

Reframing Instructional Quality in Islamic Education: Toward a Pedagogical Model of Teacher Performance in Pesantren

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Abstract

This study examines how instructional quality is constructed through pedagogical practices and teacher performance in pesantren, with a particular focus on developing a context-based pedagogical model. Situated within the broader discourse on educational quality and Islamic education, the study addresses the gap between global frameworks of instructional effectiveness and the unique pedagogical traditions of pesantren. A qualitative case study design was employed in an Indonesian pesantren, with data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed using an interactive model of data condensation, display, and verification. The findings reveal that instructional quality is shaped by the integration of five key dimensions: cognitive stimulation, contextual learning, pedagogical variation, authentic assessment and feedback, and reflective teaching. These elements are embedded in both formal classroom instruction and the broader learning ecology of pesantren, including activities such as problem-based discussions, language development, and extracurricular engagement. The study demonstrates that pesantren pedagogy is not merely traditional but adaptive and capable of supporting contemporary standards of effective teaching. This study contributes to the literature by proposing a pedagogical model of teacher performance that reframes instructional quality within the context of Islamic education. The model integrates global educational principles with pesantren-based learning practices, offering both theoretical and practical insights for improving teaching quality in Islamic educational institutions

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Introduction

The question of instructional quality has become a central concern in contemporary educational discourse, particularly in the context of rapid social,



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technological, and epistemological transformations. Across global education systems, there is increasing recognition that the effectiveness of teaching is not merely determined by curriculum design or institutional structure, but by the quality of pedagogical practices enacted by teachers in the classroom.^{1,2} Instructional quality, therefore, has shifted from a narrow focus on content delivery toward a broader understanding that encompasses cognitive engagement, contextual relevance, assessment practices, and reflective teaching. Within this evolving landscape, Islamic education particularly in traditional institutions such as pesantren faces both challenges and opportunities in redefining its pedagogical orientation.³

Pesantren, as one of the oldest and most influential forms of Islamic education in Indonesia, have long been recognized for their role in preserving religious knowledge, shaping moral character, and sustaining intellectual traditions rooted in classical Islamic scholarship.⁴ Historically, pesantren pedagogy has been characterized by text-centered learning, emphasizing the study of classical Islamic texts (*kutub al-turats*) through methods such as *bandongan* and *sorogan*. While these approaches have been effective in transmitting religious knowledge across generations, they have often been critiqued for their limited emphasis on critical thinking, contextual application, and student-centered learning.⁵

In recent years, however, pesantren have undergone significant transformations in response to broader educational reforms and societal demands. These transformations include the integration of formal education systems, the incorporation of general subjects, and the adoption of more interactive teaching

¹ Abdul Adib, "Metode Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning Di Pondok Pesantren," *JURNAL MUBTADIIN* 7, no. 01 (2021): 232–46.

² Linda Darling-Hammond et al., *Effective Teacher Professional Development* (Learning Policy Institute, 2017), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED606743>.

³ Zaenal Abidin, "Educational Management of Pesantren in Digital Era 4.0," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 17, no. 2 (2020): 203–16, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2020.172-07>; Balya Ziaulhaq Achmadin et al., "The Future of Pesantren: Reconciling Tradition with Global Educational Trends," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)* 12, no. 2 (2024): 197–222, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jpai.2024.12.2.197-222>.

⁴ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (LP3ES, 1982); Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge & Truth* (Islam International Publications Ltd, 1998).

⁵ Rahman Tanjung et al., "Manajemen Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Inklusi Pada Lembaga Pendidikan Islam," *JlIP-Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 1 (2022): 339–48.

methods . Despite these developments, the issue of instructional quality in pesantren remains underexplored, particularly in relation to how pedagogical practices are adapted to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Existing studies on Islamic education tend to focus on curriculum, institutional development, or ideological frameworks, with relatively limited attention to the micro-level dynamics of teaching and learning.⁶

This gap is particularly significant when considering the role of teacher performance in shaping instructional quality. Contemporary educational research consistently highlights that teachers are the most influential factor in student learning within the school environment.⁷ Teacher performance, in this sense, extends beyond subject mastery to include the ability to stimulate cognitive engagement, facilitate meaningful learning experiences, implement diverse assessment strategies, and engage in continuous reflection and improvement .⁸ In the context of pesantren, where teachers often serve not only as educators but also as moral and spiritual guides, the role of teacher performance becomes even more critical.

