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## *Salaf and Khalaf* Strategy: Improving Reading Skill the Heritage Book in Islamic Boarding School

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### ABSTRACT

The ability to understand the heritage book is a fundamental thing a student must own in Islamic boarding schools. In their ability to read the heritage book, the students often find it difficult to read it, let alone understand it. But in understanding the heritage book, a student must have skills in understanding the grammatical Arabic (nahwu and sharaf) to read the heritage book. This study aims to determine the learning strategy for reading the heritage at the Islamic boarding school Al-Ittihad Cianjur. This study uses a phenomenological approach. This research belongs to qualitative research. Data collection is done by conducting observations, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out by reducing, presenting, and concluding data. The results showed: 1) Implementation of the learning strategy of the salaf and khalaf Islamic boarding schools at the Al-Ittihad Cianjur Islamic boarding school using the sorogan, bandongan, memorizing methods, giving mufradāt yaumiyyah (daily vocabulary), muhādasah yaumiyyah (daily conversation), heritage reading competition. 2) The reading ability of class XII students at the Al-Ittihad Cianjur Islamic boarding school is considered good because it is supported by learning Arabic in and outside the classroom. 3) Factors supporting the learning of the heritage book, namely the existence of teachers skilled in mastering the learning method, while the inhibiting factor for learning the heritage book is the level of student discipline is still low.

Arabic learning; heritage book; Islamic boarding school; khalaf; salaf

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### مستخلص البحث

إن القدرة على فهم كتب التراث أمر أساسي يجب أن يمتلكه التلاميذ في المعهد الإسلامي. يجد كثير من التلاميذ صعوبة في قدرتهم على قراءة كتب التراث. وفي فهم كتب التراث يجب أن يتمتع التلاميذ بمهارات فهم قواعد اللغة العربية (النحو والصرف) ليتمكن من قراءة كتب التراث. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد استراتيجية التعلم المستخدمة في قراءة التراث في معهد الاتحاد الإسلامي سيانجور. تستخدم هذه الدراسة المنهج الفينومينولوجي. تنتهي هذه الدراسة إلى الدراسة الكيفية. تم جمع البيانات عن طريق إجراء الملاحظات والمقابلات والتوثيق. تم تحليل البيانات عن طريق اختزال البيانات وعرضها واستنتاجها. أظهرت النتائج (1) تطبيق استراتيجية التعلم في معهد السلف والخلف في معهد الاتحاد الإسلامي سيانجور باستخدام أسلوب

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سوروجان وباندونجان والحفظ، وإعطاء المفردات اليومية، والمحادثة اليومية، ومسابقة القراءة التراثية. (٢) تعتبر القدرة القرائية لطلاب الصف الثاني عشر في معهد الاتحاد الإسلامي سيانجور جيدة لأنها مدعومة بتعلم اللغة العربية داخل الفصل الدراسي وخارجه. (٣) العوامل الداعمة لتعلم كتب التراث، وهي وجود معلمين ماهرين في إتقان طريقة التعلم، بينما العوامل المثبطة لتعلم كتب التراث هو أن مستوى انضباط الطلاب لا يزال منخفضاً.

الكلمات الرئيسية تعلم اللغة العربية؛ كتب التراث؛ المعهد الإسلامي؛ الخلف؛ السلف

## INTRODUCTION

In the life of a dynamic society, education has an essential role in determining the existence of a community and its development. This is because education is an effort to preserve, transfer, and transform cultural values in all aspects and types to the next generation (Adisasmito, 2008; Arifin, 1996; Goodarzarparvari & Camejo, 2018). Likewise with Islamic education, its existence is one form of embodiment of the ideals of Islamic life that can preserve, maintain and develop Islamic values for future generations so that religious culture can still function in the age of Islamic education in particular and society in general (Albar & Lestari, 2018; Bosra & Umiarso, 2021; Muchtarom, 2016).

