The Implementation of the Sorogan Method for Islamic Boarding School Students in Studying Kitab Kuning

Suteja  
IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, Jawa Barat, Indonesia  
ibnupakar@gmail.com

Saifuddin  
IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, Jawa Barat, Indonesia  
saifuddin@syekhnurjati.ac.id

Sanusi  
IAIN Kudus, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia  
sanusi@iainkudus.ac.id

Laelah Al Mubarokah  
Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
laelahalmubarokah@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the quality of santri's (students) literacy of Kitab Kuning through the Sorogan method. To collect the data, observation was conducted in twenty pesantren (Islamic Boarding Schools) in West Java and in-depth interviews with Kiai, santri, alumni, and some local societies around the pesantren. The data collected were then analyzed with a descriptive narrative. This study found that the santri's literacy level to understand Kitab Kuning decreased. It was aligned with the change of teaching methods from the Sorogan to the classical method. This issue negatively impacted the transferring knowledge process, such as misconceptions about understanding Islamic law.

Keywords: Sorogan Method; Santri's Literacy; Kitab Kuning; Pesantren
A. Introduction

In the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) tradition, understanding the Kitab Kuning (Yellow Book) is mandatory for santri (students) to study Islamic law after the Qur'an and Hadith. Dhofier (1999) described the main terms in pesantren; the classical Islamic books (Kitab Kuning or Yellow Book in Arabic script), the student or follower within a pesantren (santri), and the person who delivers sermons on religious topics (in this case, is Islam) to an assembly of people (preacher), and the principal of pesantren (Kiai or Ulama). Furthermore, Kitab Kuning contains various kinds of Islamic knowledge, such as Islamic ethic (akhlak), the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), the science of Islamic mysticism (tassawuf), hadith studies, tafsir, history, muamalah, and many more.

The method of learning Kitab Kuning used by the preacher or Kiai then significantly influences santri's literacy in reading the Kitab Kuning appropriately. Especially in Indonesia, most pesantren use two methods to learn Kitab Kuning: Bandongan and Sorogan. The Bandongan method is reading Kitab Kuning by way of the preacher or Kiai presenting the contents or text of the book to a group of santri in a class (Fakhrurrazi, F., & Sebgag, 2020). Meanwhile, the Sorogan method is when santri face the Kiai individually to present their readings to the Kiai (Afif, 2019), and they get direct supervision from Kiai if there are mistakes (Muizzuddin, dkk., 2019). Therefore, the Sorogan method is one of the frequent methods used by pesantren and is considered effective (Shokhibul Fakhor, 2019).

Moreover, santri can remind each other of the words they have read in the book during deliberations, which also helps santri who struggle to understand Kitab Kuning. Santri can also help one another understand and become stronger at embodying each sentence and text in Kitab Kuning. Finally, santri can debate the direction and purpose of Kitab Kuning's text.

Deliberations amongst groups of pesantren in Indonesia are essential for learning religious knowledge because these groups represent the Muslim community. In this case, bahtsul masail was conducted by going over the issues raised in the deliberation forum, which comprised representatives from pesantren. Following responses to the issues raised, there was a deliberation of problem-solving using a variety of Kitab Kuning as the deliberation material, presented using a reference to the Kitab Kuning mu'tabaroh as a theological argument that supports or undermines the proposed answer.

These are the previous studies of the Sorogan method. Muizzuddin, Juhji, and Hasbusllah (2019) researched the comparison of the Sorogan and Bandongan methods with sixty participants in pesantren of Nurul Hidayah Banten. The study revealed a positive
The Implementation of the Sorogan Method

Edukasia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam

The correlation between the Sorogan method and santri’s understanding of reading Kitab Kuning. Thus, the sorogan method is considered to increase the ability of santri’s literacy in Kitab Kuning. Similarly, Afif (2019) found that implementing the Sorogan method in pesantren of Tarbiyatun Nasyi’in could train santri to be patient, diligent, and active in learning. On the other hand, Wakit (2016) reported that the Sorogan method was used to learn math. Thus, the Sorogan method could increase the ability to read, understand, and explain the content of Kitab Kuning appropriately.

