THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANDRAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES IN SHAPING ISLAMIC CHARACTER OF ADULT LEARNERS IN THE DAUROH QOLBIYAH PROGRAM

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of andragogical principles in the learning process of adult participants in the Dauroh Qolbiyah (DQ) program. Using a qualitative approach and case study method, the research explores how adult learning strategies are applied by ustadz (teachers) and musyrif/musyrifah (mentors) in delivering spiritual content through participatory, reflective, and contextually relevant methods. The findings reveal that experience-based learning, the habituation of worship practices, and spaces for discussion and self-reflection foster intrinsic motivation, spiritual awareness, and character transformation. The contextual application of andragogy makes this program effective as a model of non-formal education that integrates cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions holistically.

Keywords: Andragogy, Adult Learning, Spiritual Transformation

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji implementasi prinsip-prinsip andragogi dalam proses pembelajaran peserta dewasa di Program Dauroh Qolbiyah. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana pendekatan pembelajaran orang dewasa diterapkan oleh para ustadz dan musyrif/ah dalam menyampaikan materi spiritual secara partisipatif, reflektif, dan relevan dengan kehidupan peserta. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran berbasis pengalaman, pembiasaan ibadah, serta ruang untuk diskusi dan refleksi diri mampu menumbuhkan motivasi intrinsik, kesadaran spiritual, dan transformasi karakter peserta. Penerapan andragogi secara kontekstual menjadikan program ini efektif sebagai model pendidikan nonformal yang menyentuh aspek kognitif, afektif, dan spiritual secara terpadu.

Kata kunci: Andragogi, Pembelajaran Orang Dewasa, Transformasi Spiritual

INTRODUCTION

Education serves not only to transfer knowledge, but also to shape character, refine personality, and cultivate spiritual awareness. In today's society, marked by moral, social, and existential challenges, the need for education that touches the inner dimension of human life is increasingly vital. Spiritual education is one avenue through which individuals reconnect with divine values, inner peace, and a meaningful life direction. Beyond formal channels, spiritual education has also evolved into voluntary, flexible, and transformative non-formal formats. As

noted by Suraji (2021), spirituality plays a central role in character development, helping learners comprehend their divine origin and purpose in life.

One such form of non-formal spiritual education is the Dauroh Qolbiyah (DQ) program, which emphasizes purification of the heart and the strengthening of one's relationship with God. Designed for adults, this program focuses on spiritual reinforcement and self-control through activities such as remembrance of God (dhikr), Qur'anic contemplation (tadabbur), monotheism studies (aqidah), and emotional and intention-based development. Given the diverse adult backgrounds of the participants, the pedagogical approach of ustadz and musyrif(ah) is crucial. They must deliver content in ways that are emotionally resonant, consciousness-raising, and aligned with andragogical principles.

Unlike pedagogy, andragogy emphasizes learning based on relevance, experience, and self-direction. Adults tend to be internally motivated, drawing from life experience and immediate applicability. Therefore, spiritual educators in programs like DQ are encouraged to use participatory, reflective, and transformative methods. Studies by Yahya et al. (2023) and Waspodo (2009) affirm that applying andragogical principles in non-formal settings increases emotional engagement and intrinsic motivation.

In Islamic tradition, prophetic education of Rasulullah SAW embodies andragogical values : dialogue, empathy, contextualization, and respect for the learner's background. As noted by Nofriana and Fitriani (2023), Islamic andragogy emphasizes awakening the soul (tasywīq), exemplary conduct, and intentionality in spiritual learning. However, few studies have explored the instructional methods used in the Dauroh Qolbiyah program from an adult education perspective. This study seeks to fill that gap by investigating how andragogical principles are implemented in this context and how they impact participants' spiritual transformation.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to investigate the learning process in the DQ program through the lens of andragogy and participant spiritual development. The research focused on the content delivery, communication style of instructors, and the cognitive-affective responses of adult learners. The study site was purposefully selected to a religious community that consistently conducts the DQ program. Research participants included two main groups: adult learners aged 21 and above who had completed the program at least once, and ustadz/musyrif(ah) involved in the delivery.