At the same time, the concept of instructional quality in Islamic education cannot be fully understood without considering its epistemological foundations.⁹ Unlike secular education systems, Islamic education is deeply rooted in the integration of knowledge ('ilm) and values (adab), where the process of learning is inseparable from the cultivation of ethical and spiritual dispositions (Al-Attas, 1980). This raises an important question: how can instructional quality be conceptualized in

⁶ Raihani Raihani, "Islamic Schools and Social Justice in Indonesia: A Student Perspective," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 50, no. 2 (2012): 279–301, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2012.502.279-301>.

⁷ Rabiatul Adawiyah et al., "Manajemen Pendidikan Pesantren Dalam Konteks Kebijakan Pendidikan Nasional: Analisis Dan Rekomendasi," *Tarbiatuna: Journal of Islamic Education Studies* 4, no. 2 (2024): 764–71, <https://doi.org/10.47467/tarbiatuna.v4i2.7187>.

⁸ Darling-Hammond et al., *Effective Teacher Professional Development*; Mohamad Nurul Hafiz Bin Ab Latif et al., *Enhancing Islamic Outreach Through Information Technology: An Analysis of Social Media Use by Religious Teachers in Remote Areas*, February 21, 2025, https://kwpublications.com/papers_submitted/13558/enhancing-islamic-outreach-through-information-technology-an-analysis-of-social-media-use-by-religious-teachers-in-remote-areas.pdf.

⁹ Abdul Hakim Abdullah et al., "Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Models for Islamic Education Teachers in Malaysia and Indonesia," *Ar-Fachruddin: Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 1 (2025): 44–57, <https://doi.org/10.7401/awyn7j56>.

a way that remains faithful to the epistemic traditions of pesantren while also responding to contemporary pedagogical demands?

This study addresses this question by proposing a reframing of instructional quality in Islamic education, grounded in the empirical realities of pedagogical practices in pesantren.¹⁰ Rather than viewing pesantren pedagogy as inherently traditional or resistant to change, this study argues that pesantren possess dynamic pedagogical resources that can be mobilized to enhance instructional quality. These resources include practices such as bahsul masail (problem-based discussion), contextual explanation of classical texts, multi-activity learning environments, and continuous teacher reflection.¹¹

Empirically, this study is based on a qualitative case study conducted in an Indonesian pesantren, where data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis. The findings reveal that instructional quality is not a static attribute but a dynamic process shaped by the interaction between pedagogical practices, institutional culture, and teacher agency.¹² Teachers in this context actively engage in strategies that stimulate students' cognitive processes, connect learning materials to real-life contexts, provide diverse learning activities, implement varied assessment methods, and continuously reflect on and improve their teaching practices.¹³

These findings challenge the common dichotomy between “traditional” and “modern” education by demonstrating that pesantren pedagogy can simultaneously preserve classical traditions and incorporate innovative practices. In particular, the

¹⁰ Asdlori Asdlori, “Pendidikan Islam Sebagai Pilar Pembangunan Berkelanjutan: Peran Sistem Pendidikan Pesantren Dalam Implementasi SDGs,” *JURNAL PENDIDIKAN ISLAM AL-ILMI* 6, no. 1 (2023): 124–30, <https://doi.org/10.32529/al-ilmi.v6i1.2530>.

¹¹ Chusnul Chotimah, “Strategi Public Relations Pesantren Sidogiri Dalam Membangun Citra Lembaga Pendidikan Islam,” *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 7, no. 1 (2012): 186–210, <https://doi.org/10.15642/islamica.2012.7.1.186-210>.

¹² Munir Tubagus et al., “THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON ISLAMIC PESANTREN EDUCATION AND THE LEARNING OUTCOMES OF SANTRI: NEW TRENDS AND POSSIBILITIES,” *Indonesian Journal of Education (INJOE)* 2, no. 3 (2023): 443–50.

¹³ Saihu Saihu, “The Urgency of Total Quality Management in Academic Supervision to Improve the Competency of Teachers,” *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 02 (2020): 297–323, <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v9i02.905>.

integration of cognitive stimulation, contextual learning, and reflective teaching suggests the emergence of a pedagogical model that is both rooted in Islamic educational values and responsive to contemporary educational standards.¹⁴

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature on instructional quality by offering a context-specific conceptualization that integrates global educational frameworks with Islamic pedagogical traditions.¹⁵ While existing models of instructional quality often emphasize dimensions such as classroom management, instructional clarity, and student engagement,¹⁶ this study extends these frameworks by incorporating elements such as moral guidance, communal learning, and text-based reasoning, which are central to pesantren education.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the growing body of research on Islamic education by shifting the focus from macro-level institutional analysis to micro-level pedagogical practices. By examining how teaching and learning are enacted in everyday classroom interactions, the study provides a more nuanced understanding of how educational quality is constructed and experienced in pesantren contexts.

