

# Interpretation Methods in Islamic Boarding Schools: The Case of AMBS Garut and al-Kamil Tangerang

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## Abstract

This study is motivated by the limited research on the specific methodologies employed in tafsir (Qur'anic interpretation) education within pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), despite its significant impact on shaping religious understanding and practice. The study aims to analyze and compare the tafsir learning and teaching methodologies at Al-Mashduqi Boarding School (AMBS) in Garut and Pesantren Al-Kamil in Tangerang. The research adopts a qualitative design, with data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis at both pesantren. Data was analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings reveal that while both pesantren share some similarities in their approach to tafsir education, they also exhibit distinct differences in curriculum design, teaching methods, and evaluation strategies, reflecting their unique educational philosophies and goals. The study concludes that the methodologies employed are influenced by factors such as the pesantren's vision, the teachers' expertise, and the students' needs. The implications encompass practical recommendations for pesantren to enhance their tafsir education programs by incorporating diverse teaching methodologies, providing adequate resources, and addressing the challenges of teaching tafsir in the modern context. Additionally, this study identifies future research opportunities on the impact of different tafsir methodologies on students' understanding and application of the Qur'an.

Keywords: *Boarding School, Curriculum, Islamic Education, Tafsir, Teaching Methodology*

## Introduction

The Al-Quran is not merely a holy book to be heard, read, and memorized, but rather a guide to life that demands contemplation, appreciation, practice, and

dissemination so that every Muslim possesses noble character.<sup>1</sup> As the primary source of Islamic teachings, the Al-Quran holds a very special position and functions as guidance for humanity.<sup>2</sup> Its boundless uniqueness lies in its nature as an eternal miracle that remains relevant in every era and for every generation. A unique characteristic of the Al-Quran is its interpretable nature (*yahtamilu wujuhal ma'na*), meaning its contents can be understood from various perspectives, according to an individual's expertise, proficiency, profession, and love for it. A deep love for the Al-Quran will encourage more intense interaction, which in turn will strengthen faith and inspire a meaningful life in this world and the hereafter.<sup>3</sup> The richness of the Al-Quran's meaning is even likened to a boundless ocean or a pearl that radiates diverse lights.<sup>4</sup>

One of the tangible manifestations of the Al-Quran's beauty is the recitation that is melodiously intoned by Muslims every day. However, an irony arises when we realize that many Muslims are still unable to read the Al-Quran.<sup>5</sup> This phenomenon indicates a gap between the importance of the Al-Quran as a way of life and the ability of Muslims to access it directly.<sup>6</sup> Data presented by Police Commissioner General (Ret.) Dr. (HC) Syafrudin at the *soft launching* of the Indonesia Mengaji program shows that 65 percent of Indonesia's Muslim population cannot read the Al-Quran. This data is based on in-depth research conducted by Islamic youth organizations and Islamic youth figures.

In addition to being read, the Al-Quran is also the subject of study in various educational institutions, such as pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), schools, majelis

<sup>1</sup> Qurais Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Quran: Fungsi Wahyu Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994). Hlm, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ilzam Hubby Dzikrillah Alfani, "Eksistensi Manusia Dan Keadilan Sosial Kemanusiaan Perspektif Tafsir Ruh Al-Ma'ani Al-Alusi," *El-Maqra': Tafsir, Hadis Dan Teologi* 3, no. 2 (2023): 46-57, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.3>.

<sup>3</sup> Nursukma Suri and Muaz Tanjung, "Metaphor and Symbolism in the Language of the Quran: A Linguistic Study on the Concept of Tauhid (Analysis of Surah Al-Fatihah)," *Pharos Journal of Theology*, December 2024, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.3>.

<sup>4</sup> J A Rohmana, "Memahami Makna Batin Kitab Suci: Tafsir Quranuladhim Haji Hasan Mustapa (1852-1930)," *Jurnal Al-Qalam* 34, no. 1 (2017): 109-139.

<sup>5</sup> Howard M Federspiel, Tajul Arifin, and Rachmat Taufiq Hidayat, *Kajian Al-Quran Di Indonesia: Dari Mahmud Yunus Hingga Quraish Shihab* (Mizan, 1996). Hlm, 76.

