The Contribution of *Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah* (M3) to Improving the Learning Motivation of Islamic Boarding School Students

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Abstract. This study examines the contribution of *Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah* (M3) to improving the learning motivation of students in Islamic boarding schools, focusing on its implementation at Pondok Pesantren Syaichona Moh. Cholil Bangkalan. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research involved M3 program coordinators, teachers, and actively participating students. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings indicate that M3 enhances both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation through active participation, structured classical text (*kitab kuning*) literacy development, and the cultivation of Islamic values such as humility (*tawadhu'*) and brotherhood (*ukhuwah*). Supporting factors include comprehensive library facilities, the STAISyaichona e-Resource digital platform, conducive learning spaces, and strong institutional support. However, sustaining M3's impact requires consistent facilitation quality, digital literacy training, and continued stakeholder collaboration. The study concludes that M3 represents a hybrid educational model that preserves traditional pesantren scholarship while integrating modern learning innovations, making it a replicable framework for enhancing student motivation in Islamic education.

Keywords: Islamic boarding school, *Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah*, learning motivation, *kitab kuning* literacy, character education, blended learning

1   Introduction

In addressing the challenges of 21st-century education, Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) are required not only to preserve the tradition of classical Islamic scholarship but also to ensure that students (*santri*) maintain a high level of learning motivation to understand and apply such knowledge[1], [2]. Learning motivation is a key determinant of educational success in pesantren, given the complexity of *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) and the demand for santri to develop critical, analytical thinking skills that are relevant to contemporary developments[3]–[5].

As traditional Islamic educational institutions, pesantren possess a wealth of distinctive learning methods, one of which is the Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah

(M3). This program has become a flagship activity at Pondok Pesantren Syaichona Moh. Cholil Bangkalan. M3 combines the traditions of *Bahtsul Masail* (jurisprudential deliberations) and scholarly discussions that involve santri from various levels, aiming to sharpen analytical abilities, rhetorical skills, and collective problem-solving in religious matters. The program is conducted regularly and systematically, even extending to quarterly *Bahtsul Masail* forums between pesantren across Madura, providing extensive opportunities for intellectual interaction among students.

Within the framework of learning motivation theory, forums such as M3 have the potential to significantly enhance intrinsic motivation among santri through intellectual challenges, the relevance of subject matter, and social recognition within the pesantren environment. This aligns with Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory[6], which emphasizes that intrinsic motivation flourishes when learning experiences provide a sense of competence, autonomy, and social relatedness.

However, sustaining santri's learning motivation in the digital era is no easy task [7], [8]. The distractions of technology, differences in students' educational backgrounds, and the complexity of *kitab* materials pose unique challenges[9]–[11]. While several previous studies have examined pesantren learning methods and their impact on motivation, research specifically analyzing the role of M3 as an integrated learning forum in enhancing santri's learning motivation remains limited.

Previous research has shown that the *Bahtsul Masail* method can enhance students' self-confidence, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities[12], while classical instruction combined with a reward system can strengthen discipline and participation[13]. However, most of these studies focus on single, isolated methods and have not examined the integration of multiple approaches within a systematically managed program such as M3.

The identified research gap is the absence of a comprehensive study examining M3 as an integrated learning system that combines traditional pesantren methods (*Bahtsul Masail*, *Musyawarah*, *Maktabah*) with a structured managerial approach, and how this system contributes to increasing santri's learning motivation within the context of Formal Diniyah Education. Furthermore, no existing research has deeply analyzed the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting M3's effectiveness, particularly those involving inter-student interactions across multiple pesantren in regional scholarly forums.

The urgency of this research lies in the need for a comprehensive analysis of M3's contribution to santri's learning motivation amidst the modernization of pesantren education. The novelty of this study lies in examining M3 as a traditional learning model that has been strategically adapted to meet modern educational challenges, while simultaneously serving as a means of preserving pesantren's scholarly tradition in the era of educational globalization.

Accordingly, this study aims to fill the literature gap by exploring in depth how M3 is designed, implemented, and contributes to enhancing santri's learning motivation, as well as identifying the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence its effectiveness.

2   Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen to allow the researcher to understand and explain phenomena in depth within their natural and social contexts, as well as to explore the subjective meanings derived from the experiences of *santri*, supervising teachers, and program coordinators of M3 [14]. The case study design was selected because it provides a comprehensive understanding of a system or phenomenon within a real-life setting, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined[15], [16].

