



Learning Philosophy at Pesantren: A Study of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah Malang

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Abstract

The idea of a pesantren that accommodates philosophy in its curriculum seems to be a strange one still. The data in Direktorat Madrasah Diniyah dan Pondok Pesantren (The Directorate of Islamic Education and Pesantren) doesn't mention a kind of such pesantren whatsoever. The existence of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah changes that impression, so it is important to reveal the background of this pesantren and how philosophy is taught in it. To fulfill these goals, this research is designed to be qualitative that collects its data by observations, interviews and documentations and analyzes them by using Miles and Hubermann's technique. This research found that Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah became so accommodative to philosophy because it was originally a discussion group that evolved to be a pesantren. Philosophy was taught there by using three methods inspired by Qur'anic verses 96:1-5. First, the bandongan teaching method through Arabic philosophical texts. Second, the discussion method comprises weekly discussion and accidental discussion. Third, the learning-through-writing method which has already become a cultural habit there due to the exemplary of the kiai, the proliferation of social media, and the more affordable printing costs.

Abstrak:

Ide tentang pesantren yang memasukkan kurikulum filsafat ternyata masih asing di Indonesia. Data di direktorat pendidikan diniyah dan pondok pesantren tidak menyebut satupun pesantren demikian. Munculnya Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah mengubah hal itu. Oleh Karena itu, kiranya penting mengungkap latar belakang berdirinya pesantren ini dan bagaimana filsafat diajarkan di situ. Untuk memenuhi tujuan tersebut, penelitian ini didesain sebagai penelitian kualitatif yang data-datanya digali melalui observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi dan analisisnya menggunakan teknik Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian ini menyatakan bahwa Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah bisa sedemikian akomodatif terhadap filsafat karena awalnya ia adalah sebuah kelompok diskusi yang kemudian berevolusi menjadi pesantren. Ilmu filsafat diajarkan di pesantren tersebut dengan menggunakan tiga metode berdasarkan Surat Al-Alaq 1-5. Pertama, metode pengajian bandongan terhadap kitab kefilafatan. Kedua, metode diskusi yang terdiri dari diskusi rutin dan diskusi aksidental. Ketiga, metode menulis yang tradisinya di pesantren tersebut muncul karena keteladanan pengasuh, maraknya media sosial, dan biaya percetakan yang lebih terjangkau.

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A. Introduction

In a sub-district of Malang Regency, there is a pesantren that offers an intensive study of philosophy. Philosophy is not merely a complementary material but serves as the core material taught, discussed, debated, and analyzed

by its students. This remarkable pesantren is none other than Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah.

Throughout the examination of classical Islamic literatures (*kitab kuning*) taught in pesantrens, philosophy is often viewed as a discipline to be shunned and avoided. It is considered as a deviant doctrine that should not be studied by or taught to the students. Key literatures such as *Hāsyiyah al-Dasūqī 'alā Syarh Umm al-Barāhīn* (Al-Sanūsī, 2015, p. 19), *Kifāyah al-'Awāmm* (Al-Fuḍālī, 2007), *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (A. Hāmid M. ibn M. Al-Ghazālī, 2011, p. 23) and others, explicitly mention strict prohibitions against studying philosophy. Even in the standard logic book in pesantrens, *Sullam al-Munawraq*, a similar prohibition is discreetly inserted in its final section (Al-Damanhūrī, 2013, pp. 52–53).

As time goes by, with the adoption of modern educational system in pesantrens, many pesantren's alumni pursued higher education at universities. Some pesantrens have also started to establish their own universities. At this point, an extensive interaction started between the pesantren community and the field of philosophy, as philosophy becomes required course for all university students. However, despite these developments, pesantrens themselves continue to maintain their stance of keeping philosophy away from their internal curriculum. Until now, philosophy remains an excluded discipline within pesantrens, even though many of its senior students independently study this subject or explore it through sources outside the pesantren environment.

The perception of pesantren community towards philosophy is examined by Naili Mufidah (Mufidah, 2009). Focusing on Pesantren Al-Islam Lamongan, Naili Mufidah found that the *kiai* (religious leader) in the pesantren had a positive perception of philosophy, contrary to the standard teachings of pesantren or the *kitab kuning*. This is probably because of the fact that the *kiai* himself was a graduate of the Philosophy Department of Gadjah Mada University. However, despite this positive perception, philosophy did not become an internal subject in the pesantren, it was considered as included in other subjects or incorporated within the overall curriculum as part of ethical education.

Some other pesantrens have also started to adopt a model of critical thinking and freedom of thought. The Ma'had Aly of Pesantren Sukorejo is an example. The students there are introduced to Islamic thoughts that are outside the standard teachings of sciences in pesantren. Its monthly newsletter, *Tanwirul Afkar*, publishes the thoughts of the students which reflect a free way of thinking (Gazali & Malik, 2009). However, the Ma'had Aly is known as a pesantren whose scientific concentration is in the field of Jurisprudence. This pesantren introduces freedom of thought and a model of critical thinking by using the

Kitab Kuning, which varies across schools of thought, thereby broadening the horizons of its students and paving the way for creative thoughts in the fields of Jurisprudence and Islamic Theology. Thus, this pesantren cannot be categorized as a pesantren whose scientific concentration is in the field of Philosophy, but is still included in the typology of Fiqh Pesantren which has been widely known so far. This stance, as given by the young *kiai* of Pesantren Al-Islah and the students at Ma'had Aly of Pesantren Sukorejo, seems to be a common stance among the younger generation of the pesantren community. This is because the younger generation of pesantren is undergoing a transformation as they enter universities in droves, either in Indonesia or abroad. This new generation is characterized by openness, inclusiveness, nationalism, and accommodation towards modernity (Ali, 2008, pp. 82–90).

