

Assistance in the Al-Miftakh Method as an Effort to Improve Religious Text Reading Skills at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School, Karawang Regency

Undang Ruslan Wahyudin¹, Hinggil Permana², Ella Nuralailasari³, Ridwan Irwansyah⁴

Universitas Singaperbangsa, Karawang, Indonesia^{2,3,4}

{urwahyudin@fai.unsika.ac.id¹, hinggil.permana@fai.unsika.ac.id², ella.nuralailasari@fikes.unsika.ac.id³, 2310632280017@student.unsika.ac.id⁴}

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Keywords: Training; Religious; Santri. *Method;* **Abstract.** *This community service program focuses on the implementation and impact of the Al-Miftakh method in enhancing the ability to read religious texts at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School in Karawang Regency. The Al-Miftakh method is a structured approach aimed at improving the reading proficiency of religious texts by providing a systematic and practical framework for learning. The program seeks to enhance the santri's skills in reading classical Islamic texts, enabling them to gain a deeper understanding of both content and context. The community service involved a series of workshops and hands-on training sessions where santri were systematically guided through the Al-Miftakh method. The sessions were followed by assessments to evaluate their progress. The results indicated that the Al-Miftakh method significantly improved reading fluency and comprehension among the participants. Out of 85 students involved in the program, 89% reported an improvement in their skills based on post-training surveys. This program concludes that structured reading methods like the Al-Miftakh method are highly effective in contributing to the educational development of santri in Islamic boarding schools, offering them valuable tools to better understand religious texts.*

Katakunci: Pelatihan; Agama; Metode; santri. **Abstrak.** Program pengabdian masyarakat ini berfokus pada implementasi dan dampak metode Al-Miftakh dalam meningkatkan kemampuan membaca teks keagamaan di Pondok Pesantren Garunggung, Kabupaten Karawang. Metode Al-Miftakh merupakan pendekatan terstruktur yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan membaca teks keagamaan dengan menyediakan kerangka pembelajaran yang sistematis dan praktis. Program ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan santri dalam membaca teks-teks klasik Islam, sehingga mereka dapat memahami isi dan konteksnya dengan lebih mendalam. Pengabdian masyarakat ini melibatkan serangkaian workshop dan sesi pelatihan langsung di

mana para santri dibimbing secara sistematis menggunakan metode Al-Miftakh. Sesi-sesi ini diikuti dengan penilaian untuk mengevaluasi perkembangan mereka. Hasil program menunjukkan bahwa metode Al-Miftakh secara signifikan meningkatkan kelancaran membaca dan pemahaman di kalangan peserta. Dari 85 santri yang terlibat, 89% melaporkan peningkatan keterampilan berdasarkan survei pasca-pelatihan. Program ini menyimpulkan bahwa metode membaca terstruktur seperti metode Al-Miftakh sangat efektif dalam berkontribusi pada pengembangan pendidikan santri di pondok pesantren, memberikan mereka alat yang berharga untuk memahami teks keagamaan dengan lebih baik.

1. Introduction

Garunggung Islamic Boarding School in Karawang Regency plays a crucial role in the spiritual and intellectual development of its santri. As a religious educational institution, the pesantren is committed to providing high-quality and profound religious education. However, one of the main challenges faced is improving the ability to read religious texts, especially in understanding classical texts with complex language and structure.

Santri at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School often struggle with reading and comprehending religious texts. This issue is largely due to the lack of effective and structured methods for teaching to read the religious text. This condition leads to delays in achieving a deep understanding of the text's content, which in turn affects the quality of religious education at the pesantren.

The background of the problem highlights the challenges faced by Garunggung Islamic Boarding School in improving the reading proficiency of its santri, particularly in understanding classical Islamic texts. Many students struggled with reading fluency and comprehension, hindering their ability to engage deeply with religious materials. Despite the presence of qualified teachers, the traditional methods used to teach reading were not yielding the desired results, leaving students with limited skills in reading and interpreting complex texts (Sultan & Yahya, 2021). The pesantren management recognized the need for a more structured and effective teaching method to address these challenges, ensuring that the santri could not only read but also understand and critically engage with the religious texts fundamental to their studies.