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Syaichona Moh. Cholil Bangkalan, which is the primary organizer of the *Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah* (M3) program. The site was purposively selected because M3 is a flagship program implemented regularly and systematically, involving interactions among *santri* from various pesantren across Madura. The research subjects consisted of M3 program coordinators, *Bahtsul Masail* supervising teachers, and active student participants engaged in M3 forums.

Data collection was carried out through method triangulation, including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The interviews were designed to obtain detailed narratives regarding M3's role in enhancing *santri* learning motivation, the strategies employed, and participants' subjective experiences. Participant observation was used to directly observe the dynamics of M3 forums, including interactions, discussion patterns, and student participation. Document analysis involved reviewing program implementation guidelines, *Bahtsul Masail* meeting minutes, activity schedules, and program evaluation records [17], [18].

In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the primary instrument (*human instrument*), engaging directly with participants and the research context [19], [20]. Supporting instruments included interview guides, observation sheets, instrument grids, and document analysis formats to ensure clarity and consistency in the data collection process.

Data trustworthiness was established by applying the four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was achieved through source and method triangulation, as well as member checking. Transferability was ensured by providing thick contextual descriptions. Dependability and confirmability were strengthened by maintaining an audit trail and systematic documentation throughout the analysis process[21].

Data analysis employed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña [22], which consists of three stages: (1) data reduction, involving the selection, simplification, and transformation of raw data; (2) data display, involving the organization of data in narrative form, tables, and visualizations; and (3) conclusion drawing/verification, conducted iteratively to ensure the accuracy and consistency of findings. Data analysis was conducted simultaneously with data collection, enabling the researcher to respond adaptively to emerging dynamics in the field.

The research was conducted between February and April 2025, encompassing the preparation phase, field data collection, data analysis, and the preparation of the

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research report. It is expected that this approach will make a substantive contribution to the development of effective pesantren learning methods for enhancing *santri* learning motivation through traditional scholarly forums such as M3.

3 Results

3.1 *Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah* (M3) as a Participatory Learning Forum

Based on the findings at Pondok Pesantren Syaichona Moh. Cholil Bangkalan, the *Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah* (M3) has proven to be a highly favored learning forum among *santri*. Each M3 session is systematically organized with clearly defined roles, where *santri* take turns presenting the results of their *kitab* studies, posing critical questions, and providing responses to peers' arguments. Supervising teachers act as facilitators, ensuring the discussion runs smoothly, clarifying terminology, and emphasizing the key points of each deliberation.

The M3 activities encourage *santri* to prepare thoroughly before each forum. Several students reported spending hours in the library reviewing references and deepening their understanding of the topics to be discussed. Learning motivation increases both intrinsically driven by the desire to gain a deeper understanding of the material and extrinsically, through the aspiration to perform well in front of teachers and peers. This is reflected in the statement of one student:

"If it's my turn to present at M3, I always study harder. I'm afraid I won't be able to answer my friends' questions. So before M3, I read many *kitab* and note down important points." *(Fifth-year student, interview, March 15, 2025)*

Documentation of M3 activities shows a rotation schedule for student presentations, meeting minutes, and a list of *kitab* references used in each session. This pattern aligns with the principles of active learning, which emphasize direct participant involvement in the learning process, thereby fostering both cognitive and affective engagement[23].

The findings indicate that M3 not only preserves the tradition of *Bahtsul Masail* but also adapts it into a collaborative learning model that integrates critical thinking skills, communication abilities, and teamwork. The active participation of *santri* reflects the concept of student-centered learning, where the learning process focuses on the needs, roles, and contributions of learners[24].

The participatory approach of M3 also aligns with Self-Determination Theory, which asserts that learning motivation increases when students feel a sense of autonomy over the learning process, have clear goals, and experience a sense of relatedness within their learning community[6]. Thus, M3 serves as a strategic medium for fostering *santri*'s sustained learning motivation across cognitive, affective, and social dimensions.

3.2   Strengthening *Kitab Kuning* Literacy and Argumentation Skills

Based on findings at Pondok Pesantren Syaichona Moh. Cholil Bangkalan, the *Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah* (M3) plays a significant role in enhancing *kitab kuning* literacy among *santri*. Through guided literature review and discussion processes, *santri* develop the habit of reading, comprehending, and citing references from various classical Islamic texts. Each M3 session requires participants to trace legal or theological arguments (*dalil*), relate them to *fiqh* or *aqidah* contexts, and organize them logically and systematically before presenting them in the forum.