Statistical data on pesantrens provided by PDPP (*Pangkalan Data Pondok Pesantren*, Database of Pesantrens) shows that there are no graphs showing the existence of pesantren that concentrate in the field of Philosophy. So far, of the 25,938 pesantrens in Indonesia, there are 2810 pesantrens (10.83%) that concentrate in the field of Aqidah/Tawhid, 4486 pesantrens (17.29%) the field of Jurisprudence/Ushul Fiqh, 660 pesantrens (2.54%) in the field of Tasawwuf, 507 pesantrens (1.95%) in the field of Tafsir, 474 pesantrens (1.82%) in the field of Hadith, 1361 pesantrens (5.24%) in the field of *Tahfidhul Qur'an* or Qur'an memorization, 52 pesantrens (0.20%) in the field of *Hisab/Falak* or practical astronomy, 1369 pesantren (5.27%) in the field of Nahwu/Sharaf, 814 pesantrens (3.13%) in educating novice ulama/ustaz, and 324 pesantrens (1.24%) in the field of Arabic Language. These data are only 49.58% (12,857) of the total pesantren in Indonesia. The rest of them is unclear or unidentified (Ditpdpontren Kemenag RI, 2019). The incompleteness of the data provided by PDPP is very unfortunate, because there are so many pesantrens whose field concentration is not known. However, it can be hypothesized that the statistical distribution of concentration in the pesantren field follows what is commonly seen or heard in Indonesia. Pesantrens whose concentration is in the field of Philosophy are almost unheard of.

Thus, the establishment of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah has reversed the negative conceptions about philosophy and given a new colour to pesantren in general. This pesantren seems to ignore all the prohibitions by the *kitab kuning* as mentioned above and makes philosophy as its leading brand. This makes Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah a unique institution, even in the context of the pesantren community itself. While previously pesantren tended to avoid philosophy in their educational process, Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah, on the contrary, embraced it as its educational journey.

Inspired by the discovery of the uniqueness of this pesantren, I am intrigued to do research on it. The significance of researching it lies in uncovering the existence of a pesantren that incorporates the study of philosophy within its curriculum. Consequently, it is possible that this pesantren will make a substantial contribution to enrich the colours of pesantren in Indonesia. Several prior studies on Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah were conducted to delve into this unique aspect. In his master's thesis, Ach Faisol Arifin (2020) explored the teaching of theology within the pesantren and the process of its students' internalization of Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah values, resulting in impacts on their religious disposition, such as fervent enthusiasm for religious sciences, maturity in life, rationality, and tolerance towards differing religious perspectives. Another study by Abdullah et al. (2022) highlighted the integration of the pesantren with a college known as Al-Farabi College of Philosophy (*Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Al-Farabi*).

The focus of this research revolves around the background of the founding of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah in Malang, as revealed by its founder, and how the study of philosophy is taught to its students. With this focus, it is hoped that this research can contribute to the pesantren study in general, as well as contribute to the study of philosophy in the Indonesian context. Philosophy is no longer confined only to universities, Christian Theological Seminaries, study groups, NGOs, or philosophical foundations such as the Rausyan Fikr Foundation; rather, it needs to include one more institution, namely Pesantren.

B. Methods

This research is a field study, adopting a qualitative approach. It aims to objectively capture a particular reality without any researcher intervention, as well as to uncover the meanings and uniqueness of a phenomenon. The data used here consist of two types. *Firstly*, primary data obtained directly from various sources related to the object under study, including interviews, observations or collection of documents, videos or audio recordings. *Secondly*, secondary data refers to any form of data indirectly related to the object under study but highly relevant to it.

Data is gathered through observation, interviews and documentation. The collected documents serve not only to supplement the information obtained through observation and interviews but also to reinforce and support the collected data. By employing this method, it is expected to achieve a process of triangulation, where the data mutually reinforce and strengthen the findings of this research (Raco, 2010, p. 110; Sugiyono, 2012, pp. 82–83). The data analysis technique employed here follows the model proposed by Miles and Huberman

(Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 10–11), which divides the qualitative data analysis into three stages: 1) data reduction; 2) data display; and 3) conclusion drawing and verification. The process of drawing conclusions begins from the early stage of data collection and is continuously tested or verified through further data exploration throughout the research process.

These three stages of data analysis can be flexibly applied. It means that all three stages can be conducted either when the data collection is completed (data saturation) or even while the data collection process is still ongoing. If the gathered data is not yet completed, the process of drawing conclusions is done tentatively and subject to change as new findings emerge that verify or modify the temporary conclusions.

C. Results and Discussions

1. The Profile of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah

Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah was founded by Achmad Dhofir Zuhri who came from Brongkal Village, Pagelaran, Malang Regency. This young kiai is affectionately called Pak Dhofir. He received his Islamic education in Pesantren Nurul Jadid Paiton, Probolinggo. Later, he pursued higher education at the Driyarkara College of Philosophy (STF, *Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Driyarkara*). Pak Dhofir is known as a unique and multitalented figure. He possesses academic intellectual abilities that have gained recognition among the modern academic circles. Additionally, he possesses effective communication skills, characterized by simplicity and a sense of humor, which make him relatable to be a speaker to the general public and, consequently, is frequently invited to be a speaker at social-religious events. Personally, he is known for his humility and patience. His style of interacting with his students is relaxed, as if he is not trying to maintain a distance between himself and his students. Even to this day, his students still address him 'Mas' or 'Pak', reflecting the absence of such distance. Therefore, jokes between him and his students are a common sight.

Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah was established on September 28, 2011. Since 2018, this date has been commemorated as the annual anniversary of the pesantren. Apparently, the choice of this date as the birthday of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah was due to it coinciding with the day when the first *mukim* student existed (A. Khoironnafis, personal communication, December 14, 2022). Therefore, the establishment of this pesantren occurred unintentionally because, as Pak Dhofir himself admits, he initially had no intention of founding a pesantren. Through Pak Dhofir's interactions with university students in Malang regency and the wider community, there were one or two individuals who sought permission to stay at his house to receive

intensive learning from him. Because at the time Pak Dhofir was still renting a house, he placed these early students in a room in his rented house, where study sessions and discussion activities took place. At this stage, the seeds of the pesantren were already beginning to root.