<sup>6</sup> Wan Khairul Aiman Wan Mokhtar et al., "Way of Life: Students' Motivation Towards Learning the Quran and Hadith in Malaysia," *International Journal of Religion* 5, no. 9 (May 31, 2024): 673-84, <https://doi.org/10.61707/v9v76816>.

taklim (religious assemblies), and universities.<sup>7</sup> The study of the Al-Quran is known as *tafsir* study, or formally referred to as Al-Quran learning and teaching. Al-Quran learning and teaching have diverse objectives, both general and specific. Generally, the main objective of *tafsir* learning and teaching is to enable readers to understand the intent and content of the Al-Quran in accordance with what Allah SWT desires, because the Al-Quran is His word.<sup>8</sup> Specifically, *tafsir* learning and teaching aim to develop a comprehensive understanding of the Al-Quran, as well as the ability to explore the values, foundations, and general principles of life contained within it.<sup>9</sup> This understanding is expected to equip readers to address the challenges of the times and achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter.

Pondok pesantren is one of the institutions that provides special and intensive attention to *tafsir* learning and teaching.<sup>10</sup> This is because pesantren equip students with the various branches of knowledge that form the foundation for studying *tafsir*, especially the science of *tajwid* (Qur'anic recitation) and Arabic language sciences, such as *nahwu* (grammar), *sharaf* (morphology), and *balaghah* (rhetoric). In addition, pesantren also teach other sciences relevant to *tafsir* studies, such as the science of *hadith* (prophetic tradition), *fiqh ushul fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *asbabun nuzul* (reasons for revelation), *asbab wurud* (reasons for hadith), and *ilmu munasabah* (contextual connections within the Qur'an). The depth of *tafsir* study in pesantren is generally more profound compared to *tafsir* study in other institutions.<sup>11</sup>

However, the learning and teaching methods of *tafsir* applied in pesantren are generally still conventional and monologic. Therefore, efforts are needed to reform

<sup>7</sup> Nurul Sa'adah and Abdulloh Dardum, "METODE PEMBELAJARAN AL-QUR'AN DI SEKOLAH TAHFIDZ ANAK USIA DINI SAHABAT QUR'AN (TAUD SAQU) JEMBER: KAJIAN LIVING QUR'AN," *An-Nisa': Jurnal Kajian Perempuan Dan Keislaman* 14, no. 1 (April 2021): 29-45, <https://doi.org/10.35719/annisa.v14i1.54>.

<sup>8</sup> Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor and Maksum Malim, "Revisiting Islamic Education: The Case of Indonesia," *Journal for Multicultural Education* 8, no. 4 (November 4, 2014): 261-76, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-05-2014-0019>.

<sup>9</sup> Ilzam Hubby Dzikrillah Alfani et al., "Child Education in the Qur'anic Perspective: Tafsir Tarbawi Analysis and Its Implications for Modern Education," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 6, no. 1 (May 2, 2025): 12-34, <https://doi.org/10.23917/sosial.v6i1.7790>.

<sup>10</sup> Hasan Bisri, "Pengembangan Metode Pengajaran Tafsir Di Pesantren," *TAJDID* 26, no. 1 (May 2019): 59, <https://doi.org/10.36667/tajdid.v26i1.328>.

<sup>11</sup> Ara Hidayat and Rizka Dwi Seftiani, "Strategi Pengembangan Kurikulum Dan Sarana Prasarana Ma'had Aly Pondok Quran Bandung," *MANAGERIA: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 2 (January 2019): 313-33, <https://doi.org/10.14421/manageria.2018.32-06>.

teaching methodologies so that the objectives of *tafsir* learning and teaching can be achieved effectively and relevantly to the present context.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it is hoped that pesantren graduates not only possess a noble character like the Al-Quran but are also able to transform the teachings of the Al-Quran to society in a language that is easily accepted, understood, simple, and engaging. Furthermore, they are also expected to be able to inspire the exploration of new discoveries that are beneficial to human life.

This research aims to examine and analyze the learning and teaching methods of *tafsir* at Pondok Pesantren AMBS (Al-Mashduqi Boarding School) in Garut Regency and Pesantren Al-Kamil in Tangerang City. Through this study, it is hoped that a deeper understanding can be obtained regarding effective approaches in *tafsir* learning and teaching within the pesantren context.

This study applied a qualitative descriptive approach to explore in depth the teaching and learning methodologies<sup>13</sup> of *tafsir* at AMBS Garut and Pesantren Al-Kamil Tangerang. The qualitative framework was chosen for its ability to capture contextual nuances and provide a comprehensive understanding of complex educational practices. Employing a comparative case study design, the research examined how each institution implements its *tafsir* curriculum within distinct pedagogical contexts.<sup>14</sup> AMBS Garut and Pesantren Al-Kamil Tangerang were selected purposively due to their geographical representation in West Java and the shared academic background of their founders as Al-Azhar University alumni. This selection enabled an analysis of how similar philosophical orientations might yield diverse methodological applications. The study population consisted of *tafsir* teachers and students from both pesantren, with data collected through purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of information-rich cases. The sample included all *tafsir* teachers active during the study period, while the number of students varied by class size, consistent with qualitative research principles that emphasize depth of insight over statistical generalization.