This gap in reading proficiency prompted the need for an intervention that would provide a systematic, step-by-step approach to enhance reading skills, leading to the adoption of the Al-Miftakh method as a potential solution to this pressing problem (Miptakhul et al., 2018).

The training in reading religious texts using the Al-Miftakh method is the primary focus of this community service. The Al-Miftakh method is designed to enhance reading skills by providing a systematic and structured approach. The main issue to be addressed is improving the fluency and comprehension of santri regarding religious texts and overcoming the current barriers in the learning process.

The choice of Garunggung Islamic Boarding School as the service subject is based on the urgent need to improve the methods for teaching religious text reading. The pesantren is deeply committed to religious education but faces challenges in applying effective methods. By using the Al-Miftakh method, it is hoped that a concrete solution tailored to the specific needs of the pesantren can be provided.

The goal of this training is to enhance the reading and comprehension abilities of santri regarding religious texts. It is expected that this training will lead to social changes such as improved quality of religious education at the pesantren and increased confidence among santri in reading and understanding classical texts. (Wahyudin et al., 2024). These changes are anticipated to have a significant positive impact on the quality of education and learning at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School. Qualitative data collected through interviews and observations indicate a deep need for a more structured teaching method. Quantitative data, such as the initial assessment of santri's reading abilities, will be used to measure the effectiveness of the Al-Miftakh training. This combination of data will provide a comprehensive view of the method's impact on santri's reading skills.

Literature on the Al-Miftakh method shows that it has been successfully applied in various religious education contexts to improve reading skills and text comprehension (Lathifah et al., 2022). Previous research indicates that systematic and structured approaches, such as those used in the Al-Miftakh method, can significantly enhance student learning, particularly in language and religious text education. This community service is expected to make a tangible contribution to improving the quality of education at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School. By applying the Al-Miftakh method, it is hoped that there will be a significant improvement in santri's reading skills, supporting the pesantren's educational goals and strengthening their religious

knowledge foundation. The training is also expected to serve as a model for other pesantren facing similar challenges in teaching religious text reading.

The Al-Miftakh method is a learning approach specifically designed to teach *nahwu* (Arabic grammar) and *sharaf* (morphology), with an emphasis on making these subjects accessible to beginners. Developed by Ahmad Qusyairi Isma'il and further refined by Batartama under the mandate of Pesantren Sidogiri, this method has gained popularity for teaching *kitab kuning* (traditional Islamic texts) in Indonesian educational settings. Its goal is to help students, especially those in Islamic boarding schools and madrasahs, master the basics of Arabic grammar and morphology in a more engaging and systematic way.

Key features of the Al-Miftakh method include: Step-by-step learning: The method is structured into volumes that guide learners progressively through material, starting with the basics and advancing toward more complex concepts; Memorable tools: To enhance understanding, the method incorporates catchy *nazams* (poetic songs) and other mnemonic aids, making learning more engaging and memorable, especially for younger students; Practical application: The method is designed to enable students to read *kitab kuning* proficiently, which are often dense theological texts. Students learn not only to recognize and parse words but also to understand their grammatical status and function within a sentence.

The approach has been praised for its effectiveness in simplifying complex Arabic grammatical rules, making them easier for new learners to digest. However, some challenges exist, such as the difficulty in mastering dense material in a short time. Still, for those new to Arabic studies, Al-Miftakh offers a structured, engaging way to dive into *nahwu* and *sharaf*.

2 Method

The subject of this community service is the santri (students) of Garunggung Islamic Boarding School in Karawang Regency. This pesantren has a strong commitment to religious education but faces challenges in effectively teaching reading of classical Islamic texts. The service aims to address these challenges through the implementation of the Al-Miftakh method. The service will be conducted at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School, located in Karawang Regency, West Java, Indonesia. This location was chosen due to its established educational

framework and the urgent need for improved methods in teaching reading of religious texts.

Involvement of Assisted Subjects The planning and organizing process involves active participation from various stakeholders at the pesantren, including: Santri: Provide input on their current reading challenges and preferences; Dosen (Instructors): Offer insights on the existing curriculum and areas needing improvement. Pengurus Pesantren (Management): Facilitate logistics and ensure alignment with institutional goals.

