

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### **A. Findings**

This study shares the research results from analyzing data gathered from different sources, based on detailed interviews and observations. These results try to answer the questions about how students feel about using interactive and flexible teaching approaches, and how these methods affect their academic performance in the pesantren setting. The data collected were then looked at using thematic analysis to find the main topics that show what students felt and experienced during their learning.

These findings are organized based on Research Question 1 and Research Question 2. Each thematic narrative presents the students' experiences in relation to the implementation of interactive and flexible teaching methods, including the positive impacts perceived during the learning process.

#### **1) Flexibility in Responding to Students' Physical and Emotional Conditions**

Based on the interview data, one of the main findings of this study reveals that an interactive and flexible teaching approach was implemented by adjusting to the students' conditions during the learning process. The santri explained that the Ustadz did not merely focus on delivering the material, but also paid close attention to their physical and emotional well-being throughout the teaching and learning activities.

Santri 1 shared his experience in a storytelling manner. He explained that whenever the classroom atmosphere began to feel boring, or when the santri looked sleepy and exhausted, the Ustadz would immediately take action to regain their attention. Instead of getting angry, the Ustadz chose to respond wisely and thoughtfully.

*His story:*

*“In my opinion, the interactive and flexible teaching method is very enjoyable, and it personally suits me. It doesn’t feel too burdensome. The Ustadz in this boarding school truly considers our condition in class. Our daily activities in the pesantren are very packed from morning until night. After Fajr prayer, we receive English and Arabic vocabulary lessons. After that, we prepare for school. At school, we attend regular classes as usual. When we return, we pray, eat, and then continue again with compulsory extra lessons depending on the subject. Those usually start around 1:30 p.m. after lunch and last until around 3:30 p.m.*

*After that, we prepare for Asr prayer. In the late afternoon, some students join extracurricular activities, some wash their clothes, some receive punishments, and not a few of us fall asleep because we are exhausted (he laughed softly). So, naturally, we feel very tired.*

*For example, during a lesson around 11 a.m. or after the first break, some students definitely start to feel sleepy—including me. In fact, I’m usually the first one to fall asleep (he laughed again). But in situations like that, we are not immediately scolded or punished, nor are we forced to sit and keep listening. Instead, the Ustadz tells us to stand up for about three to ten minutes. He says, „Qum, qum, qum, qiyaman jamī,,an!“ (Stand up, everyone!).*

*After we stand, he asks us to do light stretching so our bodies won’t feel stiff and our minds become fresher. Sometimes, if not stretching, he tells those who fell asleep to perform wudhu so they can feel refreshed. Of course, if someone keeps sleeping, sometimes their face might get a little mark from a whiteboard marker,” he joked.*

*After that, we continue studying as usual. Sometimes, even before the lesson starts, the Ustadz informs us that the class will be moved to an open area like the yard or the mosque. Honestly, we really look forward to that. It feels like we are free from the usual classroom environment, even though it is still school time. At least we are not stuck in the same room (he laughed).*

*To be honest, around 80 percent of my friends and I prefer this kind of learning method. It creates a different atmosphere and prevents boredom. Strangely enough, I am usually not very serious in class, but in situations like this, I suddenly become serious and focus without even realizing it. It feels unusual,” he said thoughtfully.*

*“Moreover, when we are divided into groups after studying outside, the Ustadz does not immediately tell us to work individually. Instead, we are asked to discuss in groups and exchange our understanding and opinions. The Ustadz walks around from one group to another, gently asking about our progress. After everyone completes the task, we have a question-and-answer session. Those who answer correctly receive rewards. Usually, the reward is that we are allowed to buy food or drinks during the lesson.*

*That is the most exciting moment! I always try my best to answer correctly so I can immediately buy rice or noodles and iced orange juice and eat it right there,” he laughed enthusiastically. “If someone gives a wrong answer, it is discussed again and explained until we truly understand.*