Regarding Islamic education, Indonesia has many types and forms of institutions oriented towards Islamic education, such as schools, mosques, *majlis ta'lim*, and Islamic boarding schools. However, in this study, researchers will analyze and describe matters relating to Islamic education in Islamic boarding schools. Indeed, studying Islamic boarding schools or Islamic boarding schools as Islamic educational institutions is significant and exciting. Because Islamic boarding schools have a long history of developing the national education system in Indonesia (Wekke, 2015), in other words, Noor emphasized that Islamic Boarding Schools are traditional Islamic educational institutions that had long grown and developed in Indonesia long before public schools entered rural areas long before madrasas were established (Noor, 2009).

Furthermore, Islamic boarding schools, also known as *pesantren*, are traditional Islamic educational institutions that function as places for teaching science, character building, and preserving religious traditions. They are indeed faced with severe challenges. Even the traditional functions, such as transmitting and transferring Islamic knowledge, maintaining Islamic traditions, and reproducing the cleric, must be pursued. This means that Islamic Boarding Schools can survive in the face of modernization, especially in the modern education system (Azra, 1999).

In this modern era, Islamic Boarding Schools are Islamic educational institutions that get much attention from the private sector and the government. Many studies and research have focused on Islamic boarding schools in order to try to dig deeper into what is "actually" going on with Islamic boarding schools, such as the education system and curriculum that is applied, the customs of students, the influence of Islamic Boarding School on the surrounding community, as well as the involvement of kyai as Islamic Boarding School authority holders.

Islamic boarding schools played a significant role as early anti-colonial activists in Indonesia before independence. Even after the country gained independence, these institutions continued to hold a special place in the hearts of Indonesians. Ki Hajar Dewantara, a prominent figure in National Education and the inaugural Minister of Education, Teaching, and Culture of Indonesia, emphasized the pivotal role of *pesantren* in national education, highlighting their alignment with the essence and identity of Indonesia (Perwiranegara, 1982).

The Indonesian government acknowledges Islamic boarding schools and madrasas as fundamental pillars and primary contributors to national education, necessitating their development, guidance, and support. Oversight and advancement fall within the purview of the Ministry of Religion (Latif, 1983).

Within Islamic boarding schools, a dynamic interaction occurs between *kyai* or *ustaz*, educators, and their students, typically in the mosque or dormitory courtyards. Due to their historical significance, this interaction revolves around reciting and discussing classical Islamic texts, commonly called heritage books. Traditionally, these texts were printed on yellow paper and authored by ancient scholars, encompassing diverse Islamic knowledge such as *fiqh*, *hadith*, interpretation, and moral education. Heritage books are the sole formal instruction within the Islamic boarding school setting. They are categorized based on complexity into "small books" for foundational knowledge, "medium books" for intermediate level, and "big books" for advanced study (Departemen Agama RI, 2000).

Islamic boarding schools can be classified into two distinct categories: traditional Islamic boarding schools, which adhere to conventional teaching methods utilizing classical texts, often referred to as heritage books, and modern Islamic boarding schools, which seek to incorporate both classical teachings and contemporary educational practices seamlessly. Students are organized into grade levels within these institutions. It is important to note that the emphasis on studying classical texts has remained the same, with some becoming supplementary materials or integrated into formal school subjects. Additionally, traditional systems like *sorogan* and *band organ* have evolved into more individualized learning approaches or general assemblies for lectures (Zuhairini et al., 1995).

As the results of research conducted by Sauri, he emphasized that the *Salaf* and *Khalaf* (modern) Islamic Boarding Schools have developed and instilled Islamic values, including theological values that aim to strengthen the faith and devotion of students, increase worship, faith, *Sharia*, and develop Islamic morality. In addition, philosophical values focus on obedience to *kyai* and teachers, and teleological values are helpful for families and communities, regionally and nationally (Sauri et al., 2018).