Furthermore, under Pak Dhofir's skillful guidance, study of philosophy becomes approachable and easily digestible. As mentioned in Darmawati H's research, some pesantren communities tend to avoid philosophy because it is considered as too difficult to comprehend (Darmawati H, 2021). However, this is not the case for the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah. Thanks to Pak Dhofir's rhetorical abilities and communication style, the philosophical ideas became far from difficult or complicated. This was acknowledged by one of his students who is now an alumnus (R. Asy'ari, personal communication, January 23, 2023):

The most obvious thing from studying philosophy at our pesantren was how Mas Dhofir was able to present a study of philosophy that is simple, supple, nutritious, and has addictive effects on the participants. Unsurprisingly, even though there were very few *mukim* students in the pesantren, more than 30-60 people from various backgrounds could attend the study. Most of them were university students, but there were also other pesantren students and young people willing to share their thoughts on more than just the usual things discussed by people in general. Furthermore, as a teacher of philosophical studies, Mas Dhofir was able to eliminate the cult of certain figures, for example, Karl Marx. In fact, [he was] completely eliminating the 'awesomeness' of philosophy that has so far inhabited the minds of those who initially wanted to study philosophy. Yes, he taught philosophy in a fun and happy way.

Gus Dhofir is aware that pesantren is an institution deeply rooted in this country. Its contributions to this country have been evident throughout history. Therefore, pesantren always support the existence of the Republic of Indonesia. With this in mind, Pak Dhofir believes that the pesantren he founded must play a role in maintaining the meeting point between religion and the state. As a result, one of the rules of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah is: "Whatever is mandated by religion and the state is mandatory for the students of this pesantren. Whatever is prohibited by religion and the state is also prohibited for the students of this pesantren." In addition, students are required to practice the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, such as believing in blessings (*keberkahan*), having confidence on oneself (*al-i'timād bi an-nafs*), cherishing knowledge, and engaging only in activities that are beneficial and rooted in knowledge. Through all of this, it is expected that the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah will contribute not only to Indonesia but also to the world, not only to religion but also to the state and nation (A. D. Zuhri,

personal communication, December 12, 2022; Zuhri, 2018).

The students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah can be classified into two categories, namely “santri mukim” (resident students) and “santri kalong” (non-resident students). As implied by their names, “santri mukim” refers to students who reside within the pesantren and participate in its daily activities. On the other hand, “santri kalong” which literally means bat students is a term used to describe students who do not reside at the pesantren but still engage in various pesantren-related activities, such as *kitab kuning* learning, *madrasah diniyah* (religious schooling), formal schools or specific courses (Khulusinniyah & Wassalwa, 2017; Saimima & Dhuhani, 2021).

Students who reside (*santri mukim*) at Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah primarily come from distant regions, such as Kalimantan, Lombok, Sulawesi, Madura, or areas of Java outside Malang Regency. Some of these santris also pursue higher education in nearby universities, such as Raden Rahmat University, STAI Ibnu Sina (Ibnu Sina Islamic College), or IAI Al-Qolam (Al-Qolam Islamic Institute). Others engage in employment while residing in pesantren, and a few of them opt a full residing without external activities. (A. H. Malik, personal communication, January 26, 2023) As for the *santri kalong*, they are typically university students in Malang City, such as UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim (National Islamic University Maulana Malik Ibrahim) and Universitas Islam Malang (Islamic University of Malang) or other universities. These non-resident santris (*santri kalong*) consist of several individuals whose homes are not far from the pesantren. In addition, all female students studying at the pesantren fall under *santri kalong* category, because until now there is no dormitory designated for female students (H. Zany, personal communication, December 14, 2022).

2. Learning Philosophy at Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah

As conveyed by Pak Dhofir, the learning method applied at Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah consists of three methods plus one (3 + 1). The application of these three methods is inspired by the Qur'anic verses, Al-'Alaq 1-5. The intended learning method is: (1) reading, in accordance with the first verse; (2) discuss, in accordance with the third verse; (3) writing, in accordance with the fourth verse; and one more: (4) the belief in the concept of blessings (*keberkahan*). However, according to Pak Dhofir, the fourth method need not be explicitly mentioned (A. D. Zuhri, personal communication, December 12, 2022).

The concept of blessings is deeply attached to the world of pesantren. While this concept finds its roots in the Qur'an and hadith, the practical

doctrine is found in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, which emphasizes the importance of respecting knowledge and its experts. This teaching becomes local wisdom in pesantren and is referred to by a specific name, *ngalap berkah*, which literally translates as seeking blessings. The practice of *ngalap berkah* takes various forms, such as kissing the hand of a teacher, serving or dedicating oneself to the teacher, and *mulāzamah* or studying under the guidance of a teacher until completion (Andriani, 2020).

For the purpose of this inquiry, the learning method mentioned by Pak Dhofir above was slightly modified into three: 1) *pengajian* (learning sessions), 2) discussion, and 3) writing. The fourth method is ignored because it does not stand alone and can be combined with the other three methods at once. In other words, the belief in the existence of blessings is inseparable from the learning method in the form of *pengajian*, discussion and writing themselves. This belief can be seen as the spirit or essence that animates the three aforementioned methods, rather than a distinct conceptual entity.



Picture 1: learning methods based on sura Al-Alaq 1-5

a. *Pengajian* (Study Sessions)

The teaching and learning process in pesantren differs significantly from that of formal schools. It is not conducted in a classical manner, which involves hierarchical progressions based on grade levels. In formal schools, the learning materials are designed to achieve specific competences for students and must be completed in no longer than a year. In contrast, in pesantren, the learning materials revolve around the study of certain classical religious texts (*kitab kuning*) without any predetermined time frame. This kind of study is called *pengajian kitab kuning*. The essential aspect is the completion of the designated religious texts, indicating the conclusion of the learning process. Therefore, the duration of the learning process depends on the thickness and extent of the texts being studied.

In pesantren, there are two classic text-based teaching and learning methods known as *bandongan* and *sorogan*. The *bandongan* method entails a

collective learning activity centered around the *kitab kuning*. A teacher or *kiai* plays an active role by reading, translating, and explaining the contents of the *kitab kuning* in front of a number of students. The students, in turn, adopt a passive stance as they listen attentively to the teacher's explanations and take notes. Conversely, the *sorogan* method is also rooted in the *kitab kuning*-based learning, but it encourages active participation from the students. Here, the students themselves read and translate the *kitab kuning* in front of their teacher or *kiai* who is in charge of assessing and correcting the students' reading or translation. So both *kiai* and the students are active in this method, according to their respective roles and functions (Kamal, 2020).

