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## **The Role of *Bahtsul Masail* in Improving the Understanding of Jurisprudence of Santri at Manbaul Hikam Islamic Boarding School in Burneh Bangkalan**

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### **Abstract**

Discussion forums organized in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are one of the most effective means to support students' understanding of scientific material in the yellow classical books (*kitab kuning*). *Bahtsul masail* is a typical religious discussion forum in the *pesantren* tradition, which is used to examine contemporary issues through a *fiqh* perspective. This research explores the role of *bahtsul masail* in improving the understanding of *fiqh* among the *santri* of Pondok Pesantren Manbaul Hikam Burneh, Bangkalan. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, involving observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis as data collection techniques. The results show that *bahtsul masail* plays a significant role in deepening the *fiqh* understanding of *santri*, especially in terms of the practical application of Islamic law. The intensive and collaborative discussions in *bahtsul masail* encourage *santri* to think critically and analytically on complex issues, which in turn strengthens their intellectual and religious skills. This study concludes that *Bahtsul Masail* is an important instrument in *pesantren* education that is effective in producing knowledgeable and insightful *santri*. This study gives implication that *bahtsul masail* as the main learning method that not only encourages the improvement of *santri*'s knowledge in religious sciences, but also develops their skills in scientific and religious argumentation through interactive and collaborative discussions.

**Keywords:** *Bahtsul Masail, Manbaul Hikam, Pesantren, Santri, Understanding of Jurisprudence*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools are one of the oldest and most influential Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Pesantren have strong roots in Indonesia, so they can be considered as a typical Indonesian educational institution.<sup>1</sup> As a center of education and character building, boarding schools not only focus on teaching religious sciences, but also shaping the personality of students to be in accordance with kaffah Islamic values in their learning activities.<sup>2</sup>

As an example of understanding fiqh becomes one of the important elements taught in Islamic boarding schools, because fiqh is a science that discusses Islamic laws that regulate the daily life of a Muslim. One of the methods used to improve students' understanding of fiqh in Islamic boarding schools is through the bahtsul masail forum. Bahtsul masail is a typical pesantren tradition that functions as a discussion and deliberation forum to discuss various contemporary issues related to Islamic law. Through this forum, santri are invited to think critically and conduct in-depth studies on various issues that arise in society based on classical books (turats) and guidance from kiai.

The importance of bahtsul masail in pesantren education can be seen from several perspectives. From a historical perspective, bahtsul masail is a tradition that has long existed in Indonesian pesantren, especially those affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Through bahtsul masail, NU scholars and intellectuals are required to think and mobilize all their intellectual abilities to answer problems that occur in the midst of society.<sup>3</sup> The struggle of thought becomes a characteristic in ijtihad, as well as the struggle of fiqh thought in Nahdlatul Ulama. The Nahdlatul Ulama Bahtsul Masail institution has been clearly seen and written in the results of the fatwa in 1926.<sup>4</sup> This tradition is rooted in the need for Muslims to get answers to various problems encountered in everyday life that are not explicitly explained in the Qur'an and Hadith. In the bahtsul masail forum, santri not only learn to understand religious texts, but are also taught to develop analytical skills and legal arguments based on maqashid sharia, namely the objectives of Islamic law aimed at the benefit of the people. Second, from an educational perspective, bahtsul masail plays an important role in training santri to master the methodology of ijtihad, which is a serious effort in interpreting Islamic law based on the conditions of a particular time and place. In this process, santri are required not only to master the text, but also to understand the social, cultural, and political context surrounding a problem.

The formulation of the problem in this study focuses on the effectiveness of the role of bahtsul masail in improving the fiqh understanding of santri at Manbaul Hikam Islamic Boarding School in Burneh Bangkalan. This pesantren is known as one of the pesantren that still firmly holds the tradition of bahtsul masail as one of the main learning methods in its curriculum. However, the effectiveness of this method in the context of

<sup>1</sup> Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren dan Tarekat* (Yogyakarta: Gading Publishing, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Baso, *Pesantren Studies Kosmopolitalisme Peradaban Kaum Santri Di Masa Klonial* (Jakarta: Pustaka Afid, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Pujiono, *Hukum Islam, Dinamika Perkembangan Masyarakat* (Yogyakarta: Mitra Pustaka, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Soeleiman Fadeli i Mohammad Subhan, *Antologi NU: Sejarah Istilah Amaliah Uswah, Cet. 2, Surabaya : Khalista* (Surabaya: Khalista, 2008).