Practically, the findings of this study have important implications for educational policy and practice. They suggest that efforts to improve instructional quality in Islamic education should not be limited to curriculum reform or institutional restructuring but should also focus on enhancing teacher performance through professional development, reflective practice, and pedagogical innovation. In this regard, pesantren can serve as a valuable model for integrating tradition and innovation in educational practice.

Therefore, this study aims to develop a pedagogical model of instructional quality based on the empirical analysis of teacher performance in pesantren. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research question: how is instructional

¹⁴ Syamsul Ma'arif, "Education as a Foundation of Humanity: Learning from the Pedagogy of Pesantren in Indonesia," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 9, no. 2 (2018): 104–23.

¹⁵ Muhammad Asadurrohman, *Historical Analysis of the Influence of Pre-Islamic Traditions in Jurisprudence and the Importance of Recontextualization* | *TAJDID*, November 14, 2025, <https://riset-iaid.net/index.php/tajdid/article/view/1587>.

¹⁶ Muhammad Jamil, "Traditions and Transformations of Qur'anic Education in Two Pesantren," *Mauriduna: Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 4 (2025): 630–51, <https://doi.org/10.37274/mauriduna.v6i4.34>.

quality constructed through pedagogical practices and teacher performance in pesantren? By addressing this question, the study not only contributes to academic discourse but also offers practical insights for improving the quality of Islamic education in contemporary contexts.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach to examine how instructional quality is constructed through pedagogical practices and teacher performance in pesantren. A qualitative design is particularly appropriate for this study because it allows for an in-depth exploration of teaching and learning processes within their natural context, focusing on meanings, interactions, and practices that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement.¹⁷ By adopting this approach, the study seeks to understand how instructional quality is enacted in everyday educational practices rather than merely assessed through standardized indicators.

The research is designed as a case study focusing on an Indonesian pesantren, namely Pondok Pesantren Daarul Rahman. The selection of this site is based on purposive considerations, particularly its active implementation of diverse pedagogical practices, structured instructional systems, and emphasis on both religious and general education. As a form of Islamic boarding school, pesantren provide a unique educational environment in which formal, informal, and non-formal learning processes are integrated within a single institutional setting. This makes it a rich context for examining instructional quality as a holistic and multidimensional phenomenon. Case study methodology is particularly suitable when the aim is to explore a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined.¹⁸

Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling to ensure

¹⁷ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, third edition (SAGE, 2013).

¹⁸ Jodi Potter, "Applying a Hybrid Model: Can It Enhance Student Learning Outcomes?," *Journal of Instructional Pedagogies* 17 (November 2015), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1102855>.

that data were obtained from individuals who are directly involved in instructional processes. The participants include teachers (ustadz and ustadzah), school leaders, curriculum coordinators, and students. This selection allows for the collection of data from multiple perspectives, including those responsible for designing and implementing instructional practices as well as those who experience them directly. Such diversity of participants enhances the credibility of the findings by enabling triangulation across different roles and viewpoints.¹⁹

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations were carried out to examine how teaching practices are enacted, including how teachers deliver content, engage students, stimulate cognitive processes, and manage classroom interactions. Particular attention was given to activities such as text-based learning of classical Islamic books, group discussions (bahsul masail), language development programs, and extracurricular learning activities. Observation in this context enables the researcher to capture real-time instructional practices and identify patterns of interaction that may not be fully articulated in verbal accounts.²⁰

In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants, including teachers, curriculum coordinators, and institutional leaders, to explore their perspectives on instructional practices, teaching strategies, and efforts to improve learning quality. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing flexibility to probe deeper into relevant issues while maintaining alignment with the research objectives. Through these interviews, the researcher gained insights into how teachers design learning activities, adapt instructional strategies to students' needs, and engage in reflective practices to enhance their performance.²¹

Document analysis was also employed to complement and validate the data obtained from observations and interviews. The documents analyzed include

¹⁹ Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (SAGE, 1985).

²⁰ Burhan Bungin, *Penelitian Kualitatif: Komunikasi, Ekonomi, Kebijakan Publik, Dan Ilmu Sosial Lainnya*, 2007.

