

THE DIALECTICS OF TRADITION AND INNOVATION: HYBRIDIZING PEER TEACHING WITHIN THE KITAB KUNING LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

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Abstract

Kitab Kuning learning in Salaf Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) faces a dialectic between preserving authoritative tradition (sanad, talaqqi) and adopting collaborative pedagogical innovation (peer teaching). This study aims to answer: How is this dialectic manifested in learning experiences, and what kind of hybrid pedagogy model can be developed? This study positions itself within the discourse of pedagogical glocalization, analyzing the negotiation between the traditional structure of pesantren and modern learning approaches through the lens of social construction theory. A phenomenological qualitative study was conducted in two Salaf Islamic boarding schools in East Java, involving 20 students and 4 teachers. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, then analyzed thematically. The findings indicate that: (1) Peer teaching enhances student agency and metacognitive awareness, yet remains framed within teacher authority; (2) Conventional methods preserve the spirituality of talaqqi but limit critical space; (3) Cultural resistance leads to the adaptation of a “guided musyafahah” model as a form of hybridization. The implication is that Kitab Kuning learning requires a contextual model that integrates authoritative transmission and collaborative exploration.

Keywords: *Peer Teaching; Conventional Method; Kitab Kuning; Islamic Boarding School; Pedagogical Phenomenology.*



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Abstrak

Pembelajaran kitab kuning di pesantren salaf menghadapi dialektika antara menjaga tradisi otoritatif (sanad, talaqqi) dan mengadopsi inovasi pedagogis kolaboratif (peer teaching). Penelitian ini bertujuan menjawab: Bagaimana dialektika tersebut terwujud dalam pengalaman pembelajaran, dan model pedagogi hibrid seperti apa yang dapat dikembangkan? Penelitian ini menempatkan diri dalam wacana glokalisasi pedagogi dengan menganalisis negosiasi antara struktur tradisional pesantren dan pendekatan pembelajaran modern, melalui perspektif teori konstruksi sosial. Penelitian kualitatif fenomenologis dilakukan di dua pesantren salaf di Jawa Timur dengan melibatkan 20 santri dan 4 ustaz. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa: (1) Peer teaching meningkatkan student agency dan kesadaran metakognitif, namun tetap dalam bingkai otoritas ustaz; (2) Metode konvensional menjaga spiritualitas talaqqi namun membatasi ruang kritis; (3) Resistensi kultural melahirkan adaptasi berupa model "musyafahah terpimpin" sebagai bentuk hibridisasi. Implikasinya, pembelajaran kitab kuning memerlukan model kontekstual yang mengintegrasikan transmisi otoritatif dan eksplorasi kolaboratif.

Kata Kunci: *Peer Teaching; Metode Konvensional; Kitab Kuning; Pesantren; Fenomenologi Pedagogis.*

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary religious education faces increasingly complex challenges, not only in transmitting normative knowledge but also in cultivating learners who are capable of reflective thinking, dialogic engagement, and adaptive responses to social change (Amirudin et al., 2025; Irayanti, 2026; Marshall, 2025). In this context, learning can no longer be understood merely as a one-way transmission of knowledge from teacher to student, but rather as an interactive space in which knowledge is actively constructed through social engagement. Recent studies have demonstrated that dialogic teaching, peer learning, and metacognitive development significantly enhance student participation, critical reasoning, and academic achievement (Noroozi et al., 2025; Tao & Chen, 2024; Xie & Lin, 2025). Therefore, pedagogical renewal within Islamic education has become an important issue, not to replace long-established scholarly traditions, but to ensure that these traditions remain dynamic, relevant, and responsive to contemporary societal needs.

However, Islamic educational institutions often encounter a persistent tension between maintaining traditional scholarly authority and responding to modern pedagogical demands (Hasan, 2025; Hayadin et al., 2025; Karwadi et al., 2025; Rofiqi et al., 2026; Romlah et al., 2025). Traditional modes of instruction emphasize the

authority of teachers and the authenticity of knowledge transmission through intellectual lineage (*sanad*), which plays a crucial role in preserving the integrity of religious scholarship. At the same time, overly monologic teaching practices may limit opportunities for student engagement, critical reflection, and intellectual autonomy (Dwicahyo et al., 2024; Ikhsan, 2024; Ramadhani & Afendi, 2025; Suhilmiati et al., 2025; Wagola et al., 2025). The challenge therefore lies in balancing authoritative transmission with participatory learning environments. Previous studies have also noted that effective educational systems require both epistemic authority and opportunities for learner participation to coexist in productive ways (Asnawi & Zuhdi, 2025; Rafiqie et al., 2025).