As a religious institution, learning Kitab Kuning is a must and always requires santri to understand the Kitab Kuning in accordance with Kiai’s explanation. Hence, santri’s literacy in Kitab Kuning is essential to understanding either the implied or explicit meaning of Kitab Kuning. However, many senior santri and those who have graduated from pesantren cannot read Kitab Kuning appropriately. It is because they tend to use another method rather than Sorogan.

Research presentations that strengthen this research provide solutions to the problem of weak pesantren in mastering the Kitab Kuning. In fact, pesantren contribute to providing intelligence with an understanding of the Kitab Kuning texts. It will be assisted by effective methods that have been going on for a long time but are fading in some pesantren today. For this reason, this research strengthens the Sorogan method, which is important to continue and not be abandoned along with the times. In this case, the only way to improve santri’s reading skills is for teachers to focus on really looking ahead to santri, whether wrong or right and then immediately give input to the wrong and right problems, as researched by Muizudin about effective methods. This method is also vital in supporting the ability to read and understand the Kitab Kuning of santri, and this method is very effective, especially when santri read and understand the Kitab Kuning in front of the teacher. Santri read what has been read by the teacher, and this activity is carried out continuously so that santri are at the level of understanding of the text and describing the context. In addition, the santri comes in front of the teacher and reads what the teacher has read, then reads it again until he understands.

Furthermore, most graduated santri no longer use Kitab Kuning as their reference to understand Islam. Thus, this study investigates the quality of santri’s literacy of Kitab Kuning through the Sorogan method. Then, the research question is how the Sorogan method implementation can significantly affect santri’s literacy. Based on the phenomenon discussed in the previous studies, it is interesting to do a broader study about this issue in different contexts.

This study involved twenty participants with the same ideological and emotional connection as the researchers. The same ideology between the santri and the pesantren community is with the same name of God, namely Allah SWT, and the same way of worship. In
comparison, the emotional bond unites individuals and creates a sense of kinship between santri. In this study, one author is an alumnus of a boarding school, a Kitab Kuning teacher at several traditional pesantren, and a curriculum development team at these pesantren, such as PP Babakan Ciwaringin, Arjawinangun, Kempek, Balerante, and Buntet. The author also often conducted religious discussions with several alumni and Kiai of the pesantren, doing actual community problem-solving. Thus, this study involved Kiai, santri, graduated santri, and local societies which benefit from the alumni from pesantren. All participants came from several pesantren in West Java, Indonesia (i.e., Daruttauhid Arjawinangun, Rodhotut T holibin Babakan Ciwaringin, Salafiyah Kempek, Khutulistiwa Kempek, Assalafiyah Bode Lor, Darul ‘Uulum Assy’aryah Bode Lor, Darul Ulum Bunder Susukan, Gedongan, Benda Kerep, Madinaturrosul Babakan Ciwaringin, Buntet, and Nurul Iman GSI). These pesantren have similarities in learning the Kitab Kuning because of the same lineage and sanad, H adhrotusaikh KH . H asyim Asy’ari and K H. C holı Bangkalan.

This research was a type of field research, which was qualitative. Data collection was carried out in an in-depth interview, observation, and focused discussion. The observation was conducted from early 2019 to 2020 with santri and graduated santri (i.e., alumni). Other than that, data were collected through semi-structured interview techniques with Kiai and the preachers teaching Kitab Kuning for several years. To enrich the data, a small discussion was conducted with some alumni who taught in their pesantren. The researchers also used a semi-structured interview technique to make the situation more comfortable when conducting the interviews. The following are discussed:

1. The issue of implementing the Sorogan method in Kitab Kuning
2. The factors causing the low santri’s literacy towards Kitab Kuning
3. The cause of the abandonment of the Sorogan method in learning Kitab Kuning
4. The probability of pesantren with charismatic leadership of Kiai willing to re-apply the Sorogan method in the pesantren

Likewise, the discussion was carried out with the alumni who had returned to their hometown and became holders of pesantren and institutions schools. This discussion was conducted to seek a similar perspective about the urgency and function of the Sorogan method to shape santri and alumni of pesantren to have good literacy in reading Kitab Kuning.