This activity not only strengthens text comprehension but also fosters the ability to defend opinions with well-founded evidence. As one M3 instructor stated:

> "In M3, *santri* learn that expressing an opinion must be backed by evidence. They become accustomed to finding sources, verifying them, and structuring their points neatly before speaking." *(M3 instructor, interview, March 12, 2025)*

Documentation of M3 meeting minutes shows a list of reference texts used in each discussion, such as *Fathul Mu'in*, *Al-Bajuri*, and *Nihayatul Zain*. This indicates that *kitab kuning* literacy is not acquired solely through *sorogan* or *bandongan* methods, but also through interactive discussion forums that demand active participant engagement.

These findings align with Zed's perspective on academic literacy[25], which emphasizes the importance of critical reading skills and information processing in constructing valid arguments. Furthermore, the argumentation skills honed through M3 support the principles of critical pedagogy [26], which positions learners as active subjects in the educational process, capable of analyzing, evaluating, and responding to issues critically.

Teachers and pesantren administrators affirm that the literacy and argumentation skills gained through M3 serve as vital assets for *santri*, both in meeting academic challenges within the pesantren and in contributing to society. *Santri* actively involved in M3 tend to exhibit greater self-confidence, sharper critical thinking, and more effective communication skills.

3.3   Character Formation and Islamic Values

Based on research conducted at *Pondok Pesantren Syaichona Moh. Cholil Bangkalan*, the *Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah* (M3) functions not only as a forum for knowledge transfer but also as a medium for character formation and the internalization of Islamic values. In each discussion, *santri* are trained to practice honesty, humility (*tawadhu'*), respect for differing opinions, and proper etiquette (*adab*) in speaking and interacting. These values are an integral part of the pesantren learning process and are reflected in the *santri*'s daily behavior.

Instructors emphasize the importance of *tawadhu'* and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) in every M3 activity to maintain a conducive and harmonious learning atmosphere. One instructor stated:

> "In M3, we stress that *adab* is above knowledge. Differences of opinion are natural, but they must be expressed politely and with mutual respect." *(M3 instructor, interview, March 10, 2025)*

In addition, *santri* actively involved in M3 are trained to take on roles such as discussion leader, moderator, or note-taker. Each role fosters leadership skills, responsibility, and the ability to manage a forum. Documentation of M3 activities shows a rotation of roles in every session, ensuring that each *santri* has the opportunity to develop social and leadership competencies.

This approach aligns with the concept of Islamic character education, which integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning. Furthermore, leadership training within M3 reflects the perspective of [27] on transformational leadership, in which individuals are shaped through experiences of leading, motivating, and inspiring their peers.

Thus, M3 serves as a strategic platform for instilling Islamic values while shaping *santri* into knowledgeable, well-mannered, and high-integrity individuals.

3.4 Supportive Facilities and Learning Environment

Based on findings at Pondok Pesantren Syaichona Moh. Cholil Bangkalan, the success of the *Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah* (M3) in enhancing *santri*'s learning motivation is closely linked to the availability of supportive facilities and a conducive learning environment. The pesantren provides both a school library and a pesantren library with a collection of more than 3,000 titles of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) and contemporary literature, including rare works inherited from KH. Moh. Cholil. These facilities are designed not only as reading resources but also as discussion spaces that foster academic interaction among *santri*.

Field observations show that 78% of *santri* from the PDF *Ulya* and *Wustha* levels access the library at least three times a week to prepare for *Munadhoroh* sessions. Since 2023, accessibility has been further enhanced through the launch of the STAISyaichona e-Resource application, which provides digital *kitab*, academic journals, and recorded scholarly lectures. The application has been downloaded more than 500 times within its first six months, with an average usage time of 2.5 hours per day. One *Ulya* student explained:

> "With e-Resource, I can study the *syarah* of *Alfiyah Ibn Malik* while waiting for the *bahtsul masail* session something that would be impossible with a physical *kitab*." *(Ulya-level student, interview, March 14, 2025)*

Qualitative data indicates a 40% increase in *santri* participation in M3 activities after library operating hours were extended. A natural *peer learning* mechanism has also developed, with *santri* sharing study notes or recommending specific *kitab* references to each other. Teachers noted an increase in the number of sources cited in *bahtsul masail* assignments 65% of tasks now reference at least three different sources, compared to 35% before the library's optimization.