This tension becomes particularly visible within the learning ecosystem of *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) in traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren salaf*) (Anida Yuspa & Ahmad Arifin, 2024; Huda, 2022). The teaching of classical texts in *pesantren* has historically relied on instructional methods such as *talaqqi*, *bandongan*, and *sorogan*, which emphasize textual accuracy, reverence for teachers, and hierarchical transmission of knowledge. From the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, educational practices can be understood as socially constructed processes in which meanings are negotiated and institutionalized through interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 2016). Within *pesantren*, the learning of classical texts therefore represents not merely a pedagogical activity but also a process of cultural reproduction that maintains the continuity of Islamic intellectual traditions. Nevertheless, recent developments indicate that *pesantren* classrooms are increasingly experimenting with more interactive forms of learning, including peer teaching practices that encourage student participation while still respecting teacher authority.

Recent research has highlighted the significant potential of dialogic and collaborative approaches in improving learning quality. For instance, a meta-analysis by Tao and Chen (2024) demonstrates that dialogic teacher talk positively correlates with students' academic achievement. Similarly, Xie and Lin (2025) report that dialogic teaching-and-learning programs substantially enhance classroom interaction quality and student engagement. Furthermore, Noroozi et al. (2025) argue that peer learning can strengthen students' agency, collaborative competence, and metacognitive awareness when supported by well-designed pedagogical scaffolding. Earlier educational theories also support this perspective. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction in cognitive development, particularly through the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Likewise, research on peer-assisted learning

suggests that students can play an active role in facilitating each other's learning processes (Gillies & Boyle, 2010; Topping, 2005).

Despite these advances, existing research leaves an important gap when applied to the context of traditional Islamic education, particularly within pesantren environments. Most studies on dialogic pedagogy and peer learning have been conducted in general schooling or higher education contexts that do not operate within knowledge traditions based on authoritative transmission and intellectual lineage. Meanwhile, recent studies on pesantren education tend to focus on broader transformations of learning models—from traditional *sorogan* practices to digital learning—without deeply examining how teachers and students themselves experience and negotiate the encounter between traditional instructional authority and collaborative learning practices (Suresmana et al., 2025). Consequently, a significant empirical and conceptual gap remains regarding how peer teaching functions within the learning ecosystem of *kitab kuning*, where authority structures, ethical norms, and intellectual traditions strongly shape educational practices.

Based on this gap, the novelty of this research lies in conceptualizing the learning of classical Islamic texts not as a binary opposition between tradition and modernity but as a process of pedagogical hybridization negotiated within specific social and cultural contexts. This study proposes a state-of-the-art perspective suggesting that pedagogical innovation in pesantren should not be evaluated solely through the lens of modern instructional effectiveness but must also be understood through the internal mechanisms of Islamic scholarly traditions, including teacher authority, interpretive validation, ethical learning practices, and the continuity of intellectual lineage. Through this perspective, the study contributes to expanding scholarly discussions on Islamic pedagogy by demonstrating that educational innovation can emerge as an adaptive process rooted in tradition rather than as a disruption of it.

This study aims to examine how the dialectic between conventional instructional methods and peer teaching unfolds within the learning of classical Islamic texts in traditional pesantren settings, what cultural factors mediate this interaction, and what form of pedagogical model may emerge from this encounter. Specifically, this research seeks to analyze the lived experiences of teachers and students within the learning process, explore the social dynamics that shape the construction of religious knowledge, and formulate a contextual pedagogical model that integrates authoritative knowledge transmission with collaborative participation. The central argument of this study is that pedagogical innovation in the learning of classical Islamic texts becomes more effective and culturally legitimate when developed through hybrid forms that preserve teacher authority

while simultaneously opening dialogic spaces for student agency and metacognitive engagement. In doing so, this study contributes both theoretically to the development of Islamic pedagogy and practically to the design of contextual and dialogic learning models within pesantren education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore the dialectic between tradition and pedagogical innovation in the learning of *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts). The phenomenological approach was chosen because it is particularly suitable for understanding the lived experiences of students (*santri*) and teachers (*ustaz*) as subjects who actively interpret and construct meaning within the learning process. The research was conducted in two traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren salaf*) in East Java, Indonesia. These institutions were selected based on three criteria: (1) the use of *kitab kuning* as the core component of the curriculum, (2) the simultaneous implementation of peer teaching and conventional instructional methods, and (3) institutional openness to participatory classroom observation.