Ibrahim has also researched the existence of *Salaf* Islamic Boarding School amid modern education. The results of his research show that the values maintained by Islamic Boarding Schools, including the curriculum used/recitation of the heritage book (classical), have a significant role in maintaining its existence amid global civilization (Ibrahim, 2014). Thus, apart from being the primary foundation for learning various sciences, teaching the heritage book also maintains the educational tradition in Islamic boarding schools.

Based on the statement above, the ability to understand the heritage book is a fundamental thing a student must own. However, in understanding the heritage book, a student must have skills in understanding the grammatical Arabic (*nahwu* and *sharaf*) to read the heritage book (Hamid, 2021) In their ability to read the heritage book; the students often find it difficult to read the heritage book, let alone understand it. The results of Sudrajat's research emphasize this problem that the difficulty in mastering the four

language skills, especially reading skills in the heritage book, is caused by the student's knowledge of Arabic grammatical aspects still needs to improve (Sudrajat, 2021).

Thus, grammatical mastery of Arabic helps students master the four skills of Arabic, especially reading skills. In line with this, the Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School integrates the *learning of the Salaf* and *Khalaf* Islamic boarding schools, especially in improving students' Arabic language skills. Both strategies generally study and read the classic heritage texts in Arabic, which are led directly by the cleric and have programs to speak Arabic and English in daily conversation (Aswir & Misbah, 2018; Nihwan & Paisun, 2019; Rangkuti, 2018; Solahudin et al., 2020).

Therefore, in this study, researchers are interested in researching the learning strategy of the *Salaf* and *Khalaf* Islamic boarding schools applied by the Al-Ittihad Cianjur Islamic boarding school in West Java to improve reading skills in the heritage book.

## METHOD

In this study, the researcher employed a unique qualitative descriptive method. Simultaneously, the approach used was a distinctive phenomenological approach, designed to unveil phenomena and reality. This type of qualitative research, with its phenomenological approach, delves into in-depth and detailed observations, providing a closer understanding of individual experiences. The primary aim of phenomenological research is to interpret and explain the experiences of a person, including their interactions with others and the surrounding environment. In the context of qualitative research, a phenomenon is viewed as something that exists and is perceived by the researcher in a specific way, making the process clear and tangible. Phenomenological research is focused on discovering, studying, and explaining the meaning of phenomena and events, as well as their relation to individuals in specific situations.

With this approach, it is hoped that researchers will obtain in-depth information about various matters relating to 1) The implementation of the *Salaf* and *Khalaf* Islamic Boarding School learning strategy at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School in Cianjur using the method of *sorogan* and classical or modern. 2) The ability to read the heritage book of students at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School in Cianjur using the classical and modern methods that support learning Arabic. 3) Supporting and inhibiting factors of the *Salaf* and *Khalaf* Islamic Boarding School learning strategy at Al-Ittihad Cianjur Islamic Boarding School.

In this case, the parties who are the subject of research are 1) Deputy Leaders at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur. 2) Class XII students at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur. 3) Documents and archives that support the primary data source. The essential steps and procedures in carrying out a phenomenological study, according to (Creswell, 1998), are determining the scope of the phenomenon to be studied, preparing a list of questions, collecting data, analyzing data, and reporting research results.

Data is collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis is done by reducing the data. The resulting condensed data provides a clearer overview, facilitating the researcher's data collection and retrieval efforts as required, presenting the data, and concluding the data.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### The Implementation of *Salaf* and *Khalaf* Islamic Boarding School Learning in the Heritage Book Learning

Al-Ittihad Cianjur Islamic Boarding School is an Islamic boarding school model of traditional and modern integrative education at Al-Ittihad Cianjur Islamic boarding school, which can be seen from the curriculum, which is also the hallmark of this Islamic boarding school. Namely, it is a combination of the curriculum of the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School (*salaf*), Gontor Islamic Boarding School (*khalaf*), and the Ministry of National Education. Its realization lies in the establishment of schools (formal education), namely Junior High Schools, Senior High Schools, and Vocational High Schools. Apart from teaching public school lessons, the Al-Ittihad Islamic boarding school also teaches heritage books and foreign languages, which are no less dominant than general lessons.