students' understanding of fiqh is still a question that requires further research. Some of the problems identified include how the bahtsul masail forum at Manbaul Hikam Islamic Boarding School is organized and implemented, the extent to which students can internalize the knowledge gained from bahtsul masail, and how this tradition affects the ability of students to apply fiqh law in everyday life. In addition, this research also wants to find out whether there are other factors, such as the support of kiai and the pesantren environment, which also affect the effectiveness of bahtsul masail in fiqh learning. Critical thinking can improve children's ability to express opinions critically.<sup>5</sup> Learning is the basis for creating education.<sup>6</sup> Critical thinking as the ability to ask, test and think about ideas and values.<sup>7</sup> Thinking skills are one of the important aspects of learning.<sup>8</sup>

Some previous studies found that bahtsul masail plays an important role in training santri to think critically and be able to respond to various contemporary problems with an Islamic legal.<sup>9</sup> A study to emphasizes the importance of bahtsul masail as a forum for developing the ability of ijtihad among santri, which is an important asset for them in their role as ulama or community leaders in the future.<sup>10</sup> A study telated NU's bahsul masail and the implementation of Democracy.<sup>11</sup> A study about the contribution of bahtsul masail pesantren in Madura in facing the development of contemporary Islamic law.<sup>12</sup> A study about bahtsul masail fiqh material in improving students' critical thinking skills.<sup>13</sup> A study about the implementation of the bahtsul masail method based on pesantren education to improve students' critical thinking skills and ability to analyze in Physics.<sup>14</sup> A study about bahtsul masail as a problem solving method in Contextualized

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<sup>5</sup> Darmawan Harefa, Tatema Telaumbanua, *Belajar Berpikir dan Bertindak Secara Praktis dalam Dunia Pendidikan Kajian untuk Akademis*, ed. Siti Jamalul Insani, cet, ke-1 (Solok: Insan Cendekia Mandiri, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> Pipit Novita Candra, Yerry Soepriyanto, Henry Praherdhiono, Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) Guru Dalam Pengembangan dan Implementasi Rencana Pembelajaran, JKTP Jurnal Kajian Teknologi Pendidikan, 3(2), (2020): 166-177 DOI: 10.17977/um038v3i22020p166

<sup>7</sup> McConnell, J. An educational strategy to improve graduate nurses critical thinking skills during the hospital orientation program. *The journal of continuing education in nursing*, 3, (2008):193. <https://doi.org/10.3928/00220124-20080301-12>.

<sup>8</sup> I. W. Widana, *Modul Penyusunan Soal Higher Order Thinking Skill (HOTS).*, Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Departemen Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Abdurrahman Wahid, Bahtsul Masail Membudayakan Berfikir Obyektif, *Majalah Nahdlatul Ulama Aula*, núm. 7 (1996): 34-46.

<sup>10</sup> Ahmad Baso, *NU Studies: Pergolakan Pemikiran antara Fundamentalisme Islam dan Fundamentalisme Neo-Liberal*, cet. ke-1 (Jakarta: Gelora Aksara Pratama, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> Husein Muhammad, Bahtsul Masail NU dan Implementasi Demokrasi, *Edukasi: Jurnal Penelitian. Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan* 3 (2), (2005): 4-17.

<sup>12</sup> Kudrat Abdillah, Maylissabet, M. Taufiq M.. Kontribusi Bahtsul Masail Pesantren Di Madura Dalam Menghadapi Perkembangan Hukum Islam Kontemporer. *Perada Jurnal Studi Islam Kawasan Melayu*, 2(1), (2019): 67-80. <https://doi.org/10.35961/perada.v2i1.31>.

<sup>13</sup> Ririn Hastari, Ngarifin Sidiq, Luluk Alawiyah, Analisis Kegiatan Bahtsul masail Materi Fiqih dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis Santri di Pondok Pesantren Ulumul Qur'an Al-Qindiliyah Kalibeber Mojotengah Wonosobo, *Jurnal Al-Qalam* 20(2), (2019): 49-60.

<sup>14</sup> Jauharotul Insiyyah, Sri Jumini, Ahmad Khoiri, Implementasi Implementasi Metode Bahtsul Masail Berbasis Pendidikan Pesantren untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis dan Kemampuan Menganalisis Peserta Didik pada Pembelajaran Fisika di SMA, *Radiasi: Jurnal Berkala Pendidikan Fisika* 13(2), (2020): 50-54, <https://doi.org/10.37729/radiasi.v13i2.299>.

