

## TRANSFORMING LEARNING IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: A STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN INDONESIA

Fahrurrozi  
UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia  
Email: fahrurrozisakiran@gmail.com

Mujamil Qomar  
UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia  
Email: mujamil65@yahoo.com

Sokip  
Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng, Indonesia  
Email: sokip@uinsatu.ac.id

Naser Ali Abdulghani  
University of Benghazi, Libya  
Email: naser.ali@uob.edu.ly

---

**Corresponding Author:** Fahrurrozi

**Article history:** Received: January 07, 2025 | Revised: April 20, 2025 | Available online: June 10, 2025

---

**How to cite this article:** Fahrurrozi, Fahrurrozi, Mujamil Qomar, Sokip Sokip, and Naser Ali Abdulghani. "Transforming Learning in Islamic Education: A Study of Pedagogical Change and Student Achievement in Indonesia". *Didaktika Religia: Journal of Islamic Education* 13, no. 1 (2025): 31-51. 10.30762/didaktika.v13i1.3577.

---

**Abstract:** This study explores transformative pedagogical innovations implemented at SMAS Al-Ma'arif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, a faith-based senior high school in Central Lombok, Indonesia. Aiming to improve student learning outcomes and academic performance, the research adopts a qualitative case study approach. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with teachers and students, classroom observations, and document analysis of instructional strategies. The findings highlight several key innovations, including the integration of digital technology in teaching, proactive dissemination of student competition opportunities, and the evolving role of teachers as academic mentors. These practices reflect a dynamic shift in instructional culture, emphasizing collaboration, motivation, and student-centered learning. The study underscores the importance of sustained institutional support and teacher development to ensure the long-term success of such innovations. The results contribute to broader discussions on pedagogical

**Copyright:** © 2025. The authors.

Didaktika Religia: Journal of Islamic Education is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License

transformation in Islamic educational contexts, demonstrating how targeted innovations can drive academic achievement in under-resourced yet culturally rich learning environments.

**Keywords:** Transformative Pedagogy, Innovative Teaching Practices, Teacher Mentorship.

## Introduction

Improving the quality of education in Indonesia remains a primary concern at all levels of the education system. One of the key indicators of educational quality is student achievement, which not only reflects the success of the learning process but also demonstrates the effectiveness of the strategies implemented by educators. In the midst of ongoing globalization and digital transformation, educators are expected not only to master the subject matter but also to design and implement innovative strategies that can adapt to change and meet the needs of students.<sup>1</sup> These innovative strategies include the application of creative teaching methods, the utilization of advanced educational technology, and student-centered learning approaches to create an active, enjoyable, and meaningful learning environment.<sup>2</sup>

SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, as one of the private educational institutions grounded in the values of Nahdlatul Ulama in Central Lombok, has unique characteristics that combine Islamic values with a spirit of nationalism. In its daily practice, the school continuously strives to improve the quality of its teaching processes and student academic performance through various well-planned strategic programs. These efforts reflect the school's commitment to creating an educational environment that is not only result-oriented but also focused on character development and competence, enabling students to compete at both national and international levels.

The goal of national education is to develop an intelligent nation and to educate the entire Indonesian population to be faithful

---

<sup>1</sup> Kuok Ho Daniel Tang, "Student-Centered Approach in Teaching and Learning: What Does It Really Mean?," *Acta Pedagogica Asiana* 2, no. 2 (March 28, 2023): 72–83, <https://doi.org/10.53623/apga.v2i2.218>.

<sup>2</sup> Nurassyl Kerimbayev et al., "A Student-Centered Approach Using Modern Technologies in Distance Learning: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Smart Learning Environments* 10, no. 1 (November 15, 2023): 61, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-023-00280-8>.

and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, be knowledgeable and skilled, physically and mentally healthy, contribute to sustainable development, and become independent individuals. Since citizens have a sense of responsibility toward society and their nation, the government takes measures to ensure equitable access and quality improvements in education.

Student success in the learning process at school can be identified through learning outcomes and student performance. Furthermore, student achievement depends on several factors, such as class participation, learning motivation, enthusiasm, comprehension skills, student abilities, and the school environment. Variation in teaching methods aims to improve student learning outcomes and promote engagement. Choosing the right teaching strategy can help students engage more effectively in learning activities and acquire the expected skills.