The study of the classical religious texts at Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah bears similarities to other pesantrens. It conducts sessions on various subjects, such as *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *kalam* (Islamic theology) or *tasawuf* (Islamic mysticism). However, the distinguishing feature of this pesantren lies in the study of philosophical texts. This distinctiveness arises from the pesantren's self-proclaimed identity as an institution that accommodates philosophy.

The philosophical texts studied in *bandongan* at this pesantren consist of several types. The *first* type includes books on logic or *mantik*. A mandatory text on this field is *As-Sullam al-Munawraq* by Al-Akhḍarī, along with its commentary *Īdāḥ al-Mubham* by Aḥmad ad-Damanhūrī. As in many other pesantrens, this text is considered essential for learning logic because it is composed in the form of *nazam* (poetry,) making it easier to memorize. In order to gain comprehensive understanding and insight into its contents, the commentary written by Ad-Damanhūrī is also studied. The study of this text primarily uses three methods: *bandongan*, discussion and book writing (A. Khoironnafis, personal communication, December 14, 2022). Details on how this text was discussed and written will be elaborated in the next section.

For the need for enriching the study of logic, several other books are also taught, although not as part of the regular curriculum, but are taught only once. Pak Dhofir once recited *Mantiq al-Mashriqiyyīn* authored by Abū 'Āli ibn Sinā in *bandongan* during the month of Ramadan. In addition to this, other books on logic like *Miḥakk al-Nazar* and *Al-Qiṣṭās al-Mustaqīm* by Al-Ghazālī, as well as *Al-Risālah al-Shamsiyyah* by Najm ad-Dīn al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī, has also been taught in *bandongan* by Ahmad Khoiron Nafis as a supplementary texts, not as part of the regular study.

The study of logic garnered significant enthusiasm among the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah. Adnan Fakih, an alumnus who was actively engaged in learning logic during his time at the pesantren, said: (A.

Faqih, personal communication, November 14, 2022)

My friends and I were very serious at studying and discussing logic books that we read, especially *Al-Sullam al-Munawraq* we studied under the guidance of our teacher. One of the motivations that drove us to enthusiastically study it was the words of Imam Al-Ghazālī that those who do not understand logic cannot be trusted with their knowledge.

What Adnan Faqih meant by Al-Ghazālī's words quoted above is his very famous slogan at the beginning of *Al-Mustaṣfā* (A. Ḥāmid M. ibn M. Al-Ghazālī, 2009, p. 15).

The second type of philosophical texts taught intensively in *bandongan* at this pesantren are diverse in their topics, but all fall within the scope of philosophy. One that is highly popular amongst the students is the study of *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* by Al-Ghazālī dan *Tahātuf at-Tahāfut* by Ibn Rushd. The first book, written by Al-Ghazālī, serves as a rebuttal to philosophers' 20 views, which he considers as contrary to the theological principles in Islamic teachings (*uṣūl ad-dīn*). Al-Ghazālī stated (A. ḥāmid M. ibn M. Al-Ghazālī, 2000, pp. 5–7):

Know that the differences in the views of philosophers from other groups are of three types [...]. *Third*, is a view that contradicts religious principles, such as views on the createdness of nature, the attributes of God, and the teachings of bodily resurrection; these are all denied by philosophers. It is with regard to such matters that the views of philosophers must be shown to be wrong.

The second book, *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*, written by Ibn Rushd as a direct refutation to Al-Ghazālī's work mentioned above. Ibn Rushd was motivated to write this refutation because, in his view, instead of giving a refutation as Al-Ghazālī wanted, he expanded the further misunderstanding toward philosophy in general. Ibn Rushd believed that what Al-Ghazālī did above was dangerous both for philosophy and for the religion he wanted to defend. In Ibn Rushd's own words (Ibn Rushd, 1969, pp. 52–53):

That is why the demonstrations should only be presented in demonstrative books. This is because if the demonstrations are only found in demonstration books, only those who understand the art of demonstration argument can access them. However, if it is presented in books other than demonstrative ones, such as poetic, rhetorical and dialectical books, as done by Abū Ḥāmid [al-Ghazālī], that becomes dangerous for religion and philosophy, even though the intentions are good [...] And what should be done by the Islamic religious leaders is to prevent the Muslims from Al-Ghazālī's books containing this subject, except for those who are classified as scholars. Similarly, the religious leaders should not allow non-experts to read

demonstrative books, even though the danger they cause is relatively milder.

In practice, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* and *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut* are not merely studied in *bandongan* but are further explored through analysis and written translations, which is why the study of these two books becomes highly enjoyable for the students. Apart from the required exploration of the meanings and meanings within the two books, the students are also required to discuss, debate and argue on the meanings and understandings they gain while studying them. (A. Fauzy, personal communication, December 12, 2022) Gus Dhofir indeed encouraged his students to discuss the philosophical thoughts contained in these two books. Regarding the students' discussion of these two books at Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah, a more detailed explanation will be provided in the next section.

Another notable book on philosophy taught in *bandongan* at this pesantren is *Kitāb al-Jam' bayn Ra'yay al-ḥakīmāy* by Al-Fārābī. This book describes Al-Fārābī's efforts to find common ground between the two greatest Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, regarding 13 key topics. With his profound understanding of both philosophers' works, Al-Fārābī's refuted the erroneous views of his contemporaries who thought that there were contradictions between the views of these two figures (Al-Fārābī, 1986). Another important book is *Faṣl al-Maqāl fī mā bayn al-Ḥikmah wa asy-Syarī'ah min al-Ittiṣāl*, or often abbreviated *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, by Ibn Rushd. This book was written to reassure students of philosophy – after receiving strong attacks from Al-Ghazālī – that there is no conflict between philosophy and religion. In fact, said Ibn Rushd, religion actually encourages Muslims to engage in philosophical studies. The words highly famous from this book are that "philosophy and religion are suckling brothers" (Ibn Rushd, 1969, p. 67). This book is taught in the fasting month.

Another book taught in *bandongan* during the fasting month is *Al-Risālah al-Ladunniyyah* by Al-Ghazālī. Through this book, Al-Ghazālī tried to prove the existence of a knowledge he called *ladunnī* or –borrowing the term used by Suhrawardī Maqtul – *ḥuḍūrī* knowledge. The conventional type of knowledge, obtained through the learning process, is called *muktasab* knowledge. On the other hand, *ladunnī* knowledge is completely different because the process of acquiring it is not through studying, reading books or discourse, but rather "directly pierced by God into the human heart" without the process mentioned earlier. According to Al-Ghazālī, this is the knowledge of the prophets, later inherited by the saints (A. Ḥāmid M. ibn M. Al-Ghazālī, 1910). This book is indeed trying to prove sufistic knowledge, but its contents are classified as philosophical. Hence, studying this book in

bandongan can be considered as a study of the book of philosophy.