<sup>12</sup> Putri Maydi Arofatur Anhar, Imron Sadewo, and M Khoirul Hadi Al-Asy Ari, "Tafsir Ilmi: Studi Metode Penafsiran Berbasis Ilmu Pengetahuan Pada Tafsir Kemenag," *Prosiding Konferensi Integrasi Interkoneksi Islam Dan Sains* 1 (2018): 109–13.

<sup>13</sup> Katariina Stenberg and Katriina Maaranen, "Promoting Practical Wisdom in Teacher Education: A Qualitative Descriptive Study," *European Journal of Teacher Education* 45, no. 5 (October 20, 2022): 617–33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1860012>.

<sup>14</sup> Weng Marc Lim, "What Is Qualitative Research? An Overview and Guidelines," *Australasian Marketing Journal* 33, no. 2 (May 25, 2025): 199–229, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582241264619>.

## Materials, Learning Methods, and Teaching Methods of *Tafsir*

The *tafsir* materials taught at AMBS (Al-Mashduqi Boarding School) in Garut Regency and Pesantren Al-Kamil in Tangerang City show significant differences in several aspects, including the timing of material delivery, curriculum scope, and the sources used. At AMBS Garut, *tafsir* material is introduced relatively early, starting from the second semester of the seventh grade (equivalent to the first level in the *pesantren* education system). The teaching approach for *tafsir* material at AMBS Garut also varies according to the students' educational level. For the junior high level, a thematic approach is used, focusing on specific themes within the Al-Quran, such as tolerance or filial piety. Meanwhile, for the senior high level, a *tahlili* approach is employed, which is a systematic and in-depth interpretation method, with the material presented per *juz'* (section) of the Al-Quran. The teaching resources used at AMBS Garut come directly from Al-Azhar University, Egypt, which is one of the leading centers of Islamic studies in the world, and the material is presented in Arabic<sup>15</sup>. This reflects AMBS's curriculum orientation, which prepares students for more in-depth Islamic studies and potentially to continue their education in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, at Pesantren Al-Kamil Tangerang, *tafsir* material is introduced at a higher level, namely in the third year (equivalent to the ninth grade). Similar to AMBS Garut, Pesantren Al-Kamil begins *tafsir* instruction with a thematic method. However, the *tafsir* curriculum at Pesantren Al-Kamil then progresses to the study of specific *surahs* (chapters) of the Al-Quran, such as *surah Al-Baqarah*, *surah Ali Imran*, and *surah An-Nisaa'*, for the MA (*Madrasah Aliyah*, or senior high) level. This difference indicates a different focus in the selection of material, possibly tailored to the educational needs and objectives of each *pesantren*. The primary source used at Pesantren Al-Kamil is the book *Tafsir Jalalain*, a classic *tafsir* text widely used in Indonesia. This difference in sources reflects different academic traditions and preferences between the two *pesantren*, although both have strong roots in classical Islamic tradition.<sup>16</sup>

The *tafsir* learning method in both *pesantren* shares a fundamental similarity, namely the students' note-taking of the material as an important part of the learning

<sup>15</sup> Rosihon Anwar, Dadang Darmawan, and Cucu Setiawan, "Kajian Kitab Tafsir Dalam Jaringan Pesantren Di Jawa Barat," *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama Dan Sosial Budaya* 1, no. 1 (2016): 56–69.

<sup>16</sup> Hiroko. Horikoshi, *Kyai Dan Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren, 1987). Hlm, 32.

process.<sup>17</sup> However, there are differences in the focus of note-taking and how note-taking is integrated into the learning process. At AMBS Garut, emphasis is placed on students' note-taking of *mufrodat* (vocabulary) from Arabic-language sources, which aims to strengthen students' mastery of Arabic and assist them in understanding *tafsir* texts. On the other hand, Pesantren Al-Kamil places greater emphasis on note-taking that is adapted to the students' level of understanding and relevant social contexts. This indicates a difference in pedagogical approaches, where AMBS Garut emphasizes language and text mastery, while Pesantren Al-Kamil emphasizes the relevance of the material to students' daily lives.

