

THE COMBINATION OF THE SOROGAN AND BANDONGAN METHODS IN IMPROVING THE INDEPENDENT THINKING AND LITERACY OF STUDENTS AT THE JABAL NUR BEJI PASURUAN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

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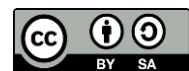
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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the application of the Sorogan and Bandongan methods at the Madrasah Diniyah Jabal Nur in Beji, Pasuruan, and evaluate their impact on improving religious literacy and critical thinking skills among students. A qualitative case study approach was used to collect data through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation of teachers and students participating in the learning process. The results demonstrate that the sorogan method fosters students' independence and accuracy in reading classical texts, while the bandongan method strengthens their contextual understanding through collective interaction and group discussions. Integrating the two methods creates a more balanced learning pattern: sorogan provides individual depth, and bandongan broadens understanding through collective interaction. Field findings also demonstrate that combining the two methods overcomes the time-related limitations of sorogan, as bandongan provides an initial framework of understanding that accelerates the sorogan process. Overall, combining sorogan and bandongan improved students' ability to understand text structure, analyse meaning and develop critical thinking skills. This study recommends this integrative model as an alternative learning strategy that could be adopted by other Islamic educational institutions to enhance students' religious literacy and analytical abilities.

Keywords: Bandongan Method, Independent Thinking, Sorogan Method



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INTRODUCTION

Madrasah Diniyah is an Islamic educational institution that plays an important role in preserving classical scholarly traditions, particularly in teaching turath books (Hakim et al., 2020). The institution utilizes traditional learning methods, such as the sorogan and bandongan, which have long been employed in Islamic boarding schools. These methods are characteristic not only of Islamic education in Indonesia but also have been proven to effectively help students comprehensively understand Islamic texts (Altinyelken, 2021).

In the sorogan method, students read texts independently and receive immediate correction from the teacher. This model enables students to learn actively and critically according to their abilities (Sopha & Tabroni, 2022). In contrast, the bandongan method is a traditional approach in which the teacher reads the text, explains the content, and provides context. Students then take notes and discuss ideas that arise. This approach is considered effective for fostering collective understanding and enhancing scientific interaction between teachers and students (Falaqi, 2023).

Both methods have been widely used, but a number of studies show that they are not optimally effective in improving literacy and critical thinking skills, especially in the context of madrasas facing demands for modern pedagogical developments (Behar & Niu, 2011). The main challenge is the lack of learning strategies that systematically develop students' independence, critical reading, and analytical skills (Tathahira, 2020). Religious literacy at the Madrasah Diniyah level must also be strengthened, particularly with regard to text comprehension, meaning analysis, and the ability to apply teachings to everyday life (Ali & Halim, 2023).

Several studies emphasize the importance of innovative learning strategies to improve 21st-century skills in Islamic educational institutions, including literacy, problem-solving, and critical analysis. Combining the sorogan and bandongan methods is considered to overcome the limitations of each method because it combines the strengths of individual and collaborative learning (Nurtawab, 2018). However, there is a relevant research gap to be explored: empirical studies that specifically assess the implementation of integrating these two methods to improve literacy and critical thinking skills in Madrasah Diniyah are still limited.

Based on these conditions, the objective of this study is to analyze the application of the sorogan and bandongan methods at Madrasah Diniyah Jabal Nur in Beji, Pasuruan, and to evaluate the impact of integrating these methods on improving students' literacy and critical thinking skills. The study is expected to contribute to the development of learning methodologies in Islamic educational institutions by strengthening students' ability to deeply understand, interpret, and analyze Islamic texts.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. This research is important because it provides a deeper understanding of the sorogan and bandongan methods used at Madrasah Diniyah Jabal Nur (Gammelgaard, 2017). This case study aims to analyze how the two methods mentioned above influence the literacy and thinking of santri in the context of religious education. Using this approach, this study can identify various factors that influence the effectiveness of these two methods and potential problems that may arise during the implementation process.