The data collected were then analyzed with narrative analysis. Some data were presented with a table to have a clear explanation. The result data focused on the effectiveness
The Implementation of the Sorogan Method in shaping santri's literacy of Kitab Kuning. Furthermore, the data verification was conducted to reveal the theory's truth in implementing the Sorogan method in learning classical books or Kitab Kuning in traditional pesantren and was to hypothetically test the effectiveness of implementing the Sorogan method on the literacy of traditional pesantren's santri. Furthermore, the data were discussed in content analysis. This content analysis revealed that santri was involved with various activities, Kiai and pesantren, and santri with various elements allow for wider causes and effects such as family and society. Thus, this research strongly supports Sorogan-based learning, especially in studying the Kitab Kuning more intensively. In addition, this research is relevant to the current situation with the various dynamics that occur in religious life. Besides, the minimal increase in santri with various studies of the Kitab Kuning needs to be re-invigorated so that the causes of the decline in literacy are easily known comprehensively. Therefore, the discussion was then carried out by elaborating the data between the theoretical and practical results related to the Sorogan method and santri literacy.

B. Discussion

1. Literature Review

   a. Sorogan as a Method for Learning Kitab Kuning

      The local wisdom value in Pesantren is one of the main aspects of developing santri's characteristics to be more independent and responsible, particularly in the learning process guided by Kiai or preachers (Tolchah, M., & Mu’ammar, 2019). Pesantren is a local education, but for international, it is even a national character and moral fortress that must be planted as life values, forming an international scale network. Pesantren is also a typical education of the Indonesian nation; these pesantren are widely available in various remote areas, which have minimal progress but become a separate value for the Indonesian nation. Their presence is a moral bulwark of the nation's generation. In addition, as the only education that applies generational morality with national character, pesantren contribute to instilling the mutual love values among human beings and respecting any differences. In the pesantren environment, the learning process is conducted at a mosque or dormitory terrace, where the Kiai or preacher teaches the santri to recite and explain the Kitab Kuning. In the past, Kitab Kuning was generally written or printed on yellow paper, so it was called Kitab Kuning or Yellow Book (Wiryotinoyo, 2017).
The activity in the learning process in pesantren is led by Kiai, or preacher, who uses Sorogan and Bandongan methods. Meanwhile, the learning method is defined as the tool used to convey the material to the students (Fadli, M. R., Sudrajat, A., Aman, & Amboro, 2021). In this context, the Sorogan method is discussed. Wekke (2015) explained that the Sorogan method is individual learning in which the santri try to learn by themselves and then continue interacting with their Kiai or preacher to understand the studied material better. Meanwhile, Rinaningsih, Kadarahmon, & Firman (2019) described the Sorogan method as the most challenging in the traditional system of Islamic education because this system requires patience, perseverance, obedience, and discipline of santri. Specifically, Dhofer (1987) agreed that the Sorogan method forces santri to learn individually. He explained that santri faces Kiai to read and explain what has been learned during learning individually. The explanation contains the meaning in Kitab Kuning word by word and sentence by sentence.

It is also important to note that the Sorogan method allows the santri to do individual learning before facing Kiai to test their literacy in Kitab Kuning. When the santri faces the Kiai to read and explain word by word and sentence by sentence, Kiai can give feedback or comments directly about the santri's literacy in Kitab Kuning. In addition, the santri are allowed to select which book (Kitab) based on their desire; however, they are still under the guidance of Kiai or the preacher (Dhofer, 1987). In other words, while a santri is doing nyorog or facing the Kiai or preacher, Kiai or preacher will teach some parts of the studied book. During the learning process, a santri repeatedly imitates what Kiai or the preacher says (Sauri, S., Rahmat, A. S., Nursyamsiah, N., & Nursaidah 2016).

In other cases, Kiai or preachers read Kitab Kuning in the Arabic language, and then santri will translate it into santri’s books in the santri’s mother tongue, for instance, Javanese or Sundanese. Thus, santri will repeat and translate accurately as explained they Kiai or the preacher (Sauri et al., 2016). By this method, Fakhruurrazzi & Sebag (2020) stated that it allows a preacher to supervise, assess, and guide them intensely. Further, it is easier to know the santri’s ability to understand Kitab Kuning. In contrast, some argue that the Sorogan method tends to be monotonous, indoctrinated, teacher-centered, text-oriented, and top-down. However, this method has the authenticity of the material/substance of Islamic values from one generation to another (Ma'Arif, 2018). In a different context, Fadli et al. (2021) reported that the Sorogan method improved santri’s understanding of history and literacy rather than conventional learning. In short,
this method is effective for novice santri who want to be a preacher. Besides that, preachers or Kiai can genuinely supervise and guide the santri in mastering the Arabic language or other books. M. Dawam Rahardjo (1985) stated

"...The santri face the preacher or Kiai in turn and bring the Kitab Kuning they will study; the preacher or Kiai reads the Arabic lesson sentence by sentence, then translate and explains it. Santri listens and analyzes by giving notes or marks in their books to validate that the teacher or Kiai has given the knowledge.