²¹ Muhammad Akhtar et al., "Adaptive Learning Systems for Classical Arabic: Personalised Pathways to Proficiency," *Southern Journal of Arts & Humanities* 3, no. 02(01) (2025): 57–67.

curriculum plans, teaching schedules, evaluation records, reports of academic activities such as musyawarah and bahsul masail, and institutional guidelines related to teaching and learning. These documents provide important evidence of how instructional processes are formally structured and implemented within the pesantren. The use of multiple data sources strengthens the validity of the study through methodological triangulation.²²

Data analysis in this study follows an interactive model, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data condensation stage, the researcher organized and reduced the data by selecting relevant information related to instructional quality and teacher performance. The data were then categorized based on key themes, such as cognitive stimulation, contextual learning, pedagogical variation, assessment practices, and reflective teaching. In the data display stage, the categorized data were systematically presented to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships.²³ Finally, conclusions were drawn through an iterative process of interpretation and verification, ensuring that the findings are grounded in the empirical data.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the study applies several strategies, including triangulation of data sources and methods, prolonged engagement in the research setting, and continuous reflection throughout the research process. Triangulation was achieved by comparing data obtained from observations, interviews, and documents, as well as from different participants. Prolonged engagement allowed the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the research context and to build trust with participants, thereby enhancing the credibility of the data. These strategies are essential in qualitative research to ensure that the findings accurately represent the reality of the studied phenomenon.²⁴

Result

²² Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (SAGE, 1994).

²³ Jane Sutton and Zubin Austin, "Qualitative Research: Data Collection, Analysis, and Management," *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy* 68, no. 3 (2015): 226.

²⁴ Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*.

Instructional Practices and Cognitive Engagement in Pesantren Learning

The findings of this study demonstrate that instructional quality in Pondok Pesantren Daarul Rahman is constructed through pedagogical practices that actively stimulate students' cognitive engagement. Rather than relying solely on traditional modes of instruction, the pesantren integrates structured content delivery, interactive learning processes, and contextual pedagogical approaches. This indicates that instructional quality in this setting is not merely defined by the transmission of knowledge but by the extent to which students are cognitively involved in the learning process.²⁵ Such an approach aligns with contemporary perspectives that define effective teaching as the ability to promote active learning and higher-order thinking.²⁶

One of the foundational elements of instructional practice in this context is the alignment between teaching assignments and teacher qualifications. The data indicate that instructional materials are systematically mapped based on curriculum structures and academic calendars, and teachers are assigned to teach subjects according to their areas of expertise. This practice ensures that learning materials are delivered with depth and accuracy, allowing students to engage with complex subjects, including classical Islamic texts, in a more structured and meaningful way. From a pedagogical standpoint, this reflects Shulman's concept of pedagogical content knowledge, which emphasizes the importance of teachers' mastery of subject matter in facilitating effective learning.²⁷

Beyond content organization, teachers actively employ strategies that stimulate students' cognitive processes. Observational data reveal that learning activities involve multiple layers of engagement, including reading classical texts, analyzing grammatical structures such as *i'rab* and *sharaf*, interpreting meanings, and

²⁵ Zen Amrullah and Siti Mutholingah Mutholingah, "Tradition Meets Modernity: A Study on Classic Book (Turats) Learning at Sidogiri Pesantren," *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama Dan Keagamaan* 23, no. 2 (2025): 208–26, <https://doi.org/10.32729/edukasi.v23i2.1893>.

²⁶ Darling-Hammond et al., *Effective Teacher Professional Development*.

²⁷ Ahmad Asron Mundofi, "Integration of Deep Learning Approach in Transforming Islamic Religious Education Learning in Schools: A Pedagogical and Technological Study," *Journal of Asian Primary Education (JoAPE)* 2, no. 1 (2025): 79–90, <https://doi.org/10.59966/joape.v2i1.1787>.

connecting textual knowledge to broader conceptual understanding.²⁸ This multi-layered approach requires students to engage in analytical and interpretive thinking, moving beyond rote memorization toward deeper comprehension. Such practices are consistent with constructivist learning theory, which views learning as an active process in which students construct knowledge through interaction and interpretation.²⁹

A particularly significant pedagogical practice identified in this study is the implementation of *bahsul masail*, a form of problem-based discussion that requires students to analyze real-life issues using Islamic legal reasoning. In this activity, students work collaboratively to propose solutions to contemporary problems, drawing on sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical scholarly opinions.³⁰ This method not only enhances cognitive engagement but also develops critical thinking, argumentation skills, and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practical contexts. From an educational perspective, this approach reflects principles of problem-based learning, which have been widely recognized as effective in promoting deep learning and intellectual autonomy.³¹

In addition to cognitive stimulation, the findings highlight the importance of contextual learning in enhancing instructional quality. Teachers consistently relate learning materials to students' everyday experiences, social environments, and broader societal contexts. For example, lessons on civic values and diversity are connected to real-life situations within the pesantren environment, emphasizing tolerance and social responsibility³². This practice enables students to understand the

²⁸ Martin Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning; Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu; Comments on a New Collection in the KITLV Library," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde/Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 146, nos. 2–3 (1990): 226–69.