Location This research was conducted at Madrasah Diniyah Jabal Nur Beji Pasuruan, which is known for using the sorogan and bandongan methods in its teaching process. This location was chosen based on the madrasah's reputation for upholding traditional teaching methods and their efforts to foster critical thinking and literacy among santri.

The research subjects consisted of teachers and active students who participated in the teaching process using the two methods mentioned above. Interviews were conducted by

several teachers and students who were present during the teaching activities. The purpose of the research subject selection process was to ensure that the information available would have long-term benefits in the use of the sorogan and bandongan methods (Arifin et al., 2025).

Information was collected through direct interviews, participatory and systematic observations, and documentation of subjects taught at the madrasah. Interviews were conducted with teachers who applied both methods, as well as with registered students (Tambak & Sukenti, 2025), to explore their understanding and perceptions. Systematic observations were also conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of how the two methods were applied in real situations. These observations documented the interactions between teachers and students in detail and described the conditions and practices that emerged from the application of these methods in relation to critical thinking and literacy skills.

The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which aim to identify the main themes related to the use of both methods in improving literacy and thinking. This analysis focused on categorizing data based on field observations and interviews (Ranney et al., 2015). Using this method, researchers were able to explore more in-depth information regarding the benefits and shortcomings of the two learning approaches mentioned above.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study takes a qualitative approach in the form of a case study conducted at Madrasah Diniyah Jabal Nur in Beji, Pasuruan. This approach enables researchers to explore the learning process in depth, with a particular focus on the application of the sorogan and bandongan methods and their effect on students' literacy and critical thinking skills. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with teachers and students, by observing learning practices in the classroom, and by analysing documents related to the curriculum and the application of the two methods. All data were analysed inductively using thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns and compile main themes regarding the effectiveness of the two methods in developing literacy and critical thinking skills (Ozdemir, 2020).

The sorogan method originates from the Javanese term 'sorog', meaning direct communication between students and teachers within an individualised learning system (Mustakim, 2021). In practice, students read texts in front of their teachers, who then provide evaluations, corrections and comprehensive explanations relating to the material (Vaughn et al., 2024). Observations at Madrasah Diniyah Jabal Nur demonstrate that students actively engage with their teachers by asking for clarification and further explanations about the meaning of the text. This encourages students to read religious texts meticulously and think critically about them (Praja et al., 2025).

The results of the study demonstrate the effectiveness of the sorogan method in developing the ability to read classical texts individually and in depth. However, previous studies have revealed that the main weakness of this method is its lack of time efficiency, as teachers must assist students individually (Demetriou, 2023). This time constraint can hinder equal understanding when there are many students.



Figure 1. Application of the Bandongan Method Using the Jurumiyah Book

This study makes an important contribution to mapping ways to overcome the weaknesses of sorogan. Through observation and interviews, it was found that teachers at Madrasah Diniyah Jabal Nur apply complementary strategies by combining sorogan and bandongan. In bandongan sessions, teachers provide general explanations of i'rab structure, sentence context, and global meaning that were previously difficult for students to understand during sorogan. This strategy reduces the time burden on the sorogan process because students do not start from scratch; they have already acquired a basic framework of understanding through bandongan. Thus, this study shows that the weaknesses of sorogan in terms of time and effectiveness can be minimized through the integration of collective learning, so that the individual process becomes faster, more focused, and more efficient.

The bandongan method, also known as wetonan, is a type of learning system carried out by a kiai with a santri without any age or intelligence restrictions. All kiai read the book, but each santri holds the book by interpreting or explaining the yellow book (writing the meaning below and above the text of the yellow book as spoken by the kiai). According to Ngrawulan and Roseli (2025), the bandongan method involves santri systematically explaining the kiai's readings and explanations, while each member of the group takes notes on the book. These notes can be in the form of syakal, mufrodat meanings, or explanations ('tabahan' notes). It is important to note that santri, especially classical (salafy) ones, have a unique learning method known as utawi iki iku, which is characterized by a strong command of grammar (nahwu and sharof). Although in East Java it is called wetonan, in West Java this method is called bandongan, while in Sumatra the term halaqah is used (Umam, 2011).