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling based on clearly defined criteria. The sample consisted of 20 students divided into two groups: 10 students from peer-teaching classes and 10 students from conventional classes. The selection criteria for students included at least two years of experience studying *kitab kuning*, intermediate to advanced Arabic language proficiency, and willingness to participate fully in the research process. In addition, four *ustaz* were recruited based on their teaching experience and pedagogical roles. Two teachers had a minimum of seven years of teaching experience and were actively facilitating peer teaching activities, while the other two teachers had at least ten years of experience using conventional instructional methods and possessed recognized scholarly lineage (*sanad*) in classical Islamic learning. This sampling strategy aimed to obtain balanced and in-depth perspectives from both pedagogical approaches.

Data were collected through the triangulation of three primary techniques: semi-structured in-depth interviews, participatory observation conducted over an eight-week period, and document analysis of curriculum materials and instructional records. The interviews focused on participants' subjective experiences, perceptions, and challenges encountered during the learning process. Participatory observation was employed to capture the dynamics of classroom interaction that might not be fully revealed through interviews. Document analysis was conducted to provide contextual understanding of the instructional framework, including curriculum structure and the learning materials used in the teaching of *kitab kuning*.

Data analysis followed the interactive thematic model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction through open coding, data display in the form of matrices and thematic narratives, and conclusion drawing through interpretative analysis (Miles et al., 2014). Data credibility was ensured through several strategies, including source triangulation, member checking, and prolonged observation in the field. Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining written informed consent from all participants and ensuring the confidentiality of their identities through the use of pseudonyms.

Through this methodological framework, the study seeks not only to describe the phenomenon but also to uncover the processes of meaning negotiation and cultural adaptation that occur within the unique context of *kitab kuning* learning in pesantren. The phenomenological approach allows the researcher to explore the lifeworld of both students and teachers, while simultaneously providing an analytical framework for examining pedagogical transformation within traditional Islamic educational settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Transformation of Student Agency and Metacognitive Awareness

The transformation of student agency and metacognitive awareness refers to the shift in students' roles from passive recipients of knowledge to active participants who construct and regulate their own learning processes. In the context of *kitab kuning* learning, this transformation becomes visible when students not only receive textual explanations from the *ustaz* but also engage in interpreting, explaining, and evaluating classical texts collaboratively through peer teaching. Operationally, student agency in this study is defined as the students' ability to initiate discussion, articulate interpretations, and negotiate meaning with peers, while metacognitive awareness refers to their ability to reflect on their own understanding and monitor the process of learning classical texts.

One participant described how the peer teaching process encouraged deeper reflection on his own understanding of the material. He explained:

"When I had to explain the rule of 'amil to my friends, I felt forced to reorganize my own understanding. I realized that there were parts I had previously skipped because I thought I already understood them." (SPT-05, Interview)

The statement illustrates how the act of explaining material to peers stimulates cognitive restructuring. From the researcher's perspective, this

experience indicates that peer teaching functions as a mechanism that compels students to revisit their prior understanding and reconstruct knowledge more systematically. The process of articulating explanations encourages students to identify gaps in their comprehension and develop greater awareness of how they learn.

A similar perspective was expressed by another student who emphasized the role of peer dialogue in clarifying complex passages from classical texts. The participant stated:

"Sometimes we understand the text better when a friend explains it in simpler language before the ustaz confirms the explanation." (SPT-12, Interview)

This statement suggests that peer interaction creates a supportive learning environment where students feel more comfortable expressing confusion and exploring alternative interpretations. The researcher interprets this interaction as an indication that peer teaching facilitates a collaborative meaning-making process. In such settings, students negotiate understanding through dialogue before the teacher provides authoritative validation, thereby strengthening both conceptual comprehension and confidence in their learning abilities.

Observational data further reinforce these interview findings. During classroom observations conducted over eight weeks, peer teaching sessions frequently involved reflective questioning and collaborative interpretation of textual passages. In approximately 80% of the observed sessions, students initiated discussions by posing questions such as *"Why is this grammatical rule applied here?"* or *"How does this concept relate to the previous chapter?"*. These discussions often led to collective attempts to interpret the text before the *ustaz* provided clarification or confirmation. The researcher interprets this pattern as evidence that peer teaching expands the dialogic space within the classroom, enabling students to engage in analytical reasoning rather than relying solely on memorization.