A teaching strategy refers to the methods chosen and used by an educator to deliver learning materials, aiming to facilitate students in receiving and understanding the content, ultimately enabling them to achieve the learning objectives.<sup>3</sup> A teacher's teaching strategy should include explanations of the methods, procedures, and techniques used throughout the teaching process. In this sense, methods, procedures, and techniques are all components of a broader teaching strategy.<sup>4</sup>

Schools, as formal educational institutions, are responsible for organizing the teaching and learning process, collectively contributing to the achievement of educational goals. In carrying out their educational function, institutions and schools must continuously strive to produce qualified graduates and outcomes, achieving reliable and competent learning results across various fields.

A school is considered successful in conducting and achieving educational goals when it demonstrates student accomplishments as a tangible result of the educational process. Achievement represents a measurable level of ability; thus, a school's quality can partly be

---

<sup>3</sup> Karima Matar Almazroui, "Project-Based Learning for 21st-Century Skills: An Overview and Case Study of Moral Education in the UAE," *The Social Studies* 114, no. 3 (May 4, 2023): 125–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2022.2134281>.

<sup>4</sup> Simon Finkelstein, Sharma, Umesh, and Brett and Furlonger, "The Inclusive Practices of Classroom Teachers: A Scoping Review and Thematic Analysis," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 25, no. 6 (May 12, 2021): 735–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1572232>.

assessed through the accomplishments of its students. According to Masyruriyah, achievement serves as a benchmark for the level of learning and progress aligned with the methods and curriculum on which the education system is based.<sup>5</sup> Widiyanto defines achievement as the outcome of completed activities or creations that bring satisfaction, resulting from diligent work performed individually or collectively in a specific field.<sup>6</sup>

One of the indicators of educational success is a school's ability to provide high-quality and effective educational services at both the classroom and school levels. Student achievements include not only academic achievements related to knowledge acquisition but also non-academic achievements associated with students' skills. According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI)<sup>7</sup>, academic achievement refers to learning outcomes obtained from school or university activities that are cognitive in nature and generally measured through assessments. Non-academic achievement refers to students' abilities developed outside of curricular hours, often through extracurricular activities.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the strategies implemented by principals and teachers, efforts must also come from within the students themselves. Therefore, collaboration between principals, teachers, and students is essential in improving achievement as a reflection of the attainment of educational objectives. The efforts made by each student may vary depending on their abilities and needs; however, each student ultimately shares the same goal. Motivation and a spirit for learning are the fundamental elements students must possess before engaging in the educational process.

Improving student quality is also being carried out throughout various regions, including Central Lombok Regency. All schools in the area, including SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, continue to strive for improved student achievement. SMAS Al-

---

<sup>5</sup> Ilma Lailatum Masyruriyah and Karwanto Karwanto, "Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Upaya Meningkatkan Prestasi Belajar Siswa," *Inspirasi Manajemen Pendidikan*, August 2, 2020, 248–56.

<sup>6</sup> Suheri Widiyanto, "Korelasi Motivasi, Fasilitas Belajar Dan Prestasi Belajar Siswa," *Anwaliyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 3, no. 1 (June 16, 2020): 47–56, <https://doi.org/10.58518/awwaliyah.v3i1.494>.

<sup>7</sup> KBBI. (2008). *Indonesian Dictionary*. Jakarta: Ministry of Education and Culture.

<sup>8</sup> Ayu Sundari, "Manajemen Kegiatan Ekstrakurikuler Dalam Meningkatkan Prestasi Non Akademik Siswa," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (April 21, 2021): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v2i1.45>.

Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder is a senior secondary school under the auspices of Nahdlatul Ulama. It is known for its strong commitment to enhancing educational quality and shaping students with excellence in both academic and non-academic aspects.

In its efforts to improve student achievement, SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder adopts a holistic educational approach, combining the national curriculum with Islamic values rooted in Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja). This approach not only hones students' intellectual abilities but also nurtures their moral character and spirituality.

The school actively encourages its students to participate in various competitions at the local and national levels, including science, sports, arts, and religious activities. The achievements gained in these competitions serve as tangible proof of the high quality of education provided. Moreover, teachers at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder are continually encouraged to improve their competencies through training and workshops aligned with the latest developments in education.

