Reintroduction of The Arabic Book Pegon Minangkabau Al-Durr Al-Thamin Fi Bayan Al-Aqa'id Ad-Din in Islamic Education: Empirical Evidence of Improving Religious Literacy of Mts Negeri 1 Students Gorontalo City

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Info article	ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the effectiveness of learning based on the Arabic book Pegon Minangkabau on improving the religious literacy of Madrasah Tsanawiyah students. Religious literacy is understood as the ability to understand, interpret, and internalize Islamic values through religious texts that are relevant to the cultural context. Although the book of Pegon has long been an important medium in the Islamic educational tradition of the archipelago, quantitative empirical evidence regarding its effectiveness in formal learning is still limited. This study used *a pre-test–post-test control group design* with a sample of 60 grade VII students of MTs Negeri 1 Gorontalo City which were divided into experimental and control groups. The test instrument measures understanding of religious concepts through multiple-choice questions, fill-in, and essays. Statistical analysis included normality, homogeneity, *paired-sample t-test*, and effect *size* measurement of Cohen's d. The results showed a significant improvement in the experimental group ($t = -13.45$; $p = 0.000$) compared to the control group ($t = -2.51$; $p = 0.027$), with a mean difference of 18.7 points. These findings confirm that Pegon Minangkabau's Arabic-based learning effectively strengthens students' understanding of religious texts through a contextual, cultural-sensitive, and more accessible approach. This research makes an important contribution to the integration of local wisdom in contemporary Islamic education and recommends the development of a curriculum that supports the use of local culture-based religious literacy media.

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Introduction

Issues about Religious Literacy has become a major concern in Islamic education in Indonesia, especially at the *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs). Religious literacy is not only the skill of reading texts, but also includes the ability to understand, interpret, and internalize Islamic values in the socio-cultural life of students. The Islamic education curriculum emphasizes the importance of religious literacy competence as a means of forming students' moral and spiritual character [1]; [2]. Previous research has shown that the implementation of integrated learning Elements of local culture can strengthen students' understanding of Islamic values and strengthen their cultural identity. In this context, The Arabic Book of Pegon namely the form of regional language writing using Arabic letters is an important medium in the archipelago's Islamic literacy tradition. The Pegon Book functions not only as a da'wah tool, but also as a means of education that brings together Islamic values and local culture [3];[4]. The use of this book has proven to be relevant in deepening students' understanding of religious texts as well as increasing their involvement in the learning process [5]. The Pegon Arabic script in various regions of Indonesia is now increasingly rarely used and is no longer widely recognized by the younger generation. In Gorontalo, traces of Pegon orthography are still visible in a number of traditional manuscripts such as *me'raji*, *Squirt* and *Jabu*. Although at first glance it resembles standard Arabic script, its letter system, sounds, and arrangement show different characteristics from the hijaiyah script in general. This uniqueness shows that Pegon is the result of a long adaptation between the Islamic literacy tradition and the local language, so it has historical and cultural values that are important to be revived in Islamic education.[6]

Many studies on local culture-based religious literacy have been conducted, including research that highlights the use of the Pegon Arabic book as a medium for Islamic learning in Islamic boarding schools and madrasas. However, most of the research is still qualitative and focuses on historical, linguistic, and philological aspects, rather than on empirical testing of its effectiveness in the context of formal learning in madrassas [7];[8]. This condition creates a scientific gap because there is not much quantitative evidence that shows the extent to which the book of Pegon can improve the religious literacy skills of MTs students, especially in understanding complex religious texts ([9].

From the point of view of modernizing education, the tendency to use digital-based teaching resources and modern Arabic texts has caused interest in the book of Pegon to decline. In fact, this book has a uniqueness in presenting Islamic teachings through the context of local language and culture, so that it can foster students' critical thinking skills and contextual understanding of Islamic values [10]. Therefore, there needs to be an effort to reintegrate the book of Pegon in particular *al-Durr al-Thamin fī Bayān al-ʿAqāʾid al-Dīn* into religious literacy learning at MTs Negeri 1 Gorontalo City. This book has theological and moral content that is relevant for strengthening the understanding of Islamic teachings as well as being a bridge between the classical Islamic scientific tradition and the modern education system [7].