*In reality, my friends and I become more motivated because we are not constantly in the same classroom atmosphere. This kind of method and adjustment is what we always hope for, because it makes us feel comfortable and helps us understand the material more easily.”*

The data above clearly show how flexibility is practiced in real classroom situations. The teacher does not rigidly follow a fixed teaching method, but instead adjusts the learning activities based on students' physical and emotional conditions. This flexibility is reflected in several actions, such as allowing students to stand and stretch, asking them to perform wudhu,

moving the class to a different environment, and using group discussions to maintain engagement. These adjustments indicate that flexibility in teaching is implemented as a responsive strategy to sustain students' attention and participation during the learning process. These findings indicate that flexibility in teaching goes beyond simply varying instructional methods or managing time. It involves the teacher's ability to respond to students' physical and psychological conditions in a thoughtful and adaptive manner. Such responsiveness helps create a more conducive learning environment and supports students in maintaining their focus and engagement throughout the learning process.

## **2) Learning in the Middle of an Unpredictable Schedule**

Another significant finding of this study shows that the implementation of interactive and flexible learning strategies is closely connected to the dense and dynamic schedule of the pesantren. Based on the interview data, learning activities are often interrupted by sudden announcements or institutional agendas that require all santri to immediately gather in a specific place.

Santri 2 explained that even though the boarding school schedule is very tight, an interactive and flexible learning approach can still be applied—as long as the Ustadz understands the condition and well-being of the santri. He emphasized that interruptions during the learning process are common and sometimes unavoidable.

*His story:*

*“In my opinion, since the first time I entered the boarding school—especially now as a final-year santri—the interactive and flexible teaching method must be applied in a balanced way, even though the schedule here is very busy. As long as the Ustadz understands our condition, it will work.*

*One day, the lesson was running normally. Personally, I was very focused at that time because it was still morning and my mood was good. Suddenly, without any warning, there was an announcement telling all of us to gather in front of the TMI office. Just imagine, Ustadz,” he said, looking at the researcher, “how could we not instantly feel bad and lose motivation to continue studying? The gathering time is unpredictable. Sometimes it even takes up our break time just to listen to someone giving a speech or shouting unclearly.*

*The impact on me personally is that I cannot fully understand the lesson material. Sometimes my mind just goes completely blank,” he added in an annoyed tone.*

*“Usually, the Ustadz adjusts to the situation. Before turning the unfinished material into an assignment, he divides us into groups first. Or sometimes he looks for another free time, for example at night. Later, there will be an announcement from the qismu e”lan (the boarding school announcement division) telling us where to gather—maybe in the mosque, the library, or the garden.*

*After we gather, the Ustadz gives brief instructions, such as, „Please work with your respective groups. If you have any questions, just ask me.” Usually, he also allows us to eat and drink while studying. As santri, we can feel when the Ustadz realizes that in situations like this, he must understand our condition so the learning process can remain effective. When he allows us to work in groups and even eat and drink as long as we stay focused, we feel more confident and it becomes easier to absorb the material,” he said with a small laugh.*

*“Sometimes, unfinished material is continued in the next meeting or turned into P.A (Pekerjaan Asrama/dormitory assignment). But honestly, it feels heavier to complete it in the dormitory than at school. In the dormitory, our activities can easily be disrupted. We are required to speak formal Arabic and English. Actually, the rule also applies at school, but it feels safer not using formal language at school than in the dormitory,” he joked. “In the dormitory, it”s very strict!*

*I once experienced a situation where I had a futsal competition. Because we were gathered during lesson time, the material was turned into a dormitory assignment. There were so many tasks that I ended up not being able to join the futsal competition.*

*In my personal opinion, it is okay if all students are gathered together, but it should only be for truly important announcements. If the matter concerns only a particular person or class, then only that person or class should be called—not the entire school.”*

From his narration, it is clear that interactive and flexible learning in this context does not merely refer to interaction within the classroom. It also involves the teacher’s ability to respond to systemic disruptions and institutional activities within the pesantren environment. Sudden field activities and institutional agendas significantly affect the flow of learning. Therefore, teachers need to adjust by reorganizing the material, postponing explanations, or transforming unfinished lessons into assignments.

