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Human Resource Management Based on Cadre Development and Academic Development to Support the Quality of the 'Kitab Kuning' Learning Process in Islamic Boarding Schools

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Abstract. The teaching of classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning) in Islamic boarding schools requires teachers (ustadz) who have a thorough grasp of the texts' content and are able to explain them to the students (santri). This study aims to analyse how the management of teachers supports the quality of the teaching process for classical Islamic texts at the API ASRI 2 Islamic Boarding School in Bandongan, Magelang. The study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data from interviews with the boarding school's elders, the Qori'in committee, a teacher, and three students were analysed through pattern matching and the construction of explanations. The results of the study indicate that the number of classes forms the basis for estimating teaching staff requirements, whilst the type of text serves as a reference for mapping the necessary expertise. The boarding school prioritises senior alumni based on observations of their character, moral conduct and depth of knowledge whilst they were students. Through textbook deliberations, teachers harmonise their understanding of the material and exchange teaching methods. Monthly evaluations cover the teachers' performance and the students' learning outcomes. This research highlights two key roles played by the management of teachers in supporting the quality of the learning process. The recruitment of alumni helps the pesantren provide teachers who are familiar with its scholarly traditions, whilst the text-based discussions provide a space for teachers to develop their methods of explaining the text's content to students.

Keywords: Human Resources Management, Alumni Development, Textual Discussions, Classical Islamic Texts Studies, Islamic Boarding Schools

Abstrak. *Pembelajaran kitab kuning di pesantren memerlukan ustadz yang menguasai isi kitab dan mampu menjelaskannya kepada santri. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana pengelolaan ustadz mendukung mutu proses pembelajaran kitab kuning di Pondok Pesantren API ASRI 2 Bandongan Magelang. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data wawancara dengan sesepuh pesantren, pengurus Qori'in, seorang ustadz, dan tiga santri dianalisis melalui pencocokan pola dan pembangunan penjelasan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa jumlah kelas menjadi dasar untuk memperkirakan kebutuhan pengajar, sedangkan jenis kitab menjadi acuan untuk memetakan keahlian yang diperlukan. Pesantren memprioritaskan alumni senior berdasarkan pengamatan terhadap karakter, akhlak, dan kedalaman ilmu mereka selama menjadi santri. Melalui musyawarah kitab, ustadz menyamakan pemahaman atas materi dan bertukar cara mengajar. Evaluasi bulanan mencakup kinerja ustadz dan capaian belajar santri. Penelitian ini memperjelas dua peran pengelolaan ustadz dalam mendukung mutu proses pembelajaran. Kaderisasi alumni membantu pesantren menyediakan pengajar yang mengenal tradisi*

keilmuannya, sedangkan musyawarah kitab memberi ruang bagi ustadz untuk mengembangkan cara menjelaskan isi kitab kepada santri.

Kata Kunci: *Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia, Kaderisasi Alumni, Musyawarah Kitab, Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning, Pesantren*

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INTRODUCTION

The study of classical Islamic texts forms part of the scholarly tradition of Islamic boarding schools, enabling Islamic knowledge to be passed down from one generation to the next (Fikri dkk., 2025; Izmi, 2022; Salam dkk., 2025). During this process, the ustadz helps the santri to read, interpret and understand the contents of the text. This role takes place within the educational environment of the pesantren, which also prioritises personal and character development as an integral part of the santri's education (Chandra, 2020; Najib, 2020). A study on the quality of teaching from the 'kitab kuning' has identified programme management and the delivery of teaching as key factors in understanding how students learn from the 'kitab' (Adhawiyah, 2022; Hidayah, 2023). As far as teaching staff are concerned, the issue is how Islamic boarding schools can provide teachers who have a thorough grasp of the subject matter whilst also giving them the opportunity to develop their own teaching methods.

From a human resources management perspective, planning, recruitment, placement, development and performance appraisal help organisations meet their workforce requirements and develop their capabilities (Dessler & Varkkey, 2020). Planning for teaching staff at Islamic educational institutions must be based on the institution's needs and the skills required to carry out teaching duties (Farid dkk., 2025). In the teaching of classical Islamic texts, these considerations include the number of teachers required and the expertise appropriate to the texts to be taught. A study on human resource management in Islamic boarding schools also highlights the development of educators' competencies and its link to the quality of education and the learning of students (Maskar, 2025; Murzaki dkk., 2026; Riduwan, 2023; Tulili dkk., 2025).