Moreover, the age of this method is estimated to be older than the age of the pesantren itself. Based on Arifin’s perspective, the Sorogan method has proven effective at the earliest stage of creating skilled santri reading classical books. Therefore, implementing the Sorogan method enables Kiai or preacher as an educator to understand each santri's individuality and intellectual dynamics from an early age.

b. Santri’s Literacy in Kitab Kuning

Ironically, children who cannot read and write need motivation and improvement of learners to live fully in the world; here, education is important, involving welfare and profit, and learners are urged to live together. Alfin Toffler stated that human development experienced a characteristic wave; the most felt wave today is the 1970s. Its development promoted a powerful flow of information, and human underdevelopment is like being in a period of illiteracy. Humans also experience blindness in every action in obtaining information.

Commonly, literacy might be understood as an ability to read and write. In fact, literacy has a broader meaning, which actually involves a set of skills and social practices (Zutas, 2017). Further, Gamble and Easingwood asserted that literacy is a dynamic that transcends the basic expertise of reading and writing skills. Meanwhile, White & Cooper (2015) remarked that literacy could not be separated by text, language, situation, meaning, practice, social institution, academic performance, and unofficial learning. It aligns with pesantren as a formal education institution that provides qualified literacy to santri through book teaching or religious practices (Carvalho, 2011).

In the Indonesian context, it is common to know that Kitab Kuning is one of the parts of tradition in pesantren. Kitab Kuning is also an identity of pesantren that distinguishes it from the other educational institutions. In other words, pesantren cannot be called a pesantren if they do not include Kitab Kuning as the main learning (Chaeru Nugraha, T., & Amalia, 2017). Further, the position of Kitab Kuning is essential
to be used as textbooks, reference, and curriculum in the *pesantren* education system (Chaeru N ugra ha, T., & Amalia 2017).

Equally important, the increases in *santri* literacy will positively affect the development of academics in *pesantren*. Firstly, the increases in *santri*’s literacy can improve their quality in terms of information literacy. Secondly, literacy enables *santri* to tell the truth on a broader scale. Thirdly, radicalism indoctrination can be prevented because the *santri* have religious knowledge and broader insight. Furthermore, several elements must be developed to strengthen literacy culture in *pesantren*, such as the library's development, books collections, and reading and writing habits among *santri* (Maskur, 2019). In addition, *pesantren* of Lubbul Labib have implemented *santri*’s literacy. They realize that literacy culture is essential to develop *santri*’s critical and creative thinking ability and respond to various internal or external phenomena. Undoubtedly, they use *Kitab Kuning* and other Islamic *Kitab Kuning* as the main references (Baharun, H., & Rizqiyah, 2020).

c. **Traditional Pesantren in Indonesia Context**

*Pesantren* is a tradition of educational institutions that have been embedded among Muslims. The term *pesantren* is similar to Islamic educational institutions in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia. For instance, in Aceh, it is known as *dayah*; in Minangkabau, it is called *Surau*; in Java, it is called *pesantren*; in Malaysia, it is called *Pondok*; in Southern Thailand, it is called *pho no* (Ridhwan, Nurdin, A., & Samad 2018).

*Pesantren* was born as a religious response in the local community, which aims to create individuals who understand Islamic religious knowledge as a way of life (*tafaqquh di al-din*) by emphasizing ethics and morals (*akhlaq karimah*) in society (Hanafi et al., 2021). Furthermore, Patriadi, Bakar, & H amat (2015) defined *pesantren* as consistently preserving what has been good in tradition (*alhumafazah ala l qodi sholih*) in terms of the learning system, infrastructure, and management.