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. A qualitative approach involves describing data in the form of words that are then structured into coherent sentences. The descriptive method is a problem-solving procedure in which the object of investigation is portrayed as it exists, based on observable facts, which are then analyzed and interpreted within the framework of research and development.<sup>9</sup>

The research design used in this study is a case study, which provides detailed and in-depth descriptions of the setting, subject, and events.<sup>10</sup> This perspective is supported by Yin, who stated that a case study is a strategy chosen to answer how and why questions, particularly when the focus of the study is to examine contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts.<sup>11</sup> The main reason for using a case study in this research is to provide detailed information about the

---

<sup>9</sup> Bui Thanh Khoa, Bui Phu Hung, and Mohsen Hejsalem-Brahmi, "Qualitative Research in Social Sciences: Data Collection, Data Analysis and Report Writing," *International Journal of Public Sector Performance Management* 12, no. 1–2 (January 2023): 187–209, <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSPSPM.2023.132247>.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Bogdan and Sari Knopp Biklen, *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods* (Pearson A & B, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (SAGE, 2009).

uniqueness and strengths of SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder.

The object of this research is SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder. To obtain valid data, the researcher was directly involved in the field. Three methods were used for data collection, including observation, interview, and documentation. Once all data were collected, data analysis techniques were applied. Data analysis is the method of collecting, filtering, and organizing information from interviews, observations, and documents. The data are then described, filtered, and analyzed to develop a clear and easily understandable interpretation for both individuals and groups. The analysis process can be conducted through data condensation. Data condensation is the process of summarizing, selecting, or simplifying data to approach the entirety of the collected notes. This is followed by data display, where a brief narrative description is written, and finally, drawing conclusions from the findings.

## **Innovative Strategies of Teachers in Improving Student Achievement**

Teachers' strategies to improve student achievement are crucial. A teacher has multiple roles, not just as a source of knowledge. Based on research conducted at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, various teaching strategies have been developed. This proves that teachers are fulfilling their goals of making the learning process enjoyable. The many achievements obtained by students in various competitions are inseparable from the teachers' successful leadership and guidance. Below are several strategies employed by teachers at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder to enhance student performance:

### **1. Development of Varied Learning Media and Methods**

Teachers employ a variety of strategies, such as lectures, discussions, presentations, practicums, interactive learning applications, educational games, and remedial teaching for students who have not yet mastered the material until they fully understand the lessons. This approach aligns with the school's vision and mission, which emphasizes a strict, accountable system focused on success.

This was confirmed by Zainul Arifin,

“We always strive to make learning less monotonous. In addition to using blackboards and textbooks, we also utilize digital media such as instructional videos, infographics, and interactive quizzes using platforms like Quizizz and Google Forms. We combine group discussions, student presentations, and problem-solving methods to encourage students to be more active and think critically.”<sup>12</sup>

Likewise, Saparwadi added that:

“At SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, we constantly develop more innovative and varied media and teaching methods. We integrate technology into the learning process, using online learning applications and other educational software. We also encourage teachers to apply various instructional approaches such as group discussions, simulations, and project-based learning. This is aimed at making students not only passive learners but actively engaged participants.”<sup>13</sup>

Teaching materials are not limited to textbooks but are also used to inspire student projects aligned with the lesson content. These projects are not just assignments but are also submitted to competitions. Therefore, each lesson delivered effectively can become an opportunity for students to achieve success.

As stated by Kurniawati, “The materials we teach go beyond just rewriting or understanding; they also serve as trials for students to produce scientific work. This helps students become accustomed to research and expand their knowledge, enabling them to compete when opportunities arise.”<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the development of varied learning media and methods is an innovative strategy applied by educators at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder to improve student achievement. The teachers use diverse educational tools such as visual aids, educational videos, digital-based applications, and interactive materials tailored to student needs. The applied learning methods include project-based learning, collaborative learning, and group discussions that actively engage students. These approaches make learning more engaging and enjoyable, while also encouraging creativity and participation.

---

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Zainul Arifin, Vice Principal of Curriculum, April 3, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Saparwadi, Principal, April 3, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Kurniawati, Physics Teacher at MBI, April 5, 2024.

The use of diverse teaching strategies is one of the key elements that can significantly enhance student learning outcomes. At SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, educators do not rely solely on the traditional lecture method. Instead, they actively adopt innovative approaches such as group discussions, practical experiments, project-based learning, and the integration of interactive digital media, including educational videos and quiz applications. This approach aligns closely with Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences, which posits that every student possesses various types of intelligence—such as linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, and interpersonal. Therefore, a diverse range of teaching methods is essential to reach and engage all these forms of intelligence.<sup>15</sup>

In practice, the use of group discussions in the classroom provides opportunities for students to engage directly and share their ideas and perspectives. For example, in history lessons, students may be divided into small groups to discuss significant events in Indonesian history. Each group is then asked to present the results of their discussion in front of the class. This activity not only enhances students' understanding of the subject matter but also trains their communication and collaboration skills. This aligns with Gardner's theory, in which interpersonal intelligence can be developed through active and constructive social interaction.