Taken together, the interview and observational data indicate that peer teaching encourages students to become more reflective and participatory learners. In other words, the learning process shifts from a purely transmission-based model toward a collaborative process in which students actively construct knowledge. A clear pattern emerges from the data: when students are given the opportunity to explain and discuss classical texts with their peers, they develop stronger metacognitive awareness and demonstrate greater confidence in articulating their interpretations. This transformation does not eliminate the authority of the *ustaz*

but rather situates teacher guidance within a more interactive learning environment where students play a more active intellectual role.

Dialectics of Authority and Participation

The dialectics of authority and participation refers to the dynamic interaction between the hierarchical authority of the *ustaz* and the participatory engagement of students in the learning process. In traditional *kitab kuning* learning, authority is historically centralized in the figure of the teacher who functions as the primary interpreter and validator of knowledge. Students are expected to demonstrate obedience, attentiveness, and textual precision. However, the introduction of peer teaching creates a new participatory dimension in which students engage more actively in interpreting texts and discussing conceptual meanings with their peers. Operationally, this dialectic manifests in the coexistence of two pedagogical structures: authoritative transmission through traditional instruction and dialogic interaction through peer learning.

One teacher emphasized the importance of maintaining scholarly authority within the learning process even when peer discussion is allowed. He stated:

“Even when students discuss among themselves, the final interpretation must still return to the ustaz. That is how we maintain the continuity of the scholarly tradition.” (UKV-01, Interview)

This statement highlights the epistemological significance of authority within pesantren pedagogy. From the researcher’s perspective, teacher authority functions as a mechanism for safeguarding interpretive accuracy and maintaining continuity with established scholarly traditions. Although peer teaching encourages participation, knowledge validation ultimately remains within the domain of the teacher, reflecting the pesantren’s commitment to preserving intellectual lineage (*sanad*).

A student participant also reflected on how peer discussion operates alongside teacher authority in the classroom. The student explained:

“During discussion we can express different opinions, but when the ustaz explains the correct interpretation, we accept it as the final reference.” (SPT-09, Interview)

The researcher interprets this statement as evidence that participation and authority coexist within the pesantren learning environment. Peer discussion provides students with a space to articulate ideas and test interpretations, while teacher guidance serves as the final stage of epistemic validation. In this structure,

students perceive peer learning not as a challenge to authority but as a preparatory stage that enhances their understanding before receiving authoritative clarification.

The comparative observations conducted during classroom sessions further illustrate how these two pedagogical structures operate in practice. In conventional learning sessions, interaction tended to be teacher-centered, with students listening to textual explanations and occasionally presenting individual recitations. By contrast, peer-teaching sessions involved more dynamic exchanges among students, including collaborative interpretation and question-based discussion. These differences can be summarized in the following comparative framework.

Table 1. Pedagogical Dynamics of Conventional and Peer Teaching Methods

Aspect	Conventional Method	Peer Teaching
Authority Structure	Vertical and hierarchical; the ustaz acts as the primary gatekeeper of knowledge	Distributed authority; the ustaz functions as facilitator
Interaction Pattern	One-directional in <i>bandongan</i> ; individual in <i>sorogan</i>	Multi-directional interaction among students and teacher
Main Strength	Preservation of sanad authenticity and spiritual discipline	Development of student agency and communication skills
Limitations	Limited space for critical exploration	Potential risk of misunderstanding without guidance

Observational notes indicate that during conventional sessions the teacher typically delivered extended explanations while students listened attentively, occasionally annotating their texts. In contrast, peer-teaching sessions involved more interactive engagement, with students asking clarifying questions, comparing interpretations, and debating grammatical structures before the teacher intervened to provide final clarification. The researcher interprets this pattern as evidence that peer teaching expands dialogic interaction while maintaining the structural authority of the teacher.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the relationship between authority and participation in pesantren learning is characterized by negotiation rather than opposition. A clear pattern emerges from the data: conventional methods ensure epistemological stability and continuity of scholarly tradition, whereas peer teaching introduces participatory dialogue and collaborative reasoning. Instead of replacing traditional authority, peer teaching complements it by providing a dialogic space that allows students to engage more actively in the process of understanding classical texts.