Previous research has shown that there are variations in the ways in which Islamic boarding schools recruit and develop teaching staff. Hasanah et al. demonstrated that the recruitment of teachers at the As-Sa'adiyah Islamic Boarding School in Samarinda utilises internal networks, including alumni (Hasanah dkk., 2023). Adisaputro and Solechan found that MA Sunan Kalijaga Pakuncen employs internal recruitment, taking into account loyalty and competence (Adisaputro & Solechan, 2025). These findings indicate that internal recruitment requires a shared understanding of the criteria used by the institution to assess prospective teachers. Mustofa et al. found that a needs analysis precedes the recruitment and placement of ustadz, taking into account their field of expertise (Mustofa dkk., 2023). Meanwhile, (Jazuli dkk., 2025) indicates that the An Nur II Bululawang Islamic Boarding School prioritises alumni whilst continuing to use tests and a probationary period, and develops educators through various activities, including the study of religious texts. Building on this analysis, this study examines two more specific issues: how

observations made during the students' time at the pesantren are used to assess prospective teachers, and how the exchange of ideas amongst teachers during scriptural discussions is applied when explaining material to the students.

Both of these issues were examined at the API ASRI 2 Islamic Boarding School in Bandongan, Magelang. The training of new teachers was analysed through the use of alumni's academic backgrounds, character and moral conduct as the basis for recruitment decisions. Academic development was examined through book-based discussions, which serve as a forum for teachers to align their understanding of the material and exchange teaching methods. This focus links two stages in the management of teachers: the assessment of prospective teachers prior to their appointment and the development of teaching methods once they have begun teaching. The relationship between these two stages and the quality of learning was examined at the process level, particularly in terms of how teachers explain the content of the texts and adapt their explanations when students encounter difficulties.

This study aims to analyse the planning of teacher requirements based on the number of classes and types of texts, recruitment based on the training of alumni, as well as academic considerations in the allocation of teachers; academic development through 'musyawarah kitab'; and the evaluation of teachers' performance in the teaching of classical Islamic texts. Through these four aspects, this study explains how Islamic boarding schools provide teachers who are familiar with their scholarly traditions whilst also allowing ustadz the freedom to develop their own methods of conveying the content of the texts to students.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a single-case study design (Yin, 2017). The case studied concerns the management of ustadz in the teaching of classical Islamic texts at the API ASRI 2 Islamic Boarding School in Bandongan, Magelang. The study covers the planning of ustadz requirements, recruitment based on the training of alumni, and academic considerations in the allocation of teachers; academic development through Kitab discussions; and the evaluation of ustadz performance. A case study design was employed to examine how these practices unfold within the context of the pesantren and in relation to the teaching of classical Islamic texts.

The primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with six informants who were purposively selected based on their involvement in the management or study of the 'kitab kuning'. The informants comprised an elder of the pesantren, a Qori'in committee member, a Qori'in ustadz, and three students from Years 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Interviews with the senior figure and the committee member explored the basis for planning requirements and the recruitment of ustadz. Interviews with the committee member and the ustadz examined the implementation of the kitab deliberations and evaluations. Interviews with the santri were used to understand their experiences whilst attending the ustadz's explanations in class. Photographic documentation was used to illustrate the learning context.

The data were analysed using pattern matching and explanatory modelling (Yin, 2017). During the pattern-matching stage, the informants' accounts were grouped according to the four aspects of the research and compared with the human resource management framework employed. During the explanation-building stage, these accounts were analysed to elucidate the relationship between the ustadz's management decisions and teaching practices. For example, the elders' accounts regarding the recording of data on students, classes and textbooks were examined

alongside the administrators' explanations of how this data was used to estimate the number of teachers required and to map out the necessary skills.

The validity of the data was checked through source triangulation by comparing the informants' accounts in accordance with their respective roles and experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997). In terms of planning, the explanations provided by the elders are compared with those given by the administrators. In terms of learning, the ustadz's comments on how to present the material are considered alongside the students' experiences regarding the types of explanations that helped them understand the content of the text. The implementation of the outcomes of the classroom discussions is presented through the ustadz's own account, whilst the link between the monthly evaluations and changes to teaching methods is limited to the information provided.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The management of teachers at the API ASRI 2 Islamic Boarding School in Bandongan, Magelang, is based on the need to teach classical Islamic texts. The management estimates the number of teachers required based on the number of classes and the types of texts, whilst the boarding school considers senior alumni as a source of teaching staff. Once the teachers have begun teaching, text-based discussions provide a forum for discussing the material and teaching methods. Monthly evaluations cover the teachers' performance and the students' learning outcomes.