Furthermore, this approach is also in line with the Constructivist theory proposed by Vygotsky, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the process of knowledge construction. Vygotsky introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where students learn more effectively with the support of others, including teachers and peers.<sup>16</sup> In the context of SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, the teacher's role as a facilitator is crucial. Teachers assist students in exploring new material by providing the necessary support. For instance, when students face difficulties in understanding complex mathematical concepts, the teacher can offer additional explanations or use visual aids to enhance comprehension.

---

<sup>15</sup> Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

<sup>16</sup> L. S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, ed. Michael Cole et al. (Harvard University Press, 1978).



The use of practical methods has also proven to be an effective way to improve student learning outcomes. In science subjects, for example, students can conduct simple experiments to understand scientific concepts. By engaging in hands-on experiments, students are able to observe and experience the phenomena being studied, leading to a deeper understanding. This approach reflects the principles of active learning, in which students are not merely passive recipients of information but are actively involved in the learning process.

In this increasingly digital age, the use of interactive digital media such as educational videos and quiz applications has become an emerging trend. Teachers at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder utilize applications such as Quizizz and Google Forms to conduct engaging interactive quizzes. This not only makes the learning process more enjoyable but also encourages students to study independently and evaluate their own understanding. According to Mayer the effective use of multimedia can enhance conceptual understanding and transfer of learning by activating both the verbal and visual communication channels in students.<sup>17</sup> In this context, educational videos can help students visualize real-life applications of the concepts being taught, while quizzes provide immediate feedback on their learning progress.

The importance of applying diverse learning strategies is also reflected in increased student motivation. When students are engaged in a variety of learning activities, they tend to show higher enthusiasm and motivation to learn. For example, students who were previously less interested in a particular subject may develop new interest when engaged in group-based projects or when given the opportunity to use technology in the learning process. Thus, the variety of teaching strategies not only contributes to improved academic performance but also fosters a more positive and supportive learning environment.

However, it is important to note that challenges in implementing diverse teaching strategies must also be carefully considered. Not all students share the same learning style, and some may find it difficult to adapt to newly introduced methods. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to conduct an initial assessment of each student's needs and preferences. By understanding the characteristics

---

<sup>17</sup> Richard E. Mayer, ed., *The Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

and uniqueness of each learner, teachers can adjust their teaching strategies to be more effective and targeted.

Additionally, professional development and training for teachers are crucial components in implementing diverse learning strategies. Teachers need to continually update their knowledge and skills in using the latest teaching methods and technologies. Schools can provide training sessions or workshops to help teachers enhance the skills required to implement various instructional strategies. Consequently, teachers will be better prepared and more confident in addressing the challenges they may encounter in the classroom.

## **2. Teachers Actively Disseminate Competition Information**

Participating in various competitions is an effective way to enhance students' skills. In education, competitions are not just about winning awards but serve as a vital tool for self-development. Teachers at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder regularly encourage students to participate in both academic and non-academic competitions. Through these experiences, students sharpen their skills and knowledge in competitive settings—strategically improving their academic performance and enriching critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities.

This was affirmed by Saparwadi, “One important aspect of joining competitions is the development of academic skills. In science competitions, for instance, students must apply learned theories in practice. They need to design experiments, analyze data, and draw logical conclusions. This not only deepens their understanding but also trains them to think analytically. Participating in competitions such as the National Science Olympiad challenges students to think critically.”<sup>18</sup>

Competitions serve as tools to test and enhance students' intellectual abilities. They also help develop non-academic skills. For example, in debate contests, students not only gain knowledge about the topic but also develop public speaking skills, logical reasoning, and active listening—key communication skills vital in real-world situations. This was also mentioned by Muliani Azmi:

“We always actively provide competition information to students, hoping they get used to practicing. Success in competitions often earns students extra points in university

---

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Saparwadi, Principal, April 3, 2024.

admissions. Many higher education institutions value applicants with a track record of success in various fields, seeing it as proof of dedication, hard work, and the ability to excel in competitive environments. Even though winning is not the main goal, the learning process makes that dream achievable.”<sup>19</sup>

Fitria Harya Dewi added that “Joining competitions allows students to interact with peers from other schools and diverse backgrounds. It creates opportunities to network, exchange knowledge, and learn from one another.”<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in this strategy by providing guidance, training, and emotional support. They help students prepare for competitions, offer strategies for success, and provide the necessary resources. Competitions are not only about winning prizes but also about learning and self-development throughout the preparation and participation process. Teachers at MBI remain committed to promoting student participation in competitions to improve skills, confidence, and future prospects.