The *tafsir* teaching methods also show significant variations between the two *pesantren*, reflecting differences in pedagogical approaches and learning objectives. At AMBS Garut, the teaching methods used are more diverse, including lectures (*ceramah*), *talaqqi* (a learning method where students receive lessons orally from the teacher), assignments, question-and-answer sessions, and discussions. The teaching methods at AMBS Garut are also combined between a thematic approach for the junior high level and a *tahlili* approach for the senior high level. The teaching steps at AMBS Garut tend to be concise and structured, including discussions of *mufrodat* meanings, general meanings of verses, and lessons that can be drawn from the verses. On the other hand, Pesantren Al-Kamil Tangerang applies almost all available *tafsir* methods, such as *tahlili*, thematic, *ijmali* (a global interpretation method), and *muqarin* (a comparative method). The teaching methods at Pesantren Al-Kamil are also more detailed and structured, with steps that include greetings, *bismillah* (in the name of God), prayer, review of previous material, posing introductory questions, *meloghat mufrodat* (explaining vocabulary), reading Al-Quran verses, translating, correlating the verse being discussed with the previous verse, discussing *asbabun nuzul* (reasons for revelation), discussing *tafsir* of the verse, and evaluation. These differences indicate variations in teaching styles and the emphasis on specific aspects in Al-Quran interpretation.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Dyah Rohma Wati and Sigit Haryanto, "Language Style of Ustazah Oki Setiana Dewi's Lectures," 2023, 83-92, [https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-162-3\\_12](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-162-3_12).

<sup>18</sup> M Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Quran: Tafsir Tematik Atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Mizan Pustaka, 1996). Hlm, 88.

## Evaluation of Learning and Teaching *Tafsir*

The *tafsir* learning and teaching evaluation systems at both *pesantren* institutions, AMBS Garut and Pesantren Al-Kamil Kota Tangerang, share similarities in several fundamental aspects, particularly in the evaluation methods used to measure students' understanding and learning achievement. Both *pesantren* employ direct question-and-answer sessions in class as a form of daily evaluation to assess students' comprehension of the material that has just been taught. This method is considered effective because it allows teachers to obtain direct and rapid feedback on their teaching effectiveness, as well as to identify areas where students may be experiencing difficulties or misunderstandings. Through direct interaction, teachers can promptly provide clarification, correction, or reinforcement of concepts to students. Furthermore, direct question-and-answer sessions also encourage active student engagement in the learning process, as they are required to be consistently prepared and responsive to the teacher's questions.

In addition to daily evaluations, both *pesantren* also utilize written examinations for the Mid-Term Exams (UTS) and Final Exams (UAS). Written exams serve as a more formal and comprehensive form of summative evaluation, designed to measure students' learning achievement over a longer period and in a more comprehensive manner. Written exams enable teachers to assess various aspects of students' understanding, including factual knowledge, conceptual comprehension, analytical abilities, and writing skills. The results of written exams provide a more accurate representation of students' overall mastery of the *tafsir* material.<sup>19</sup>

However, beyond these similarities, there are differences in the emphasis of evaluation between the two *pesantren*, reflecting the distinct educational philosophies and learning objectives embraced by each institution. At AMBS Garut, there is a strong emphasis on the *tahfizh* (memorization) aspect in the evaluation of *tafsir* learning. Memorization of the Al-Quran is considered an integral and essential part of education at AMBS, and therefore, it carries significant weight in determining students' final grades. In fact, this *tahfizh* aspect can provide "syafaat" (intercession) or assist students in other subjects where their grades are lower. This reflects AMBS's educational

<sup>19</sup> Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia; Dari Hermeneutika Hingga Ideologi* (Lkis Pelangi Aksara, 2013). Hlm, 103.

philosophy, which not only emphasizes intellectual understanding of *tafsir* but also the mastery and internalization of the Al-Quran through memorization, which is regarded as an important means of drawing closer to the Al-Quran, practicing its teachings, and developing a love for the holy book.

Meanwhile, Pesantren Al-Kamil Kota Tangerang includes *tafsir* as part of the "kitab kuning" category, which is prioritized, alongside *tahfizh* and Arabic language. "Kitab kuning" refers to classic books in the Islamic tradition, which serve as authoritative sources in various fields of Islamic knowledge, including *tafsir*. Mastery of these books is considered an important competency for students at Pesantren Al-Kamil, as it enables them to directly access original sources in understanding Islamic teachings. This indicates that *tafsir* evaluation at Pesantren Al-Kamil not only focuses on memorization but also on students' ability to comprehend and master classic *tafsir* texts, which are considered authoritative sources in Al-Quran interpretation. The grading system at Pesantren Al-Kamil also uses a different quantitative scale, namely a three-digit numerical scale (hundreds), which differs from the two-digit numerical scale (tens) used at AMBS Garut. This difference may reflect variations in grading standards and the reporting of learning outcomes at the two *pesantren*, as well as differences in the level of precision and detail desired in the assessment.