Jurisprudence Learning.<sup>15</sup> A study about bahtsul masail-based learning management in the subject of fiqh of worship at the Fathul Ulum Jombang Islamic Boarding School.<sup>16</sup> A study about the bahtsul masail tradition of Nahdhatul Ulama (NU).<sup>17</sup> A study on the use of the bahtsul masail fiqhiyyah method in the learning process.<sup>18</sup> A study about bahtsul masail learning model to build religious moderation.<sup>19</sup> A study about the optimization of santri critical reasoning in the 2014 NU fiqhiyyah bahtsul masail system.<sup>20</sup> A study about the problem-based fathul qorib learning through the syawir (deliberation) forum.<sup>21</sup> Implementation of the bahtsul masail method on PAI learning motivation.<sup>22</sup> The implementation of bahtsul masail in improving the ability of santri to answer various problems in society.<sup>23</sup> The contribution of bahtsul masail activities in improving the ability to understand the yellow book and critical thinking of santri.<sup>24</sup> A study about the scientific development of santri through the selection of bahtsul masail activists.<sup>25</sup> A study examined the implementation of the bahtsul masail method in motivating Fiqih learning.<sup>26</sup> A study examined the strengthening of critical thinking of santri through bahtsul masail.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Zaenal Arifin & Chothibul Muttaqin. Bahtsul Masail sebagai Problem Solving Method dalam Pembelajaran Fikih Kontekstual, *At-Taqwa: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, 16(1), (2020): 15-31, <https://doi.org/10.54069/attaqwa.v16i1.16>.

<sup>16</sup> Mihmidaty Ya'cub, Nurul Lailiyah, Nur Hani'ah, Manajemen Pembelajaran Berbasis Bahtsul Masail Pada Mata Pelajaran Fiqih Ibadah di Pondok Pesantren Fathul Ulum Jombang, *Al-Idaroh: Jurnal Studi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 4(1), (2020), 52-73. <https://doi.org/10.54437/alidaroh.v4i1.145>.

<sup>17</sup> Eni Zulaiha, B Busro, Tradisi Bahts Al-Masail Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) Pematangan Pemikiran Fikih Adil Gender Husein Muhammad, *Musawa: Jurnal Studi Gender dan Islam* 19(2), 205-218, (2020): 205-218. <https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2020.192>

<sup>18</sup> Alfu Naim Alizza, Eko Heri Widiastuti, Nuryanti, Penggunaan Metode Bahtsul Masail Fiqhiyyah dalam Proses Pembelajaran di Pondok Pesantren Darul Mukhlisin Magelang, *Historica Education Journal*, 2(2), (2021): 12-19.

<sup>19</sup> Mokhamad Miptakhul Ulum, Model Pembelajaran Bahtsul Masail untuk Membangun Moderasi Beragama, *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam*, 9(2), (2021): 213-222, <https://doi.org/10.36667/jppi.v9i2.784>.

<sup>20</sup> Abdul Wasik, Optimalisasi Nalar Kritis Santri dalam Sistem Bahtsul Masa'il Fiqhiyyah NU, *Jurnal Lisan Al-hal*, 8(2), (2014): 203-27

<sup>21</sup> Mahfudz Syamsul Hadi, Pembelajaran Fathul Qorib Berbasis Masalah Melalui Forum Syawir (Musyawarah) Di Pondok Pesantren Denanyar Jombang, *Risalah, Jurnal Pendidikan dan Studi Islam*, 8(2), (2022), 473-489. <https://doi.org/10.31943/jurnalrisalah.v8i2.266>

<sup>22</sup> Azizatul Nafiah, Munawir, Implementasi Metode Bahtsul Masail Terhadap Motivasi Belajar PAI, *Ta'dibuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 5(1), (2022): 44-51, <https://doi.org/10.30659/jpai.5.1.44-51>.

<sup>23</sup> Eko Prasetyo, Syaiful Hanif, Afifah Puri Rahmawati, Implementasi Bahtsul Masa'il dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Santri Menjawab Berbagai Permasalahan Di Masyarakat, *Kurikula: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 6(2), (2022), 134-149. <https://doi.org/10.56997/kurikula.v6i2.702>.

<sup>24</sup> Achmad Mahrus Helmi, Hanifuddin, Kontribusi Kegiatan Bahtsul Masail dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Memahami Kitab Kuning dan Berfikir Kritis Santri di Forum Musyawarah Anjang Sana Anjang Sini (FMAA) di Kabupaten Jember, *Edukasia: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran* 4(2), (2023): 2401-2412, <https://doi.org/10.62775/edukasia.v4i2.603>.