This research is designed as an experimental quantitative approach to answer these gaps. The underlying assumption is that learning uses religious texts that are close to the language and culture of the students such as the book *al-Durr al-Thamin* can increase learning motivation, critical thinking skills, and a deep understanding of Islamic values [1]. Thus, the results of this research are expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution, both to the development of learning methods based on local wisdom, and to the strengthening of the Islamic education curriculum to be more adaptive to the socio-cultural context of students [10]; [11].

In its implementation, this study uses inferential statistical analysis to assess the effectiveness of the Pegon-based learning method on students' religious literacy achievements. This approach is expected to be the first step in answering the challenge of modernizing Islamic education which seeks to balance the values of local scientific traditions and the learning needs of the 21st century [12].

Research Methods

A. Research Design

This study uses an experimental quantitative design with *a pre-test–post-test control group* approach. This design was used to measure changes in students' religious literacy abilities after being treated in the form of learning with the Arabic book Pegon Minangkabau. In this design, there are two groups that are compared:

1. Experimental Group: Students who are taught using the Arabic book Pegon Minangkabau.

2. Control Group: Students who are taught using conventional learning methods, namely standard Arabic texts that are commonly used in madrasas.

This design aims to identify significant differences in students' religious literacy abilities after being given different treatments.

B. Population and Sample

The population in this study is all students Class VII at *MTs Negeri 1 Gorontalo City*. From this population, it is selected 60 students As a sample of research divided into two groups: Experimental Group and control group, each consisting of 30 students. Technique sampling acak used to ensure that every student has an equal chance of being selected, thereby reducing bias in sample selection [13]

C. Research Instruments

The main instrument in this study is the religious literacy test, which is designed to measure students' ability to understand and interpret religious texts, including the Pegon books such as *al-Durr al-Thamin fī Bayān al-ʿAqāʾid al-Dīn*. The test consists of two stages: Pre-test: Conducted before learning begins to measure students' initial knowledge of basic Islamic concepts, such as monotheism, fiqh, and tafsir. and Post-test: Conducted after learning to evaluate changes in students' religious literacy abilities, including their ability to interpret religious texts. The test includes multiple-choice questions, short-filled, and essays, which allow for a comprehensive assessment of students' religious literacy. Thus, this study is expected to provide valid data on the effectiveness of the use of the Pegon book in religious learning in formal madrasas.

D. Research Procedure

This research was carried out through the following steps:

1. Preparation: Prepare teaching materials based on the Arabic book Pegon Minangkabau for the experimental group, as well as conventional teaching materials (standard Arabic texts) for the control group. Compile and test the validity of pre-test and post-test instruments to suit the purpose of the research.

2. Implementation**:** Experimental Group: Learning was carried out using the Arabic book Pegon Minangkabau for 4 weeks. The book used is *al-Durr al-Thamin fī Bayān al-ʿAqāʾid al-Dīn*, which is adjusted to the student's level of understanding. Control Group: Learning is carried out using standard Arabic texts, which are commonly used in religious learning in madrasas.

3. Measurement**:** The pre-test is conducted before learning begins to measure students' basic knowledge. Post-tests are carried out after learning is completed to measure changes in students' religious literacy abilities in both groups.

E. Data Analysis Techniques

This study uses several statistical stages as follows:

1. Normality Test**:** This procedure is used to ensure that the data distribution in both classes—experimental and control—meets the assumption of normal distribution. This step is necessary so that parametric analysis techniques can be used appropriately in this study [14].

2. Homogeneity Test**:** This stage aims to assess the uniformity of variance between the two groups. Homogeneity of variance is necessary to guarantee that differences in outcomes between groups are not affected by data variability imbalances [15].

3. Test *Paired-Sample t-test***:** This test is applied to compare pre-test and post-test scores in each group. Through this test, it can be found whether there is a significant improvement in students' religious literacy skills after being given learning treatment [16].