Other work of Al-Ghazālī not explicitly entitled philosophy but contents philosophical elements is *Al-Munqiz min al-Ḍalāl*. This book is Al-Ghazālī's intellectual autobiography from his youth until his return from *uzlah* (seclusion) and resumed teaching at the madrasah (A. ḥamid M. ibn M. Al-Ghazālī, 2015). This book was taught in *bandongan* by Pak Dhofir during the fasting month as well. The students then discussed the book and even translated it into a complete book.

Another significant book is *Muqaddimah* by Ibn Khaldūn. This book is actually the introductory part of a large book titled *Dīwān al-Mubtada wa al-Khabar fī Tārīkh al-'Arab wa al-Barbar wa Man 'Āṣarahum min Żawī al-Sya'n al-Akbar*. As can be seen from the full title, as a whole this book is actually a chronological history book (Khaldūn, 2001). However, due to its substantial and highly original content, this introductory part is more widely known. It is this originality of the introductory part that makes Ibn Khaldūn lined up as a philosopher of history. Muḥammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī in his dissertation even concluded that Ibn Khaldūn had created a new science which he called "the science of civilization" (*'ilm al-'imrān*), so that he deserves to be the father of modern historical science because he has laid the foundation for this science in its further development (Al-Jābirī, 1994, pp. 103–111). At Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah, this book is taught in *bandongan* to the students with the aim that they gain historical awareness akin to Ibn Khaldūn's example.

Studying the above-mentioned books in *bandongan* does not stop solely at recitation. Some students continue with discussion activities or writing books or translations, as has been alluded to in sections above. *Bandongan* indeed has become a tradition that has taken root in Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah—as well as in all pesantrens throughout the archipelago. However, the journey doesn't stop there. Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah also nurtures learning traditions in the form of discussion and book writing. The next section will elaborate philosophical discussion activities there, followed by book writing activities in the last section.

b. Discussions

Discussion activities carried out by the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah extend across various disciplines they study. So in the field of *tafsīr* (Qur'anic exegesis), *fiqh* (jurisprudence) or *kalam* (Islamic theology), and so on, besides they learn them through *bandongan*, there are times when they discuss them. However, among all these disciplines,

philosophy is a discipline that is always discussed. The habit of discussing various scientific disciplines, especially philosophy, seems to have its roots in the origin of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah itself. As previously mentioned, this pesantren originated from a discussion group called the Avennasar Institute. The tradition continued after it transformed into Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah and became a prominent learning method in that institution.

It is important to note that discussion activities are in fact nothing new in the pesantren world. In some salaf pesantren, discussion activities are called *musyāwarah*, literally meaning discussion. The well-known pesantrens such as Al-Anwar Sarang, Al-Falah Ploso, Hidayatul Muftadi'ien Lirboyo or Mambaul Ma'arif Denanyar Jombang have long implemented *musyāwarah* and integrated it as part of the students' learning process (Hadi, 2022; Hanum, 2013; Irsyad & Makhromi, 2021; Rohman, 2017). Mostly, the topics discussed in the *musyāwarah* forum are the problems of fiqh, but sometimes this method is used to discuss other fields of science, such as *naḥw* (Arabic linguistics) or *kalam*.

The awareness of its importance as an effective learning method in pesantren communities seems because this is mentioned in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* by Az-Zarnūjī. Discussion method, which in the book is referred to as *munāẓarah* and *muṭārahah*, meaning collaborative learning among students through discussions on certain topics, considered a superior method than individual study or *muṭāla'ah* (Al-Zarnūjī, 1981, p. 104). In recent studies, some experts associate *musyāwarah* tradition in pesantrens with modern learning approaches such as *problem-based learning* (Rohman, 2017) or *critical thinking* (Fadholi, 2021; Sholeh, 2018).

Pak Dhofir himself immensely encouraged his students to engage in discussion activities. This departs from his awareness of the importance of discussions in the student's learning experience. Not only did he held regular discussions for them, but sometimes also spontaneously initiated discussions when his guests or friends visited him. It is not uncommon for him to invite some of his students to participate in discussion events outside the pesantren (R. Asy'ari, personal communication, January 23, 2023).

1) Regular Discussions

As mentioned above, Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah originated from a discussion group called Avennaser Institute. Before the establishment of this pesantren, the discussion group used to meet regularly, focusing on topics related to philosophy and Islamic thought.

Some of its members admitted that they could attend Avennaser Institute discussions and Gus Dhofir's teaching classical religious texts (*kitab kuning*) every day of the week (M. Saifi, personal communication, October 13, 2022). After the establishment of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah, the philosophical discussions continued as one of the key activities and became an important tradition there. Over time, the discussions expanded beyond philosophy and involved other fields of disciplines, such as *tafsīr muqāran* (comparative Qur'anic exegesis) and kalam (Islamic theology).

The mechanism for carrying these philosophical discussions involved the help of a designated book as guide. Each member of the discussion was required to read a certain part of the book, then one member presented the results of his or her reading, followed by collective discussion. During these discussions, sometimes debates among members occurred when differing opinions arose. A mentor, besides managing the discussion to be smooth and relevant to the topics, sometimes provoked debate to ensure that each member defended their arguments effectively. So, the discussion activities among the students felt like a vibrant and lively forum (A. Fauzy, personal communication, December 12, 2022).

Herlianto has guided the *Malam Kamis* (regular Thursday night) discussions since 2015, using the same guide book written by Pak Dhofir. The discussion mechanism used remained unchanged, following the one used by Pak Dhofir, where the members presented parts of the book in rotation. The mentor's role is organizing the discussions and sparking arguments, as Herlianto told the story (Herlianto, personal communication, January 27, 2023):

The Thursday Night discussion model at that time was strict reading, deciding which book to read together. Each sub-chapter in the book was presented by a member of the group in rotation every week. This style of presentation continued to rotate until the sub-chapters in the book all finished to be presented. Only then did the group decide to move to another book. The presentation strictly followed the content of the chosen book. So, the presenter had to explain paragraph by paragraph in the book. After the presentation, the other members were allowed to ask questions. They could ask in two models. *First*, it could be related to the understanding in the paragraphs discussed in the book. In this case, the questions could be semantic in nature, involving the context of the text. *Second*, it could be about the contents of the book or its ideas, essentially questioning the opinions put forward by the author. The presenter must defend the opinions contained in the book. This approach often led to a fierce debate.