<sup>25</sup> Makhfud, Zaeini Misbaahuddin Asyuari, Pengembangan Keilmuan Santri Melalui Seleksi Aktivis Bahtsul Masail Di Madrasah Hidayatul Mubtadiin Lirboyo Kediri, *Andragogi Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Agama Islam* 5(1), (2023): 72-82. <https://doi.org/10.33474/ja.v5i1.20488>.

<sup>26</sup> Ruswanto, Rudy Irawan, Implementasi Metode Bahtsul Masail dalam Memotivasi Belajar Fiqih di Madrasah Aliyah Ahsanul Ibad Purbolinggo Lampung Timur, *Learning: Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 4(3), (2024): 588-596. <https://doi.org/10.51878/learning.v4i3.3170>

<sup>27</sup> Riyen Sefiyani, Arditya Prayogi, Nurul Husnah Mustika Sari, Penguatan Berpikir Kritis Santri Melalui Bahtsul Masail, *Kamaliyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 2(1), (2024): 145-153. <https://doi.org/10.69698/jpai.v2i1.510>

However, although many studies have been conducted related to *Bahtsul Masail*, research that specifically examines the effectiveness of this forum in the context of learning *fiqh* in certain *pesantren* is still limited. Therefore, this research is present to fill the gap by focusing on Pondok Pesantren Manbaul Hikam Burneh Bangkalan. The scientific novelty proposed in this research is an in-depth analysis of the role of *bahtsul masail* in improving the *fiqh* understanding of santri at Manbaul Hikam Burneh Bangkalan Islamic Boarding School, with an approach that integrates historical, sociological, and pedagogical analysis. This research not only explores the mechanism and process of *bahtsul masail*, but also seeks to measure its impact on the *fiqh* competence of santri, as well as identify the challenges faced in its implementation. Thus, this research is expected to make a new contribution to the existing literature, as well as a reference for the development of *fiqh* learning methods in other *pesantren*.

The main objective of this study is to strengthen the understanding and practice of *fiqh* learning in *pesantren*, especially through the *bahtsul masail* tradition. Thus, it is expected that santri who are educated through this method can become a generation of scholars who not only master the science of *fiqh*, but are also able to respond to the challenges of the times with a relevant and contextual approach to Islamic law. This research is also expected to make a real contribution to the development of Islamic education in Indonesia, especially in the context of improving the quality of *fiqh* learning in Islamic boarding schools. This study was conducted to answer the following questions: 1) what is the role of Pesantren Manbaul Hikam?; (2) What are the mechanism and process stages of *bahtsul masail* activities at manba'ul hikam islamic boarding school in studying *fiqh* material?; (3) what is the role of *bahtsul masail* in improving the understanding of *fiqh* material at manbaul hikam islamic boarding school

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods to examine the role of *bahtsul masail* in improving the understanding of santri *fiqh* at the Manbaul Hikam Burneh Bangkalan Islamic Boarding School. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand the phenomenon in depth and holistically, as well as explore the deeper meaning of the experiences and perceptions of informants related to the implementation and effectiveness of *bahtsul masail*. In this context, the descriptive method is used to provide a detailed description of the process, dynamics, and impact of *bahtsul masail* on the *fiqh* understanding of santri. Moreover, this research used a case study because it is only for a group of santri at Manbaul Hikam islamic boarding school. This method is related to the situation of the research by using a case study which happened at boarding school.<sup>28</sup> The informants in this study were selected by purposive sampling by considering their knowledge, experience, and involvement in *bahtsul masail* at Manbaul Hikam Islamic Boarding School. The main informants include kiai who lead *Bahtsul Masail*, senior santri who actively participate in the discussion, as well as *pesantren* administrators who are responsible for the education program. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore informants' views and experiences regarding the role and effectiveness of *bahtsul masail*, while participatory observation was conducted to directly observe the implementation process of *bahtsul masail*. Documentation studies include analyzing relevant documents, such as *bahtsul masail* records, *pesantren* curriculum, and teaching materials used.

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<sup>28</sup>Hancock, R. D., & Algozzine, B. (2021). *Doing case study research: a practical guide for beginning researchers* (4th ed.). Teachers College Press.

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, in which researchers identified the main themes that emerged from the data and connected them with relevant theoretical concepts. The analysis process involved several stages, including interview transcription, data coding, theme identification, and thematic narrative drafting. Data validity was maintained through method triangulation, by comparing interviews, observations and documentation to ensure consistency and credibility of findings. In addition, the researcher also conducted member checking by asking informants to review the results of the interviews and analysis to ensure accuracy of interpretation. The results of the analysis compiled in the form of a research report that provides a comprehensive picture of the role of *bahtsul masail* in improving the fiqh understanding of santri at the Manbaul Hikam Burneh Bangkalan Islamic Boarding School.