External factors such as government support also play a role. Assistance from the Directorate of PD Pontren, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, since 2017 has enabled the renewal of 30% of book collections annually. The adoption

of a digital catalog system since 2020 has reduced the average book search time from 15 minutes to 3 minutes per title. This efficiency has created a positive feedback loop the easier the access, the higher the frequency of use, ultimately increasing learning motivation.

These findings support Tubagus research, which demonstrated a positive correlation between effective library management and increased reading interest among *santri*. What sets this pesantren apart is the integration of technology, enabling M3 to function not only as a traditional discussion forum but also as a digital literacy laboratory. The combination of the authenticity of *kitab kuning* studies and the adoption of modern technology produces a unique hybrid learning model within the *salaf* pesantren environment[28].

4   Discussion

The findings indicate that *Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah* (M3) operates as an integrated learning forum that combines traditional Islamic scholarly practices with participatory and student centered learning principles. The active engagement of students in presenting, debating, and defending their arguments reflects an internalization of *active learning* strategies, which emphasize learner autonomy and critical engagement with subject matter [23], [24]. This aligns with *Self-Determination Theory*, where the fulfilment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness fosters both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation[6].

In terms of its contribution to academic competence, M3 significantly enhances students' *kitab kuning* literacy and argumentation skills. The requirement to cite classical references, construct logical arguments, and maintain scholarly etiquette mirrors Freire's critical pedagogy approach, positioning learners as active co-constructors of knowledge rather than passive recipients. This literacy based approach is essential for sustaining pesantren traditions while equipping students with higher-order thinking skills that remain relevant in contemporary contexts[25]

From a character education perspective, M3 also serves as a platform for the cultivation of Islamic values such as *tawadhu'* (humility), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and mutual respect during debates. The structured rotation of roles moderator, note-taker, and discussion leader supports transformational leadership development by encouraging responsibility, empathy, and communication skills. This dual focus on cognitive and moral development reflects the integrative aims of Islamic education, combining intellectual rigor with moral refinement.

The success of M3 is further supported by substantial infrastructural and environmental factors. The combination of extensive library collections, digital resources, and conducive study spaces aligns with Herlina's findings on the positive correlation between library management and reading interest in pesantren. The integration of the STAISyaichona *e-Resource* platform represents an adaptive use of educational technology in a traditional setting, supporting blended and hybrid learning models[29]. The significant increase in M3 participation following library optimization

illustrates how resource accessibility directly impacts learner motivation and engagement.

However, several challenges remain. The sustainability of M3's impact depends on the consistent quality of facilitation, the capacity of student participants to engage critically, and ongoing institutional support. Without continuous mentoring and structured feedback, there is a risk of discussions becoming procedural rather than intellectually transformative. Additionally, while technological integration has expanded access to learning materials, it also introduces the need for digital literacy training to ensure that students can effectively navigate and critically assess online resources[30].

Structurally, M3 demonstrates that traditional pesantren pedagogies can be modernized without losing their identity, provided that adaptations are contextually grounded. As argued by Glewwe & Muralidharan [31], effective educational innovation requires not only well-designed programs but also localized implementation strategies supported by institutional leadership, community engagement, and adaptive management. M3's blend of heritage-based scholarship and modern learning facilitation can thus serve as a model for other pesantren seeking to enhance student motivation in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

5   Conclusion

This study concludes that *Majelis Munadhoroh wal Maktabah* (M3) plays a significant role in enhancing the learning motivation of Islamic boarding school students by integrating traditional scholarly practices with participatory and student-centered approaches. Through structured discussions, classical text literacy, and argumentation exercises, M3 fosters both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, encouraging students to prepare thoroughly, engage critically, and communicate effectively. M3's impact extends beyond academic competence to the cultivation of Islamic values and leadership skills. The emphasis on humility, respect, and cooperative learning nurtures character development alongside intellectual growth. Supporting infrastructure such as comprehensive library facilities, digital learning platforms, and conducive study environments further strengthens M3's effectiveness and increases student engagement. While challenges remain in maintaining facilitation quality and ensuring digital literacy, the findings demonstrate that traditional pesantren learning models can be adapted to contemporary contexts without losing their identity. M3 thus represents a hybrid educational model that preserves the authenticity of Islamic scholarly traditions while embracing modern learning innovations, offering a replicable framework for enhancing student motivation in similar educational settings.

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