that the capacity for analysis is essential for the occurrence of innovation. (2) Innovation encompasses both conceptual and perceptual dimensions, initiating with the intent to create something novel that can gain societal acceptance. (3) Innovation should commence on a small scale; it does not invariably start with grand, unattainable ideas. Even modest aspirations to enhance conditions or address needs can eventually exert a significant impact on human life. (4) Innovation is oriented towards leadership or pioneering efforts. It is designed to ensure that its outcomes effectuate necessary changes; otherwise, the purpose of the innovation may become ambiguous and fail to receive societal recognition.

Targets and Goals of Educational Innovation

Educational innovation pertains to the development of novel approaches designed to address issues within the educational domain. It encompasses innovations related to various components of the education system, including both specific elements such as educational institutions and broader aspects such as the national education system (Rusdiana, 2014).

Innovation within the field of education can manifest in multiple forms, including both products and systems. For instance, product innovation might involve the development of a novel instructional tool by an educator, such as a mock-up learning device. Conversely, system innovation could entail the introduction of new pedagogical methods, such as implementing question-and-answer sessions or alternative techniques for material delivery in the classroom. These innovations are designed with specific purposes in mind, aiming to enhance the educational process and foster progress (Rusdiana, 2014).

Educational innovation, aimed at effectuating change within the educational sector, necessitates the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including innovators, central and local government, teachers, and students. The effectiveness of educational innovation is contingent not only on a few isolated factors but also on broader elements such as community involvement and the availability of resources. Critical factors influencing the success of educational innovation include teachers, students, the curriculum, facilities, and the specific programs or goals being pursued (Rusdiana, 2014).

Innovation functions as an alternative solution to existing problems, thus necessitating a comprehensive understanding of the problem as the preliminary step in the innovation development process (Rogers, 1983; Lehman, 1981). Following the identification of the problem, research and development (R&D) or curriculum evaluation is subsequently undertaken to facilitate the creation of the innovation (Syafaruddin dkk., 2012).

The primary goal of innovation is to enhance various capabilities, including human and financial resources, facilities, infrastructure, as well as organizational structures and procedures. Consequently, it is imperative that the entire system be improved to ensure that all intended objectives are achieved as efficiently as possible (Hasbullah, 2001, p. 189). The overarching goal of the Indonesian education system can be articulated as follows: Indonesia is currently endeavoring to keep pace with rapid global advancements in science and technology while ensuring that education is both accessible and available to all citizens (Rusdiana, 2014).

Innovative Methods in the Learning of Kitab Kuning

Classical Islamic texts, often referred to as “Kitab Kuning,” are integral to classical Islamic literature and encompass the written works of scholars and Muslim intellectuals. The use of yellow-tinted paper has emerged as a defining characteristic of these texts, thereby establishing a distinct brand identity for Kitab Kuning (yellow books) within the public’s perception.

In the pesantren tradition, Kitab Kuning represent a fundamental aspect of both identity and practice. As institutions dedicated to the study and advancement of Islamic sciences, pesantren regard Kitab Kuning as an integral component of their educational and cultural identity (Yusri, 2020). The principal characteristics of Kitab Kuning are as follows: (1) the texts are written in Arabic script; (2) they are typically devoid of vowel markings, punctuation, or commas; (3) they encompass Islamic knowledge; (4) the writing style is considered antiquated; (5) they are printed on yellow-colored paper; and (6) they are frequently studied at pesantren (Yusri, 2020).

The study of both classical and contemporary Arabic texts necessitates an understanding and mastery of several fundamental principles, including the grammar and rhetoric of the Arabic language. This is particularly crucial for the effective reading, analysis, and comprehension of classical Islamic texts, which involves the study of rhetoric (*balaghah*), syntax (*nahwu*), morphology (*sharaf*), and other pertinent linguistic rules. Consequently, students engaging with these classical texts often require an extended period of study. According to some sources, accurately reading and interpreting these texts in accordance

with Arabic linguistic and rhetorical norms may take between 5 to 15 years (Mu'izzuddin, Juhji, & Hasbullah, 2019).