## **2. DISCUSSION**

### ***2.1. The Role of Bahtsul Masail In Pesantren Manbaul Hikam***

*Bahtsul masail* programme at Manbaul Hikam Islamic Boarding School was initiated by Ustadz Abdul Qodir in 2005, inspired by his observation of the challenges students faced in comprehending fiqh comprehensively. He realized that classroom learning alone, constrained by limited time and facilities, was insufficient to address the complex issues surrounding Islamic jurisprudence. Driven by the need for a more thorough and interactive approach, Ustadz Abdul Qodir proposed establishing a dedicated *bahtsul masail* programme. His proposal was deliberated in a teachers' meeting, where it gained unanimous approval and strong support for implementation, highlighting the shared commitment to advancing students' understanding of fiqh.

After one year of preparation, the *bahtsul masail* programme officially commenced and quickly gained momentum with the introduction of supporting activities such as philosophy seminars and participation in district-level *bahtsul masail* competitions. The pesantren actively engaged in these competitions by sending delegates, reflecting the institution's commitment to fostering intellectual growth and representing its community. The programme's success in resolving students' challenges, combined with the overwhelming support from both teachers and students, solidified its position as a vital component of the pesantren's curriculum. This integration into the academic framework underscored its relevance and effectiveness.

To this day, the *bahtsul masail* programme at Manbaul Hikam continues to thrive and remains a cornerstone of educational activities within the pesantren. The programme serves as a dynamic forum for discussion between students and teachers, promoting not only intellectual engagement but also the development of critical thinking and collective problem-solving skills. Beyond its primary purpose, it has evolved into a platform for knowledge enhancement through various academic pursuits, ensuring that the tradition of scholarly dialogue is maintained and strengthened.

The programme's enduring presence reflects the pesantren's dedication to fostering a tradition of collaborative inquiry and in-depth analysis. It also underscores the value placed on addressing contemporary issues within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence while preserving the classical methodology of discussion and deliberation. This consistency and adaptability highlight the importance of *bahtsul masail* in bridging traditional knowledge with modern challenges, ensuring the relevance of the pesantren's education in a changing world.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Ustadz Abdul Qodir, One of the Founders of the *Batshul Masail* Programme, Sunday 1 September 2024 n.d, s.d.

Bahtsul Masail programme is a compulsory and integral component of the educational curriculum at Manbaul Hikam Islamic Boarding School. All students (santri) are required to participate actively in this programme, which aims to enhance their proficiency in the field of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and to nurture their critical thinking abilities. Through the Bahtsul Masail, students engage in discussions that not only deepen their understanding of fiqh but also prepare them to represent the pesantren as delegate participants in deliberations hosted by other Islamic boarding schools. The benefits of this programme are manifold, especially in resolving complex issues that previously could not be addressed comprehensively in regular classroom settings. Its implementation has proven to be transformative, enabling students to collaboratively solve fiqh-related problems while showcasing their capability in applying Islamic legal principles effectively.

The implementation of the Bahtsul Masail programme at Manbaul Hikam involves several strategic efforts to ensure its success. These efforts are systematically designed to provide a structured approach to learning and problem-solving in the context of fiqh. Below are the key components of these efforts:

*a. Learning Planning Using Bahtsul Masail*

The foundation of the Bahtsul Masail programme lies in meticulous learning planning. At this stage, the pesantren develops detailed lesson plans and identifies pertinent issues to be discussed during fiqh learning sessions. The planning process involves selecting contemporary and relevant topics that resonate with students and their societal context. These topics are not only educational but also practical, allowing students to engage in discussions that reflect real-world challenges. This strategic planning ensures that the learning process is well-organized, enabling students to approach discussions with clarity and focus. By doing so, the pesantren fosters an environment where critical thinking and problem-solving skills can flourish.