However, this form of interactivity and flexibility also presents challenges for the santri. Although continuing the material in the next meeting is considered a reasonable solution, turning unfinished lessons into dormitory assignments can increase students’ workload—especially when combined with strict dormitory rules and language requirements. This finding indicates that interactive and flexible learning is deeply interconnected not only with academic activities but also with the broader boarding school life experienced by the santri.

### **3) Learning Without Feeling Forced**

Another important finding of this study reveals that the santri perceive interactive and flexible learning strategies as more effective compared to

conventional teaching techniques. The difference is clearly visible in the classroom atmosphere, student engagement, and the overall effectiveness of the learning process. Santri 3 explained that the impact of interactive and flexible methods could be strongly felt throughout the lessons. According to him, the learning experience became more alive and less monotonous compared to traditional lecture-based approaches.

*His story:*

*“In my opinion, the difference is very clear. Interactive and flexible teaching methods have a stronger impact because the learning process feels more directed. At the beginning of the second semester, some teachers were rotated—some were replaced, and some remained the same. If I’m not mistaken, it was on the third day of the new semester, during the first period, in a subject about Islamic hikayat (stories).*

*Usually, when I hear that the lesson is about stories or hikayat, I assume it will eventually turn into a long lecture. But this time, it was different. The Ustadz came into class carrying a projector and played the movie Bilal: A New Breed of Hero.*

*While we were watching the film, the Ustadz explained parts of the story and asked us light questions related to the Islamic hikayat shown in the movie. My friends and I immediately felt excited. It made us want to keep learning with this Ustadz,” he laughed. “We felt more relaxed and comfortable in class.”*

*“Of course, sometimes the Ustadz still adjusts to our condition. Even when learning through a movie, there are still students who fall asleep. If too many students lose focus, we are asked to stand up, stretch, or perform wudhu—just like usual.*

*But the most exciting part, especially for me, is when the Ustadz organizes games. For example, we play a game where a ball is thrown around while we read Arabic or English vocabulary, depending on the subject. When the Ustadz says „stop,” the student holding the ball must answer a question*

*related to the lesson. If someone cannot answer, their face gets drawn on with a marker to make a „cat mustache,“” he said jokingly.*

*“But if someone answers—even if the answer is not completely correct—they still get points. And if the answer is correct, they get even more points. My friends and I really enjoy this kind of game because it can add to our grades,” he smiled.*

*“Personally, I prefer this kind of teaching method. It’s not that the lecture method is bad, but I’ve heard so many lectures already—especially in the dormitory and mosque, where we have short religious talks almost every day. Honestly, it makes me feel bored.*

*When the teaching method is like this, I don’t know why, but I just feel naturally interested in learning. I’m actually the type of person who rarely studies unless forced. But at that time, I studied without feeling any pressure, Ustadz!”*

He further explained that such activities made the classroom atmosphere more dynamic and encouraged active participation. Instead of passively listening to lengthy explanations, the santri were directly involved in the learning process. The combination of movement, language practice, spontaneous questioning, and audiovisual media created a more engaging learning experience.

Santri 3 emphasized that participatory activities like these helped reduce boredom and increased learning motivation. Unlike conventional approaches where the Ustadz dominates the class through extended explanations, participatory methods provide opportunities for students to speak, respond, and express their opinions. As a result, learning does not feel rigid or monotonous, and students become more enthusiastic.

This finding demonstrates that interactive and flexible teaching methods are not only perceived as more enjoyable, but also more effective in maintaining focus and fostering meaningful participation among the santri.

#### **4) Balancing Methods in Pesantren Learning**

Another important finding of this study highlights the santri's perspectives on balancing conventional teaching methods with interactive and flexible approaches. Although participatory methods are generally viewed positively, the santri acknowledge that conventional lecture-based teaching is still frequently used, especially by senior teachers. Santri 4 explained that many senior Ustadz—particularly those over fifty years old—tend to rely on traditional lecture methods with limited interaction. According to him, this approach often leads to boredom and decreased participation, especially when considering the differences between past and present generations of students.