Planning for the Ustadz's Needs

The Islamic boarding school determines its teaching staff requirements based on the class structure and the textbooks to be taught in the new academic year. During a joint meeting with the supervisors, the number of new students is used to determine which classes need to be opened. Once the number of classes and the types of textbooks are known, the management checks whether the teaching requirements can be met by the available teaching staff. Fatma Dwi Wahyuni, a member of the Qori'in management team, explained this sequence of considerations.

> *"Together with the supervisors, we look at several factors. The number of students determines the number of classes; the number of classes determines how many teachers are needed; the types of textbooks determine the expertise required; and the existing teachers determine whether we need to recruit new ones or not."*

This explanation clarifies the two decisions resulting from the planning process. The number of classes is used to estimate the number of teachers, whilst the type of religious texts is used to determine the expertise required. The decision to recruit additional teachers depends on an assessment of the teachers already available. The boarding school's elders also explained that the allocation of teachers is based on the needs of the classes and the content of the religious texts. This means that teaching requirements are established once the curriculum has been finalised, whilst the need for new recruits is determined after this plan has been compared with the availability of teachers.

Alumni Recruitment and Placement of Ustadz

The pesantren uses its knowledge of the students gained during their time at the institution as the basis for considering prospective teachers from among senior alumni. Recruitment takes place without an open call for applications or an administrative selection process. According to Achmad Halimi, a senior figure at the pesantren, the character, moral conduct and depth of knowledge of prospective teachers have been observed over several years before they are considered for teaching roles. *"The ustadz who teach the classical Islamic texts here are, on average, the result*

of internal succession planning that is, senior alumni whose character, moral conduct and depth of knowledge we have observed over many years whilst they were students."

This observation during their time as students provides the pesantren with a basis for assessing prospective teachers when the need arises. The pesantren elders also link the priority given to alumni to efforts to preserve the sanad and continue the teaching tradition. Alumni are already familiar with the learning methods at the pesantren, having previously followed this teaching tradition as students themselves.

The process of mapping out teacher placements involves more specific considerations. The Qori'in management uses the type of text as a reference for determining the required expertise. An alumnus's track record whilst a student provides the basis for considering who might be recruited, whilst the scholarly requirements of the text provide the basis for determining what expertise is needed for the assignment. The interviews highlighted both of these considerations, but did not provide detailed examples of teachers being assigned to specific texts or classes.

Academic Development through Book Discussions

The textbook discussion session serves as a forum for the ustadz to discuss two issues they face before teaching: how to understand the textbook material and how to convey it to the students. The forum, scheduled for the beginning of this month, is also used to discuss the tamrinan and imtichan programmes. One of the ustadz, Qori'in, explained that the key issues he wishes to discuss sometimes only emerge once the teachers have gathered. He then gave an example of how the exchange of teaching methods in the forum is applied in his own classroom. *"During the lesson, we'll use what we discussed in the meeting to align our understanding by exchanging ideas on methods so that when I apply them in my class, the lesson flows more coherently."*

In this teacher's experience, the outcome of the meeting is evident in the way he structures his explanations whilst teaching. The exchange between teachers provides input that can be directly applied in the classroom. The opportunity to receive such feedback depends on the meetings actually taking place. When the discussion schedule clashes with boarding school activities or a teacher is unable to attend, the meeting may be postponed. Ustadz Qori'in explained that postponements can result in either a replacement meeting or the session being missed altogether. *"Sometimes it's rescheduled for the following week; sometimes it's simply missed, as there are no fixed rules regarding this yet."*

This indicates that the discussions provide an opportunity to link the subject matter to teaching practice, whilst the availability of such opportunities from month to month still depends on the presence of the ustadz and the boarding school's schedule.