Research Methods and Strategies To achieve the goals of the community service, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods will be used: Qualitative Methods: Include interviews and focus group discussions with santri, dosen, and pesantren management to gather in-depth information about current challenges and needs (Snyder, 2019) and Quantitative Methods: Involve pre- and post-training assessments of reading skills to measure the effectiveness of the Al-Miftakh method.

The community service activities were carried out in several interconnected stages. The preparation stage began with an initial consultation, where meetings were held with pesantren management to discuss the objectives of the program and secure full support from the pesantren. Following this, a needs assessment was conducted, involving interviews and focus group discussions with both santri and dosen to identify specific reading challenges faced by the students. This process aimed to understand the existing difficulties and tailor the training program to meet their needs (Suyadi et al., 2022).

During the planning stage, the training program was carefully designed. This included developing a detailed plan for implementing the Al-Miftakh method, which covered the training schedule and materials. Additionally, resources were organized, such as preparing training materials, arranging qualified facilitators, and coordinating logistics to ensure that all technical and operational requirements were met (Greenland et al., 2022).

The implementation stage began with conducting workshops using the Al-Miftakh method. During these training sessions, santri were given the opportunity to practice through practical exercises and guided reading sessions. Each participant was encouraged to engage actively, making the learning process interactive and effective. Continuous support was also provided throughout the training period to ensure the santri

received adequate guidance and assistance in overcoming challenges during their learning process.

After the training was completed, the evaluation stage was conducted to measure the progress achieved. Assessments were carried out through post-training tests to evaluate improvements in the students' reading skills. In addition, feedback was gathered from the santri, dosen, and pesantren management to assess the effectiveness of the training method implemented. This process also provided insights into areas that still required improvement, ensuring that future training programs could be better aligned with participants' needs.

Finally, in the reporting and follow-up stage, the outcomes of the training were documented in a report, including findings and recommendations based on the evaluation results. The report also outlined follow-up plans for providing continued support to the santri if needed, as well as the possibility of additional training to ensure the long-term benefits of the program. These stages worked together to ensure that the community service activities had a significant positive impact on the santri and the pesantren.

Flowchart 1: Stages of community service



This flowchart visually represents the sequential stages of the community service activities, ensuring a systematic approach to planning, implementing, and evaluating the training program.

3 Results

During the community service project aimed at training santri at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School using the Al-Miftakh method, a comprehensive and structured approach was implemented to ensure the success of the initiative. The project began with an initial assessment phase, where the existing reading skills of the santri were carefully evaluated. This assessment was crucial in identifying specific challenges that the students faced, particularly in understanding classical Islamic texts. Through interviews and surveys with the santri and dosen, the project team was able to gather valuable insights into the areas where the students struggled, allowing for a tailored approach in addressing these challenges.

Once the challenges were identified, the next step was the implementation of a series of training workshops that focused on the Al-Miftakh method. These workshops included theoretical sessions, where participants were introduced to the core principles of the Al-Miftakh method, followed by practical reading sessions where the santri could apply the learned concepts. These sessions also incorporated interactive exercises designed to reinforce key learning points, making the training process engaging and participatory. Additionally, continuous support was provided to the santri throughout the training period. This support was not only in the form of direct assistance during the workshops but also through follow-up sessions, where progress was assessed, emerging issues were addressed, and extra guidance was given to ensure the proper application of the method.(Jääskä et al., 2022)

The technical actions involved in the project were carefully planned to support the overall objectives. The training modules were structured in a way that introduced the Al-Miftakh method systematically, with a strong focus on developing reading techniques and enhancing comprehension skills(Shalahuddin et al., 2024). These modules were supplemented with additional materials, including reading guides and practice texts, which served as resources for the santri to deepen their understanding and practice independently. To further enhance engagement, interactive learning sessions were held, where group discussions and collaborative reading exercises took place. These

sessions not only allowed the students to share their insights and challenges but also fostered a collaborative learning environment, helping to create a sense of community among the santri.