Given that the study of classical Islamic texts has traditionally necessitated substantial time investment, and considering the rapid pace of advancements in science and technology, it is imperative to reassess the methodologies and strategies employed in learning these texts through traditional classical approaches. This reassessment should facilitate the refinement and integration of innovative techniques to accelerate the acquisition of classical Islamic texts (Madi & Badri, 2023).

SD Unggulan Assunniyyah Kencong, located in Jember Regency and operating under Pondok Pesantren Assunniyyah Kencong Jember, considers the implementation of a classical Islamic text learning program essential for advancing students' comprehension of religious studies. The study of Islamic literature written in Arabic poses a significant challenge, necessitating innovative approaches to effectively translate Arabic into Indonesian while adhering to the principles of *nahwu* and *sharaf*.

Based on the findings from the research and interviews conducted, this study presents an analysis of educational innovations related to *kitab kuning* learning methods at SD Unggulan Assunniyyah Kencong in Jember Regency. The method is designed for students at SD Assunniyyah who have completed the *munaqosyah* or final exam and are transitioning to the post-*munaqosyah* class. This post-*munaqosyah* class is divided into two programs: the *tahfidz* class and the *kitab* class. Students and their parents are given the option to choose between these two programs based on their learning preferences. The *tahfidz* class emphasizes the memorization of the Qur'an, beginning with Juz 30, then progressing to Juz 29 or Juz 1, with the average student graduating from SD Unggulan Assunniyyah Kencong Jember having memorized three juz of the Qur'an. Conversely, the *kitab* class focuses on the study of *nahwu* as applied to the *kitab Safinatunnaja*. Additionally, the *kitab* class maintains the tradition of memorizing Juz 30, which remains a requirement for all students at SD Unggulan Assunniyyah.

The *Kitab Kuning* learning method represents a recent innovation at SD Assunniyyah. This innovation was introduced at the request of the foundation's chairman, KH. Sadid Jauhari desiring to provide knowledge of *nahwu* and *sharaf* to elementary school students. Such innovation received support from various educators and parents wishing for their children to continue their education at a pesantren beyond elementary school. The primary goal of this program is to enable students to comprehend *nahwu* and *sharaf* as applied to the *kitab Safinatunnaja* within a relatively brief timeframe. Given that the typical entry age for students into the post-*munaqosyah* class is during the 5th grade of elementary school, the duration of enrollment generally does not exceed two years. However, individual learning paces vary; thus, a student may enter the post-*munaqosyah* class in the sixth grade and complete the program in a year, or enter in the fourth grade and remain for up to three years.

The method to learning *Kitab Kuning* employs a *nahwu* guidebook developed by the post-*munaqosyah* team. Unlike standard *nahwu* textbooks, which typically present the subject in a sequential format addressing sub-topics such as *kalam* (sentence) and *i'rob* (declension), the locally developed *nahwu* guidebook prioritizes the instruction of *kalimat isim* (nominal sentences) through an initial framework of 11 questions. This is succeeded by the exploration

of *kalimat fi'il* (verbal sentences), facilitated by a subsequent guide comprising 12 questions. The guidebook is designed with simplified language to ensure comprehensibility for elementary school students, thereby making the study of *nahwu*, also referred to as tool science, more accessible.

Each question in the guidebook is accompanied by its corresponding answer and several illustrative examples. The guidebook employs a systematic approach within the kitab Safinatunnaja. For instance, the questions include:

1. **What type of sentence is the following?**

Answer: Kalimat isim (nominal sentence)

2. **What are the indicators of a nominal sentence?**

Answer: The presence of alif lam and a final vowel mark of kasra (case marker placed below the final part of a noun and is uttered as the English short vowel /i/) at the end of the sentence.

3. **What is the structure of the sentence?**

Answer: Isim fa'il (subject noun)

These questions are repeated until the educator assesses those students are proficient in answering a variety of questions with different sentences.

In the context of *Kitab Kuning* learning, educators employ diverse instructional models to enhance students' comprehension of the Arabic language. The following is the learning model employed in this study:

1. Probing-Prompting Learning Model

The probing-prompting learning model is a teaching approach that assesses and develops students' understanding through a question-and-answer methodology. In this model, questions are categorized as positive if they facilitate the transition from an incorrect provisional response to a correct final answer. Conversely, questions are classified as negative when students transition from a correct answer to an incorrect one (Fadly, 2022).