Performance Appraisal of the Ustadz

The monthly evaluation covers the performance of the ustadz and the students' learning outcomes. A member of the Qori'in management explained that the end-of-month evaluation involves observing the ustadz, conducting oral tests of students during lessons, and holding consultations amongst the teaching staff. From the teachers' perspective, the Qori'in ustadz cited late arrival for lessons and a lack of variety in the delivery of material as issues that emerged during the evaluation. He explained that lateness can reduce the time available to explain the contents of the text. When teaching time is reduced, teachers sometimes only have time to translate the text or provide a brief explanation.

The students' accounts clarified the difference they perceive between having the text translated and receiving an explanation of its content. A Year 3 student described how teachers differ in the explanations they provide after translating the text. For him, examples from everyday

life help him to understand the material, whilst explanations that are too brief make the text's content difficult to grasp. *"Sometimes I understand, sometimes I don't. I understand when the teacher gives examples of things we do in our daily lives. Sometimes I get confused if the explanation is only brief."*

Second year students described different forms of support. When a student asked a question, the teacher repeated the explanation in a way that was easier to understand. Both students' accounts shed light on aspects of teaching that they experienced first-hand, namely the adequacy of explanations following the translation of texts, the use of examples, and the opportunity to receive further clarification. Figure 1 illustrates the classroom situation that formed the context for these learning experiences.



Figure 1. Study of the 'kitab kuning' at the API ASRI 2 Islamic boarding school in Bandongan, Magelang

Findings relating to the evaluation aspect indicate that the pesantren assesses the performance of the ustadz and the santri's learning outcomes in monthly evaluations. The ustadz's comments highlight the time available to explain the content of the textbook, whilst the santri's comments clarify the types of explanations that help them understand the material, namely everyday examples and restatements.

Table 1. Research Findings on the Role of Ustadz in the Teaching of Classical Islamic Texts

Aspect	Research Findings
Planning for the needs of religious teachers	The management uses the number of classes to determine the number of teachers required and the type of textbook to determine the required expertise. The decision to appoint additional teachers is taken after checking the availability of teachers.
Recruitment of alumni and placement of religious teachers	Observation of character, moral conduct and depth of knowledge during the students' time at the boarding school forms the basis for the recruitment of senior alumni. The type of religious text studied serves as a guide for identifying the expertise required for specific assignments.

Aspect	Research Findings
Academic development through scholarly discussions	The meetings bring together discussions on the content of the text with an exchange of teaching methods. A teacher applies the insights gained from these exchanges to organise the sequence of explanations in class. The forum does not always take place every month.
Performance appraisal of religious teachers	The evaluation covers the performance of the ustadz's duties and the students' learning outcomes. The teachers' accounts indicate that there is limited time to explain the content of the textbook, whilst the students' experiences highlight the role of everyday examples and further explanations in understanding the material.

Discussion

The management of teachers at the API ASRI 2 Islamic boarding school in Bandongan, Magelang, highlights two interrelated issues: how the boarding school provides teachers who have a thorough grasp of the religious texts, and how teachers develop methods for explaining these texts to the students. Dessler and Varkkey's human resource management framework helps to distinguish the functions of planning and recruitment from those of development and performance appraisal (Dessler & Varkkey, 2020). In the context of this research, the need to study the 'kitab kuning' provides direction for these functions. The type of text forms the basis for mapping teachers' expertise, whilst the issues encountered in the classroom serve as material for the ustadz to discuss how the subject matter is delivered.

When planning for teaching staff requirements, the number of classes determines the need in terms of the number of teachers, whilst the type of textbook determines the need in terms of specialist expertise. By assessing the availability of teaching staff once these two requirements have been mapped out, the management can determine whether the Islamic boarding school needs to recruit additional teachers. This finding is consistent with the results of the research (Hidayatullah dkk., 2024; Mustofa dkk., 2023), which indicates that a needs analysis was carried out prior to the recruitment of teaching staff. The study also found that the placement of ustadz took into account their academic specialisms. In the context of the API ASRI 2 Islamic Boarding School in Bandongan, Magelang, these considerations are specified at the level of the subject matter to be taught, namely the type of religious text planned for each class. The findings of this study explain the basis for mapping expertise, whilst the alignment between teachers' expertise and the texts they actually teach still requires data on their actual teaching assignments.

