



Fostering Students' Active Participation in Kitab Kuning Learning Through the Syawir Method in Islamic Boarding Schools

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to examine the implementation of the syawir method in improving students' active participation in learning kitab kuning and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in its application. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving teachers and students in the Islamic boarding school environment. The findings revealed that the syawir method significantly enhanced students' active participation during the learning process. Students became more engaged in asking questions, expressing opinions, participating in discussions, and understanding the learning material. Furthermore, the method created a more interactive and collaborative learning atmosphere among students. The implementation of the syawir method was supported by teacher guidance and students' enthusiasm for learning, while differences in students' levels of understanding and self-confidence became the main obstacles. The study implies that the syawir method can serve as an effective alternative learning strategy to promote active participation and collaborative learning in kitab kuning instruction.

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INTRODUCTION

The learning method used in educational institutions plays an essential role in shaping students' understanding, participation, and critical thinking skills during the learning process. In Islamic boarding schools or pesantren, learning methods are not only intended to transfer knowledge but also to develop students' intellectual attitudes, communication skills, and collaborative learning culture (Kamilah, 2026; Tarashtwal et al., 2026). One of the traditional methods that continues to be practiced in pesantren is the syawir method or deliberative discussion. This method emphasizes collective discussion activities among

students to understand classical Islamic texts or kitab kuning through argument exchange, collaborative interpretation, and problem solving. The importance of this research lies in its contribution to improving the quality of pesantren education, especially in strengthening participatory learning models that encourage students to become more active in classroom interaction (Milki et al., 2026; Surur et al., 2026). Active learning approaches are increasingly needed because contemporary education requires students to think critically and communicate effectively. Previous studies explained that discussion-based learning can improve students' motivation, participation, and understanding in Islamic educational contexts (Ghufron & Khoiriyah, 2021; Wati et al., 2023). Therefore, examining the implementation of the syawir method becomes important for developing more adaptive and participatory learning systems in pesantren education.

In many Islamic educational institutions, especially traditional pesantren, learning activities are still frequently dominated by teacher-centered approaches in which students tend to become passive listeners during the learning process. This condition often limits students' opportunities to express opinions, ask questions, and actively engage in collaborative discussions (Hidayati et al., 2025; Nurhaida & Asdiqoh, 2026). As a result, students may experience difficulties in understanding complex materials contained in kitab kuning, particularly in subjects related to fiqh, nahwu, and sharaf. The lack of active participation also influences students' confidence and communication abilities in academic discussions. Educational experts argue that active learning strategies are necessary to create meaningful classroom interaction and increase students' cognitive engagement during learning activities (Nurhabibi et al., 2024; Ruslandi et al., 2025). In pesantren education, the challenge becomes more complex because many students come from different educational backgrounds and possess varying levels of Arabic language mastery. Consequently, pesantren institutions require instructional methods capable of encouraging collective participation and equal involvement among students. The syawir method is considered one alternative approach that potentially addresses these problems by emphasizing peer discussion, collaborative interpretation, and mutual learning among santri.

Field phenomena indicate that the implementation of the syawir method in pesantren learning environments demonstrates both positive impacts and practical challenges. Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Asrama I is one of the salaf-based Islamic boarding schools that consistently focuses on kitab kuning learning, particularly in the fields of fiqh, nahwu, and sharaf. In its learning activities, the pesantren has implemented syawir sessions to help students discuss lesson materials collectively and improve their comprehension of classical Islamic texts.

However, several obstacles remain evident during the implementation process. Some students still show limited confidence in expressing arguments during discussions, while others tend to rely on more active participants when interpreting kitab content. Unequal comprehension among senior and junior students also affects the effectiveness of classroom discussions. Similar findings were identified in previous studies explaining that participation inequality, low communication confidence, and uneven comprehension often become obstacles in discussion-based learning within pesantren settings (Ahlunnaja & Dimyati, 2023; Mubarak et al., 2024). These phenomena demonstrate that although syawir has educational potential, its implementation still requires further investigation to maximize students' active participation in learning activities.