One of the innovative strategic approaches implemented by educators at this school is actively informing and facilitating students’ participation in various competitions, both academic and non-academic. In today’s increasingly modern educational context, the role of a teacher is no longer limited to delivering information alone, but also includes serving as a motivator and facilitator capable of creating a dynamic and inspiring learning environment.

This approach aligns with the Self-Determination Theory proposed by Deci and Ryan, which explains that intrinsic motivation develops when individuals feel a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.<sup>21</sup> By providing students with opportunities to engage in various competitions, teachers help students gain a sense of control over their own learning process, which in turn can enhance their confidence and motivation to learn more diligently.

When students participate in competitions, they are faced with real-world challenges that require problem-solving skills, teamwork, and the ability to make quick and accurate decisions. For instance, in a science competition, students might be required to design

---

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Muliani Azmi, Chemistry Teacher, April 5, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Fitria Harya Dewi, Mathematics Teacher, April 5, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, “Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being,” *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 68–78, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>.

experiments that are not only engaging but also relevant to the concepts they have learned in class. This process not only sharpens their academic skills but also offers deep contextual experiences that support meaningful learning.

In this context, David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory provides a highly relevant framework. Kolb emphasizes that effective learning occurs through a cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.<sup>22</sup> Through competitions, students undergo concrete experiences during participation, reflect on those experiences, develop new concepts, and later apply their knowledge through active experimentation in future endeavors.

The significance of these experiences should not be underestimated. For example, a student participating in a debate competition may learn to think critically and formulate strong arguments. Preparing for such a competition requires the student to conduct thorough research, practice public speaking, and collaborate with classmates. These skills are not only beneficial for the competition itself but are also invaluable in everyday life and future careers. Therefore, participation in competitions is not merely an extracurricular activity, but rather an integral part of holistic learning.

Furthermore, the Achievement Goal Theory proposed by Elliot and McGregor also offers valuable insight into how students' goal orientations can influence their approach to learning tasks.<sup>23</sup> In this context, participating in competitions can foster positive performance-approach goals. This means that students focus not only on achieving high results but also on self-development and skill improvement. For example, a student competing in a mathematics contest may aim to enhance their problem-solving abilities, not just to win a prize. By emphasizing personal growth and skill mastery, teachers can help students develop a positive attitude toward lifelong learning.

Thus, the innovative strategies implemented by teachers not only bring immediate benefits in the context of competitions but also contribute to the development of students' character and skills that

---

<sup>22</sup> David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (FT Press, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> Andrew J. Elliot and Holly A. McGregor, "A  $2 \times 2$  Achievement Goal Framework," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 80, no. 3 (2001): 501–19, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.80.3.501>.

will be highly valuable in the future. Through this holistic approach, the education at this school fosters a generation that is not only academically competent but also adaptable and capable of thriving in various aspects of life.

### 3. Teachers as Mentors

During the learning process, teachers must motivate students to boost their enthusiasm for learning. When internal motivation is supported by external encouragement from teachers, it significantly affects students' academic success. One form of motivation provided by teachers is explaining that SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder has a good reputation in the community, encouraging students to aim for first place in competitions. Teachers also share stories of successful alumni. Students who excel are rewarded with additional grades as a form of appreciation for their achievements.

Kurniawati stated that:

"I hope that all the students I mentor will achieve high academic success and develop the skills necessary for future success. I want them not only to succeed in competitions but also to be prepared to face real-world challenges with confidence and the skills they need."<sup>24</sup>

In line with this, Zainul Arifin note:

"Our mentoring also includes character building, soft skill development, and increasing students' motivation to learn. Teachers focus not only on academic achievements but also on students' emotional and psychological well-being. Accurate and detailed mentoring has proven to positively impact student performance in both academic and non-academic fields."<sup>25</sup>

In general, students who participate in competitions receive special guidance from teachers aimed at maximizing their performance. They may also be exempted from regular assignments during competition preparation. Recognizing high-achieving students is a serious commitment from the institution to honor student accomplishments.