*b. Discussion of Actual Issues*

A significant aspect of the Bahtsul Masail programme is its emphasis on discussing actual and contemporary issues. These discussions go beyond theoretical frameworks, challenging students to apply the principles of fiqh in addressing modern-day societal problems. Topics often include ethical dilemmas, economic issues, and social challenges that require nuanced understanding and thoughtful solutions. Through these discussions, students experience a marked improvement in their fiqh literacy as they learn to analyze, interpret, and apply Islamic jurisprudence in real-life contexts. This aligns with findings from research indicating that Bahtsul Masail can effectively train students to solve problems critically and collaboratively, preparing them to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

*c. Results of Bahtsul Masail*

The outcomes of the Bahtsul Masail discussions are systematically documented and compiled into reference books. These books serve as valuable resources for students and the broader community, offering well-reasoned solutions to a variety of fiqh-related issues. The documentation process ensures that the insights and decisions reached during discussions are preserved for future reference. This approach not only aids students in solving recurring problems but also builds a repository of knowledge that can be accessed to address new challenges. Moreover, this documentation

reinforces the pesantren's commitment to creating a lasting impact through scholarly contributions, ensuring that daily problems can be resolved effectively and wisely. Research has consistently highlighted the importance of such documentation in fostering a culture of problem-solving and knowledge-sharing within Islamic educational institutions.<sup>30</sup>

The implementation of these efforts within the Bahtsul Masail programme has had a transformative impact on the educational landscape of Manbaul Hikam Islamic Boarding School. Students have shown remarkable growth in their ability to understand and apply fiqh principles, demonstrating enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The programme has also contributed to a significant increase in fiqh literacy among students, enabling them to engage confidently with complex issues. This development is crucial in preparing students to navigate the challenges of modern society while remaining rooted in their Islamic values. By participating in Bahtsul Masail, students gain a deeper appreciation for the relevance of Islamic jurisprudence in everyday life, fostering a sense of responsibility and ethical awareness.<sup>31</sup>

## ***2.2. The Mechanism and Process Stages of Bahtsul Masail Activities at Manba'ul Hikam Islamic Boarding School in Studying Fiqh Material***

The bahtsul masail deliberation activity at Manba'ul Hikam Islamic Boarding School is a structured and comprehensive process that develops students' intellectual and analytical skills in Islamic legal studies. The activity consists of five key stages, each contributing to the depth and quality of the discussions. These stages reflect the pesantren's commitment to addressing contemporary issues within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence.<sup>32</sup>

### ***a. Determination of Discussion Topic***

The first stage in the bahtsul masail process is the selection of discussion topics, undertaken by the formulation team in collaboration with the board of teachers. The chosen topics are highly relevant to the needs of the community, covering areas such as fiqh muamalah (Islamic transactions), and other emerging issues that demand scholarly attention. Topics are carefully selected to ensure they are actual, impactful, and reflective of current challenges. For instance, subjects like the permissibility of digital transactions, Islamic perspectives on environmental preservation, and responses to evolving social phenomena are often included. This careful selection ensures that the topics not only resonate with contemporary realities but also equip students to contribute meaningfully to societal discourse.

### ***b. Collecting References***

Once a topic is decided, the santri embark on a detailed process of collecting references. These references encompass classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning), modern literature, and scholarly opinions, both classical and contemporary. Particular emphasis is placed on sourcing arguments from the Qur'an, Hadith, and other authoritative Islamic texts. This stage not only familiarizes students with a range of perspectives but also hones their ability to critically analyze and contextualize these

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<sup>30</sup> Muzawwir, Pengaruh Fatwa Lembaga Bahtsul Masail NU Terhadap Pembangunan Hukum Nasional, *Al-Irfan: Journal of Arabic Literature and Islamic Studies*, 4(2) (2021): 254-64.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Ustadz Achmad Sodik, Bahtsul Masail Formulator, Sunday 1 September 2024.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Ustadz Achmad Sodik, Bahtsul Masail Formulator, Sunday 1 September 2024.



sources. The process deepens their understanding of the selected topic and enhances their ability to formulate arguments with a strong evidentiary basis. By engaging with diverse sources, santri gain valuable insights into the evolution of Islamic jurisprudence and its application to modern contexts.

*c. Discussion and Deliberation*

The third stage involves intensive discussions, engaging all participants, including students, teachers, and the formulation team. This collaborative approach fosters an environment of intellectual exchange where ideas can be debated constructively. The discussions are guided by a commitment to respect differing views (*ikhtilaf*) while ensuring that every argument presented is logical and evidence-based. Participants are encouraged to present their opinions clearly and to engage with opposing viewpoints respectfully. This dynamic deliberation not only sharpens the analytical skills of the santri but also prepares them to navigate complex discussions in broader societal settings. Through this process, they develop critical thinking skills, learn to articulate their thoughts effectively, and gain an appreciation for the diversity of scholarly opinions in Islam.