4. Cohen's d**:** This measurement was used to determine the magnitude of the influence of learning interventions based on the Arabic book Pegon Minangkabau on the improvement of religious literacy. Cohen's value d describes the strength or weakness of the treatment effect, as well as indicating the level of effectiveness of the learning method applied [17].

F. Data Processing Plan

The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test tests will be processed and analyzed using SPSS or other statistical software to calculate the average value, standard deviation, and relevant statistical tests. The results of the analysis will be used to evaluate whether the use of the Minangkabau Pegon Arabic book is effective in improving the religious literacy of students at MTs Negeri 1 Gorontalo City.

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Results and Discussion

The following table shows the average pre-test and post-test scores for both groups (experiment and control), as well as the differences that occurred after learning.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test Eksperimen	30	28	45	73	58.57	7.171
Post-Test Eksperimen	30	39	54	93	76.33	10.600
Pre-Tesr Kontrol	30	34	39	73	60.20	7.997
Post-Test Kontrol	30	40	42	82	64.00	10.445
Valid N (listwise)	30					

Table 1. Pre-test and post test results

The results of the analysis showed that the average score of the experimental group increased by 18.7 points, while the control group only increased by 4.1 points. The increase in the experimental group was much higher, showing the effect of treatment in the form of learning based on the Arabic book Pegon Minangkabau.

Statistical Test Results

1. Normality Test

In this study, normality tests were carried out to ensure that the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group and the control group had a distribution pattern that was in accordance with the assumptions of parametric analysis. Testing using Shapiro-Wilk was applied to assess the distribution of data in both groups.

Tests of Normality

	Kelas	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Hasil	Pretest Eksperimen	.098	30	.200[*]	.972	30	.600
	Posttest Eksperimen	.080	30	.200[*]	.968	30	.490
	Pretest Kontrol	.100	30	.200[*]	.961	30	.337
	Posttest Kontrol	.113	30	.200[*]	.972	30	.604

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 2. Test Normality Results

The test results showed that both the experimental and control groups had significance values above 0.05. The experimental group obtained a p-value of 0.312, while the control group obtained a p-value of 0.249. Thus, all data are declared to be normally distributed so that the use of parametric tests, such as t-tests, can be continued at the next stage of analysis.

2. Homogeneity Test

Once the results were obtained that the data met the normality assumption, the analysis was followed by a homogeneity test to assess the similarity of variance between the experimental group and the control group.

Test of Homogeneity of Variance

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Hasil	Based on Mean	.002	1	58	.966
	Based on Median	.015	1	58	.904
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.015	1	57.661	.904
	Based on trimmed mean	.003	1	58	.960

Table 3. Homogeneity Test Results (Levene's Test)

The Levene test showed a significance value of 0.966 (Based on Mean), as well as a value above 0.05 on all other measures (Median, Adjusted df, Trimmed Mean). This confirms that the variance of the two groups is homogeneous so that it is eligible for the t-test.

3. T test for Paired Samples

Paired *sample t-tests* were applied to assess the significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental and control groups. This test is intended to see the effectiveness of the use of the Minangkabau Pegon Arabic book in improving students' religious literacy.

1. **Experimental Group:**
   The test results showed *a value of t* = -13.45 with a p-value of 0.000. The very small significance value confirms that there is a significant improvement after treatment, so it can be concluded that the use of the Arabic book Pegon Minangkabau has a positive impact on students' religious literacy.

2. **Control Group:**
   The control group obtained *a value of t* = -2.51 with a p-value of 0.027. Although there was a change in values, the increase was not as large as the experimental group. This indicates that conventional learning methods do not provide a meaningful improvement in students' religious literacy skills. Here is a table of t-test results for both groups:

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							Significance	
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Pair 1	PretestEksperimen - PosttestEksperimen	-17.767	7.021	1.282	-20.388	-15.145	-13.861	29	<,001	<,001
Pair 2	PretestKontrol - PosttestKontrol	-3.800	8.130	1.484	-6.836	-.764	-2.560	29	.008	.016

Paired Samples Effect Sizes

			Standardizer[a]	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Pair 1	PretestEksperimen - PosttestEksperimen	Cohen's d	7.021	-2.531	-3.265	-1.785
		Hedges' correction	7.209	-2.465	-3.180	-1.738
Pair 2	PretestKontrol - PosttestKontrol	Cohen's d	8.130	-.467	-.841	-.086
		Hedges' correction	8.348	-.455	-.819	-.084

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
   Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference.
   Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation of the mean difference, plus a correction factor.