The role of teachers as motivators and mentors holds significant importance in enhancing students' enthusiasm and academic achievement. At SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah

---

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Kurniawati, Physics Teacher at MBI, April 5, 2024.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Zainul Arifin, Vice Principal of Curriculum, April 3, 2024.

Bonder, this role is implemented through a comprehensive and integrated approach. In this context, teachers do not merely function as instructors delivering academic material, but also serve as mentors who provide personal guidance and positive reinforcement. Through meaningful interactions and genuine attention, teachers create a learning environment that supports students' optimal development.

One of the strategies employed by teachers at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder is rewarding students who demonstrate outstanding achievements. These rewards are not limited to certificates or trophies but also include verbal recognition that can significantly boost students' confidence. For example, when a student wins a science competition, the teacher not only praises the student in front of the class but also invites them to share their experience and journey with classmates. This action not only acknowledges the student's achievement but also serves as a source of inspiration for others to strive harder.

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory offers a theoretical framework that explains the importance of recognition in the educational context. According to Maslow, human needs can be organized in a hierarchy, where esteem and self-actualization lie at the top.<sup>26</sup> When students achieve success, they not only receive recognition from their teachers but also fulfill their psychological need to be valued and appreciated. For instance, a student who wins first place in a debate competition not only feels proud but also gains recognition from peers and family. This contributes to the development of self-confidence and a strong motivation to continue achieving.

In line with this, the Behaviorist Theory introduced by B.F. Skinner<sup>27</sup> emphasizes the importance of positive reinforcement in shaping behavior. When students receive rewards or recognition for their accomplishments, they are more motivated to repeat the same behavior in the future. For example, if a student is acknowledged for their effort and dedication in learning, they will feel encouraged to continue studying diligently. In this context, the teacher functions as an agent of change who provides positive reinforcement that can trigger students' intrinsic motivation.

---

<sup>26</sup> A. H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (1943): 370–96, <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>.

<sup>27</sup> B. F. Skinner, *Science And Human Behavior* (Simon and Schuster, 1965), 103.

Furthermore, comprehensive guidance by teachers also includes emotional support, which is a core principle of the Humanistic Pedagogy developed by Carl Rogers.<sup>28</sup> Rogers emphasized the importance of empathetic relationships between teachers and students. When teachers are able to build relationships based on mutual respect and understanding, students feel more comfortable expressing themselves and facing challenges. For example, a student struggling with a certain subject may feel more open to asking for help when they know their teacher genuinely cares and is willing to listen. This creates a learning climate that supports both personal and academic growth.

In this regard, the teacher's involvement in guiding students to participate in competitions reflects the practice of the Scaffolding Theory introduced by Jerome Bruner.<sup>29</sup> Scaffolding is a process in which teachers provide support tailored to the students' needs until they become independent and confident. For example, when a student is preparing for a math competition, the teacher can offer additional guidance, practice exercises, and effective learning strategies. In this way, the student feels supported and has the opportunity to develop the necessary skills to succeed in the competition.

Overall, the teacher's role as a motivator and mentor extends beyond academic achievement to include the development of students' character and social skills. Through a holistic approach, teachers at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder aim to shape students who are not only academically intelligent but also possess strong interpersonal abilities. This is crucial, considering that today's world demands individuals who can think critically as well as collaborate and communicate effectively. Therefore, the role of teachers in education is vital in shaping a generation prepared to face future challenges.

### **Students' Efforts to Improve Academic Achievement**

Students, as the primary targets of educational implementation, must also possess a strong determination to learn. They are expected

---

<sup>28</sup> Carl Ransom Rogers, *Freedom to Learn: A View of What Education Might Become* (C.E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969), 273. Rogers, C. R. (1969). *Freedom to Learn*. Merrill. p. 273

<sup>29</sup> Jerome Seymour Bruner, *The Process of Education: Revised Edition* (Harvard University Press, 1977), 45.

to make good use of their free time at school. At SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, students use their spare time effectively by engaging in peer discussions and visiting the library to study. This reflects a conducive learning climate. Many of them also frequently participate in competitions and demonstrate a strong commitment to personal growth. One of the key efforts to improve academic performance is having a commitment to continuous improvement, which means not being satisfied with current achievements but always striving to enhance their abilities.