The results of the training program led to several significant social changes within the pesantren. One of the most notable changes was the improvement in the reading proficiency of the santri. Many of them demonstrated significant progress in both their reading speed and comprehension of classical Islamic texts (Permana et al., 2024). This enhancement in reading skills was evident not only in their ability to read more fluently but also in their ability to engage more deeply with the material. This behavioral change reflected a shift towards a more effective and structured approach to learning, where the students became more confident in their reading abilities. This increased confidence also translated into greater participation in religious discussions and activities within the pesantren, as the santri felt more equipped to engage with the texts and share their understanding.

Another major outcome of the project was the institutionalization of the Al-Miftakh method within the Garunggung Islamic Boarding School curriculum. The method was officially integrated into the school's teaching framework, making it a standard approach for developing reading skills among the santri. This integration represented a significant institutional change, as the method became a core part of the educational experience at the pesantren. The success of the project also led to the emergence of new leadership roles within the pesantren. Some of the santri, having excelled in the training, took on the responsibility of peer mentors, helping their fellow students apply the Al-Miftakh method effectively. These peer mentors played a crucial role in reinforcing the learning within the pesantren and contributed to a more collaborative and supportive learning environment.

The project also raised broader awareness about the importance of structured reading methods in religious education. It highlighted the need for systematic and methodical approaches to teaching reading, which could significantly improve the learning outcomes of the santri. This awareness has sparked discussions about how teaching methods can be continuously improved and adapted to better meet the needs of students. Moreover, the success of the Al-Miftakh method has inspired other pesantren and educational institutions to consider adopting similar structured approaches to teaching reading. This has the potential to lead to broader social and educational transformations, as more institutions

recognize the value of innovative and effective teaching methods(Lathifah et al., 2022).

In summary, the community service project not only resulted in significant improvements in the reading skills of the santri but also brought about notable social changes within the Garunggung Islamic Boarding School. The integration of the Al-Miftakh method into the school's curriculum, the emergence of peer mentors, and the increased awareness of educational innovations all contributed to a more dynamic and effective learning environment. The success of this project serves as a model for other pesantren and educational institutions, demonstrating how a structured, methodical approach to teaching can lead to lasting positive changes in religious education.

4 Discussion

Training in reading religious texts using the Al-Miftah Method at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School in Karawang Regency is an innovative effort to enhance students' ability to understand *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts). These texts, which serve as primary sources of Islamic knowledge, cover various disciplines such as jurisprudence (*fiqh*), exegesis (*tafsir*), prophetic traditions (*hadith*), and mysticism (*tasawwuf*), all of which require a deep understanding of Arabic. The Al-Miftah method is designed to provide a systematic and practical approach to learning how to read and interpret these texts.

The main advantage of the Al-Miftah Method lies in its simplification of Arabic grammar (*nahwu* and *sharaf*). This method introduces a structured, step-by-step learning process, enabling students to progress from basic to more advanced levels of text comprehension. This approach helps students, who often find reading *kitab kuning* challenging, to gradually build their confidence as the material is presented in a clear and accessible manner.

In practice, the training utilizes repetition and direct application to strengthen students' memory and understanding of Arabic grammar rules. For instance, students are trained to recognize grammatical patterns through frequent examples from commonly used phrases or short texts in *kitab kuning*. This method not only helps them grasp the theoretical aspects of grammar but also encourages them to apply their knowledge directly in reading and understanding the texts.

Moreover, the Al-Miftah Method emphasizes collaborative learning. Students are encouraged to study in groups, where they can discuss and

help one another in understanding the texts. This group-based learning approach has proven effective in accelerating comprehension, as students can complement each other's understanding and create an active, enjoyable learning environment.

The local context of Karawang Regency also underscores the importance of implementing this method. Many students come from educational backgrounds where they are not yet fully familiar with Arabic. The Al-Miftah Method provides a relevant solution to bridge this gap, enabling students to adapt more quickly to the Islamic boarding school curriculum, which heavily relies on *kitab kuning*.