Cultural Resistance and the Emergence of Guided Musyafahah

Cultural resistance in this study refers to the hesitation or concern expressed by teachers and students when new pedagogical practices challenge established learning traditions. In the context of pesantren education, such resistance is closely related to the preservation of scholarly lineage, the maintenance of traditional teacher–student roles, and the cultural norms that regulate classroom interaction. However, rather than rejecting pedagogical innovation entirely, pesantren communities tend to negotiate these tensions by adapting new practices to fit within their existing cultural framework. This adaptive process ultimately led to the emergence of what participants described as a **guided musyafahah model**, a hybrid form of peer teaching integrated with teacher supervision.

One teacher expressed concern about the potential risks of adopting peer teaching without appropriate guidance. He explained:

“If students only rely on discussion with their peers, there is a risk that the interpretation of the text may deviate from the established scholarly tradition.” (UPT-02, Interview)

This statement reflects a common concern among teachers regarding the preservation of intellectual authority. From the researcher’s perspective, such concerns represent a form of cultural resistance rooted in the pesantren’s commitment to safeguarding the authenticity of knowledge transmission. Teachers perceive their role not only as instructors but also as custodians of an intellectual tradition that must be carefully preserved.

However, another teacher described how peer teaching can still be integrated within the pesantren framework through careful supervision. He noted:

“We do not reject peer discussion. Instead, we guide it so that students remain active while the ustaz ensures that the interpretation stays on the correct path.” (UPT-01, Interview)

The researcher interprets this statement as an indication of pedagogical adaptation rather than rejection of innovation. Instead of fully adopting Western models of peer teaching, pesantren educators reinterpret collaborative learning within the ethical and epistemological framework of traditional Islamic scholarship.

Observational evidence further illustrates how this hybrid model operates in practice. During several peer-teaching sessions, students first worked together to analyze passages from classical texts, discussing grammatical structures and conceptual meanings in small groups. After the discussion phase, the teacher invited representatives from each group to present their interpretations before providing

clarification and authoritative confirmation. The researcher interprets this structure as a form of guided collaboration in which peer discussion serves as a preparatory stage for authoritative validation.

Overall, the data indicate that cultural resistance does not necessarily hinder pedagogical innovation. Instead, it functions as a mechanism that shapes how innovation is adapted within the pesantren environment. A clear pattern emerges: rather than replacing traditional instructional methods, peer teaching is integrated through a hybrid structure in which collaborative discussion is guided by teacher authority. This process ultimately results in the emergence of the guided musyafahah model, a contextual pedagogical approach that combines the participatory strengths of peer learning with the epistemological safeguards of traditional pesantren education.

Discussions

The findings of this study demonstrate that pedagogical change in pesantren learning environments occurs through a process of negotiated integration between traditional authority and participatory learning practices. This result is consistent with previous studies suggesting that contemporary religious education must move beyond purely transmissive teaching toward more dialogic and interactive learning environments (Marshall, 2025; Irayanti, 2026). Similar to the findings of Tao and Chen (2024), which indicate that dialogic interaction improves students' academic engagement and comprehension, the present study shows that peer teaching expands opportunities for students to discuss, interpret, and clarify the meanings of classical texts collaboratively. However, unlike many educational contexts examined in prior studies, the dialogic learning process observed in pesantren remains embedded within a framework of teacher authority, which continues to function as the primary mechanism for validating knowledge.

The transformation of student agency identified in this study also supports the theoretical assumptions of sociocultural learning theory, particularly the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development proposed by Vygotsky (1978). According to this theory, learning occurs most effectively when individuals interact with peers or mentors who support their cognitive development. Consistent with this perspective, the results of this research show that peer teaching encourages students to articulate interpretations, reflect on their understanding, and reconstruct knowledge through collaborative dialogue. These findings align with previous research on peer learning that highlights its positive impact on metacognitive awareness and conceptual understanding (Noroozi et al., 2025; Topping, 2005). Nevertheless, this study reveals a distinctive characteristic of peer learning within

pesantren contexts: collaborative dialogue operates within a structured hierarchy in which the ustaz maintains the role of epistemic authority. This structure differs from many Western peer-learning models that emphasize student autonomy as the central feature of collaborative learning.

Furthermore, the findings regarding the dialectical relationship between authority and participation correspond with recent research on Islamic educational institutions that highlights the importance of maintaining scholarly authority while accommodating pedagogical innovation (Hasan, 2025; Hayadin et al., 2025). Previous studies have argued that pesantren pedagogy is deeply rooted in the preservation of intellectual lineage (*sanad*) and ethical teacher–student relationships. The present research confirms this observation by showing that teacher authority remains a central component of learning even when dialogic practices are introduced. However, this study extends previous scholarship by demonstrating that teacher authority does not necessarily restrict student participation; rather, it can coexist with collaborative learning practices when appropriately mediated. This finding challenges the assumption that hierarchical authority inevitably inhibits student-centered learning.