Data Collection Techniques:
• Semi-structured interviews with ustadz/musyrif(ah) and participants to explore instructional experiences and spiritual impact.
• Participant observation during the DQ sessions to capture instructional methods and participant engagement.
• Document analysis including syllabi, daily schedules, and visual documentation.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles & Huberman, encompassing data reduction, display, and conclusion. Triangulation of sources (ustadz, learners, documents) and member checking were employed to ensure credibility. Ethical standards such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly maintained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Observation at PKBM Daarut Tauhiid
Based on field observations, the Community Learning Center (PKBM) Daarut Tauhiid in Bandung offers several core programs. The first is the Equivalency Education Program, which includes Paket A (elementary level), Paket B (junior secondary), and Paket C (senior secondary). The second is the Spiritual-Based Life Skills Program, comprising activities such as Dauroh Qolbiyah (DQ), *Akhlak Plus Wirausaha (APW), Pesantren Masa Keemasan (PMK), Program Pesantren Mahasiswa (PPM),* Private Dirosah Islamiyah, and Daarut Tauhiid Spiritual Camp. Additionally, there is also an early childhood education unit (PAUD) that includes daycare services.

Figure 1. Observation at PKBM Daarut Tauhiid

Among these, Dauroh Qolbiyah (DQ) stands out as a flagship non-formal spiritual education program under the Daarut Tauhiid Islamic Boarding School. Conducted over one month, it targets Muslim men and women aged 17 to 45, with the goal of nurturing individuals with strong monotheistic beliefs (*aqidah*), consistent and proper worship, and noble character. DQ serves as a structured spiritual alternative for adults, a demographic often underserved by formal institutions. The program is grounded in Islamic teachings to shape a generation committed to remembrance (*dzikir*), contemplation (*fikir*), and effort (*ikhtiar*). It reflects a vision aligned with the core mission of Daarut Tauhiid.

The learning model is structured into three phases (*marhalah*):
- The **first phase** includes orientation and character development through registration, participant profiling, and socialization of institutional values and regulations.
- The **second phase** comprises the core content, which includes:
  o Classroom learning (topics such as Aqidah, Fiqh, Qur'anic studies, and Heart Management)
  o Habitual practices (group prayer, voluntary fasting, *dzikir*, and charity)
  o Supplementary activities (spiritual retreats, overnight stays, outbound training, and mentoring).
- The **third phase** involves final evaluation and program closure, including learning assessments, program reviews, and a graduation ceremony.

The instructional methods used in the program are holistic and engaging. These include lectures, group discussions, case studies, self-reflection (*muhasabah*), and eclectic techniques that allow instructors to adapt their methods based on participant needs. Evaluation is conducted comprehensively across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, with instruments such as worship practice tests, Qur'an memorization checks, and direct observation by assigned mentors (*musyrif/ musyrifah*).

With its systematic, value-driven approach and supportive learning environment, the DQ program aims to cultivate resilient, ethically grounded Muslim individuals, embodied in the acronym BAKU (*Baik dan Kuat*, meaning "Good and Strong"). It addresses the increasing demand for in-depth, flexible, and spiritually oriented religious education that responds to the realities of modern adult life.

Perspective from Ustadz (Spiritual Instructors)

Interviews with instructors revealed distinct differences in teaching approaches between children and adult learners. The DQ program adopts an andragogical approach, emphasizing *self-directed learning*, where adult participants are expected to manage their own learning paths. They are more prepared, motivated, and inclined to understand not only *what* to learn but *why* and *how*.

> *"Children usually learn because they are told or feel afraid, but adult learners are different. They ask questions and initiate discussions, especially when the material relates to real-life situations. For example, why are men obligated to pray at the mosque, but not women? Children won't ask that, but adults will, because they want to truly understand, not just memorize. That's what drives their motivation."*

At the beginning of the program, participants are introduced to a *learning contract*, outlining mutual expectations, rules, and consequences. This fosters personal responsibility and accountability in the learning process.

> *"We establish a learning agreement from the start. Participants are informed about the rules and what happens if those are broken. But rather than punishing them immediately, we remind them of the agreement. It helps them internalize their responsibility in the learning journey."*

Figure 2. Interview with Ustadz and Musyrif(ah)

The ustadz also noted that adult learners bring a wealth of personal experiences into the classroom, which serves as a valuable foundation for dialogue and mutual learning.

