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**Ethics, Law, and Educational Democratization:  
Shaping Islamic Cultural Behavior of Students in Sultan Hasanuddin  
Islamic Boarding School, Gowa, South Sulawesi**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the forms and dynamics of the democratization of learning at Pesantren (Islamic Boarding School) Sultan Hasanuddin Gowa from the perspectives of ethics and law, with the goal of fostering Islamic cultural behavior. The main focus is to explore how the democratization of education, within the framework of legal and ethical understanding, contributes to the formation of Islamic cultural values. Utilizing a phenomenological approach, the study collected data by means of observation, interviews, and documentation. Findings reveal that ethical and legal standards regulate the relationships and interactions among students as well as between students and institutional administrators in order to create a peaceful, stable, and harmonious pesantren environment. Ethics guide students to act in accordance with accepted social and moral norms, while legal principles help prevent actions that may lead to legal consequences. Thus, ethics and law are two complementary components in shaping healthy and sustainable Islamic cultural behavior at Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin Gowa. Cultural values can develop into ethical norms that may later be formalized into law. Islamic culture serves as the foundation of Islamic civilization, built upon key elements such as *tauhid* (belief in the Oneness of Allah SWT), *akhlaq* (morality and ethics), and knowledge. Islamic culture and civilization encompass *aqidah* (creed), *sharia* (Islamic law), and *muamalah* (social transactions), which together reinforce educational strength, ethical-legal principles, and social cultural order. Democratic learning enables students to internalize ethical values derived from Islamic teachings, i.e., values that have been deeply rooted and practiced throughout the history of Islamic civilization.

**Keywords:** Ethics, Law, Democratization, Islamic Civilization, Islamic Culture

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bentuk serta gambaran dalam proses demokratisasi pembelajaran di Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin Gowa dalam prespektif etika dan hukum, untuk membentuk perilaku budaya islami. Fokus kajian adalah bagaimana bentuk demokratisasi pendidikan dalam wawasan etika hukum dalam membentuk perilaku budaya Islami. Melalui pendekatan fenomenologi data diperoleh dengan cara observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa standar etika hukum mengatur hubungan dan interaksi antara sesama peserta didik dan pengelola lembaga pendidikan untuk mewujudkan suasana lingkungan Pesantren yang damai, stabil, kondusif dan harmonis. Etika membimbing peserta didik berperilaku sesuai dengan norma sosial dan moral yang diterima. Sedangkan hukum membantu menghindari tindakan yang dapat menimbulkan konsekuensi hukum. Dengan demikian, etika dan hukum adalah dua komponen penting yang saling melengkapi dalam membentuk perilaku budaya Islami yang sehat dan berkelanjutan di Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin Gowa. Nilai-nilai budaya tertentu dapat membentuk norma-norma etika yang kemudian dapat diadopsi menjadi hukum formal. Budaya Islami menjadi sumber utama peradaban Islam dengan beberapa faktornya yakni tauhid yaitu kepercayaan kepada Ke-Esa-an Allah swt. akhlaq yakni moralitas dan etika serta faktor ilmu pengetahuan. Kebudayaan dan peradaban Islam meliputi keseluruhan aqidah, syariah dan muamalah yang membangun kekuatan pendidikan, etika hukum dan sekaligus sebagai tatanan budaya sosial. Pembelajaran demokratis membantu santri menemukan nilai-nilai etis yang bersumber dari ajaran Islam yang banyak dipraktikkan dan terekam dalam sejarah peradaban umat Islam semenjak dahulu.

**Kata Kunci:** Etika, Hukum, Demokratisasi, Peradaban Islam, Budaya Islami

## Introduction

Ethics and law are two key components of cultural behavior that contribute to social order and harmony. Ethics are a set of moral principles that assist individuals to determine what is right and wrong, good and evil. Ethics often originate from cultural values, religion, and philosophies that are embraced by a community or individual. Ethics are subjective and more flexible, and thus, they may vary across individuals and groups. Ethics encourages societally acceptable and moral activities. While no explicit legal sanctions exist, transgressions of ethical standards may result in societal consequences. On the contrary, law is a system of rules established and enforced by governmental institutions to regulate social behavior. Laws are derived from constitutions, statutes, and regulations passed by legislative bodies. They are objective, clearly defined, and apply to all members of society. Laws function to maintain public order, protect individual rights, and ensure justice. Violations of the law are subject to formal sanctions such as fines, imprisonment, or other legal measures.

In the sociocultural sphere, education can uphold the pillars that promote the advancement of civilization and wisdom. UNESCO has identified the four pillars of education that support holistic development: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. Learning to know refers to enhancing students' cognition by mastering knowledge in depth and breadth in specific fields. Learning to do focuses on students to acquire practical skills to apply knowledge, collaborate in teams, solve problems in various situations, and create new works through their own discoveries. Learning to be puts emphasis on the development of independence and responsibility to achieve shared goals, and learning to live together signifies that humans are social beings who constantly need the presence of others, and therefore, students must learn to understand, respect, and play positive roles within their communities.<sup>1</sup>

The pillars of learning can effectively and optimally function when they are implemented in accordance with established rules and laws. Here, law serves as an instrument of the state, whose intent is to maintain order, ensure peace, and organize national life in pursuit of justice and balance between rights and responsibilities. Law comprises a set of legal norms which contains directives and prohibitions that regulate social order and, therefore, must be upheld by members of society.<sup>2</sup>

Further, law can also be understood as a framework that maintains harmony within diversity, ensuring freedom while aligning individual wills with those of others. Essentially, law governs human relationships within society based on various fundamental principles. Every individual has the right to act according to their own ability and will; however, others possess the same right. When personal desires are pursued without regard to prevailing legal norms and values, social imbalance and disorder inevitably arise.