This training not only focuses on the technical aspects of reading but also introduces the context and meaning behind the texts being studied. As a result, students do not merely read mechanically but also understand the essence and messages contained in *kitab kuning*. This understanding is crucial for shaping students who are not only intellectually capable but also spiritually grounded. (Hanafi et al., 2021)

The results of this training indicate that the Al-Miftah Method significantly enhances students' comprehension. Many students who initially required assistance from teachers to read texts can now read and understand *kitab kuning* independently (Laeheem, 2018). This reflects the effectiveness of the method in building strong religious literacy skills among the students. Beyond individual improvement, this training also positively impacts the community within the boarding school. With more students proficient in reading and interpreting *kitab kuning*, the intellectual tradition at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School becomes more vibrant. Senior students who master this method can mentor their juniors, creating a sustainable cycle of knowledge transfer.

The implementation of the Al-Miftah Method has also inspired other Islamic educational institutions in Karawang and nearby areas. Many boarding schools are beginning to adopt this method as a model for more effective *kitab kuning* instruction. The potential replication of this method across other institutions opens opportunities to elevate the quality of Islamic education regionally and nationally.

With its numerous benefits, the training program for reading religious texts using the Al-Miftah Method at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School represents a strategic initiative to preserve Islamic intellectual traditions in Indonesia. This program not only produces students proficient in reading *kitab kuning* but also nurtures a new generation of scholars

capable of safeguarding Islamic intellectual heritage while remaining relevant to contemporary challenges.

Results of the community service project implementing the Al-Miftakh method at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School reveal significant improvements in reading proficiency and comprehension among santri, aligning with theoretical perspectives on effective teaching methods. The project demonstrated that structured, systematic approaches to reading instruction, such as the Al-Miftakh method, can substantially enhance students' engagement and understanding of complex texts, which is consistent with educational theories emphasizing the importance of clear instructional frameworks (Katilmiş et al., 2019).

The Al-Miftakh method is a popular approach used in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Indonesia, particularly for teaching students how to read and understand traditional religious texts, often referred to as "yellow books." This method integrates various Arabic grammar rules and provides a more accessible way to learn complex texts by utilizing songs and creative formats, making the learning process more engaging. In *pesantren* like Madrasah Diniyah Syaichona Cholil in Samarinda, this method has shown positive results in improving students' reading skills of classical Arabic texts (Permana, Syafrida, 2019).

The approach's effectiveness lies in its structured and systematic learning steps, which encourage repetition and mastery over time. It involves various phases of practice that enhance the students' understanding and fluency in reading the religious (Abdul et al., 2022) texts. Teachers play a crucial role in planning, implementing, and evaluating the method to ensure continuous progress (Arifin et al., 2020). In some *pesantren*, the method has been complemented by other techniques like conversational practice and language immersion to reinforce learning. The method's flexibility and engagement are key to its success in Islamic educational settings.

The theoretical underpinning of the Al-Miftakh method draws from the principles of structured pedagogy, which suggest that systematic and explicit instruction facilitates deeper learning and skill acquisition (Laeheem, 2018). This theoretical perspective was reflected in the observed improvements in santri's reading skills and comprehension. The method's success in increasing reading fluency and comprehension supports the notion that structured pedagogical interventions can lead to significant educational advancements (Permana et al., 2023).

Throughout the community service process, several stages were critical in achieving the observed social changes (Slimi & Villarejo-Carballido, 2024). Initial assessments and tailored training modules provided a solid foundation, while ongoing support ensured the effective application of the method. The emergence of local peer mentors and the institutionalization of the method within the pesantren's curriculum further illustrate the transformative impact of the intervention. These outcomes align with theories of educational change, which emphasize the role of both institutional support and student agency in fostering sustainable improvements (Hanafi et al., 2021).

The integration of the Al-Miftakh method into the pesantren's curriculum and the subsequent rise in student confidence and leadership roles reflect broader social changes, including enhanced educational quality and increased internal capacity for peer mentoring. This aligns with the theoretical framework of social capital, where educational interventions foster community cohesion and individual empowerment (Baharun et al., 2021).