### **Obstacles, Challenges, and Solutions**

The main obstacles and challenges encountered in the learning and teaching of *tafsir* at both *pesantren*, AMBS Garut and Pesantren Al-Kamil Kota Tangerang, are the students' competence in Arabic, especially their ability to read *kitab kuning* (classic Arabic books). This is because the primary sources used in *tafsir* studies, such as classic *tafsir* books, are written in Arabic. Therefore, students' ability to understand and master Arabic, particularly in reading and comprehending classic texts, becomes a crucial factor in the success of *tafsir* learning. These Arabic texts often contain linguistic nuances, writing styles, and concepts specific to classical Islamic scholarship, which may differ from the Arabic students learn in modern contexts.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Ahmad Izzan, *Metodologi Ilmu Tafsir*, Edisi Revi (Bandung: Tafakur, 2009); M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an: Tafsir Maudhu'i Atas Pelbagai Persolan Umat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996).

In addition to the Arabic language barrier, AMBS Garut also faces challenges related to the large number of subjects (*maddah*) that students must study in the combined curriculum, which includes Al-Azhar curriculum, national curriculum, and local curriculum. This extensive curriculum can burden both students and teachers in completing the teaching material effectively and efficiently. It can also fragment students' time and attention, potentially reducing the depth of their engagement with *tafsir*. Meanwhile, Pesantren Al-Kamil Kota Tangerang encounters obstacles such as students being sleepy in class, students' lack of discipline in bringing their books, and difficulties in *tahfizh* (memorization) evaluation, especially among male students who are not all enrolled in the *tahfizh* program. These challenges relate to students' discipline, learning motivation, and variations in the *tahfizh* program, all of which can affect the effectiveness of *tafsir* learning and evaluation. For instance, sleepy students may have difficulty concentrating and absorbing the material, while students who don't bring their books will struggle to follow the lesson.<sup>21</sup> Difficulties in *tahfizh* evaluation arise because not all male students participate intensively in memorizing the Quran.

To overcome the Arabic language barrier, both *pesantren* have taken proactive steps. AMBS Garut requires students to have Arabic dictionaries and continuously improves their Arabic language comprehension through language enrichment and collaboration with other institutions that use the *manhaji* and *mustaqilli* methods in Arabic language instruction. These methods are intensive and structured approaches to Arabic language learning, aimed at accelerating students' acquisition of Arabic proficiency. Furthermore, AMBS Garut also limits the number of students admitted to ensure that teaching can be carried out optimally and that all students can effectively participate in *tafsir* lessons. This measure reflects AMBS Garut's commitment to addressing the challenges of a heavy curriculum and ensuring the quality of *tafsir* instruction by providing sufficient attention to each student. Concurrently, Pesantren Al-Kamil emphasizes strengthening Arabic language skills through the study of *kitab kuning*, which is a core program of the *pesantren*. Both approaches demonstrate an awareness of the importance of Arabic language proficiency in *tafsir* learning and a commitment to addressing this challenge through various strategies.

<sup>21</sup> Agus Imam Kharomen, "Metode Pembelajaran Tafsir Di Sekolah Berbasis 'Ulum Al-Qur'an," *Andragogi: Jurnal Diklat Teknis Pendidikan Dan Keagamaan* 8, no. 2 (December 2020): 476-84, <https://doi.org/10.36052/andragogi.v8i2.179>.

## **Comparison of Approaches and Methodologies for Teaching Interpretation at AMBS Islamic Boarding School in Garut and Al-Kamil Islamic Boarding School in Tangerang**

This table presents a comparative overview of the approaches and methodologies employed in teaching Qur'anic interpretation (*tafsir*) at AMBS Islamic Boarding School in Garut and Al-Kamil Islamic Boarding School in Tangerang. It highlights key aspects of their *tafsir* education, including curriculum design, selection of learning materials, pedagogical strategies, and educational objectives. By juxtaposing these elements, the table aims to illustrate how differing institutional philosophies and goals shape distinctive models of *tafsir* instruction, while also revealing shared commitments particularly the central role of Arabic language proficiency in both pesantren.