²⁹ L. S. Vygotsky and Michael Cole, *Mind in Society: Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (Harvard University Press, 1978).

³⁰ Ali Ja'far, "LITERASI DIGITAL PESANTREN: PERUBAHAN DAN KONTESTASI," *Islamic Review: Jurnal Riset Dan Kajian Keislaman* 8, no. 1 (2019): 17–35, <https://doi.org/10.35878/islamicreview.v8i1.156>.

³¹ Laura Silver et al., *Most People in 35 Countries Say China Has a Large Impact on Their National Economy*, 2024, http://livinginhel.com/pdf/pg_2024.07.09_global-views-china-2024_report.pdf.

³² Leo Anarki et al., "Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Pesantren," *Jurnal Pendidikan: Riset dan Konseptual* 9, no. 1 (2025): 92–101, https://doi.org/10.28926/riset_konseptual.v9i1.1117.

relevance of their learning and to apply it in real-world situations. According to meaningful learning occurs when new information is connected to existing knowledge and experiences, suggesting that contextualization is a key factor in effective instruction.³³

Furthermore, instructional practices in pesantren are supported by a multi-activity learning environment that extends beyond formal classroom instruction. The data indicate that students participate in a wide range of activities, including religious gatherings, language development programs, public speaking exercises, journalism training, and artistic and physical activities. These activities provide diverse opportunities for learning and skill development, contributing to what describes as a “learning ecology,” in which multiple contexts and experiences interact to support learning.³⁴ This holistic approach reflects the pesantren tradition of integrating intellectual, spiritual, and social development within a unified educational framework.

Another important aspect of instructional practice is the accommodation of diverse student needs. Teachers demonstrate sensitivity to differences in students’ abilities and learning pace by providing additional support, individualized guidance, and adaptive teaching strategies.³⁵ For instance, students who experience difficulties in understanding the material receive more intensive guidance, and teachers adjust their explanations to ensure comprehension. This practice reflects principles of inclusive education, which emphasize the importance of addressing learner diversity to ensure equitable learning outcomes.³⁶

³³ Zul Amri, “The Use of the Canva Application Learning Media in the Fiqh Learning Process,” *Jurnal Inovasi Dan Teknologi Pembelajaran* 10, no. 1 (2023): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.17977/um031v10i12023p001>.

³⁴ Marjuni Marjuni and Moch Khafidz Fuad Raya, “Liberal Thinking in Salaf Pesantren, Is It Possible? (Freedom of Thought the Santri Ma’had Aly Sukorejo, Situbondo),” *Jurnal Tatsqif* 19, no. 2 (2021): 175–91, <https://doi.org/10.20414/jtq.v19i2.4307>.

³⁵ Imam Ghozali, “Application of Islamic Teaching Values in Education: Creating Students with Siddiq, Amanah, Tablig, and Fatonah Characters,” *PROCEEDING OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION, SOCIETY AND HUMANITY* 2, no. 1 (2024): 1759–66.

³⁶ Muhyar Fanani and Florian Pohl, “Fiqh-Based Social Transformation in Farmer Empowerment: A Participatory Action Research Approach,” *Al-Jami’ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 62, no. 2 (2024): 305–35, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2024.622.305-335>.

Moreover, the role of teachers in this context extends beyond instruction to include mentorship and continuous monitoring of student development. Teachers actively observe students' progress, provide feedback, and encourage improvement, creating a supportive learning environment that fosters both academic and personal growth. This holistic role aligns with the broader conception of teaching in Islamic education, where educators are not only transmitters of knowledge but also guides in moral and intellectual development.³⁷

Taken together, these findings indicate that instructional practices in Pondok Pesantren Daarul Rahman are characterized by a dynamic integration of traditional and innovative pedagogical approaches. The use of classical texts is complemented by interactive and contextual learning methods, while structured instruction is enriched by diverse educational activities. Cognitive engagement is achieved through a combination of analytical tasks, problem-based learning, and real-world application, demonstrating that pesantren pedagogy is capable of supporting contemporary educational objectives.³⁸

Importantly, these practices challenge the common perception that pesantren education is predominantly traditional and teacher-centered. Instead, the findings suggest that pesantren possess inherent pedagogical strengths that can contribute to broader discussions on instructional quality. By integrating cognitive stimulation, contextual learning, and multi-activity engagement, pesantren offer a model of education that is both rooted in tradition and responsive to modern educational demands.

In conclusion, the instructional practices observed in this study demonstrate that cognitive engagement is a central component of instructional quality in

³⁷ Ita Yunita et al., "The Imperative of Integrating Knowledge and Adab in Reconstructing Islamic Education in the Digital Era: A Study of Al-Attas's Thought," *J-PAI: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 11, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.18860/jpai.v11i2.32660>.