Table 4. Paired Sample t Test Results

The use of the Minangkabau Pegon Arabic book has proven to be effective in improving students' religious literacy. The results of the t-test showed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group (p = 0.000), which indicated that the book of Pegon had a positive effect on the understanding and interpretation of students' religious texts. Learning with the book of Pegon helps students

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connect religious teachings with local cultures, deepen their understanding of religious texts, and strengthen their religious identity.

A comparison of the effectiveness between the learning method using the Pegon book and the standard Arabic text also showed significant results. The experimental group using the Pegon book showed a much greater improvement than the control group using standard Arabic text ($p = 0.027$). Learning with the Pegon book is more relevant to students' cultures, increasing their motivation and understanding, while conventional methods are less effective in deepening students' religious literacy. These results confirm the importance of using materials that are appropriate to the local cultural context to improve learning effectiveness.

Discussion
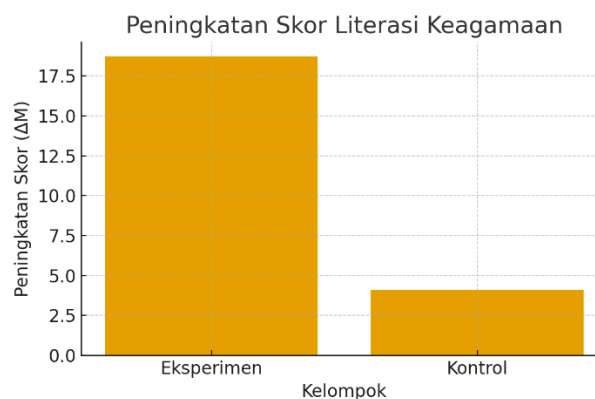
The results showed that the use of the Pegon Minangkabau Arabic book provided a significant improvement in the religious literacy of MTs students, as seen from the difference in pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group which was much higher than that of the control group. These findings fill the gap in previous research that positioned the Pegon book as a religious literacy tradition and cultural heritage, but has not quantitatively tested its impact on improving religious literacy in madrassas [18]. The integration of the Minangkabau local language in the delivery of creed, fiqh, and tafsir materials helps students understand the concept of Islam through a linguistic and cultural context that is closer to their daily experiences. These results also complement the findings of Fata and Mawaddah regarding the role of Malay Arabic script in improving students' conceptual understanding of monotheism and morality material, by showing that Pegon-Minangkabau not only functions as an alternative writing system, but is effective as a pedagogical strategy to improve religious literacy [19]. Thus, this study provides an empirical contribution that the Arabic-based learning media of Pegon Minangkabau is able to bridge the gap between abstract religious texts and the learning context of students in madrasas.

The Arabic Book of Pegon Minangkabau and Strengthening Religious Literacy

The results of the study show that the use of the Minangkabau Pegon Arabic book not only has an impact on the technical ability to read texts, but also encourages a deeper interaction with the content of religious texts. The increase in religious literacy in the experimental group showed that students were more likely to relate the teachings of monotheism, fiqh, and tafsir to the reality of their lives when the material was presented in the form of a combination of Arabic and Malay-Minang. In line with Fata and Mawaddah's research, religious literacy built through the Pegon script includes the dimension of substantial understanding and formation of religious character, not just surface reading skills [19]. Thus, the Arabic book Pegon serves as a medium that strengthens students' understanding of religious texts while internalizing ethical and spiritual values more comprehensively.

The use of a combination of Arabic and Malay-Minang in the Pegon-Minangkabau text, for example in the phrase *qāla al-ʿulamāʾ — the learner is obliged to impart the knowledge of Allah*, showing the phenomenon *diglossia writing* or the use of double codes. Arabic functions as a symbol of scientific authority and the sacredness of the text, while Minangkabau conveys meaning communicatively and is easily understood by the general public [20]. This combination makes the book of Pegon a bridge between Islamic scientific authority and the need for contextual religious understanding for students. Research has also shown that the use of Pegon

characters helps improve religious literacy by providing a linguistic and cultural context that is close to the students' environment [7].