*d. Formulation of Answers or Solutions*

Following the discussions, the results are formulated into clear and actionable solutions. This stage involves methods such as *tarjih* (selecting the most robust opinion), *taufiqi* (reconciling compatible views), or *ihtiyath* (adopting precautionary measures when necessary). The formulated solutions are crafted in accessible language to ensure their relevance and applicability to the community. This meticulous process ensures that the decisions not only address the issues at hand but also align with the broader objectives of Islamic law. The formulation stage underscores the pesantren's dedication to producing solutions that are both principled and practical, reflecting the depth of the discussions and the quality of the deliberations.

*e. Submission and Publication of Results*

The final stage is the presentation and publication of the *bahtsul masail* results. These outcomes are shared within the pesantren through internal forums and may also be disseminated to the wider public via various media platforms. This stage emphasizes the importance of knowledge-sharing and positions the santri as active contributors to Islamic scholarship and societal development. By documenting and publishing their findings, the santri not only preserve the outcomes of their deliberations but also provide valuable resources for addressing similar issues in the future. This stage exemplifies the pesantren's role in bridging the gap between Islamic scholarship and contemporary societal needs.

*Bahtsul masail* deliberation activity at Manba'ul Hikam Islamic Boarding School reflects a commitment to integrating traditional Islamic legal thought with a critical approach to modern challenges. Each stage of the process—from topic selection to the dissemination of results ensures that students are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to address the complexities of contemporary life. By engaging in this structured process, santri are not only trained as scholars but also as future leaders who can navigate the evolving dynamics of society with an Islamic perspective. This programme

exemplifies the dynamic nature of Islamic jurisprudence and its enduring relevance in addressing the multifaceted challenges of the modern world.

### ***2.3. The Role of Batshul Masail in Improving the Understanding of Fiqh Material at Manbaul Hikam Islamic Boarding School***

The results of this study highlight the significant role of bahtsul masail in fostering critical thinking among students, enabling them to address common societal issues effectively.<sup>33</sup> Through this programme, santri develop critical problem-solving skills grounded in Islamic teachings.<sup>34</sup> The learning process, structured as a problem-solving method, encourages students to seek appropriate solutions to real-life challenges.<sup>35</sup> For students who have a passion for knowledge and enjoy intellectual challenges, this activity becomes an engaging platform for growth and learning.<sup>36</sup>

#### ***a. Mastery of Fiqh Material***

One of the primary benefits of bahtsul masail is its ability to help students master fiqh concepts thoroughly. This process allows santri not only to learn fiqh theoretically but also to practice applying these principles to contemporary problems. Through intensive study and discussion, students gain a profound understanding of fiqh, including classical interpretations and their relevance to modern-day issues. Discussions during bahtsul masail are supported by references from the Qur'an, Hadith, and the views of respected scholars, strengthening the students' grasp of Islamic jurisprudence. Furthermore, this activity serves as a platform for exchanging ideas among students, allowing them to collaboratively address societal challenges related to fiqh.

#### ***b. Improved Skills in Using Fiqh Literature***

The bahtsul masail process requires santri to actively engage with classical Islamic texts, particularly the kutubul mu'tabarrah (authoritative reference books). This engagement involves locating, comprehending, and interpreting Arabic texts, which hones their ability to analyze primary sources. The rigorous practice of working with kitab kuning (traditional Islamic manuscripts) improves their literacy in classical Islamic literature, enabling them to extract relevant knowledge for solving modern problems. This skill not only enriches their academic capabilities but also prepares them to use these texts as reliable sources for decision-making in future contexts.

#### ***c. Public Speaking and Communication Skills***

Participating in bahtsul masail discussions trains students to present their arguments and ideas confidently in a public forum. Over time, this activity fosters the santri's public speaking skills, as they become accustomed to articulating their thoughts clearly and persuasively in front of diverse audiences. The experience gained through these forums helps students build confidence, develop strong communication

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<sup>33</sup> Hudlari Hamim, *Diskusi sebagai Jawaban atas Pelbagai Problematika Masyarakat* (Kediri: LBM Al-Mahrusiyah, 2018).

<sup>34</sup> HM. Amin Haedari, *Masa Depan Pesantren dalam Tantangan Modernitas dan Tantangan Komplexitas Global* (Jakarta: IRD Pess, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> Abdul Majid, *Perencanaan Pembelajaran Mengembangkan Standar Kompetensi Guru* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2006).