Suud, T oriqul Chaer, & Setiawan (2020) also emphasized that the *pesantren* teach various of Islamic knowledge, such as *Fiqh*, *Ushul Fiqh*, *Tauhid*, *T asawuf*, *M antiq*, *Bayan*, *Nahu*, *Saraf*, *Tafsir*, *Qaidah fiqh*, *Balagah*, *Faraid*, *Arudth*, *Ilmu Falak*, *Ilmu H adist*, *Hadist* and *Kurma*. Besides that, traditional *pesantren* also teach and practice the classical Islamic books without being interfered with by profane sciences or knowledge (Sakai, M., & Isbah, 2014). The importance of traditional *pesantren* as educational institutions have the main function not merely as an agent of social changes,
economics, and culture but also as the spread of Islamic tradition. For instance, they include the transmission and transfer of Islamic knowledge throughout history by scholars (i.e., Kiai or Ulama), keeping Islamic tradition from classical books written over centuries, and regeneration of Ulama and future leaders for society (Bustamam-Ahad, 2015).

In traditional pesantren education, Kitab Kuning or classical Islamic books must be studied, understood, and memorized by all santri. H. Fadli & Ramadhan (2016) mentioned that traditional pesantren have certain characteristics than modern pesantren. First, traditional pesantren preserve the value of education with the traditional teaching method. Second, the role of Kiai and santri is not only in the scope of pesantren but also in socializing and contributing to surrounding societies. In line with that, N urhayati & N urhidayah (2019) agreed that the way of life in pesantren is still thick with cultural traditions with hierarchical communication between santri and Kiai or preachers and their students.

d. The History of Kitab Kuning

Kitab Kuning is an Arabic book written on yellow paper. Kitab Kuning terms are used in Indonesia, especially in Java, as one of the traditional pesantren identities and to distinguish other books written on white paper (Mughits, 2008). At the end of the 20s century, according to Martin (1999), the number of Kitab Kuning spread among pesantren of Java and Madura reached 900 titles, with the percentages 20% of Fiqh, 17% of ushuluddin, 12% of Arabic language (al-Nahw, Sharf, Balaghah), 8% of hadith, 7% of tasawwuf, 6% of akhlaq, 5% of prayer guidance and dzikir, and 6% of the creation of praise to the Prophet Muhammad (qisās al-anbiyā, mawlid, ma-nāqib).

Since the public's interest in studying in pesantren is increasing, Kitab Kuning has become familiar, especially because all aspects of Kitab Kuning are conveyed through the religion assembly (i.e., Majlis taklim), which is led by Kiai or preachers either at school or mosque flexibly. In the last decades, certain graduated Muslims translated Kitab Kuning into Indonesian so that the public can read and understand Kitab Kuning without entering pesantren. Since then, the teaching of classical Kitab Kuning continues and culturally has become a special feature in pesantren. The teaching of Kitab Kuning has also increased and brought their characteristics and certain value systems (Abuddin Nata, 2012).

Moreover, even though the majority of pesantren have been included in general knowledge materials within their educational system and teaching, the teaching of Kitab
Kuning is still preserved. It aims to maintain the primary purpose of the pesantren itself, which is to educate santri to be preachers or ‘ulama in the future (Soebahar, 2013). Through the tradition of Kitab Kuning, Kiai has succeeded in coloring the diversity of religious life in social life. In this respect, the teaching of ahl sunnah wa al-jama’ah among Muslims has a huge influence. It is proven using Asy’ariyah’s understanding in the field of theology, the use of As-Shafii ideology in the field of Fiqh, and the use of tasawuf al-Ghazali and Imam al-Junaid in the field of Islamic tasawuf. The field of Sufism occurred because of the influence of the tradition of reading the Kitab Kuning by Kiai in pesantren (Abuddin Nata, 2012).

2. Results

a. Santri vs. Ordinary Student

Santri is an Islamic religious student in Pondok pesantren who lives with the Kiai, while ordinary students study in public schools. In addition, santri is students in the pesantren environment; they always study with the Kiai, imitate what the Kiai does, carry out routine worship and Qur’an activities, and conduct religious discussions by taking various references to the Yellow Book. Meanwhile, ordinary students only study in the school environment to receive an education. These students go from home to school; after finishing studying, students will return to their respective homes.