> *"Our participants come from diverse backgrounds. Some are new to religious learning, others have prior knowledge. This affects how they absorb the material. They often compare lessons with personal experiences or previous teachings. We, as instructors, must be prepared to navigate various perspectives."*

Relevance is also key. Adult learners are most motivated when content directly relates to their lives and roles: as parents, professionals, or community members.

> *"Not everyone joins the program with the same intention. Some are genuinely curious because their religious knowledge is limited. Others come out of obligation. But over time, they realize the content is relevant to their lives. It just takes the right approach to awaken that awareness."*

DQ also encourages *problem-centered learning*. Classes are designed to stimulate critical thinking through real-world issues.

> *"To make lessons come alive, we raise questions like: why is smoking forbidden in Islam? We present various logical viewpoints and encourage participants to discuss them. They're not passive recipients, they're thinkers and problem-solvers."*

Perspective from Musyrif/ Musyrifah (Mentors)
The mentors (*musyrif/musyrifah*) play a critical role in facilitating both the formal and personal aspects of the learning experience. While their role might appear as traditional supervision, their approach in fact supports *self-directed learning*, encouraging internalization of values rather than mere compliance.

> *"Our role goes beyond classroom supervision. We support participants spiritually and personally by monitoring daily worship, habits, and how they implement what they've learned. Our guidance is not only cognitive but also character-based."*

They must also adapt to the *diverse personalities and needs* of adult learners, often switching between roles as teachers, guardians, and friends.

> *"One of our biggest challenges is the wide range of personalities. You can't treat everyone the same way. Sometimes you have to be a teacher giving direction, sometimes a parent offering kind advice, and at other times, a friend who simply listens."*

Figure 3. Daily Mentoring with Musyrif(ah)

Reflections from Participants (Santri)

Participant interviews revealed significant personal transformation. The repetition of religious practices during the program evolved into internal habits and a growing sense of spiritual discipline, an indicator of self-directed learning in practice.

> *"Since joining DQ, worship has become easier. I pray with intention now, and it's become a habit. I pray on time and in congregation. I feel less lazy and more consistent. It all starts with small steps, from myself."*

Participants also reported spiritual *readiness and motivation* emerging from within, not imposed externally.

> *"I've started reading the Qur'an again, something I hadn't done in a long time. I've also begun performing night prayers. Waking up used to be hard, but now I'm used to it. I feel the need to change starting with myself."*

They noted a deeper understanding of Islamic principles (*aqidah*), recognizing divine will and providence as sources of strength.

> *"After learning about tauhid, I've become more confident in Islam. I now believe that sustenance is already decreed. My understanding of religion has grown. Before, it was very limited."*

Lastly, the *social learning environment* fostered moral support and meaningful interaction, which enhanced their personal growth.

"I've learned to be more tolerant with others from different backgrounds. We support one another. The ustadz and fellow participants encourage me to stay on the right path and not fall back into bad habits."

Figure 4. *Santri* (participants) share their knowledge to others

Discussion

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it is evident that the Dauroh Qolbiyah (DQ) Program at PKBM Daarut Tauhiid Bandung has effectively implemented the principles of andragogy in its learning model. The program is consciously designed to address the specific needs of adult learners, who come with diverse backgrounds, life experiences, and varying motivations. This is reflected in a learning structure that is oriented toward the participants' real-life spiritual and social needs, and an approach that emphasizes active participation and personal reflection.

Learning Based on Life Relevance and Learner Needs (Need to Know & Readiness to Learn)

One of the core tenets of andragogy is that adult learners engage best when they perceive the learning as relevant to their lives. In interviews, ustadz noted that adult learners tend to be more inquisitive and eager to discuss, particularly when lessons touch on real-life issues. As one ustadz explained:

"Children tend to learn because they are told to or because they are afraid. But adult learners are different. They often ask questions and engage in discussions, especially when the topic relates to something they experience in their daily lives."

This reinforces Knowles' (2015) assertion that adult education becomes effective when learners can see a direct connection between what they learn and the challenges they face in real life.

Experience as a Source of Learning (Learners' Experience)

Participant experience is another crucial element in adult learning. The ustadz highlighted the varied backgrounds of the learners from those new to religious knowledge to those with a stronger foundation. This diversity demands pedagogical flexibility and openness to multiple perspectives:

"Sometimes they compare the lesson with their personal experiences or something they've heard before. So we, as instructors, must be ready to handle diverse viewpoints."