The heritage book, a significant part of Islamic culture, is not only included in the school curriculum but also taught in Islamic boarding schools during non-school hours. This dedication to preserving the heritage is further demonstrated in the daily conversations of the students, who use foreign languages such as English and Arabic. Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School's strategy is a testament to its commitment to maintaining its identity as an Islamic educational institution while fostering global understanding.

In line with this, based on the results of an interview with the deputy leadership at Al-Ittihad Cianjur Islamic Boarding School:

*Educational priorities at the Al-Ittihad Cianjur Islamic boarding school are divided into three: the yellow book. This yellow book study is carried out three times a day. Second, the use of Arabic and English as the flagship program. Third is general knowledge and technology, where students receive formal education at Islamic boarding schools.*

The results of the interviews show that learning related to Arabic is a flagship program, where learning Arabic is reinforced by reciting the yellow book and using foreign languages every week. Thus, the Al-Ittihad Islamic boarding school integrates the learning strategy of the *Salaf* and *Khalaf* Islamic boarding schools in improving Arabic language skills. Tolinggi believes that the hallmark of the *Salaf* Islamic boarding school is applying classical learning methods by making classic books, namely the heritage book, as textbook references (Al Farisi et al., 2022; Tolinggi, 2020). The distinctive features of the *Khalaf* Islamic boarding school are the emphasis on foreign language conversations and having formal schools under the curriculum of the Ministry of Education and Culture or the Ministry of Religion (Nasir & Maisah, 2022; Qadariyah, 2019).

In other words, apart from reciting the heritage book to improve Arabic language skills, especially reading skills, Arabic is also a foreign language that must be used as a mandatory language of communication for all students studying at the pesantren. Based on interviews, observations, and documentation conducted by researchers during the research process, it shows that in its development, the Al-Ittihad Islamic boarding school reinforced the student's language skills. The curriculum was developed by including the most significant portion in supporting the learning process of mastering Arabic (Mustofa & Arsita, 2023).

The heritage book learning method, a cornerstone of education in Islamic boarding schools, is a topic of significant interest. The method applied at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding



School Cianjur, while not radically different from those used by other pesantren in Indonesia, offers unique insights and approaches.

As explained by the US, one of the teachers at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur:

*Heritage book learning in this pesantren is carried out three times: in the morning, afternoon, and evening. In its implementation, there are differences between these times; for example, the band organ method is used in the morning, so all students immediately listen to what the ustaz says together. Now it is different if in the afternoon, the learning system is sorogan, that is, students submit the reading of the heritage book to the ustaz, to be listened to and corrected if there are errors. In addition to such classical methods, al-Ittihad also applies modern methods in learning Arabic, such as memorization, giving daily vocabulary, daily conversation, and reading the heritage book competition. This is done by grouping students based on their respective grade levels.*

This is in accordance with several existing studies. Some methods that are in accordance with the method inherited from *salaf* scholars are: a) classical method (a combination of conventional methods) where students are tiered and classed, b) bandongan method where students listen/follow what the *ustaz* says, c) sorogan method where the *ustaz* listens/follows what the students say, d) discussion method as problem solving, and e) memorization method is a method for remembering teaching materials (Adib, 2021; Akbar & Ismail, 2018; Ifendi, 2021).

The heritage book learning process at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur is carried out three times, starting in the morning, afternoon, and evening. In the learning process, Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur prepares plans and applies specific methods to carry out the learning. The implementation of the learning that took place at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur can be seen in the following table.