Since 2016, the guiding book has changed to *Living Issues in*

Philosophy by Harold H. Titus, Marilyn S. Smith and Richard T. Nolan which was translated into Indonesian by H.M. Rasjidi and titled *Persoalan-persoalan Filsafat* (Titus et al., 1984). The following year, in 2018, the Thursday Night discussion began focusing on the ideas of Karl Marx. The guiding book used was Frans Magnis Suseno's book, *Pemikiran Karl Marx: Dari Sosialisme Utopis ke Perselisihan Revisionisme* (1999). In 2018, the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah began discussing postmodern philosophical thoughts, using *Cultural Studies: Teori & Praktik* by Chris Barker (Barker, 2005) as the discussion guide.

After the completion of discussing *Cultural Studies* book, Herlianto continued his master studies at UGM Yogyakarta for two years, from 2018 to 2020. During his absence, the regular Thursday Night discussion activities continued, indicating that the discussion activity had become a tradition so that the students continued to carry it out even without their mentor. The book subsequently discussed in the Thursday Night discussion was *Formasi Nalar Arab* (2014), translated by Imam Khoir from Muḥammad 'Ābid al-Jābirī's book, *Takwīn al-'Aql al-'Arabī* (Al-Jābirī, 2014). Following the completion of this book, the discussion moved on to the book of Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqāl*.

The last mentioned book is one of the most important books in the history of Islamic philosophy as it is considered a defense of philosophy against external attacks, especially from Muslim theologians like Al-Ghazālī. Basically, Ibn Rushd wrote three books to defend philosophy from external attacks: *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, *Al-Kasyf 'an Manāḥij al-Adillah*, and *Faṣl al-Maqāl*. However, so far, only the third book has been used for regular Thursday Night discussion at Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah (Habiburrahman, personal communication, December 14, 2022).

The *Critical Reading Discussion* was initiated at the request of Pak Dhofir with the aim for cultivating the students' high interest in reading and enhancing their literacy skills. To handle this task, Ahmad Khoiron Nafis was assigned by Pak Dhofir as mentor. At first, Nafis utilized a book titled *How to Read a Book: The Art of Reading and Understanding Different Kinds of Reading* by Mortimer J. Adler and Charles van Doren (Adler & Doren, 2015). However, Nafis found that this book primarily offered theoretical insights and was not suitable for the objectives of the *Critical Reading Discussion* program he envisioned. Consequently, he decided to look for another book as a guiding book that allowed the students to directly practice critical reading. His choice settled on Al-Ghazālī's book, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*.

Tahāfut al-Falāsifah is very well known in the world of Islamic Philosophy, and the fact that this pesantren was discussing the book serves as evidence of the profound philosophical essence it holds. This book is basically a book of stern critique of the views held by philosophers (A. ḥāmid M. ibn M. Al-Ghazālī, 2000). Nevertheless, as acknowledged by the author himself, this book was compiled using the method of thinking and terms commonly used by philosophers themselves (A. Ḥāmid M. ibn M. Al-Ghazālī, 2015, pp. 50–51), ensuring that its content retains philosophical value and stands as one of the most brilliant philosophical books in the history of Islamic philosophy.

Despite using *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* as the primary guidebook, students were encouraged to supplement their understanding with other relevant references. Therefore, in addition to having to read *Tahāfut al-Falasifah*, they also need to read other related books, such as Ibn Rushd's *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*. The next book studied in regular *Critical Reading Discussions* was *Falsafatunā* by Muhammad Bagir Sadr. This book also approaches philosophy thematically. As a development from the previous discussion format, the discussion of *Falsafatunā* was not limited to discussions and debates but also included translating the original Arabic text into Indonesian. So, despite discussing its contents, the students also analyzed the text by comparing it with other translations of *Falsafatunā* available, such as the edition published by Mizan (Sadr, 2014) and Rausyan Fikr Institute (Sadr, 2018), using their own understanding. Through this approach, the students were able to provide critique on several translations. The result of their translation effort *Falsafatunā* subsequently was compiled and published by Mori Publisher in June 2022 (Sadr, 2022).

Thus, this discussion activity was carried out happily and consistently by the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah, despite the topic discussed was the supposed-heavy subjects such as philosophy. Apart from the reasons mentioned above, Adnan Faqih also mentioned other reasons (A. Faqih, personal communication, November 14, 2022):

During the delivery of philosophical subjects, whether through presentation or dialogue, the discussion session is always infused with jokes typical of pesantren, making the actually-heavy subjects of philosophy enjoyable and not boring.

In 2021, the construction of the pesantren's permanent building began. As a result, the two regular discussion activities were suspended because the students actively helped the construction works, which

consumed their energy and time. However, the cessation of discussion activities does not mean that the study of philosophy has stopped, because the study sessions (*pengajian bandongan*) by Pak Dhofir still continued, albeit with less frequency than before. In addition, the students kept learning through other means, such as reading and writing. It was only recently, after the construction activities were considered 95% completed, the students gained more free time and discussion activities were resumed (H. Zaqy, personal communication, December 14, 2022).

2) Accidental Discussions

What is meant by accidental discussions here are discussion activities at Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah which are not part of regular activities. This kind of activity takes various forms, such as seminars, book reviews, or workshops. These events usually involve external speakers to serve as presenters or discussion catalyst, but it is also possible for some individuals in the pesantren to take on roles as presenters.

These events were deliberately held at Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah for the purpose of increasing the students' enthusiasm to study various subjects, including philosophy itself. Using varied and non-monotonous methods in the learning process is considered as an important strategy to increase the students' learning motivation. This strategy proves quite effective in Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah because the students are already familiar with the academic and public discussions, owing to their status as university students outside the pesantren. These Activities are usually initiated by Pak Dhofir by utilizing his connections or friends as presenters. This is understandable since Pak Dhofir himself has a fairly extensive network of friends, considering his experience studying and traveling to various places. He then used this network of friends to help him stimulate the students' interest in studying philosophy – as well as other disciplines that he found important to teach at his pesantren.