**Table 1:** Comparison of Tafsir Teaching Methods at AMBS Garut and Al-Kamil Tangerang

<b>Aspect of Discussion</b>	<b>AMBS Garut</b>	<b>Pesantren Al-Kamil</b>
Approach to Tafsir Learning	Academically oriented and classical, primarily referring to Al-Azhar-based sources	Contextual and applicative, connecting <i>tafsir</i> with social life
Curriculum Design	Thematic approach at the early level and juz-based curriculum at the advanced level	Surah-based curriculum (e.g., Al-Baqarah and An-Nisa')
Selection of Tafsir Texts	Predominantly classical <i>tafsir</i> texts derived from Al-Azhar traditions	Utilizes a variety of classical <i>tafsir</i> texts
Educational Objectives	Preparing students for advanced Islamic studies and higher education	Equipping students with <i>tafsir</i> knowledge relevant to social issues

Teaching Methods	Integration of Qur'anic memorization (tahfizh) with tafsir instruction	Emphasis on contextual interpretation of Qur'anic verses
Role of Arabic Language	Arabic proficiency as the foundational requirement for tafsir learning	Arabic proficiency as a key competence for understanding tafsir texts
Teachers' Qualifications	Qualified teachers with strong academic backgrounds	Qualified teachers with diverse contextual and practical experiences
Relation to Previous Studies	Reflects the continuity of traditional tafsir methodologies	Demonstrates efforts toward contextualizing tafsir as suggested by prior studies
Theoretical Implications	Highlights the influence of institutional philosophy on tafsir methodology	Illustrates the adaptation of tafsir learning to contemporary needs
Practical Implications	Serves as a model of academically oriented tafsir instruction emphasizing Arabic mastery	Serves as a model of contextual and socially oriented tafsir instruction
Research Limitations	-	The study is limited to two pesantren and employs a qualitative, context-specific approach

The findings of this study reveal distinct approaches to *tafsir* learning and teaching methodologies at AMBS Garut and Pesantren Al-Kamil Tangerang. The differences in curriculum design, material selection, and teaching methods reflect the

unique educational philosophies and objectives of each institution. AMBS Garut's emphasis on Al-Azhar-derived materials and Arabic language instruction aligns with its goal of preparing students for advanced Islamic studies and potentially higher education in the Middle East. The thematic approach in early grades and the *juz*-based curriculum in higher grades provide a structured progression of *tafsir* learning. The integration of *tahfizh* (memorization) with *tafsir* instruction highlights the importance of both textual understanding and memorization in their educational model.<sup>22</sup>

Pesantren Al-Kamil Tangerang, while also valuing Arabic, demonstrates a broader approach by incorporating diverse *tafsir* texts and emphasizing the relevance of *tafsir* to various aspects of life. Their curriculum's focus on specific *surah* (chapters) like Al-Baqarah and An-Nisaa' suggests an intent to equip students with practical knowledge for navigating social issues<sup>23</sup>. Both pesantren acknowledge the centrality of Arabic language proficiency for *tafsir* study, which explains their efforts to enhance students' Arabic skills. The reliance on classical texts necessitates strong linguistic competence.<sup>24</sup>

This study's findings resonate with previous research highlighting the challenges of traditional *tafsir* methodologies in pesantren. Bisri<sup>25</sup> critiqued the weakness of *tafsir* methodology in pesantren and called for modernization. The current study confirms that while some pesantren are incorporating diverse methods, the emphasis on classical texts and Arabic language remains a significant factor. The study also aligns with Kharomen's<sup>26</sup> emphasis on the importance of *tafsir* learning being

<sup>22</sup> Danial Danial and Nasri Akib, "Dekadensi Strategi Pembelajaran Tahfizh Dan Tafsir Pondok Pesantren Tahfizh Al-Qur'an Di Sulawesi Tenggara," *Al-Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian*, June 2023, 60, <https://doi.org/10.31332/ai.v0i0.5840>; Salim Abd. Muin, *Beberapa Aspek Metodologi Tafsir Al-Qur'an*, *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling*, SOSIO-RELI, vol. V (Ujung Pandang: Lembaga Studi Kebudayaan Islam, 2013); Abd al-Hayy Al-Farmawi, *Metode Tafsir Maudhu'i Suatu Pengantar* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 1996).