This aligns with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which positions personal experience as a central foundation in the learning process for adults.

Self-Directed Learning

DQ places strong emphasis on *self-directed learning*, a cornerstone of andragogical theory. From the outset, learners are invited to engage in *learning contracts*, in which they are made aware of expectations, rules, and consequences:

> *"At the beginning of the program, we establish a mutual agreement, a learning contract. Learners are told about the rules and their consequences. If someone breaks them, we don't punish immediately, we remind them of the agreement."*

This strategy encourages personal responsibility and reflective engagement with the learning process, consistent with Garrison's (1997) view that self-directed learning involves the learner's ability to motivate themselves and evaluate their learning meaningfully.

Readiness to Learn Based on Life Transitions

An adult's readiness to learn is often linked to life roles and developmental tasks. Some participants joined the program out of intrinsic motivation, while others came only later to appreciate its value. As one ustadz explained:

> *"Not all participants start with the same motivation, but with the right approach, they begin to realize its importance."*

This illustrates that the program succeeds in gradually cultivating learner readiness, as emphasized in Knowles' (2015) model.

Problem-Centered Orientation

Adult education is more effective when focused on real-life problem-solving rather than rote memorization. In DQ, instructors actively engage participants in critical thinking and collaborative exploration:

> *"To make the learning more dynamic, we invite learners to think critically. For example, we discuss issues like the ruling on smoking in Islam. We present various viewpoints and let them share theirs. They're involved in the problem-solving process, not just passive recipients."*

This supports Knowles' principle that adults prefer learning experiences that help them solve problems over those that merely deliver abstract concepts.

Internal Motivation as the Primary Driver

Adult learners are generally driven by *internal motivation* rather than external pressure. Interview results revealed many participants experienced deep personal transformation—motivated not by obligation, but by inner awakening and habituation:

> *"Now I pray on time and in congregation. The laziness is gone. I've become more disciplined and consistent."*

Such testimonies affirm that *intrinsic motivation* grows when learning is meaningful and connects with the learner's spiritual goals and personal journey.

The Holistic Role of Musyrif/ Musyrifah

Another key element is the holistic role of the *mentors (musyrif/musyrifah)*, who not only guide the technical aspects of learning but also offer personal support. As one mentor shared:

> *"We help monitor their daily worship, routines, and how they implement what they've learned. Our guidance is comprehensive—not just cognitive, but also character and habit formation."*

This highlights the program's integration of *cognitive, affective, and psychomotor* aspects of learning, aligned with Islamic values and principles of holistic adult education.

The instructional approach adopted in the Dauroh Qolbiyah Program demonstrates a full and integrated application of andragogical principles. Learning is relevant, participatory, experience-based, and oriented toward self-transformation. This reinforces DQ not only as a venue for strengthening religious knowledge but also as a transformative medium for *character development and spiritual empowerment*, one that deeply engages the adult learner's inner life and existential journey.

Figure 5. Graduation Day

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings derived from observation and interviews, it can be concluded that the Dauroh Qolbiyah Program at PKBM Daarut Tauhiid has successfully and comprehensively implemented the core principles of andragogy in its learning process. The instructional design is intentionally tailored to align with the real-life contexts of adult learners, employing an approach centered on problem-solving, experiential learning, and self-directed responsibility. Participants are given space to engage in meaningful discussions, reflect on their personal experiences, and participate emotionally and spiritually in the learning journey.

The use of learning contracts, the habituation of religious practices, and dialogical methods of instruction serve as tangible indicators of andragogical practice. The roles of ustadz and musyrif/musyrifah as facilitators further enhance a participatory and supportive learning environment, fostering personal transformation. The emergence of intrinsic motivation among learners, as well as notable changes in behavior and spiritual awarenessdemonstrates the

effectiveness of this approach in shaping individuals who are not only cognitively informed, but also ethically grounded and socially responsible.

Therefore, the Dauroh Qolbiyah Program stands as a model of spiritually grounded non-formal education that contextually and holistically applies andragogical principles to adult learning. Its sustained impact serves as empirical support for the validity of andragogical theories in real-world educational practice and contributes meaningfully to the discourse on adult spiritual education.

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