Several previous studies have discussed the implementation of the syawir method and discussion-based learning in pesantren education. Ghufroon and Khoiriyah (2021) explained that the syawir method contributes positively to improving students' reading interest and participation in kitab kuning learning activities. Similar findings were also reported by Wahyuni and Nuha (2024), who found that syawir activities enhanced students' understanding of fiqh materials through collaborative discussion. In addition, Azizah and Anshari (2025) highlighted that syawir learning strengthened students' mastery of Islamic legal concepts because students actively exchanged arguments and interpretations during learning sessions. Research conducted by Janah and Faisal (2023) further demonstrated that the syawir method improved students' ability to read kitab kuning correctly and increased classroom interaction among santri. Beyond pesantren contexts, discussion-based learning methods were also proven effective in increasing student activity and motivation in Islamic education classrooms (Nurhabibi et al., 2024; Wati et al., 2023). These studies collectively indicate that active discussion methods can encourage meaningful interaction, improve learning participation, and strengthen students' comprehension of learning materials in Islamic educational institutions.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of syawir and discussion-based learning methods, several important limitations remain unresolved in the existing literature. Most previous studies mainly focused on students' comprehension improvement, reading ability, or learning motivation without specifically examining how syawir contributes to the development of active participation among santri during kitab kuning learning sessions. Furthermore, earlier research generally discussed syawir implementation in a broader pesantren context without exploring the specific conditions, challenges, and interaction patterns occurring in Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Asrama I. Studies conducted by Ahlunnaja and Dimyati (2023), Asrori (2024), and Ghufroon and Khoiriyah (2025) mainly emphasized learning outcomes and students'

enthusiasm but provided limited explanation regarding participation dynamics, communication barriers, and collaborative engagement among students with different educational backgrounds. This gap becomes significant because active participation is one of the key indicators of effective learning processes in pesantren education. Therefore, further investigation is necessary to understand how the syawir method practically influences students' participation patterns, confidence development, and interaction quality during kitab kuning learning activities.

This study offers novelty by focusing specifically on the relationship between the implementation of the syawir method and the enhancement of students' active participation in kitab kuning learning at Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Asrama I. Unlike previous studies that mainly emphasized learning achievement or comprehension outcomes, this research highlights participation dynamics as the central issue of investigation. The study examines how discussion patterns, interaction processes, and collaborative learning activities influence students' confidence, communication skills, and classroom engagement during syawir sessions. In addition, this research analyzes both supporting and inhibiting factors affecting the effectiveness of syawir implementation in pesantren learning environments. The importance of this study lies in its potential contribution to strengthening participatory learning culture in traditional Islamic boarding schools while maintaining the educational values of pesantren traditions. By understanding how active participation can be developed through collaborative discussion methods, pesantren institutions may gain practical insights for improving classroom interaction, student involvement, and learning effectiveness in kitab kuning education.

Based on the identified problems and research gaps, this study investigates the implementation of the syawir method in kitab kuning learning activities at Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Asrama I, the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing its implementation, and its impact on students' active participation during learning processes. This research argues that the syawir method has strong potential to improve students' participation because it creates interactive learning situations where students are encouraged to discuss, express opinions, ask questions, and collaboratively solve learning problems. The study assumes that participatory discussion methods can reduce passive learning behavior and increase students' confidence in understanding classical Islamic texts. Moreover, this research contributes theoretically by enriching studies on participatory learning approaches in pesantren education and contributes practically by providing recommendations for improving kitab kuning learning

systems through more interactive and student-centered strategies. Ultimately, the findings are expected to support the development of adaptive Islamic educational practices that balance traditional pesantren values with contemporary demands for active and collaborative learning environments.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the implementation of the syawir method in improving students' active participation in kitab kuning learning. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study aimed to understand social and educational phenomena directly from the experiences and interactions of participants involved in the learning process. The descriptive design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to describe systematically the implementation of the syawir method, the interaction patterns among students, and the factors influencing students' participation during learning activities. The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Asrama I because this Islamic boarding school consistently implements the syawir method in kitab kuning learning activities, particularly in nahwu, sharaf, and fiqh studies. In addition, the pesantren was selected as the research site because it provides a relevant environment for examining collaborative discussion-based learning practices among students.

The subjects of this study consisted of individuals who were directly involved in the implementation of the syawir method, including pesantren administrators, ustadz or syawir supervisors, and students participating in syawir activities. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, which is a sampling technique based on specific considerations according to the needs of the research. This technique was applied because not all individuals fully understood the implementation of the syawir method, therefore the researcher selected participants who had direct knowledge and experience related to the activity (Sugiyono, 2019). The data sources in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct observation and interviews with research participants, while secondary data were collected from supporting documents such as learning schedules, activity records, photographs, journals, and other references related to the research topic.

Data collection techniques in this study included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to examine directly the implementation process of the syawir method, students' participation levels, discussion activities, and interactions between ustadz and students during kitab kuning learning sessions. Interviews were conducted with pesantren administrators, syawir supervisors, and students to obtain in-depth information

regarding the implementation of the syawir method, supporting and inhibiting factors, and its impact on students' active participation. Documentation techniques were used to support the research findings through photographs, learning schedules, and other relevant documents. Data analysis in this study employed the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles & Huberman, 1992). Data condensation was conducted by selecting and simplifying data according to the research focus, while data display was presented descriptively to facilitate interpretation and analysis. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and verifying findings based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. To ensure data validity, this study applied triangulation techniques by comparing data obtained from multiple sources and collection methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Syawir Method

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation conducted at Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Asrama I, the implementation of the syawir method has become one of the important learning strategies in kitab kuning education. The learning process was carried out through group discussion activities guided directly by the ustadz. In every learning session, students were asked to read the kitab, identify important explanations, and discuss the meaning of the text collectively with other santri. Through this process, students were not only positioned as passive listeners but also became active participants in constructing understanding collaboratively. This finding is consistent with previous studies stating that syawir is a deliberative discussion method emphasizing collective interpretation and collaborative problem-solving in understanding classical Islamic texts (Janah & Faisal, 2023; Ghufron & Khoiriyah, 2021).