Every effort and role must be fulfilled by students with a sense of responsibility so that the learning provided can be well received. The process of knowledge transfer from teachers to students should be carried out optimally. This was conveyed by Hadid Wazri, a student at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, who stated:

“I strive to improve my academic performance in several ways. First, I always create a regular study schedule and stay disciplined in following it. Second, I actively ask questions to teachers when I don’t understand the material, and I frequently engage in discussions with friends to exchange knowledge. In addition, I sometimes use additional learning resources such as reference books, online articles, and educational videos when I have access to a laptop.”<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, this must be supported by high motivation and encouragement from teachers, which helps students feel more confident and prepared to face challenges in competitions. Teachers also play a role in helping students manage stress and pressure that may arise during preparation and participation in competitions. As a result, students can make the most of their time by studying harder and maintaining self-motivation.

This was also expressed by Baiq Nikmah, another student at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder:

“My main motivation in improving academic performance is my desire to achieve my future goals and make my parents proud. I believe that good academic performance will open many opportunities, both for continuing to higher education and for entering the workforce. Additionally, I want to set a

---

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Hadid Wazri, student at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, April 8, 2024.



good example for my younger siblings and peers so that they are also motivated to excel.”<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, it is important to conduct evaluations of previously participated competitions as a step toward improving and enhancing students’ abilities in facing future competitions. This evaluation process involves various stakeholders who contribute to the activities. Based on the collected data, it is evident that students have participated in a variety of competitions. Some of these competitions are organized by government institutions or official agencies, while others stem from the students’ own initiative and creativity. Therefore, the evaluation process must be tailored to the characteristics of the organizing institution and the type of competition in order to yield more optimal and relevant outcomes for future development.

Students are the central subjects in educational activities; thus, they are expected to take an active role in improving their academic achievement. The research findings indicate that students at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder employ various independent strategies to enhance their academic performance. These strategies include utilizing free time for discussions and studying in the library, participating in various competitions, creating a regular study schedule, and seeking additional learning resources from various media. All of these practices reflect a high level of metacognitive awareness and the presence of a learning-conducive environment.

Students’ strategies such as developing study schedules, engaging in peer discussions, and searching for additional references are consistent with the concept of self-regulated learning proposed by Zimmerman. This theory emphasizes that successful learners are those who can manage their behavior, cognition, and motivation to achieve learning goals. Self-regulated learners proactively engage in their own learning process by setting goals, monitoring progress, and adjusting strategies to optimize outcomes.<sup>32</sup> In this case, students like Hadid Wazri demonstrate the characteristics of effective self-regulated learners, namely the ability to identify learning needs, seek solutions, and remain motivated to achieve optimal results.

---

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Baiq Nikmah, student at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, April 8, 2024.

<sup>32</sup> Barry J. Zimmerman, “Becoming a Self-Regulated Learner: An Overview,” *Theory Into Practice* 41, no. 2 (May 1, 2002): 64–70, [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2).

Baiq Nikmah's motivation to achieve academically for the sake of her future and to make her parents proud aligns closely with the Expectancy-Value Theory developed by Eccles and Wigfield. This theory explains that an individual's choices and efforts in academic activities are greatly influenced by two main components: (1) expectancy for success and (2) the perceived value of the task. Students are more likely to engage and persist in learning activities when they believe they can succeed and when they value the task at hand.<sup>33</sup> This theory explains why students with long-term goals—such as personal ambitions or family aspirations—tend to have strong learning motivation and show good academic performance.

A supportive learning climate—such as access to a library, peer discussions, and encouragement and guidance from teachers—reflects Fraser's learning environment theory. According to Fraser, a positive learning environment significantly contributes to students' academic success. The nature of the classroom learning environment significantly influences students' academic achievement and motivation.<sup>34</sup> At SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder, the role of teachers as motivators and mentors is also a crucial component of this supportive learning environment, helping students to feel more confident when facing academic challenges, including participating in competitions.

## Conclusion

Students' success in achieving academic performance is greatly influenced by the important role of teachers in the learning and guidance process. Teachers not only function as instructors but also as motivators, guides, and active facilitators in creating an engaging and challenging learning environment. The strategies implemented by teachers include three main aspects. First, development of diverse learning media and methods. Second, increasing student participation in competitions. Third, the role of teachers as mentors and motivators. The efforts of the students themselves are also a crucial factor in achieving success. Students demonstrate a high level of

---

<sup>33</sup> Jacqueline S. Eccles and Allan Wigfield, "Motivational Beliefs, Values, and Goals," *Annual Review of Psychology* 53, no. Volume 53, 2002 (February 1, 2002): 109–32, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135153>.