The distinctive nature of the training programme at the API ASRI 2 Islamic boarding school in Bandongan, Magelang, is evident in the way the school obtains information about prospective teachers. Hasanah et al. found that recruitment takes place through family connections and internal networks, including alumni (Hasanah dkk., 2023). Jazuli pointed out that the recruitment of teaching staff gives priority to alumni and involves a selection process comprising tests and a probationary period. (Jazuli dkk., 2025). In this study, the elders of the pesantren emphasised the importance of observing the character, moral conduct and depth of knowledge of prospective ustadz whilst they were still santri. The santri's period of education is also the time when the pesantren gets to know its prospective teachers. The knowledge acquired during this period is

utilised when the need for an ustadz arises. According to the elders of the pesantren, the alumni's familiarity with the pesantren's traditions is also a consideration in preserving the sanad and continuing the method of teaching religious texts.

Academic background helps Islamic boarding schools assess prospective teachers, whilst students' experiences highlight the challenges teachers face once they begin teaching. The concept of pedagogical content knowledge from (Shulman, 1986) helps to explain the difference between mastering the content of a text and presenting that content in a way that the students can understand. In this context, the difference becomes apparent once the text has been translated. Third-year students found it helpful when the ustadz linked his explanations to everyday examples, whilst second-year students highlighted the benefits of having the material re-explained in simpler terms. These experiences provided a basis for discussing the quality of the learning process through the way the ustadz unpacked the meaning of the text and adapted his explanations when students encountered difficulties.

The textbook discussion forum provides a space for teachers to develop their teaching methods through exchanges between educators. Madani discusses the muzakarah as a learning activity for students, with teachers overseeing the process (Madani, 2025; Putri dkk., 2026). At the API ASRI 2 Islamic Boarding School in Bandongan, Magelang, the deliberations under study serve as a learning forum for teachers to discuss their understanding of the content of the textbook as well as how to convey it in class. The professional development framework from (Sims dkk., 2025) help to interpret the relationship between these exchanges and improvements in teaching practice. One teacher, for example, reported that he used the outcomes of the discussions to organise the sequence of his explanations so that they were more coherent. These findings complement the research (Sunardi & Mujtaba, 2025) which identifies methodological training as part of teachers' professional development, demonstrating that peer-learning forums can also lead to improvements in teaching practice. However, the sustainability of this process depends on the regularity of these meetings, particularly when the boarding school's schedule conflicts and alternative timetables have not yet been finalised. This issue relates to the findings (Zad dkk., 2025) regarding the importance of organising the timetable for activities and teacher training in the management of non-formal educational institutions. In the context of API ASRI 2, organising the timetable and arranging make-up sessions are necessary to ensure that opportunities for teachers to learn together can continue on an ongoing basis.

Monthly evaluations provide the management with the opportunity to assess the performance of the teachers and the students' achievements side by side. Observations of teachers provide information on the delivery of lessons, whilst oral tests demonstrate the students' ability to understand the material studied. The use of these two sources of information is in line with the Talis report, which emphasises the importance of diverse sources of evidence when providing feedback to teachers, including observations of classroom practice (OECD, 2020). A study by (Aziz dkk., 2024) It also includes the supervision of teachers as part of efforts to improve the quality of Islamic religious education. In the context of this study, observations of teachers and oral tests of students can serve as a basis for identifying learning issues and determining appropriate follow-up measures. Teachers' tardiness, for example, is linked to a reduction in teaching time, whilst students' difficulties in understanding the content of the textbook require further examination of how the material is explained. The research data indicate that teaching issues have been discussed during monthly evaluations; however, the link between the outcomes of these evaluations and changes in teachers' teaching methods still needs to be investigated.