The implementation of syawir activities at Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Asrama I generally followed several stages. The ustadz first determined the kitab material to be discussed, after which santri were divided into small discussion groups. Each group was then encouraged to analyze the contents of the kitab independently before presenting the results of the discussion in front of other participants. During the process, the ustadz acted as a facilitator who guided students when misunderstandings occurred and provided clarification regarding difficult concepts related to fiqh, nahwu, and sharaf materials. Similar findings were also reported by Azizah and Anshari (2025) and Wahyuni and Nuha (2024),

who explained that syawir activities create a more interactive learning atmosphere because students are actively involved in exchanging arguments and discussing kitab interpretations together.

The findings also revealed that the syawir method contributed to creating a more communicative and participatory classroom atmosphere in the pesantren environment. Santri became more accustomed to expressing opinions, responding to arguments, and asking questions during learning sessions. This condition encouraged the emergence of two-way interaction patterns between students and teachers as well as among fellow santri. In addition, the discussion process allowed students to learn from one another and improve their understanding through peer interaction. Previous studies similarly emphasized that collaborative discussion methods can increase students' engagement and strengthen interpersonal communication skills during Islamic learning activities (Nurhabibi et al., 2024; Ruslandi et al., 2025).

However, the implementation of the syawir method also faced several practical challenges during the learning process. Some santri still depended on more active students during discussions, while others experienced difficulties in understanding Arabic grammatical structures due to limited mastery of nahwu and sharaf. These conditions occasionally caused unequal participation during group discussions. Nevertheless, the ustadz continuously provided guidance and motivation to ensure that all students remained involved in the learning activities. Similar obstacles were also identified in previous studies explaining that discussion-based learning in pesantren often encounters challenges related to students' confidence, educational background differences, and varying comprehension abilities (Ahlunnaja & Dimyati, 2023; Mubarok et al., 2024).

Students' Active Participation in Syawir Learning

The research findings indicated that the implementation of the syawir method significantly increased students' active participation during kitab kuning learning sessions. Before the application of syawir, many santri tended to remain passive during classroom activities and only listened to explanations delivered by the ustadz. After the implementation of collaborative discussions, students gradually became more confident in expressing opinions, asking questions, and participating in collective problem-solving activities. This improvement demonstrated that discussion-based learning methods can encourage students to become more actively involved in the educational process. Similar results were found by Asrori (2024) and Ghufroon and Khoiriyah (2025), who explained that syawir activities improve students' engagement and stimulate active learning behavior in pesantren education.

The increase in students' participation was particularly visible during group discussion sessions. Students actively exchanged arguments regarding the meaning of kitab texts, provided responses to peers' opinions, and collaboratively searched for solutions to learning difficulties encountered during the discussions. In addition, the interaction among santri became more dynamic because students were encouraged to communicate openly without fear of making mistakes. The findings support previous studies which stated that discussion-based learning methods are capable of increasing students' communication skills, critical thinking abilities, and collaborative learning experiences (Nurhabibi et al., 2024; Wati et al., 2023).

Another important finding showed that the syawir method also improved students' confidence in public speaking and expressing academic arguments. Santri who initially hesitated to speak gradually became more comfortable participating in discussions after receiving support from peers and guidance from the ustadz. This condition created a more inclusive learning environment in which students from different educational backgrounds were given equal opportunities to participate actively. Similar findings were reported by Ahlunnaja and Dimyati (2023) and Ruslandi et al. (2025), who emphasized that discussion activities help students develop self-confidence and active classroom participation through continuous interaction and collaborative learning practices.

The effectiveness of the syawir method in increasing active participation can also be observed from students' improved comprehension of kitab kuning materials. Through repeated discussions and collaborative interpretation activities, students became more capable of understanding difficult concepts related to fiqh and Arabic grammar. The process of exchanging ideas during discussions helped students clarify misunderstandings and strengthen conceptual comprehension collectively. This finding supports the argument that active discussion methods not only improve participation but also enhance students' understanding and learning achievement in Islamic educational settings (Fatoni & El-Yunusi, 2024; Muhlas et al., 2024).