This study showed that santri and graduated santri in traditional pesantren were less able to read the text of Kitab Kuning. Twenty stakeholders of traditional pesantren (Syekh al-Ma’had) with a good reputation admitted that there had been a diminishing in the santri’s ability to read Kitab Kuning. If so, it seems like the capability of a graduated santri was the same as a graduated ordinary student who did not study Kitab Kuning at school. These situations worried traditional pesantren stakeholders about the future of graduated santri. Another thing is that some pesantren no longer use the Sorogan method as their method yet use other methods, such as Bandongan. In other words, if santri cannot read Kitab Kuning, it will not be easy to learn, develop, and re-teach what has been learned in pesantren, especially content knowledge in the classical books (i.e., Kitab Kuning).

b. Capable of Understanding Value and Explanation of Kitab Kuning

One of the preachers in pesantren of Gedongan recalled:
The Implementation of the Sorogan Method...

“KH. A. Yasin and others Kiai in certain times, especially from maghrib prayer to Isya prayer, teach Kitab Kuning to santri with Sorogan method consistently. As a result, santri and graduates of pesantren of Gedongan can truly be accounted for. The vast majority of santri could read Kitab Kuning in accordance with the rules of nahwu-shorof (i’rob) and understand the meaning and the explanation of Kitab Kuning. Apart from this, when they return hometown, they also teach the Yellow Books in their respective regions.”

From the explanation above, the most important thing is that Kiai must provide time for santri to read Kitab Kuning deeply. The activities included santri reading Kitab Kuning individually and Kiai listening to their reading to be easier to evaluate and develop santri’s literacy measurably. In this respect, the way santri read the Kitab Kuning can be in accordance with the nahwu shorof for i’rob so that they can be accounted for and guaranteed scientific literacy.

Data on the ability of santri to write and read the Kitab Kuning were seen from the graduates of pesantren santri who are successful in community life, for example, 50% becoming leaders, 30% becoming entrepreneurs, and 20% becoming farmers. The ability of santri with this method also contributes to producing a reliable cadre of scholars, in which santri can overcome various problems and dynamics of community life. Santri, who passes the Kitab Kuning, will also get community support for various problems faced and learn from them, while santri, who does not master the Kitab Kuning, only gets support as a dhikr reader.

c. Sorogan Method as an Essential and the Basic Method

The Sorogan method is important because this method was considered effective in making santri easier and understanding Kitab Kuning. Meanwhile, the fundamental issue in learning Kitab Kuning is using the Bandongan method, where santri were difficult to be supervised by Kiai or preachers personally. In this respect, Kiai or preachers could not develop santri’s skills in terms of individualism.

KH. Husen Muhammad is a Kiai in a traditional pesantren known as the ‘Kiai Gender’. He likened the literacy ability of today’s traditional pesantren santri to the term ‘unclear’. He asserted:

“For instance, santri in Arjawinangun (sub-district city in Cirebon Regency) has studied and finished their junior high school, however (The Kiai was silent for a moment), they cannot even be good at reading and understanding the meaning of texts in Kitab Kuning so that they cannot explain it contextually. Their fault is one. They
From the excerpt above, he believed that the Sorogan method influenced santri’s understanding of Kitab Kuning. This perspective does not discredit other methods; however, previous studies showed that the Sorogan method is the main method to increase santri’s literacy.

d. Reluctance to Use Sorogan Method is the Same as Reluctance to Understand Kitab Kuning.

One of the sons of the principal from Khatulistiwa Kempek Pesantren (i.e., KH. Syarif Usman), Yahya, was often concerned about the condition of santri and graduated santri. He explained:

“As we discussed with senior Kiai, time by time, the santri’s understanding of Kitab Kuning was lower. They could not even read the Kitab Kuning appropriately, so how can they understand and explain it contextually? We were very concerned about it. In public, santri in Kempek Pesantren are known as smart santri, who can read Alfiyah (a book with high-level Arabic grammar); however, if we asked them to read Taqrib (the most basic Arabic books), they could not. Apparently, they came to the pesantren and reluctant to read Kitab Kuning using Sorogan method, and they prefer to choose a school.”