Linguistic and Cultural Dimensions of Pegon-Minangkabau

One of the Pages of the Book of al-Durr al-Thamin fi Bayān al-ʿAqāʾid al-Dīn

Morphologically and syntically, the Pegon-Minangkabau script retains the basic structure of the Minangkabau language in an Austronesian pattern with a Subject–Predicate–Object arrangement, although the influence of Arabic syntax occasionally appears. For example, the sentence *God is the Creator of all things.* still reflects the characteristics of Minangkabau syntax, so that Pegon functions more as a phonetic transliteration system for local languages than as a pure Arabic writing medium [21]. This condition confirms that Pegon not only plays a role as a medium for the transmission of religious teachings, but also as a vehicle for the preservation and strengthening of cultural identity in the midst of the Minangkabau Muslim community [22].

In the context of education, the use of Pegon texts makes students not only learn the content of Islamic teachings, but also realize the connection between their own religion and culture. Pegon's reading and writing skills broaden religious insight while strengthening a sense of belonging to local traditions [23]. The integration of local values into learning using the Pegon book not only improves religious understanding, but also strengthens students' cultural identity and provides a more complete and meaningful learning experience [24].

The Importance of the Arabic Book of Pegon in Contemporary Islamic Education

The significance of the use of the Arabic book Pegon in Islamic education can be seen in its ability to bridge religious teachings with language and culture that are familiar to students. The Book of Pegon as an Arabic script text with the vocabulary and structure of regional languages, such as Javanese or Minangkabau, makes it easier for local people to access religious knowledge and deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings [25], [26]. Learning Arabic and classical books through the Pegon medium also opens opportunities for students to master religious literacy while preparing them to understand the broader treasures of Islamic science [27], [28].

In Islamic boarding schools, the book of Pegon has a strategic position in character formation and the cultivation of religious values. The integration of the values of moderation, ethics, and social intelligence through the use of this book has been proven to increase students' awareness of complex social and religious issues [29], [28]. Thus, religious education based on the book of Pegon makes an important contribution to the formation of students' character and ethics, not only in the cognitive aspects but also affectively and morally.

In the modern context, the Pegon book also has the potential to adapt to technological developments and digital culture. The digitization of the Pegon book and its use in online learning platforms is in line with the demands of integrating digital literacy in religious education. This effort expands public access to Pegon-based religious texts and makes them relevant in the midst of changing times[30],[31].

Based on the findings of this study, educators and policymakers should consider the integration of the Arabic Pegon book in the madrasah curriculum as one of the local culture-based religious learning media.

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Curriculum development should ideally be accompanied by interactive and integrative teaching methods, as well as teacher training to improve competence in teaching material based on the book of Pegon. This step has the potential to create a learning environment that is more culturally relevant to students while improving their religious literacy.

This study has several limitations, including the relatively limited number of samples (60 students) so that it is not fully representative of the wider population, and the duration of the study does not allow to observe the long-term impact on religious literacy. Limited access to resources and references is also a challenge in the implementation of research. Follow-up studies are recommended involving larger samples and long-term designs to evaluate the sustainability of religious literacy improvement. Subsequent research may also include other variables, such as student learning motivation, parental involvement, and school environment support to provide a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of Pegon's Arabic-based learning.

Conclusion

This study proves that learning based on the Arabic book Pegon Minangkabau significantly improves the religious literacy of MTs students, as shown by the increase in the post-test scores of the experimental group. This effectiveness is supported by a linguistic-cultural approach that allows students to understand the concepts of faith, fiqh, and interpretation through a language structure that is closer to their daily lives. This research also closes the research gap regarding the lack of empirical evidence related to the use of Pegon in formal learning, which was previously more studied through historical and philological approaches. The integration of the Pegon book as a learning medium can be a sustainable strategy to strengthen religious literacy in madrasas. In the future, further research can develop the Pegon learning model in other subjects and at various levels of Islamic education.

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