**Table 1.** The implementation of the heritage book learning at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur

No	Time	Heritage Book Name	Participant
1	After Subuh 05.00-06.00	<i>Mantiq</i>	Class XII students
2	After Ashar 16.00-17.00	<i>Balaghah</i>	Class XII students
3	After Maghrib 18.30-19.30	<i>Alfiyah</i>	Class XII students

Seeing the vital importance of the heritage book in all these learnings, several teachers of Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur took the initiative to provide additional guidance programs, namely guidance on reading and understanding the heritage book to the students with the sorogan method. However, given the hectic schedule of learning activities, the guidance for reading and understanding the heritage book with the sorogan method can only be carried out twice a week, namely every Monday night, Tuesday to Thursday night, and Friday from 22.00 WIB until finished at the mosque. As stated by teacher AAQ;

*You see, sir, the sorogan method is carried out twice a week because, considering the activities in this Islamic boarding school, every day is hectic. Also, the sorogan method requires careful preparation, so this lesson is scheduled for Tuesday night until Friday evening, and the book studied is the Fatbul Mu'in book.*

Considering the density of activities in Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur, the guidance program for reading and understanding the heritage book with the *sorogan*

(*Salafi*) method in its implementation does not indicate that the guidance program is mandatory for students. This can be seen from the enthusiasm of Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur students. Of the many students willing to participate in *sorogan*, only 50 students are willing to take part in the guidance on reading and understanding the heritage book with the *sorogan* method.

The assumption of the students who do not want to take part in the guidance on reading and understanding the heritage book with the *sorogan* method on the grounds of a high level of difficulty so that extra preparation is needed is in line with the statement from AN about the implementation of the *sorogan* method itself.

### **Ability to Read the Heritage Book of Students at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School**

One of the pivotal factors in comprehending the contents of the heritage book is the ability to read, specifically the Arabic reading skills of a santri. This ability is not just necessary, it's the key to success in understanding the heritage books. The habituation and training in reading the heritage book are not just efforts, they are the result of your educators' dedication and guidance, which are essential for improving your ability to understand the heritage book (Hidayah, 2023).

Based on the researcher's interview with AN he said:

*Salaf and Khalaf learning support students' reading ability at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur. The Salaf method uses the Sorogan method, and the Khalaf Islamic boarding school has Arabic language learning. This helps students read the heritage book because they master the mufradat and meaning from the Arabic in the heritage book.*

The ability to read the heritage book of students at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur is related to the heritage books *Balaghah*, *Mantiq*, and *Usul fiqh*. Learning *Salaf* Islamic Boarding School with the *sorogan* method and *Khalaf* Islamic Boarding School with the classical method makes it easier for students to be proficient in reading the heritage book at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur.

In another study, it was stated that the *sorogan* method is one of the factors that play an essential role in the framework of success to improve the ability to read the heritage book (Nurjanah, 2018), besides the use of *bandongan* and *sorogan* methods, is very effective in improving the reading ability of students in *pesantren* (Mu'izzuddin et al., 2019).

### **Inhibiting and Supporting Factors**

In the practice of implementing learning activities, we often encounter inhibiting and supporting factors. The inhibiting and supporting factors in learning the Heritage Book at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur cannot be separated from time, materials, facilities, infrastructure, students, and teachers.

The perspective on the inhibiting and supporting factors in learning the Heritage book at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur is provided by AN. According to him:

*Suppose the supporting factor is that most students are making most of them, so the control is more accessible than students who are not staying. In that case, the students here have a level of awareness embedded in each of them.*

AJ also added another opinion. He added that:

*Apart from the fact that the students live here, the supporting factor is the teacher's ability. Thank God, most of the teachers here come from Islamic boarding schools, so they are easy and proficient.*

*In addition, the completeness of the existing facilities and infrastructure in Islamic boarding schools is also one of the supporting factors.*

From this, the more crucial supporting factor is that the students who live in the stay are more accessible to control, so implementing learning is very effective. The awareness arises and is embedded in the students because they already have awareness. Hence, it becomes easy because there is no element of coercion but a sense of wanting to be able to learn.