One of the earliest philosophical seminars carried out by Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah, which gained considerable attention as it involved audiences from several pesantrens, was a public discussion on *ladunni* knowledge. The seminar was titled “Halaqoh Nasional: Membedah Kitab Risalah Ladunniyah Imam Al-Ghazali dan Ijazah Ilmu Ladunni,” took place at the Malang District PCNU's hall, on April 12, 2015. Although Al-Ghazālī's book on the subject is relatively short, it clearly describes his position and stance towards the knowledge discussed. In the study of the

philosophy of science, Al-Ghazālī's stance reflects the mainstream views of classical Muslim scholars where knowledges are divided into *ḥuḍūrī* (present knowledge) and *muktasab* (acquired knowledge). Studying Al-Ghazālī's views on this matter, inevitably, provides valuable insights for the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah in the field of epistemology and philosophy of science.

Another notable public discussion organized by the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah was centered on Renè Descartes' thoughts. This activity was initiated by two senior students at the pesantren, namely Ahmad Khoiron Nafis and Herlianto. At that time, the first was researching and translating Al-Ghazālī's book, *Al-Munqiz min aḍ-Ḍalāl*, while the later is studying and translating Renè Descartes' book, *Meditations on First Philosophy*. To deepen their understanding of Descartes' ideas, a public discussion titled "Peringatan Isra'-Mi'raj: Khataman La Discourse de la Method" was held on May 12 2017, with Muhammad Al-Fayyadl as the guest speaker (A. Khoironnafis, personal communication, December 14, 2022). This discussion involved a wider audience beyond the pesantren's students. Muhammad Al-Fayyadl is a young NU intellectual who is interested in the field of philosophy and has a master's degree at the Sorbonne University in France.

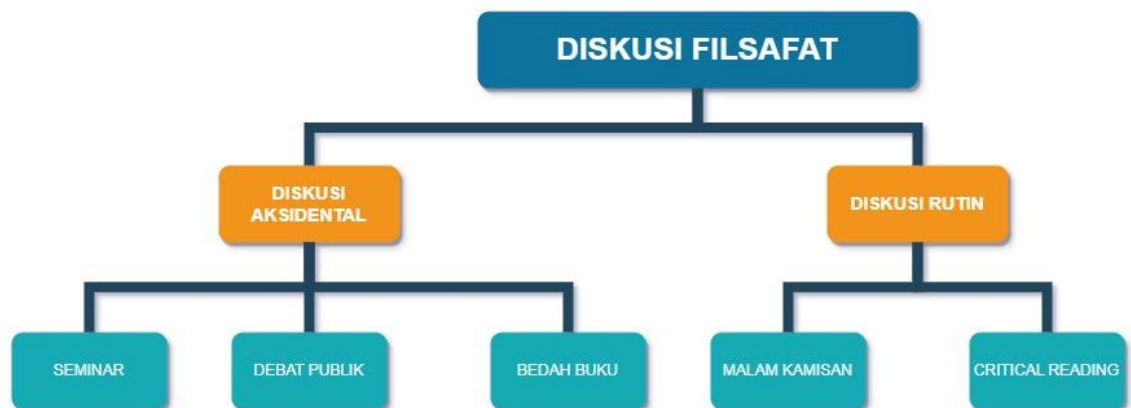
Furthermore, approximately two years later, after the translation by Herlianto and Ahmad Khoiron Nafis was completed, a public discussion was held to explore the similarities (and the influence relationship) between the two philosophers, in which Ahmad Khoiron Nafis and Herlianto themselves served as the speakers. The event is titled "*Ngaji Pemikiran: Persetubuhan Intelektual Al-Ghazali & Rene Descartes*," and took place on January 15, 2019 (A. Khoironnafis, personal communication, December 14, 2022).

One of the discussions favored by the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah was a debate-style format. This kind of discussion was held at the pesantren to stimulate their enthusiasm to engage in discussion and argue their points as a form of learning their critical thinking competency. At the end of 2017, a debate was held titled "*Debat Tahāfut al-Falāsifah dan Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*." In this event, the students were divided into two groups, one representing the side of *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* and the other representing the side of *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*. According to Heri Zenky, one of the students who was involved in the event, this kind of debate format is likely to be repeated again in the coming years to train and introduce new students to the atmosphere of philosophical debate

(H. Zaqy, personal communication, December 14, 2022).

Another philosophical discussion that is accidental in nature is the public book reviews. It can be said that book review events are the most frequent public discussions held at the pesantren. Such discussions vary in topics, depending on the book being reviewed, but there have been several occasions when the book reviews focused on the philosophical topics. Most of these philosophical book review events at Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah revolved around books written by Pak Dhofir or the students themselves. So the format is a new book launching along with in-depth reviews on it. The book launchings and the book reviews are always part of the pesantren's anniversary celebration. This tradition started in 2018 and, as the name implies, has been held every year since then. However, for certain reasons, this activity has always been called "Hilang Tahun Pesantren" (The Missing Years of The Pesantren).

Pak Dhofir greatly appreciates the book launchings at every 'Missing Years of the pesantren' events, because it proves that the continuous progress of the students' writing works year after year. He believes this tradition is praiseworthy and must be consistently maintained.



Picture 2 Discussions of Philosophy at Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah

c. Book and Article Writing

Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah has its own special features because, in addition to the *kiai* and the students being highly productive in book writing, they are also capable of writing and producing books on philosophical topics. Once again, this phenomena cannot be separated from the figure of the *kiai*, Pak Dhofir, who has set an example and motivated his students to continue writing and producing scholarly works. Iqbalul Mu'id, one of the former students who has now become alumnus, said (I. Mu'id, personal communication, January 27, 2023):

In terms of enthusiasm to write, the *Luhurans* (the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah] have already found their shape, because the *Kiai* and the teachers provide motivational inspirations and set an example through their work. Additionally, there are several assignments such as presentations requiring written essays. That way, writing became part of the lifestyle of the pesantren's students.