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Rafi Uddin, Faisal Faqih, Salman Al-Farisi, Active Students of the Batshul Masail Program at Manbaul Hikam Islamic Boarding School, Monday 2 September 2024

abilities, and refine their persuasive techniques. This skillset proves invaluable as they navigate leadership roles or address complex social issues later in life.

d. *Developing Wise Problem-Solving Abilities*

One of the key objectives of *bahtsul masail* is to instill in students the ability to approach problems with wisdom and prudence. Through collaborative deliberation, santri learn to address issues methodically, ensuring that their solutions are well-considered and balanced. The emphasis on finding practical yet ethical solutions helps students develop sharp problem-solving skills. This aspect of *bahtsul masail* not only addresses immediate concerns but also equips students with a mindset conducive to tackling diverse challenges they may encounter in the future.<sup>37</sup>

e. *Strengthening Argumentation Skills*

The *bahtsul masail* forum trains students to formulate and defend arguments that are based on strong evidence and sound reasoning. Opinions presented in these discussions are rigorously evaluated, ensuring that only well-supported arguments are accepted. This process helps students refine their ability to construct logical arguments, grounded in Islamic teachings and guided by the principles of *maslahah* (public interest) and alignment with divine guidance.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, it enhances their ability to present arguments effectively from multiple perspectives, fostering intellectual maturity and a balanced approach to debate.<sup>39</sup>

f. *Recognition of Contemporary Issues in Fiqh*

A crucial aspect of *bahtsul masail* is its focus on bridging classical *fiqh* principles with contemporary societal issues. Topics such as digital transactions, environmental challenges, and socio-cultural developments are often brought into the discussion, encouraging santri to explore the application of Islamic law in modern contexts. This exposure helps students recognize the relevance of *fiqh* in addressing new challenges, broadening their understanding of how classical teachings can be adapted to meet the needs of an evolving society.

g. *Formation of Islamic Character and Discussion Ethics*

In addition to intellectual development, *bahtsul masail* fosters the ethical and moral growth of students. Respecting differing opinions (*ikhtilaf*) and maintaining decorum during discussions are key values emphasized throughout the deliberation process. Students are trained to uphold Islamic ethics in their interactions, prioritizing mutual respect and humility. These principles not only enhance the quality of the discussions but also instill in the santri a strong foundation of Islamic character that guides their behavior in broader social and professional contexts.

The structured nature of *bahtsul masail* ensures that students gain comprehensive benefits across various domains. It deepens their knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, equips them with critical thinking skills, and prepares them to address complex challenges

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<sup>37</sup> Ruslia Isnawati, *Pentingnya Problem Solving Bagi Seorang Remaja* (Surabaya: Jakad Media Publishing, 2020).

<sup>38</sup> M. Fathu Lillah, *Ta'lim Muta'allim Dilengkapi dengan Tanya Jawab* (Kediri: Santri Salaf Press, 2015).

<sup>39</sup> Taufiq Rochim, *Berpikir Kritis & Kreatif* (Bandung: ITB Press, 2018).

with wisdom and ethical considerations. By participating in this programme, santri are molded into individuals capable of making meaningful contributions to society, bridging the gap between traditional Islamic teachings and contemporary realities.

Through its holistic approach, *bahtsul masail* exemplifies the role of Islamic education in shaping not only knowledgeable scholars but also ethical and socially responsible leaders. The programme's emphasis on critical thinking, ethical deliberation, and practical application underscores its significance as a cornerstone of learning and character-building in the *pesantren* tradition.

### 3. CONCLUSION

This study aims to review the role of *bahtsul masail* in strengthening the understanding of *fiqh* among santri. The results show that *bahtsul masail* activities make a major contribution in improving the *fiqh* insights of santri, especially regarding the practical application of Islamic law. The intense and collaborative discussions in this forum motivate santri to think critically and analytically in dealing with complex issues, thus fostering strong intellectual and spiritual skills. This shows that *bahtsul masail* acts as an effective learning method in shaping santri with a deep understanding of *fiqh* and integrated with daily life.

This study has limitations in the scope of the study area, where only one *pesantren* is the object of research. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the scope by involving several other *pesantren* as the object of study. In addition, since this study only focuses on the aspect of understanding *fiqh*, future research can consider examining other aspects of *pesantren* education that also have the potential to have a positive impact through *bahtsul masail*, such as aspects of ethics, leadership, or social competence. By expanding the study variables, a more comprehensive understanding of the role of *bahtsul masail* in *pesantren* education can be obtained.

Overall, this study provides recommendations for *pesantren* managers to make *bahtsul masail* as the main learning method that not only encourages the improvement of santri's knowledge in religious sciences, but also develops their skills in scientific and religious argumentation through interactive and collaborative discussions. This activity is expected to be further improved so that santri are more motivated to explore religious knowledge, with a relevant and applicable approach.

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