*While the inhibiting factors in learning the obstacles usually come late, often permission to leave the cottage because they have a business, some say they are sick. Some sleep, but I understand the reason, hindering the learning process.*

From the interviews above, the factors that hinder learning the heritage book in Islamic boarding schools include very little study time, while other learning is dense. The efforts made by teachers to overcome these obstacles with the aim that students can always actively participate in learning the heritage book, as stated by AN in his interview, are as follows:

*Yes, the point is to remind all students always to study the book seriously and to divide their study time to the maximum, then keep reminding students to come on time so that activities are maximized.*

In learning the Heritage book at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School, Cianjur used the sorogan method as a characteristic of the *Salaf* Islamic Boarding School (Traditional) and the Classical Method as the hallmark of the *Khalaf* Islamic Boarding School (Modern). Grammar in Arabic is known as *al-qawa'id*, in which there are two interrelated elements: the science of *Nahwu* and the science of *Sharaf*. *Nahwu* science is one of the branches of Arabic language science that can be used to read Arabic writings, most of which have no character. At the same time, the science of *Sharaf* is used to change the forms of words according to the desired harakat. Thus, the knowledge of *Nahwu* and *Sharaf* is taught to students to have excellent and correct Arabic language skills in reading (Mustofa, 2020).

Studying the science of *Nahwu* and *Sharaf* has many purposes, as M. Solihudin said that "*Abu al-'ilmi*" is the name scholars give to the science of *Nahwu* because this science aims to prevent oral errors in pronouncing Arabic kalam, as well as "is." '*anab*' (because) in understanding the Qur'an and Hadith. *Nahwu* science is also called tool science because all religious sciences, such as *fiqh*, monotheism, and all Arabic-language sciences, will be easy to understand because of *Nahwu* science (Hidayat & Purwani, 2023; Nursyamsiyah, 2021; Sanusi et al., 2020).

In reading the heritage book, one must master the science of nahwu and Sharaf, so it is necessary to master the science. *Nahwu* and *sharaf* themselves are subjects that are pretty difficult for students to master. In practice, learning *nahwu* (in particular) at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur, like other Islamic boarding schools, generally takes several years, with a multilevel learning system, from the basic level marked by the *Aj-Jurumiyah* class, the middle class which marked by the *Al-Imrithi* class and the upper class which is marked by the *Alfiyah* class. Mastery of the science of *nahwu* and *sharaf* also does not necessarily follow the guidance program for reading and understanding the heritage book with the sorogan method because it also requires mastery of Arabic and its meaning into Indonesian as applied in reading the heritage book at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur.



Mastering *nabwu* and *sbaraf* knowledge can affect the students' reading ability at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur, as described by the Ustaz at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur. As for the inhibiting and supporting factors in learning the Heritage Book at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School, Cianjur cannot be separated from time, materials, facilities, infrastructure, students, and teachers in learning the Heritage book.

## CONCLUSIONS

The *Salaf* and *Khalaf* Islamic Boarding School Learning strategy in the ability to read the Heritage book at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur is divided into two elements: 1) The heritage book learning based on the *Salaf* Islamic Boarding School at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur is carried out in three times, starting from morning, afternoon and night. In the learning process, Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur planned and applied the sorogan and bandongan methods in carrying out the learning. 2) The *Khalaf* Islamic Boarding School learning is carried out in formal learning, namely by grade level.

In addition, reading the Heritage book of students is good because it is supported by learning from the *Salaf* and *Khalaf Islamic* Boarding Schools through the proper method at Al-Ittihad Islamic Boarding School Cianjur. The supporting factor in learning *Salaf* and *Religious* boarding schools is the existence of educators with backgrounds from *Salaf Islamic* Boarding Schools such as the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School and Gontor Modern Boarding School. The inhibiting factor is the student's lack of discipline, including being late to class, having permission to leave the cottage because they have a business, some saying they are sick, and some sleeping.

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