<sup>23</sup> Eni Zulaiha, "Analisa Gender Dan Prinsip Prinsip Penafsiran Husein Muhammad Pada Ayat-Ayat Relasi Gender," *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al- Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 3, no. 1 (2018): 1-11, <https://doi.org/10.15575/al-bayan.v3i1.3125>; Fathonah K. Daud, "Jilbab, Hijab Dan Aurat Perempuan (Antara Tafsir Klasik, Tafsir Kontemporer Dan Pandangan Muslim Feminis)," *Al-Hikmah Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 3, no. 1 (2013): 1-24.

<sup>24</sup> Ahmad Bazli Ahmad Hilmi, Mohd Yakub @ Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff, and Selamat Amir, "Pengajian Tafsir Al-Quran: Sorotan Aliran Klasik Dan Moden," *Sains Insani* 5, no. 2 (2020): 43-50, <https://doi.org/10.33102/sainsinsani.vol5no2.158>.

<sup>25</sup> Bisri, "Pengembangan Metode Pengajaran Tafsir Di Pesantren." Hlm, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Kharomen, "Metode Pembelajaran Tafsir Di Sekolah Berbasis 'Ulum Al-Qur'an." Hlm, 18.

relevant to students. Pesantren Al-Kamil's focus on connecting *tafsir* to social realities reflects this principle. However, this study also offers a nuanced perspective. While Sumardi et al.<sup>27</sup> pointed out the issue of unqualified teachers in some pesantren, this study found that both AMBS and Pesantren Al-Kamil have qualified teachers, albeit with different experiences.

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on *tafsir* education in Indonesia by presenting a comparative analysis of two distinct *pesantren*. The research findings have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study highlights the diverse ways in which *tafsir* methodologies are shaped by institutional philosophies and goals. It underscores the ongoing tension between preserving traditional approaches and adapting to contemporary needs in Islamic education. Practically, the findings offer insights for *pesantren* seeking to enhance their *tafsir* programs. The emphasis on Arabic language proficiency suggests a need for targeted language support for students. The varied teaching methodologies employed by both *pesantren* can serve as models for others.

However, this research has several limitations that must be acknowledged. The scope of this study is limited to two *pesantren* in West Java, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other regions or types of Islamic educational institutions.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the qualitative approach used, while providing rich insights, does not allow for statistical generalization. Finally, the collection and analysis of data in qualitative research can be influenced by researcher subjectivity. Efforts were made to maintain objectivity, but some degree of interpretation is inherent in the process.

### **Institutional Philosophies and Pedagogical Orientations in Tafsir Education**

The comparative data presented in Table 1 demonstrate that differences in *tafsir* teaching methodologies at AMBS Garut and Pesantren Al-Kamil Tangerang are deeply rooted in their respective institutional philosophies and pedagogical orientations.

<sup>27</sup> "Potret Pendidikan Karakter Di Pondok Pesantren Salafiah," *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter* 3, no. 3 (2012).

<sup>28</sup> St. Rodliyah et al., "Optimizing the Quality of Islamic Senior High School Graduates through Curriculum Management of Vocational Programs Based on Pesantrens in East Java, Indonesia," *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (December 31, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2423437>.

AMBS Garut represents a model of pesantren education that prioritizes academic continuity with Middle Eastern Islamic scholarship, particularly the Al-Azhar tradition. This orientation shapes its structured curriculum, reliance on classical *tafsir* texts, and strong emphasis on Arabic language mastery as a prerequisite for advanced Qur'anic studies.<sup>29</sup> The progression from thematic learning in the early stages to a *juz*-based system at higher levels reflects a deliberate pedagogical strategy aimed at cultivating both conceptual understanding and textual discipline. The integration of *tahfizh* with *tafsir* instruction further reinforces a holistic educational model in which memorization and interpretation are treated as mutually reinforcing components of Qur'anic learning.

From the perspective of Islamic educational theory, this approach resonates with the classical epistemological framework of *ta'līm* and *ta'dīb*, where mastery of authoritative texts and linguistic precision are central to the formation of religious scholars. *Tafsir*, within this paradigm, functions primarily as an academic discipline that demands rigorous engagement with linguistic, theological, and exegetical traditions.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, AMBS Garut's pedagogical orientation reflects an intention to reproduce scholarly competence and maintain the continuity of orthodox interpretive authority.

In contrast, Pesantren Al-Kamil Tangerang embodies a pedagogical orientation that emphasizes contextual relevance and social applicability. By employing a surah-based curriculum and incorporating a wider range of *tafsir* texts, the institution seeks to equip students with interpretive frameworks that are responsive to contemporary social realities.<sup>31</sup> The focus on surahs such as Al-Baqarah and An-Nisa' signals an educational objective oriented toward ethical reasoning, social responsibility, and practical problem-solving. *Tafsir*, in this context, is positioned not only as a textual discipline but also as a tool for understanding and engaging with lived social experiences.