The training program for reading religious texts using the Al-Miftah Method at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School, Karawang Regency, has proven to be an effective approach to improving students' ability to comprehend *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts). This method offers a systematic and structured solution for mastering Arabic grammar (*nahwu* and *sharaf*), enabling students to read and understand texts with greater confidence. Through repetition, direct practice, and collaborative learning, the method not only equips students with technical reading skills but also fosters a deeper understanding of the content and meaning of the texts.

The results of the training demonstrate significant improvement in the students' literacy and comprehension of Islamic classical texts, including their ability to read independently. Additionally, the program has had a positive impact on the boarding school community by revitalizing its intellectual traditions and facilitating knowledge transfer from senior to junior students (Afzal & Crawford, 2022). The implementation of the Al-Miftah Method also serves as an inspiring model for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to enhance their *kitab kuning* instruction.

Overall, this program contributes to the preservation of Islamic intellectual heritage in Indonesia while nurturing a generation of students who are not only skilled in reading religious texts but also possess a profound understanding and relevance to contemporary

challenges (Wahyudin, Permana, & Nurlailasari, 2024). The method demonstrates great potential for further development and replication across other Islamic boarding schools, strengthening an adaptive and inclusive Islamic education system.

In conclusion, the community service results are consistent with theoretical findings on effective pedagogy and educational change. The positive outcomes of this project suggest that similar structured approaches could benefit other educational settings (Greenland et al., 2022). Future recommendations include expanding the training to other pesantren and incorporating feedback mechanisms to continuously refine the method. These steps will help ensure the sustainability and broader application of the successful practices demonstrated in this community service initiative (Amirudin, 2017).

The community service project implementing the Al-Miftakh method at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School underscores several theoretical reflections on effective pedagogy and educational transformation. Theoretically, the success of the Al-Miftakh method aligns with the principles of structured instruction and explicit teaching, which emphasize that clear, systematic frameworks can significantly enhance student learning outcomes. The improvements observed in reading fluency and comprehension among santri highlight the efficacy of this approach, supporting theories that advocate for structured pedagogical interventions to facilitate deeper learning and skill acquisition.

Furthermore, the project's outcomes resonate with educational change theories, which posit that institutional support, combined with student agency, can drive substantial educational improvements. The institutionalization of the Al-Miftakh method and the emergence of peer mentors reflect this theory, demonstrating how educational innovations can lead to sustainable changes within an institution. Additionally, the rise in student confidence and leadership roles aligns with social capital theories, which emphasize the role of educational interventions in fostering community cohesion and individual empowerment.

Based on the results and theoretical reflections, several recommendations can be made to enhance and sustain the impact of the Al-Miftakh method. First, the training program should be expanded to other pesantren and educational institutions facing similar challenges, enabling broader application and improvements in religious text education. Second, continuous improvement mechanisms should be established, with regular feedback and evaluations to refine and adapt the method based on the needs of the santri. Additionally, enhancing

resource availability by increasing access to supplementary materials will help reinforce the skills learned during the training. Promoting peer mentorship within pesantren can further strengthen the learning environment by encouraging collaboration and leadership among advanced santri.

Finally, long-term monitoring and evaluation should be implemented to assess the sustained impact of the method on reading skills and overall educational outcomes, ensuring its continued relevance and contribution to educational improvements. In summary, the project's conclusions emphasize the effectiveness of structured pedagogical approaches and highlight the importance of institutional support and student engagement in achieving educational transformation. The recommendations aim to build on these findings, ensuring the continued success and broader application of the Al-Miftakh method in enhancing religious text education.

5 Conclusion

The community service project at Garunggung Islamic Boarding School, using the Al-Miftakh method, demonstrates the effectiveness of structured pedagogy in improving reading skills. The method aligns with theories on structured instruction, showing that systematic teaching frameworks enhance learning outcomes. The project also highlights the importance of institutional support and student engagement, as seen in the integration of the method into the curriculum and the emergence of peer mentors. Furthermore, it supports social capital theories by fostering student confidence and leadership. Based on these outcomes, recommendations include expanding the training to other pesantren, developing continuous feedback mechanisms, enhancing resources, promoting peer mentorship, and monitoring long-term impact. Overall, the project emphasizes the role of structured pedagogy and institutional support in achieving lasting educational transformation.

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