*His story:*

*“In my opinion, and also according to my friends, there are still many senior Ustadz—especially those above fifty—who mostly use lecture methods. Usually, they have very little interaction with us in class. When the teaching style is like that, we often feel bored and sleepy,” he laughed softly.*

*“Personally, I still try to pay attention when they explain the material in front of the class. Even if I'm not fully focused, at least I look like I'm paying attention. But honestly, inside I already feel very bored. What makes it harder is that many of these senior Ustadz are scheduled in the last period before we go home—around 12:30 p.m. Just imagine, Ustadz,” he said to the researcher, “that's when the weather is at its hottest, and our energy for studying is probably only two percent left.*

*At that time, we are required to just sit and listen to a long lecture. It becomes a real struggle not to fall asleep. I'm also afraid that if I look sleepy or bored,*

*the Ustadz might feel hurt or disappointed. Sometimes, if they are very upset, they might even stop teaching for weeks.”*

*“There was once a senior Ustadz teaching tafsir. He delivered the entire lesson in Arabic—from the opening greeting to taking attendance. And he was known to be very strict. My friend was sitting in the front row, and I was behind him. While the Ustadz was explaining, my friend suddenly nodded off. Without warning, the board eraser flew straight to his face.*

*All of us who were sleepy instantly became wide awake,” he said, trying not to laugh. “I wanted to laugh, but I was afraid it would hit me next. The worst part was that my friend fell asleep again for the second time. This time, instead of throwing the eraser, the Ustadz ordered the entire class to run ten laps around the field—even though the weather was extremely hot.”*

*“But there was also the opposite experience. We once had a very elderly Ustadz, over sixty years old. He was extremely kind. While he was explaining, almost everyone fell asleep, and only a few students remained awake. Sometimes I also fell asleep, sometimes I managed to stay awake. In the end, I felt sorry and guilty toward him.”*

*“So honestly, my friends and I feel more comfortable and focused with younger Ustadz. They seem to understand us better and are more open. We feel guided and supported. But I’m not saying that the senior Ustadz teach poorly. It’s just that their method does not really suit me personally.*

*Maybe from their perspective, santri today are still the same as santri in the past. But as times change, people’s characteristics also develop. My hope for the future is that even if the lecture method continues to be used, it can at least be adjusted to the condition of today’s santri—without changing the traditional values that have existed before.”*

The findings indicate that senior teachers play a significant role in implementing interactive and flexible teaching methods in the pesantren environment. Compared to other groups, senior teachers are more active in adjusting their teaching strategies based on students’ conditions. They

demonstrate a better understanding of students' physical and emotional states, which allows them to create a more engaging and responsive learning atmosphere. As a result, students feel more comfortable, motivated, and actively involved during the learning process.

In contrast, *ustadz suyuh* tend to rely more on conventional lecturebased methods, as their teaching approach is shaped by long-standing traditions and experience. While this contributes to maintaining discipline and preserving institutional values, it may limit student interaction in certain situations. Meanwhile, junior teachers are still developing their teaching experience and often play a supporting role in the learning process. Therefore, their use of interactive and flexible methods is not always consistent.

These differences highlight that senior teachers have a stronger impact on students' engagement and learning experience, particularly through their ability to balance structure with adaptability. Their role becomes crucial in bridging traditional teaching practices with more contemporary, studentcentered approaches.

From his narration, it is clear that the *santri* do not entirely reject conventional teaching methods. Instead, they emphasize the importance of balancing traditional approaches with more interactive and flexible methods. While conventional methods help preserve institutional values and authority, adjustments are necessary to respond to generational changes and the evolving learning characteristics of modern *santri*. Ultimately, maintaining this balance is essential to ensure that learning remains meaningful, engaging, and effective in the *pesantren* environment.