<sup>34</sup> Barry J. Fraser, "Classroom Environment Instruments: Development, Validity and Applications," *Learning Environments Research* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 1998): 7–34, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009932514731>.

commitment to the learning process, make productive use of their time, and possess intrinsic motivation to grow. The supportive school environment and the evaluation conducted after competitions also contribute to the continuous improvement and enhancement of students' performance. Therefore, the combination of innovative teaching strategies, active encouragement to participate in competitions, and comprehensive guidance from teachers is the key to improving student achievement at SMAS Al-Maarif NU Al-Manshuriyah Bonder.

## References

- Almazroui, Karima Matar. "Project-Based Learning for 21st-Century Skills: An Overview and Case Study of Moral Education in the UAE." *The Social Studies* 114, no. 3 (May 4, 2023): 125–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2022.2134281>.
- Bogdan, Robert, and Sari Knopp Biklen. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theories and Methods*. Pearson A & B, 2007.
- Bruner, Jerome Seymour. *The Process of Education: Revised Edition*. Harvard University Press, 1977.
- Eccles, Jacquelynne S., and Allan Wigfield. "Motivational Beliefs, Values, and Goals." *Annual Review of Psychology* 53, no. Volume 53, 2002 (February 1, 2002): 109–32. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135153>.
- Elliot, Andrew J., and Holly A. McGregor. "A 2 × 2 Achievement Goal Framework." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 80, no. 3 (2001): 501–19. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.80.3.501>.
- Finkelstein, Simon, Sharma ,Umesh, and Brett and Furlonger. "The Inclusive Practices of Classroom Teachers: A Scoping Review and Thematic Analysis." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 25, no. 6 (May 12, 2021): 735–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1572232>.
- Fraser, Barry J. "Classroom Environment Instruments: Development, Validity and Applications." *Learning Environments Research* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 1998): 7–34. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009932514731>.
- Gardner, Howard. *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice*. New York: Basic Books, 2006.

- Kerimbayev, Nurassyl, Zhanat Umirzakova, Rustam Shadiev, and Vladimir Jotsov. "A Student-Centered Approach Using Modern Technologies in Distance Learning: A Systematic Review of the Literature." *Smart Learning Environments* 10, no. 1 (November 15, 2023): 61. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-023-00280-8>.
- Khoa, Bui Thanh, Bui Phu Hung, and Mohsen Hejsalem-Brahmi. "Qualitative Research in Social Sciences: Data Collection, Data Analysis and Report Writing." *International Journal of Public Sector Performance Management* 12, no. 1–2 (January 2023): 187–209. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPSPM.2023.132247>.
- Kolb, David A. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. FT Press, 2014.
- Maslow, A. H. "A Theory of Human Motivation." *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (1943): 370–96. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>.
- Masyruriyah, Ilma Lailatum, and Karwanto Karwanto. "Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Upaya Meningkatkan Prestasi Belajar Siswa." *Inspirasi Manajemen Pendidikan*, August 2, 2020, 248–56.
- Mayer, Richard E., ed. *The Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Rogers, Carl Ransom. *Freedom to Learn: A View of What Education Might Become*. C.E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969.
- Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being." *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>.
- Skinner, B. F. *Science And Human Behavior*. Simon and Schuster, 1965.
- Sundari, Ayu. "Manajemen Kegiatan Ekstrakurikuler Dalam Meningkatkan Prestasi Non Akademik Siswa." *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (April 21, 2021): 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v2i1.45>.
- Tang, Kuok Ho Daniel. "Student-Centered Approach in Teaching and Learning: What Does It Really Mean?" *Acta Pedagogica Asiana* 2, no. 2 (March 28, 2023): 72–83. <https://doi.org/10.53623/apga.v2i2.218>.
- Vygotsky, L. S. *Mind in Society: Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Edited by Michael Cole, Vera John-Steiner, Sylvia Scribner, and Ellen Souberman. Harvard University Press, 1978.

- Widianto, Suheri. "Korelasi Motivasi, Fasilitas Belajar Dan Prestasi Belajar Siswa." *Annwaliyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 3, no. 1 (June 16, 2020): 47–56. <https://doi.org/10.58518/awwaliyah.v3i1.494>.
- Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. SAGE, 2009.
- Zimmerman, Barry J. "Becoming a Self-Regulated Learner: An Overview." *Theory Into Practice* 41, no. 2 (May 1, 2002): 64–70. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2).