³⁸ Evi Resti Dianita et al., "Literary-Based Literacy Learning in Indonesian Pesantren," December 31, 2023, 53–58, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-182-1_10.

pesantren. Through the alignment of teacher expertise, the use of interactive and contextual teaching methods, and the provision of diverse learning opportunities, pesantren create a learning environment that supports active and meaningful engagement. This finding provides a foundation for developing a broader pedagogical model of instructional quality that integrates traditional Islamic educational values with contemporary pedagogical principles.

Assessment, Feedback, and Reflective Teaching: Toward a Pedagogical Model of Teacher Performance in Pesantren

In addition to instructional practices and cognitive engagement, the findings of this study reveal that assessment, feedback, and reflective teaching constitute critical dimensions in shaping instructional quality in Pondok Pesantren Daarul Rahman. These elements are not treated as isolated components but are integrated into a continuous pedagogical process that supports student learning and teacher development. This integration reflects a shift from assessment as a mere evaluative tool toward assessment as a formative and developmental practice, which is widely recognized as a key feature of high-quality instruction.³⁹

The data indicate that assessment practices in pesantren are characterized by diversity and depth. Teachers employ multiple forms of assessment, including written examinations, oral tests, and performance-based evaluations. Importantly, these assessments are designed not only to measure students' memorization but also to evaluate their understanding, analytical abilities, and capacity to explain concepts in their own words. For instance, essay-based questions require students to elaborate on their understanding of subject matter and provide contextual examples, thereby demonstrating deeper comprehension.⁴⁰ This approach reflects the principles of

³⁹ Agus Budiman et al., "Constructing the Body of Knowledge of Pesantren Education: A Philosophical, Historical, and Curricular Inquiry," *At-Ta'dib* 20, no. 1 (2025): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.21111/attadib.v20i1.14723>.

⁴⁰ Muhammad Mukromin, "Peran Pondok Pesantren Dalam Meningkatkan Soft Skill Dan Hard Skill Bagi Santri Untuk Menyongsong Era Indonesia Emas 2045 (Studi Kasus Pondok Pesantren An-Nawawi Berjan Purworejo)" (Thesis, Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2024), <https://dspace.uui.ac.id/handle/123456789/53046>.

authentic assessment, which emphasize the evaluation of higher-order thinking and the application of knowledge in meaningful contexts.⁴¹

Moreover, the assessment system in pesantren incorporates both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. In addition to academic performance, teachers also evaluate students' attitudes, discipline, and participation in learning activities. This holistic approach aligns with the epistemological foundations of Islamic education, which integrate knowledge ('ilm) and character (adab) as inseparable components of learning (Al-Attas, 1980). By assessing both intellectual and moral aspects, pesantren education ensures that learning outcomes extend beyond academic achievement to include the development of ethical and responsible individuals.⁴²

The role of feedback in this context is equally significant. The findings show that teachers provide immediate and constructive feedback during the learning process, particularly in classroom interactions. Students are encouraged to observe their peers' responses, identify correct answers, and revise their own work accordingly. This process fosters a collaborative learning environment in which students learn not only from the teacher but also from one another. Feedback is thus embedded within the learning process rather than being delivered solely at the end of instruction.

Importantly, feedback in pesantren is not limited to correcting errors but is oriented toward building students' confidence and motivation. Teachers provide encouragement, recognize students' efforts, and offer suggestions for improvement, thereby creating a supportive learning environment that promotes active participation. This aligns with the concept of formative feedback, which emphasizes its role in enhancing learning by guiding students toward improvement.⁴³ Research

⁴¹ Khatijah Othman and Muhamadul Bakir Yaakub, "Islamic Knowledge Management Reservoir Adaptation to Information and Digitalize Technology for Global Islamic Higher Education Institution," *LECTURES: Journal of Islamic and Education Studies* 4, no. 2 (2025): 205–23, <https://doi.org/10.58355/lectures.v4i2.144>.

⁴² Nevi Asiska et al., "Komersialisasi Pendidikan Di Indonesia: Tantangan Bagi Pesantren Dalam Mempertahankan Identitas Tradisional," *TAUJIH: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 02 (2024): 98–117, <https://doi.org/10.53649/taujih.v6i02.977>.

⁴³ Muhammad Jamil, "Exploring the Qur'anic Literacy Tradition: A Review of Traditional and Modern Pesantren in Tuban Indonesia," *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 9, no. 1 (2024): 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v9i1.4670>.

has consistently shown that effective feedback is one of the most powerful influences on student achievement, particularly when it is timely, specific, and constructive.