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Learners' Encounters with Dynamic and Adaptable Instructional Strategies (RQ1)**

Theme : The Necessity to Integrate Conventional and Participatory Pedagogical Approaches

A further pivotal result from this exploration highlights pupils' opinions concerning the essentiality of integrating conventional pedagogical tactics with dynamic and adaptable methods. Even though participatory strategies are generally regarded positively, pupils recognized that conventional tactics persist in usage, especially by experienced instructors.

Santri 4 clarified that multiple experienced educators still prefer to apply standard lecture-centered methods with restricted interaction. According to him, this strategy often induces monotony and decreased pupil involvement, particularly due to the distinctions between prior and current generations of pupils.

Santri 4 expressed:

According to santri 4, there persist some experienced educators who are inclined to employ conventional pedagogical tactics, such as continuous lecturing with minimal interaction. This frequently leads pupils to feel disinterested and less involved. I consider this situation is also connected to changes over time, because pupils from earlier periods and those of today differ. It involves not just the instructional method, but also the pupils' standards, necessities, and approaches to grasping lessons.

We, as pupils, are conscious of this variation, particularly those of us studying in the pesantren with assorted backgrounds and incentives. Therefore, I believe it would be advantageous if dynamic and adaptable instructional strategies were implemented more often. However, conventional tactics should not be entirely eliminated. It would be more productive if historical and modern methods were merged, especially since many experienced educators instructing senior-grade pupils still utilize traditional pedagogical approaches.¶

From this description, it is evident that pupils do not completely dismiss conventional pedagogical tactics. Instead, they propose a balanced fusion of established and innovative approaches. The pupils acknowledge that conventional methods may still possess value, particularly in presenting certain forms of content. Nevertheless, they also highlight the importance of adapting to generational evolutions and pupils' contemporary learning traits.

This result indicates that the incorporation of dynamic and adaptable instructional strategies in the pesantren framework demands pedagogical adjustment, particularly among experienced educators. The balance between upholding institutional instructional traditions and catering to modern educational requirements emerges as a critical element of productive education in the pesantren milieu.

Their accounts illustrate that these strategies are not solely instructional tools, but pedagogical reactions to the distinctive scholastic and organizational realities of a contemporary Islamic boarding institution.

Initially, pupils encountered adaptability via instructors' responsiveness to their bodily and psychological states. In an environment marked by rigorous daily schedules, exhaustion and diminished focus are inevitable. Instructors' choices to include stretching exercises, permit pupils to conduct wudhu, or sporadically alter instructional venues demonstrate responsive pedagogy. This discovery corresponds with McLoughlin and Lee's (2007) viewpoint that adaptable instruction empowers educators to address situational elements and pupil diversity. Likewise, Tomlinson (2014) stresses that differentiated pedagogy necessitates ongoing modifications based on pupils' preparedness and classroom interactions. In this investigation, adaptability serves as a manifestation of pedagogical awareness rather than mere structural alterations.

Secondly, pupils delineated adaptability in the handling of organizational interruptions. The pesantren framework often mandates abrupt assemblies and timetable modifications, which unavoidably disrupt classroom education. Instructors' readiness to defer content or restructure tasks reflects situational flexibility. Cummings et al. (2017) contend that adaptable learning settings demand perpetual adaptation to environmental pressures. The discoveries broaden this contention by illustrating that adaptability in pesantren is profoundly linked with institutional ethos and routine residential activities.

Thirdly, participatory classroom practices such as games, interrogation rounds, and cooperative exercises were regarded as significant educational encounters. These discoveries closely align with Bonwell and Eison's (1991) active learning framework, which posits that pupil involvement augments comprehension and memory. Prince (2004) additionally observes that participatory methods bolster drive and cognitive participation. In this investigation, participatory exercises converted the classroom from a lecture-centric space into an engaging educational arena.