Another important finding concerns the emergence of cultural resistance toward pedagogical innovation. Similar patterns have been identified in earlier research on educational reform within traditional institutions, which often encounter tensions between maintaining cultural authenticity and adopting modern pedagogical practices (Karwadi et al., 2025; Romlah et al., 2025). In the context of pesantren, such resistance reflects concerns about preserving the authenticity of knowledge transmission and safeguarding the continuity of Islamic intellectual traditions. However, the present study shows that resistance does not necessarily lead to rejection of innovation. Instead, pesantren communities reinterpret new pedagogical practices in ways that align with their institutional values and cultural norms.

This adaptive process leads to the emergence of what this study conceptualizes as the guided musyafahah model, a hybrid pedagogical framework that integrates peer discussion with teacher supervision and authoritative validation. This model reflects what may be described as pedagogical hybridization, in which educational innovation develops through the reinterpretation of existing traditions rather than their replacement. Such findings resonate with the concept of pedagogical glocalization, which explains how global educational ideas are localized and adapted within specific cultural contexts (Suresmana et al., 2025). In this case, peer teaching—originally developed within modern educational systems—is

reinterpreted within pesantren learning environments as a complementary practice that strengthens rather than undermines traditional modes of instruction.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of Islamic pedagogy by demonstrating that dialogic learning and authoritative knowledge transmission are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they can coexist within hybrid pedagogical frameworks that preserve epistemological legitimacy while encouraging student engagement and metacognitive development. This perspective expands existing discussions on sociocultural learning and dialogic pedagogy by showing how these theories can be applied within religious educational settings characterized by strong traditions of intellectual authority.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this research provide important implications for the development of teaching practices in pesantren education. First, pesantren educators may consider integrating structured peer discussion within traditional learning methods to enhance student participation and reflective thinking. Second, the implementation of collaborative learning should remain guided by teacher supervision to ensure interpretive accuracy and maintain the continuity of scholarly traditions. Third, teacher training programs in Islamic educational institutions may benefit from incorporating pedagogical strategies that balance dialogic learning with authoritative guidance.

Overall, the results of this study suggest that effective pedagogical innovation in pesantren does not lie in abandoning traditional instructional methods but in developing contextual learning models that harmonize authoritative transmission with collaborative exploration. The concept of guided *musyafahah* proposed in this study therefore provides a conceptual framework for understanding how Islamic educational institutions can adapt to contemporary pedagogical challenges while preserving the intellectual and spiritual integrity of their scholarly traditions.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the learning of *kitab kuning* in traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren salaf*) constitutes a dynamic pedagogical arena where tradition and innovation interact dialectically. The findings show that the introduction of peer teaching does not replace conventional instructional methods but instead creates a hybrid learning environment that integrates collaborative dialogue with authoritative knowledge transmission. Within this structure, students gradually shift from passive recipients of knowledge to more active participants who engage in collaborative interpretation, develop metacognitive awareness, and articulate their understanding through peer discussion. At the same time, the authority of the *ustaz* remains central as the ultimate validator of interpretation,

ensuring the continuity of scholarly lineage (*sanad*) and preserving the epistemological integrity of pesantren learning traditions.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the discourse on Islamic pedagogy by demonstrating that pedagogical innovation within pesantren emerges through processes of pedagogical hybridization rather than through the replacement of traditional educational practices. The concept of guided musyafahah, identified in this research, represents a contextual model of collaborative learning in which peer discussion is integrated with teacher supervision and authoritative validation. This model expands existing studies on peer learning by illustrating how dialogic pedagogical practices can operate within educational systems that maintain strong structures of epistemic authority. In doing so, the study enriches the broader discussion on dialogic learning, sociocultural pedagogy, and the preservation of intellectual traditions in Islamic education.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The research was conducted in only two pesantren in East Java, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other pesantren contexts. In addition, the study relied primarily on qualitative data and a relatively limited period of field observation, which may not fully capture long-term pedagogical transformations. Future research may therefore expand this study through comparative investigations across a wider range of pesantren, as well as through mixed-method approaches that examine the impact of peer teaching and guided musyafahah on students' learning outcomes and critical thinking skills. Such research would contribute to developing more comprehensive pedagogical frameworks that integrate the preservation of Islamic scholarly traditions with contemporary educational innovation.

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