Based on the excerpt above, he described that the santri was reluctant to choose the Sorogan method as their learning. They had no seriousness in knowing and understanding the content of Kitab Kuning. They just relied on the explanation of Kiai or preachers without wanting to repeat or evaluate themselves. Therefore, they could not read the Kitab Kuning, even the basic books. Since then, these issues have become a concern, especially for the Kiai or preachers. They worried that after graduating from pesantren, the santri were not willing to read Kitab Kuning and could not be beneficial to the societies. Indeed, the school is important to measure the santri’s success; however, if thinking deeply, all knowledge came from the Kitab Kuning. For instance, the existence of mathematics, science, morals, history, Fiqh, language, and others were from the Kitab Kuning. In other words, it is impossible if they are reluctant to learn the sources of the basis of knowledge at school.

e. Sorogan Method is an Identity of Pesantren

Theoretically, the common methods used in pesantren are Bandongan and Sorogan. In addition, these methods are considered as an identity of pesantren. For instance, these methods were not found in other educational institutions, such as
The Implementation of the Sorogan Method... 

Dr. Ahsin Sakho Muhammad, the principal of Rodhotut Tholibin Babakan Ciwaringin Pesantren, asserted that the Sorogan method was the identity of pesantren itself. He started his education in pesantren of Daruttauhid under his grandfather's supervision. He recalled:

“I used to recite the Kitab Kuning starting from a small book, but after studying in this pesantren in Lirboyo, these experiences were very helpful. Mbah (i.e., grandfather) taught us, as Mbah taught the other santri the Kitab Kuning in his way. This method is now known as the Sorogan method. Then, after graduating from pesantren, I got much knowledge, especially Arabic vocabulary, the official language in Kitab Kuning. Meanwhile, for current santri, when they were asked to read Kitab Kuning, they even cannot read and understand the contents because they could not understand the nahwu shorof (i.e., knowledge of Arabic grammar) from the texts. These conditions are because they have never experienced reciting Kitab Kuning with the Sorogan method.”

Kitab Kuning has been used for centuries since the pesantren was established. Kiai reads Kitab Kuning, and the santri listens (listening while memorizing). After the Kiai has had enough, the santri imitate exactly what the Kiai has read. Kiai also gives feedback directly on either the weakness or mistakes in terms of reading, vocabulary, translating, and implementing the rules of Arabic grammar. Hence, implementing the Sorogan method in the future will create the santri who are tafaqqh fial-Din or deepen what is learned. In addition, it can also improve the literacy quality of the santri in the Kitab Kuning.

3. Discussion

a. Summary

Currently, the santri’s literacy towards the Kitab Kuning in traditional pesantren decreased. The decline in the ability of santri to read the Kitab Kuning needs an effective method of learning. The weakness of the santri towards the Kitab Kuning also requires a book study approach that supports them to master the Yellow Book, such as providing basic knowledge, especially with the nahwu and shorof books, which are important learning. In addition, improving reading skills requires habituation that must be done every day to reach a good level of ability.

However, some traditional pesantren, classified as large and old based on the establishment time, have abandoned the Sorogan method as their study. These pesantren’s graduated santri or mukhaarij no longer have a special classification.
compared to modern pesantren. The survey results showed that 40% of the 120 respondents, which were 48 people who graduated from traditional pesantren, could not read the Kitab Kuning, 20% of which (24 people) were weak in understanding Kitab Kuning, and 40% were unable to explain the intent and purpose of Kitab Kuning fully. The factors causing santri's low literacy came from internal and external factors. In this respect, implementing the Sorogan method is an external factor that greatly affects the low literacy of santri towards Kitab Kuning.

b. Reflection

Learning Kitab Kuning with the Sorogan method is a requirement for santri to continue their next studies. It is suggested that learning Kitab Kuning in traditional pesantren is carried out using all the Bandongan, rote, and Sorogan methods as the main methods. The Sorogan method is an individual method of learning the Kitab Kuning, which is very effective in forming santri who can read according to grammatical rules and understand the content or text of the Kitab Kuning and is supported by the power of memorizing mufrodat (vocabulary). This method has proven effective because it allows a Kiai to supervise, assess, and guide the santri's ability in literacy of Kitab Kuning.

c. Interpretation

Traditional pesantren are still relied on as religious, educational institutions that can produce the future of tafaqqh fi al-Din scholars. As the future scholars or Kiai, the most important competition is Kitab Kuning's literacy. This competition includes deep knowledge, broad insight, and adequate scientific methodology about Islam sourced from the Kitab Kuning. In addition, the effectiveness of learning Kitab Kuning is determined by the method used. In the early 1990s, the Sorogan method implementation in learning Kitab Kuning decreased. Yet, learning Kitab Kuning with the Sorogan method has successfully built the literacy competence of santri.