Lastly, pupils championed a balanced amalgamation of conventional and participatory methods. Rather than dismissing classical lecture tactics, they recommended pedagogical synthesis. This outlook echoes Jailani's (2017) discoveries that merging traditional and modern approaches improves understanding in pesantren contexts. The pupils' accounts imply that efficacious pedagogy in pesantren necessitates both reverence for tradition and adaptation to generational changes.

In summary, pupils' encounters demonstrate that dynamic and adaptable instructional strategies operate as responsive pedagogical tactics molded by institutional framework, pupil attributes, and educational evolution.

## **2. The Influence of Dynamic and Adaptable Instructional Strategies on Pupils' Scholastic Proficiency (RQ2)**

The discoveries additionally reveal that dynamic and adaptable instructional strategies substantially enhance pupils' perceived scholastic proficiency. Scholastic proficiency in this investigation is interpreted not

exclusively as quantifiable attainment, but as pupils' comprehensive growth manifested in involvement, drive, comprehension, and self-management.

Initially, heightened involvement surfaced as a primary effect. Participatory exercises compelled pupils to actively partake instead of passively absorbing data. Freeman et al. (2014) illustrate that active learning markedly boosts scholastic outcomes across subjects. In this scenario, participation acted as a cognitive stimulant that intensified grasp and retention.

Secondly, pupils indicated elevated drive and diminished monotony. Adaptable modifications to the classroom ambiance aided in maintaining focus despite taxing timetables. McLoughlin and Lee (2007) assert that adaptable learning elevates drive by accommodating pupils' requirements and rhythms. The current discoveries affirm that adaptability in pedagogy alleviates fatigue-induced disengagement in boarding institution settings.

Thirdly, the application of adaptable assignments nurtured selfdiscipline and temporal organization. Even though supplementary tasks occasionally augmented the burden, pupils cultivated techniques to reconcile scholastic duties with dormitory commitments. Biggs (1999) maintains that instructional approaches profoundly shape learning conduct and self-directed education. This investigation shows that adaptability does not eradicate obstacles but promotes adaptive learning habits.

Furthermore, the discoveries endorse Harvey and Green's (1993) notion of scholastic proficiency as advancement in capability and intellectual maturation. Pupils' accounts disclose improved comprehension,

prolonged concentration, and increased assurance in handling scholastic pressures.

In the pesantren milieu, where scholastic, spiritual, and communal facets converge, dynamic and adaptable instructional strategies seem to uphold scholastic proficiency amid a challenging educational framework.

### **3. Relation to Previous Studies**

Overall, the findings of this study show a clear relation to previous studies on the impact of interactive and flexible teaching methods on students' academic performance. The findings of this study show a clear correlation with previous research on the impact of interactive and flexible teaching methods on students' academic performance. Consistent with Freeman et al. (2014), this study confirms that active learning significantly enhances students' understanding and engagement. Similarly, the results align with McLoughlin and Lee (2007), who emphasize that flexible learning environments can increase students' motivation by accommodating their individual needs and learning conditions.

In addition, the findings support Biggs' (1999) perspective that teaching approaches influence students' learning behavior and selfregulation. In this study, students not only showed improved comprehension but also developed better strategies to manage their academic responsibilities. Furthermore, the concept of academic quality proposed by Harvey and Green (1993) is reflected in the students' experiences, as they demonstrated growth in confidence, concentration, and overall learning development.

Moreover, this study is also in line with previous studies that highlight the importance of student participation and learning flexibility in enhancing critical thinking and learning autonomy (Senthamarai, 2018; Bostock; Lundin; Yakovleva). These findings indicate that interactive and flexible teaching methods contribute to students' deeper understanding and greater responsibility for their learning.

However, this study also provides additional insight by highlighting the unique challenges of the pesantren environment, where students must balance academic, religious, and residential responsibilities. This context shows that the effectiveness of interactive and flexible teaching methods is not only determined by instructional design, but also by how well these methods respond to students' daily realities. Therefore, while this study supports previous research, it also extends the understanding of how these teaching strategies function in a structured Islamic boarding school setting.