Table 1. Changes in Students' Active Participation Through the Syawir Method

Participation Aspect	Before Syawir	After Syawir
Asking Questions	Low	Increased
Expressing Opinions	Minimal	Improved
Discussion Interaction	Passive	Active
Understanding of Kitab Kuning	Limited	Increased

The table above demonstrates that the implementation of the syawir method contributed positively to increasing students' participation in several important aspects of learning. The improvement can be seen from students' courage to ask questions, express opinions, interact actively during discussions, and understand kitab kuning materials more effectively. These findings indicate that participatory learning methods create more engaging educational experiences for santri and encourage collaborative learning environments within pesantren education.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Syawir

The successful implementation of the syawir method at Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Asrama I was influenced by several supporting factors identified during the research process. One important factor was the intensive guidance provided by the ustadz during discussion activities. The teachers continuously supervised the learning process, corrected misunderstandings, and motivated students to participate actively during discussions. This guidance helped students feel more confident and encouraged them to express opinions openly during learning activities. Previous studies similarly explained that teacher support and facilitation play significant roles in creating active and participatory classroom environments in pesantren education (Akmal et al., 2025; Mursyidin & Muzakki, 2023).

Another supporting factor was the conducive pesantren environment that encouraged collaborative learning habits among santri. Students at Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Asrama I were already familiar with kitab kuning studies and collective religious learning traditions, making the implementation of syawir easier to integrate into daily educational activities. In addition, senior students often assisted junior santri during discussion sessions by helping them understand difficult kitab explanations and Arabic grammatical structures. Similar findings were reported by Arif et al. (2025) and Achmadin et al. (2024), who explained that pesantren culture emphasizing cooperation and peer learning contributes significantly to the effectiveness of collaborative learning methods.

Despite these supporting factors, the research also identified several obstacles affecting the implementation of the syawir method. One major challenge was the difference in students' educational backgrounds and levels of Arabic language mastery. Some students who previously studied in Islamic schools possessed better understanding of nahwu and sharaf, while others experienced difficulties in following discussion activities. As a result,

participation levels among students were not always balanced during learning sessions. Similar obstacles were also identified in previous studies discussing the implementation of kitab kuning learning methods in pesantren institutions (Khaq, 2024; Omar et al., 2022).

Another inhibiting factor was the low confidence level experienced by several students during classroom discussions. Some santri still felt hesitant to express opinions because they were afraid of making mistakes or being judged by peers. Furthermore, several students were still accustomed to conventional lecture-based learning methods and required time to adapt to discussion-oriented learning activities. Nevertheless, continuous motivation from the ustadz and support from fellow students gradually reduced these barriers and improved students' willingness to participate actively. These findings reinforce previous studies emphasizing that adaptation processes and psychological readiness are important factors influencing the success of active learning methods in pesantren education (Mubarok et al., 2024; Ahlunnaja & Dimiyati, 2023).



Figure 1. Syawir Learning Activities



Figure 2. Interview with the Education Bureau

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that the syawir method is effective in increasing students' active participation in kitab kuning learning at Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Asrama I. The implementation of collaborative discussion activities successfully encouraged students to become more communicative, confident, and actively engaged in classroom interaction. In addition to improving participation, the syawir method also strengthened students' comprehension of learning materials through collective interpretation and peer discussion activities. These findings are consistent with previous studies which emphasized that discussion-based learning methods improve critical thinking, communication skills, collaboration, and learning engagement among santri in pesantren education (Ghufron & Khoiriyah, 2025; Asrori, 2024). Therefore, the syawir method can be considered an effective participatory learning strategy capable of supporting more interactive and student-centered kitab kuning learning processes in Islamic boarding schools.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the syawir method in kitab kuning learning at Pondok Pesantren Ngalah Asrama I plays an important role in increasing students' active participation, confidence, communication skills, and collaborative learning behavior during the educational process. The most important lesson obtained from this research is that participatory discussion-based learning methods are capable of transforming students from passive listeners into active learners who are more willing to ask questions, express opinions, and engage in collective problem-solving activities. Through syawir activities, students not only improved their understanding of kitab kuning materials but also developed social and intellectual skills such as critical thinking, cooperation, and respect for different perspectives within the learning environment. The strength of this study lies in its contribution to enriching the discourse of participatory learning in pesantren education by specifically highlighting the relationship between the syawir method and students' active participation in traditional Islamic boarding school contexts. In addition, this study provides practical insights for educators and pesantren institutions regarding the importance of interactive and student-centered learning strategies in strengthening the effectiveness of kitab kuning education. However, this research is limited to one pesantren setting and focuses primarily on students' participation in kitab kuning learning activities, meaning that the findings cannot yet be generalized to all pesantren contexts. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve broader research locations, different educational levels,

and quantitative or mixed-method approaches in order to examine the long-term effectiveness of the syawir method and its influence on students' academic achievement, critical thinking development, and social interaction skills in various Islamic educational environments.

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