Pak Dhofir's exemplary inspirations in producing books can be seen through the number of books he has published. Despite his relatively young age, Pak Dhofir has published dozens of books with various themes, including books on philosophy. Not only books, his writings are widely spread across various media, both in print and online.

Herlianto acknowledged the impact of Pak Dhofir's role model in writing to motivate students to follow in his footsteps. He recalled his early days at the pesantren and how he was highly motivated to write (Herlianto, personal communication, January 27, 2023).

The eloquence of language in Pak Dhofir's writings was exceptional, which has inspired me to write following his style. I remember that my first essay was published on 7 December 2012 in the *Tribun Surabaya* daily. That was after I joined STF Al-Farabi—back then, the term Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah was not commonly used—and thanks to Pak Dhofir's guidance.

One of Pak Dhofir's approaches to encourage his students to write was through assignments. As long as he was in charge of the discussion, every member of the discussion group assigned the task of presentations was required to write a paper.(R. Asy'ari, personal communication, January 23, 2023) This approach continues to this day and has become a kind of tradition in the pesantren. Until now, some of his students still submit their writings to Pak Dhofir to be assessed and corrected if there are any errors.(A. Khoironnafis, personal communication, December 14, 2022) Similar approach was also adopted by the senior students who were given the task of guiding the junior peers. They emulated this approach while adapting certain innovations according to the latest times. For example, some senior students at the pesantren assigned their junior peers to submit their writings via Facebook in order to boost their enthusiasm in writing and producing written works (A. Fauzy, personal communication, December 12, 2022).

Therefore, it is not surprising that now the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah have been able to produce many books. Up till now, they have published more than 40 books, either authored individually or

collectively. Initially, the published books were solely written by Pak Dhofir, starting from *Mencangkul di Yunani* to *Filsafat Timur*. As Rusydi Asy'ari stated, this was because the cost of publishing books in the Malang area was quite expensive and beyond the reach of the students of the pesantren (R. Asy'ari, personal communication, January 23, 2023). However, in recent years, many printing companies have been willing to print books in limited quantities, making the costs affordable. Nevertheless, this does not mean that during the early times the students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah lacked writing skills at all, because they already wrote papers in discussions held at the pesantren. Later, since 2018, books written by the students began to be published and have continued to be sustainable until now. Some of these books were written individually and some were collectively. Some are in the form of translation books, some are not. The writings cover various genres, including collections of short stories, poems, essays, and complete writings. The topics are diverse as well, ranging from theology, logic, philosophy, Arabic grammar, to philosophy. Here is a list of these books:

Table 1: List of Books Produced by the Kiai and Students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah since 2013

Year	Author/Translator	Title
2013	A. Dhofir Zuhri	<i>Filsafat Timur</i>
2015	A. Dhofir Zuhri	<i>Mencangkul di Yunani</i>
	A. Dhofir Zuhri	<i>Filsafat Islam</i>
2018	A. Khoiron Nafis	<i>Terjemahan Al-Munidz min adh-Dhalal</i>
	Herlianto	<i>Berjabat Tangan dengan Filsafat: Epistemologi, Ontologi, Etika dan Estetika</i>
	A. Dhofir Zuhri	<i>Peradaban Sarung: Vini, Vidi, Santri</i>
2019	A. Dhofir Zuhri	<i>Mari Menjadi Gila</i>
	Translator Team	<i>Mari Menjadi Waras: Terjemahan Kitab As-Sullam al-Munawraq</i>
2020	A. Khoiron Nafis	<i>Cinta di Atas Kursi: Tafsir Ayat Kursi</i>
	Ahmad Fauzy	<i>Seni Belajar Logika Secara Sederhana</i>
	A. Khoiron Nafis & Heri Zaqi	<i>Sederhana itu Tidak Sederhana Itu</i>
	A. Dhofir Zuhri	<i>Nabi Muhammad bukan Orang Arab?</i>
2021	Herlianto	<i>Secangkir Kopi Filsafat</i>
	M. Hasani Mubarak	<i>Menyibak Tirai Al-Qur'an</i>
	Ahmad Khoiron Nafis, Heri Zaqy & Difan	<i>Sederhana Itu Tidak Sederhana Itu</i>
	Ahmad Yani	<i>Modal Dasar Baca Kitab: Bahan-bahan Persiapan sebelum Praktik Baca Kitab Kuning</i>

	Ahmad Yani	<i>Aku dan Seluruh Musim yang Terluka</i>
	Alsaba S. Igobula	<i>Mahasiswa Agen Perubahan</i>
	Iqbalul Mu'id	<i>Tanpa Logika Loe Gila: Dasar-dasar Ilmu Logika Poluler Terjemah Kitab Mukaddimah fi Ilm Mantiq</i>
2022	Translator Team	<i>Ḥadīṣunā</i>
	Writer Team	<i>Antologi Cerpen</i>
	Translator Team	<i>Falsafatunā</i>
	Heri Zany	<i>Pelukis Cermin</i>
	Adnan Faqih	<i>Meditasi Falsafi</i>

The list mentioned above displays only books. If it was to mention the list of all writings spread across various media, either in printed media or online, this place would not be enough to do so. This is because Pak Dhofir and his students have produced a lot of writings in the form of essays and published them in various media. So it's better to just ignore those various writings. It is sufficient to state here that the *kiai* and students of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah have made scholarly writing production a tradition and an integral part of their learning process.

D. Conclusions

After analyzing and presenting the data, this study arrived at the following conclusions. *Firstly*, The background to the establishment of Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah, which integrates the study of philosophy in its curriculum, can be traced back to the early 2010s when a discussion group caalled the Avennasar Institute explored philosophical themes and Islamic thoughts. This historical context explains why the later established Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah can easily accommodate philosophy in its educational framework. *Secondly*, Pesantren Luhur Baitul Hikmah applied three distinct methods of learning philosophy: (1) traditional study sessions known as *Bandongan*; (2) interactive discussion and debate sessions; and (3) writing assignments.

This study implies that pesantrens can play an important role in promoting philosophical learning in Indonesia, akin to universities, NGOs and urban study clubs. Following this insight, it is important to make further studies on more pesantrens integrating philosophical learning in their curricula. The future of philosophical studies at pesantren could be extended more broadly beyond the confines of this case study.

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