In the Probing-Prompting learning model, the question-and-answer session involves the teacher selecting students to respond to posed questions while encouraging full participation from the entire class.

The model is characterized by several key features: (a) the teacher provides questions or quizzes designed to guide and deepen students' understanding; (b) the teacher encourages students to thoroughly explore a problem until they find the correct answer; (c) the teacher strategically selects students to answer questions; (d) students are actively engaged with challenges that require sustained concentration; and (e) this approach enhances students' involvement in articulating their responses, thereby fostering their confidence and skills in answering questions (Fadly, 2022).

2. Expository Learning Model

The Expository Learning Model is a teaching approach in which educators convey content primarily through verbal delivery or lectures, with students assuming the role of passive recipients aiming to master the material. This model is designed to enhance students' competencies by facilitating their engagement in feedback mechanisms, such as

question-and-answer interactions, which serve as indicators of students' mastery of the presented material.

This learning model is characterized by the following features: (a) interaction between students and the educator, wherein the educator delivers lectures to facilitate students' comprehension of the material, (b) the provision of feedback by students, who offer opinions based on their learning and engage in discussions with peers, (c) the demonstration of creative abilities by students, leading to the generation of complex outcomes, and (d) the implementation of supportive strategies aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the Expository Learning Model.

In addition to theoretical study of *nahwu*, students are also encouraged to apply their knowledge practically through the kitab *Safinatunnaja*. This text is selected for its conciseness and appropriateness for elementary school students, as endorsed by educators. The use of *Safinatunnaja* not only aids in the comprehension of Arabic grammar but also enhances students' understanding of Islamic practices, including purification, prayer, and fasting. The instructional approach involves utilizing Indonesian for meaning practice, given its accessibility for elementary students compared to Javanese, which is less commonly used in daily communication among current students. Indonesian is therefore chosen as the primary language for translating the kitab, facilitating clearer comprehension of certain structures (*tarkib*).

In addition to employing Indonesian meanings, students are instructed in Javanese interpretation methods to maintain the traditional Javanese approach to *Kitab Kuning* interpretation. The Javanese Pegon script is utilized for practical exercises with the kitab *Mabadi al-Fiqhiyyah*, conducted weekly on Fridays. The kitab class also incorporates various pesantren traditions, including the recitation of *nadẓom* or poetic verses prior to the lesson. This includes the recitation of works such as *Aqidatul Awwam*, *Syabrowi*, and *Tashrifan* from the kitab *Amsilah at-Tashrifiyah*. Furthermore, the class includes activities focused on enhancing Qur'anic recitation (*tahsin al-Qur'an*), and students are required to recite and submit memorized Juz 30 every Thursday.

The implementation of this learning approach demonstrates that students develop an understanding of Arabic grammar through straightforward theories, which they then apply directly to the kitab *Safinatunnaja*. The approach involves continuous repetition of questions until students can accurately identify the role of each word in a sentence. Once students are assessed as proficient, supplementary questions are introduced to provide additional theoretical and practical engagement.

This model has proven effective in significantly enhancing students' comprehension within a relatively brief timeframe. This effectiveness is attributed to the focus on practical application rather than extensive definitions. Upon mastering the initial questions, students are progressively introduced to more comprehensive theories of *nahwu* and *sharaf*.

CONCLUSION

The complex learning of *Kitab Kuning* has been systematically organized into a comprehensive educational framework encompassing curriculum design, allocation of instructional time, educational materials, and educator roles. This framework has resulted in

several key developments, including revisions to the curriculum structure for grades IV-VI. Specifically, the curriculum has been reorganized for students who have completed the Yanbu'a final examinations by creating two distinct learning groups: the *tahfidz* class and the *Kitab Kuning* class.

In the *Kitab Kuning* class, instructors with specialized expertise in classical Islamic texts guide students in mastering these texts according to the standards established by the institution. During the implementation of the *Kitab Kuning* curriculum, educators utilize teaching models informed by educational literature. The predominant teaching models employed at SD Unggulan Assunniyyah include: (a) the expository teaching model, and (b) the probing-prompting model. The latter model emphasizes interactive question-and-answer sessions between educators and students, addressing cognitive (intellectual), affective (attitudinal), and psychomotor (skill-based) dimensions in a balanced manner.

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