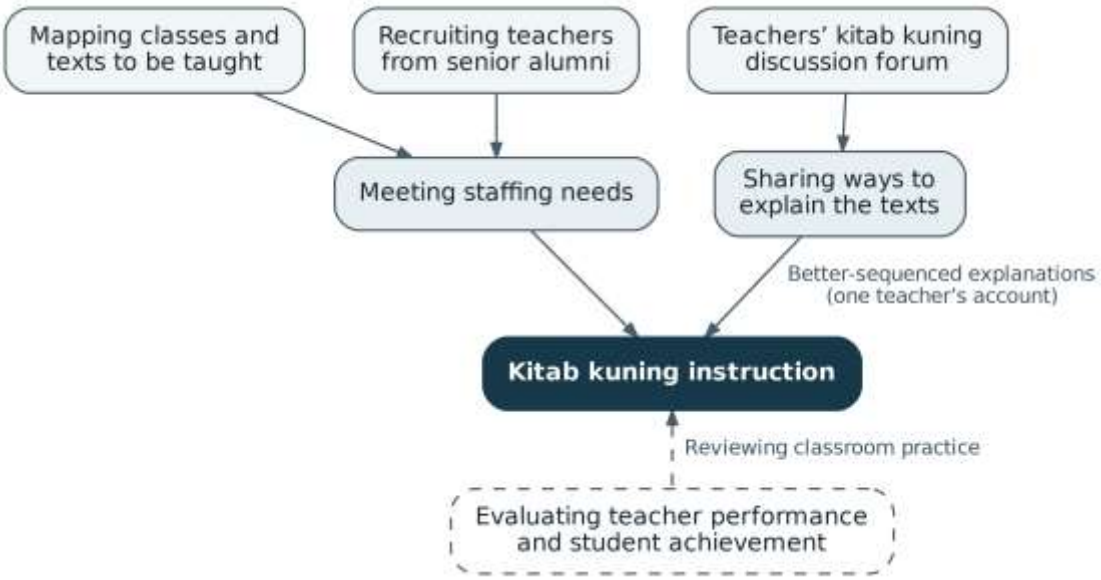


Figure 2. Teacher Management and *Kitab Kuning* Instruction

Figure 2 illustrates two approaches to the management of ustadz in relation to the teaching of classical Islamic texts. Needs assessment and the training of alumni support the provision of teachers, whilst text-based deliberations provide space for ustadz to develop their methods of explaining the material. The dotted line indicates the evaluative function in reviewing the implementation of teaching based on information regarding the ustadz's performance and the students' achievements.

The contribution of this research lies in its explanation of how pesantren link the continuity of teaching traditions with the development of methods for explaining the kitab to students. The training of successors enables pesantren to consider alumni based on their academic background and familiarity with the pesantren's traditions. The kitab deliberations then provide an opportunity for ustadz to discuss how the content of the kitab is conveyed in the classroom. The relationship between the management of ustadz and the quality of the learning process is most clearly evident when an ustadz uses the outcomes of the consultation to structure their explanations. The students' accounts broaden our understanding of this process by illustrating the significance of everyday examples and the re-explanations that aid their comprehension. The empirical contribution of this case study lies in the teaching practices that can be traced from the accounts of both the ustadz and the students, with the evidence focusing on the quality of the learning process.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the management of ustadz at the API ASRI 2 Islamic Boarding School in Bandongan, Magelang, is based on the requirements for teaching the 'kitab kuning'. The number of classes forms the basis for estimating the number of teachers, whilst the type of text serves as a reference for identifying the expertise required. The pesantren prioritises senior alumni whose character, moral conduct and depth of knowledge have been observed since their time as students. Once the ustadz begin teaching, 'kitab' deliberations provide a forum for aligning understanding of the text's content and exchanging methods of explanation. Monthly evaluations complement this management approach by assessing the ustadz's performance and the students' learning outcomes.

These findings clarify two roles of teacher management in maintaining the quality of the 'kitab kuning' learning process. The succession planning of alumni supports the continuity of teaching through prospective teachers who are already familiar with the pesantren's scholarly tradition, whilst the 'musyawarah kitab' provides a space to develop ways of conveying that tradition in the classroom. This relationship is evident in the experience of one teacher who used the outcomes of the 'musyawarah kitab' to structure his explanations so that they were more coherent. The students' accounts complement these findings by showing that everyday examples and re-explanations help them understand the text's content after it has been translated. The contribution of this research lies in its explanation of how the continuity of scholarly tradition and the development of teaching methods converge in the practice of 'kitab kuning' learning.

Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI tools were consulted when revising the written presentation of this manuscript, particularly to address grammatical inaccuracies, simplify complex sentences, and improve readability. The authors checked the resulting revisions against the intended content before accepting them. Research activities, data analysis, interpretation, and the formulation of conclusions were performed by the authors, who take full responsibility for the final article.

Author Contribution Statement

Kusuma Ambar Wati established the study focus, managed the research activities, collected and analysed the data, and prepared the first manuscript draft. Muhamad Sholikhun contributed to methodological development, critically examined the analysis, and helped strengthen the discussion. Dahlia reviewed the supporting literature, contributed to the interpretation of findings, and revised the manuscript for clarity and consistency. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript and share responsibility for the integrity of the reported research.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

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