In addition to its impact on students, feedback also contributes to teachers' reflective practices. The study finds that teachers in Pondok Pesantren Daarul Rahman engage in regular reflection and evaluation of their instructional performance. These reflective activities are conducted both individually and collectively, often through weekly meetings involving teachers, institutional leaders, and senior scholars. During these sessions, teachers discuss their teaching experiences, evaluate the effectiveness of their methods, and identify areas for improvement.

This practice reflects the concept of reflective teaching, which emphasizes the importance of continuous self-evaluation and professional learning in enhancing instructional quality.⁴⁴ Reflection enables teachers to critically examine their practices, understand the impact of their instructional decisions, and develop strategies for improvement. In this context, reflection is not an occasional activity but an integral part of the teaching process, embedded within the institutional culture of the pesantren.

Furthermore, reflective practices in pesantren are closely linked to innovation in teaching. The findings indicate that teachers actively use the results of their reflections to modify their instructional strategies, adapt learning materials, and introduce new approaches to teaching.⁴⁵ Institutional support also plays a crucial role in this process, with leadership providing guidance, mentoring, and additional training to enhance teacher performance. This demonstrates that instructional quality is not solely dependent on individual teachers but is supported by a broader organizational system that promotes continuous improvement.

Another important aspect identified in this study is the alignment between assessment, feedback, and instructional goals. Teachers design assessment methods that are consistent with learning objectives, ensuring that evaluation processes accurately reflect students' progress toward achieving educational goals. This

⁴⁴ Chris Argyris, "Good Communication That Blocks Learning," *Harvard Business Review* 72, no. 4 (1994): 77–85.

⁴⁵ Achmadin et al., "The Future of Pesantren."

alignment enhances the coherence of the instructional process and contributes to more effective learning outcomes. According to Biggs, such constructive alignment is a key principle of effective teaching, as it ensures that teaching activities, learning objectives, and assessment methods are mutually supportive.⁴⁶

Based on these findings, this study proposes a pedagogical model of teacher performance in pesantren, which integrates five key components: (1) cognitive stimulation, (2) contextual learning, (3) pedagogical variation, (4) authentic assessment and feedback, and (5) reflective teaching. While the first three components are primarily related to instructional practices, the latter two emphasize the role of evaluation and reflection in sustaining instructional quality.

This model suggests that effective teaching in pesantren is not defined by adherence to a single pedagogical approach but by the ability to integrate multiple dimensions of teaching in a coherent and context-sensitive manner.⁴⁷ Assessment and feedback function as mechanisms for monitoring and guiding student learning, while reflective teaching ensures that instructional practices are continuously improved.⁴⁸ Together, these components form a dynamic system that supports both student development and teacher professional growth.

From a theoretical perspective, the proposed model contributes to the literature on instructional quality by offering a context-specific framework that integrates global educational principles with the unique characteristics of pesantren. While existing models of instructional quality often emphasize dimensions such as classroom management, instructional clarity, and student engagement,⁴⁹ this study extends these

⁴⁶ David Mhlana, "Digital Transformation in Education: Relevant Paradigms and Theories of Teaching and Learning in the Industry 4.0," in *Intelligent Systems in Digital Transformation: Theory and Applications*, ed. Cengiz Kahraman and Elif Haktanır (Springer International Publishing, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-16598-6_19.

⁴⁷ Suryadi Nasution et al., "Pesantren and Gender Issues: Reinterpreting Classical Fiqh to Address Contemporary Gender Equality Challenges," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 15, no. 1 (2025): 14–28, <https://doi.org/10.38073/jpi.v15i1.2449>.

⁴⁸ Amirudin Amirudin et al., "Problem-Based Learning as a Pedagogical Innovation for Transforming Higher Education Students' Islamic Religious Comprehension," *Educational Process: International Journal* 18 (2025), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1485322>.

⁴⁹ Akdon Akdon, "Strategic Management for Educational Management," *Alfabeta, Bandung*, 2006, 2008–12.

frameworks by incorporating elements such as moral evaluation, communal learning, and reflective practice, which are central to Islamic education.