d. Comparison

The discussion on the urgency and function of the Sorogan method in Muhammad Afif's research (December 2019) is not the central theme. His research described that pesantren of Tarbiyatun Nasyiin Pacul Gowang Jombang, East Java, implemented the Sorogan method. It is concluded that using the Sorogan method made santri even more active in increasing their understanding of the Kitab Kuning in pesantren. It is also noted that the Sorogan method was only an offer or alternative and was not used as the main method.
The Implementation of the Sorogan Method...

Some graduated santri from the prominent pesantren in Cirebon, West Java, also abandoned the Sorogan method. Since the early 1990s, most pesantren have completely abandoned the Sorogan method as the main method in studying Kitab Kuning. Shohibul ma'had, Kiai, and preachers at the pesantren never imagined that the Sorogan method in learning Kitab Kuning would significantly impact their graduated santri (i.e., alumni) that the quality of their literacy decreased. Meanwhile, until this research was conducted, they had never thought to use the Sorogan method as an effort to overcome this issue.

e. Implication

Traditional pesantren in the archipelago (i.e., Nusantara) have a more distinctive character than other educational institutions. Keeping adapting in the globalization era will make the traditional pesantren survive. It also makes the traditional pesantren increase their quality. In addition, the alumni of these pesantren can grow up to be a society that preserves the values of simplicity, independence, and adaptability. Traditional pesantren have also succeeded in providing several values that always cause alumni to be needed because of their maziyyah. Maziyyah in every alumnus of a traditional pesantren is the literacy ability of the Kitab Kuning.

In this case, the leadership of Kiai and Kitab Kuning taught in traditional pesantren is the most influential factor in santri's literacy. The survey results revealed that implementing the Sorogan method is a significant supporting factor. Sorogan method is the first classical method implemented by Kiai in learning Kitab Kuning. This method has proven to be successful in producing the future Kiai or preachers who are tafaqquh fi al-Din with the mastering Kitab Kuning. Therefore, it is obvious that the Sorogan method has a crucial role in increasing santri's literacy toward Kitab Kuning. Moreover, using the Sorogan method is expected to return Kiai's charisma and traditional pesantren's reputation.

C. Conclusion

The Sorogan method is vital in improving the ability of santri to understand the reading of the Kitab Kuning. Mastering Islam must have a stronger understanding of mastering the Kitab Kuning and the knowledge of nahwu shorof. Therefore, the ability of all Kitab Kuning knowledge requires the carrying capacity of studying tool books and balagoh books. Without mastering the Kitab Kuning, it is impossible to deepen the knowledge of Islam. In fact, mastery
of Islam with various literacy is crucial, but this mastery requires a Sorogan method that helps in reading and understanding.

In this study, the low literacy of santri in the Kitab Kuning was caused by internal and external factors. Internal factors included motivation and the purpose of joining pesantren. Meanwhile, external factors consisted of the experience of learning the Kitab Kuning before joining pesantren, the length of time in joining pesantren, and the process of learning the classical books in the pesantren with the Bandongan method. Equally important, the leadership of Kiai has an essential role in keeping the tradition in pesantren. Kiai believes that implementing the Sorogan method in this era is no longer in accordance with the demands of the times in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, Kiai, as Shohib al-Ma’had, still maintains the belief that “the most important pesantren is the blessing of the Kiai.”

This study provides new insight into the learning method for Kitab Kuning in traditional pesantren. The selection and implementation of a method must have relevance to the teaching materials, learning objectives, time allocation, facilities and infrastructure, and santri development. In this regard, the Sorogan method is very effective in learning the Kitab Kuning, especially for novice santri. However, this study was limited to the participants by comparing several cases in learning Kitab Kuning. Thus, it is suggested for further study about this issue.

References


https://publikasiilmiah.ums.ac.id/bitstream/handle/11617/8846/ E3.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.


Dhofer, Zamakhshari. 1987. Tradisi Pesantren; Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiai. Jakarta: LP3ES.


The Implementation of the Sorogan Method...