<sup>29</sup> Mohamad Abdalla, "Exploring Tarbiyah in Islamic Education: A Critical Review of the English- and Arabic-Language Literature," *Education Sciences* 15, no. 5 (April 30, 2025): 559, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15050559>.

<sup>30</sup> Amer Zulfiqar Ali, "Brief Review of Classical and Modern *Tafsir* Trends and Role of Modern *Tafsir* in Contemporary Islamic Thought," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 (November 14, 2018): 39–52, <https://doi.org/10.55831/ajis.v3i2.87>.

<sup>31</sup> Taufikin Taufikin, Sri Nurhayati, and Makmur Harun, "Reimagining Classroom Equality: An Academic Inquiry into Surah Al-Fatihah's Core Values for Inclusivity in Education," *Dinamika Ilmu* 25, no. 1 (June 1, 2025): 23–44, <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v25i1.10008>.

This pedagogical stance aligns with contemporary approaches in Islamic education that emphasize contextualization (*takyif al-ma'rifah*) and the relevance of religious knowledge to societal transformation.<sup>32</sup> As highlighted in educational discourse, meaningful learning occurs when religious texts are interpreted in dialogue with students' social contexts. Pesantren Al-Kamil's methodology reflects this orientation by encouraging interpretive engagement that bridges scriptural understanding and social praxis.

Despite these contrasting orientations, both pesantren converge on the centrality of Arabic language proficiency in tafsir education. The reliance on classical Arabic texts necessitates strong linguistic competence, underscoring the enduring authority of Arabic as the epistemic gateway to Qur'anic interpretation.<sup>33</sup> This shared commitment suggests that pedagogical innovation within pesantren contexts does not entail a departure from classical foundations, but rather their selective adaptation in accordance with institutional visions and educational goals.

From a broader theoretical perspective, this comparison highlights the ongoing tension between preservation and transformation in Islamic education. AMBS Garut exemplifies a preservation-oriented model that safeguards classical scholarly continuity, while Pesantren Al-Kamil illustrates a transformative model that recontextualizes tafsir for contemporary relevance. Rather than positioning these models as dichotomous, the findings demonstrate that both represent complementary responses to differing educational aspirations.<sup>34</sup> This plurality of approaches contributes to a more nuanced understanding of tafsir education in Indonesia and challenges reductive portrayals of pesantren as homogeneous or static institutions.

<sup>32</sup> Mukhsin Mukhsin et al., "The Implementation of Multicultural Islamic Religious Education in the Families of Primary School-Age Children in Putrajawa, Selaawi Garut," *Dinamika Ilmu* 24, no. 2 (December 1, 2024): 197–219, <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v24i2.9008>.

<sup>33</sup> Mukhsin Mukhsin and Ilzam Hubby Dzikrillah Alfani, "Imam Shafi'i's Educational Thought And Its Implications For Contemporary Islamic Education," *Oasis : Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Islam* 9, no. 1 (October 30, 2024): 34, <https://doi.org/10.24235/oasis.v9i1.18405>.

<sup>34</sup> Ann Berrington, Steven Roberts, and Peter Tammes, "Educational Aspirations among <scp>UK</Scp> Young Teenagers: Exploring the Role of Gender, Class and Ethnicity," *British Educational Research Journal* 42, no. 5 (October 22, 2016): 729–55, <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3235>.

## Conclusion

This research examines the learning and teaching methods of *tafsir* at two different *pesantren*, AMBS Garut and Pesantren Al-Kamil Tangerang, and finds both similarities and differences in their approaches. Similarities lie in the recognition of the importance of Arabic language proficiency and the method of note-taking in *tafsir* learning. Differences are seen in the curriculum, teaching methods, and emphasis of evaluation. AMBS Garut emphasizes the Al-Azhar curriculum and memorization, while Pesantren Al-Kamil focuses on the practical application of *tafsir* and mastery of *kitab kuning*. This research has limitations in terms of scope and generalizability of findings, as it only involves two *pesantren* in West Java. Furthermore, the qualitative approach used does not allow for statistical generalization. Therefore, future research could expand the geographical scope and use quantitative methods to obtain more generalizable results. Future research could also focus on developing innovative and effective *tafsir* learning models that integrate traditional and modern aspects. In addition, studies on the impact of *tafsir* learning and teaching methods on students' character development and religious understanding are also important to conduct.

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