Bandongan is a collective teaching method in which teachers explain and discuss texts with a group of students cooperatively. Observations show that this approach enables students to gain a more comprehensive understanding through teacher explanations and group discussions. According to Bulusan et al. (2025), bandongan is an effective method for improving students' ability to understand texts collectively and accelerating the learning process.



Figure 2. Application of the Bandongan Method using the Jurumiyah book

Through this research, it can be seen that the application of the bandongan method to students at the Jabal Nur madrasah diniyah using the Jurumiyah book provides a more critical and in-depth understanding as a good starting point for understanding the most basic tools as a strong foundation when applying the practice of reading classical Islamic texts such as the Safinatun Najah book so that the quality of reading and analyzing each phrase in the book is better and more in-depth, considering the strength of the tools of knowledge as a support for the quality of reading during sorogan and the critical thinking of the students when analyzing each phrase in the Safinatun Najah book so that every reading of the contents of the Safinatun Najah book moves from one fashal to another in a better and more correct manner. This is because in this method, the teacher maximally guides the students' ability to master the material. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of the bandongan method lies in the achievement of quantity and the closeness of the relationship between the santri and the kyai or ustadz (Arifin, 2013). In addition, the bandongan method allows santri to learn in a collaborative atmosphere.

In this process, several students are used to assist the teacher in explaining the classical texts, followed by group discussions. The benefits of this method are to improve collective understanding and accelerate the learning process. According to Benonguli & Barnido (2022), the bandongan method can improve students' literacy and insight because students influence more comprehensive explanations from various angles.

However, some students remain passive and simply support the teacher's explanations without attempting to understand independently. This can hinder the development of critical thinking skills. As stated by Shcheglova et al. (2019), it is important to encourage student participation in the educational process to develop their critical thinking skills.

The combination of the Sorogan and Bandongan methods produces optimal learning synergy. The Sorogan method allows for in-depth individual understanding and direct verification of texts and i'rab with the teacher. This is very important for accurate literary analysis. On the other hand, the Bandongan method provides a platform for collective discussion, allowing students to expose their understanding to diverse perspectives and develop critical thinking skills through broader question-and-answer sessions and explanations. Together, these two approaches have been proven to improve students' ability to comprehensively understand the Kitab Kuning by combining individual accuracy with collective depth of interpretation.

According to Fadli et al. (2021), this combination enhances the development of students' thinking skills because it allows them to develop their own ideas through sorogan and then discuss the results of their learning scientifically through bandongan.

However, implementing this combination requires a thorough understanding, especially in terms of time management and learning sessions. Teachers must ensure that each student has the opportunity to learn independently and participate in group discussions. According to Egeberg et al. (2021), effective classroom management is essential for the success of this combined approach.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory observation and analysis of documentation at Madrasah Diniyah Jabal Nur in Beji, Pasuruan, it can be concluded that applying a combination of the sorogan and bandongan methods significantly improves students' religious literacy and critical thinking skills. Field findings show that the sorogan method plays an important role in developing accuracy, fostering independent learning and promoting a deep understanding of the structure of classical texts. Meanwhile, the bandongan method strengthens students' ability to understand context, accelerates the learning process and fosters collective discussion that encourages broader analysis.

This study also found that integrating the bandongan method with the sorogan method can minimise the weaknesses of the sorogan method, particularly those related to time constraints and the intensity of guidance. The global explanations provided in the Bandongan sessions were found to reduce teachers' workload in the Sorogan sessions, making the individual learning process more efficient and focused. The combination of these two methods creates a more balanced learning pattern, striking a balance between depth of understanding and breadth of interpretation.

Furthermore, the study provides empirical evidence that combining the two methods creates a more adaptive and comprehensive learning environment. Students develop an understanding of the text both structurally and linguistically, as well as the ability to interpret, compare and critically evaluate its meaning.

Therefore, this study recommends using an integrative model that combines the sorogan and bandongan methods as a strategic alternative for other Islamic educational institutions wishing to improve their students' religious literacy and critical thinking skills. The model can be adapted to suit the institution's characteristics and the students' profiles, resulting in a more flexible, effective and sustainable learning approach.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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