Moreover, the model highlights the importance of teacher agency in shaping instructional quality. Teachers are not passive implementers of curriculum but active agents who design, evaluate, and refine their instructional practices. This perspective aligns with contemporary views of teaching as a professional practice that requires continuous learning, adaptation, and innovation.⁵⁰

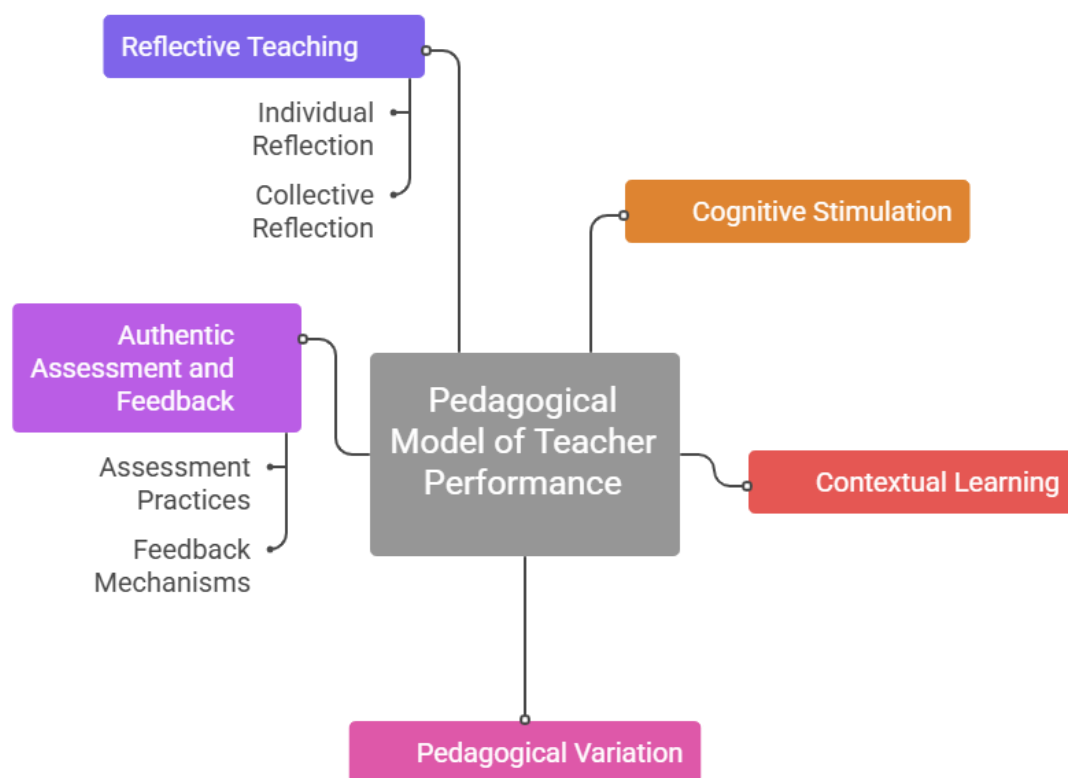


Figure 1. Pedagogical Model of Teacher Performance in Pesantren

In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrate that assessment, feedback, and reflective teaching are essential components of instructional quality in pesantren. These elements are integrated into a continuous pedagogical process that supports both student learning and teacher development. The proposed pedagogical model provides a conceptual framework for understanding how instructional quality can be constructed in Islamic education, offering valuable insights for both theory and

⁵⁰ Darling-Hammond et al., *Effective Teacher Professional Development*.

practice. By integrating traditional values with modern pedagogical principles, pesantren education demonstrates its potential to contribute to the development of effective and transformative educational practices in contemporary contexts.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that instructional quality in pesantren is not merely a function of curriculum design or institutional structure, but is fundamentally constructed through pedagogical practices and teacher performance. By examining the case of Pondok Pesantren Daarul Rahman, the study reveals that instructional quality emerges from the integration of cognitive engagement, contextual learning, pedagogical variation, authentic assessment, and reflective teaching. These interconnected elements form a dynamic system that supports both student learning and continuous teacher development.

The findings challenge the common assumption that pesantren education is predominantly traditional and teacher-centered. Instead, they show that pesantren pedagogy is inherently adaptive and capable of incorporating innovative instructional strategies without abandoning its epistemological foundations. Practices such as *bahsul masail*, contextual interpretation of learning materials, diverse extracurricular engagement, and reflective evaluation illustrate how traditional Islamic education can align with contemporary standards of effective teaching.

Importantly, this study contributes to the literature by proposing a pedagogical model of teacher performance that reframes instructional quality within the context of Islamic education. Unlike conventional models that emphasize technical aspects of teaching, the proposed model integrates cognitive, social, and reflective dimensions, while also acknowledging the role of moral and communal values embedded in pesantren traditions. This highlights that instructional quality in Islamic education must be understood not only in terms of effectiveness but also in relation to its ethical and cultural context.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that efforts to enhance instructional quality in pesantren should prioritize the development of teacher

capacity through reflective practice, pedagogical innovation, and institutional support systems. Future research is recommended to test and refine the proposed model across different pesantren contexts and to explore its applicability in broader Islamic education settings.

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