These pillars of learning are closely related to the concept of democratic education, which fosters freedom in the learning process. Students are encouraged to explore and seek knowledge (through inquiry and participation) within the boundaries established by the teacher. In so doing, students may face challenges in independently grasping knowledge comprehensively and accurately; however, this process provides students with valuable training, which help them cultivate

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<sup>1</sup>Jwalin Patel, "Learning to Live Together Harmoniously: A Conceptual Framework," *Cambridge Journal of Education* 52, no. 3 (2022); Jwalin Patel, "The Role of Dissent, Conflict, and Open Dialogue in Learning to Live Together Harmoniously," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 55, no. 6 (2023); <https://fkip.unisma.ac.id/pramuka-dan-4-pilar-pendidikan-menurut-unesco/>.

<sup>2</sup>Risa Diningrum, Eni Fariyatul Fahyuni, and Renny Oktafia, "Education Quality Management Based on Islamic Boarding School," *Proceedings of The ICECRS* 7 (2020); H.A.R. Tilaar, *Standarisasi Pendidikan Nasional Suatu Tinjauan Kritis* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2006), p. 6; Sitti Aisyah Mu'min, et.al, Inclusive Education Policy for Children with Special Needs: A Review of Stakeholder Perceptions in Southeast Sulawesi, *El-Ussrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga*, Vol. 8 No. 1 (2025).

observation, critical thinking, and the ability to construct understanding through personal experience.

Educational qualifications, as understood by society, can become a central focus of study for all stakeholders in the field of education. Such inquiry aims to generate new concepts that may serve as the foundation for educational management in the future. The low quality of education should be addressed through various innovative breakthroughs grounded in national culture, which enable Indonesia to achieve strong competitiveness in the years to come. Therefore, innovation is crucial for improving the quality of Indonesian education and can be seen as a strategic effort to enhance national capacity through the deployment of educators across the archipelago. This initiative also reflects Indonesia's commitment to balancing the development of human and natural resources in each region. Moreover, Indonesia is also recognized for its concern for global human development with other countries, such as Malaysia, which helps enhance its reputation and diplomatic standing in the region, thereby strengthening its bargaining position internationally.

More often than not, educational quality is assessed by how well academic knowledge aligns with the demands of the job market. As such, graduates should not only be prepared to fill positions within government institutions but also be equipped to create new employment opportunities. This goal can only be realized if the education system successfully produces individuals with broad knowledge and strong practical skills, which allow them to innovate and establish new enterprises.

In the view of Sudarwan Danim, what is currently needed is not merely an increase in the number of graduates, but also the tangible impact of education, i.e., its utility or employability. Hence, education should empower individuals to enter the workforce, whether in the public or private sector, or to create new employment opportunities. Indonesian education, therefore, should retain its distinctive character, which is rooted in religiosity, culture, and independence.<sup>3</sup>

In the realm of education, quality is a non-negotiable aspect, whose effects extend beyond a single dimension, influencing every facet of a nation's life. For Indonesia in particular, quality education is highly essential given the nation's vast and diverse geography, its large population, and its rich yet historically colonized socio-cultural context. When human resources are weak or of low quality, the country's abundant natural resources, such as fisheries, minerals, oil, and gas, tend to be managed and exploited by foreign parties. Consequently, these resources fail to provide equitable benefits to the Indonesian people as a whole.

In relation to the above, the development of human and natural resources must be viewed as integral to education's purpose. Education should be evaluated

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<sup>3</sup> Sudarwan Danim, *Inovasi Pendidikan Dalam Upaya Peningkatan Profesionalisme Tenaga Kependidikan* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2002), p. 17.

based on its contribution to developing learners into valuable citizens, i.e., individuals who are prepared to face future challenges and actively participate in national progress.<sup>4</sup>

Holistically, educational quality should take into account the effective management of educational institutions, which encompasses clear goal setting, strategic planning, regular review, as well as internal monitoring and external reporting.<sup>5</sup> A high-quality education or the achievements of students do not happen by chance; it is the deliberate result of concerted efforts by teachers through well-designed learning activities, both inside and outside the classroom.

Education transforms knowledge with the aim of shaping students' personalities and behaviors toward a higher cultural standard, enhancing intellectual ability, and fostering a healthy social and environmental culture. It is a natural aspect of human life that people depend on one another, i.e., supporting, helping, and working together to create a healthy and productive environment. A healthy life can be described as a life free from unnecessary burdens or one lived in a state of well-being. The most important aspect of a healthy life is overall health itself, which includes physical, mental, and social well-being as described in Law No. 23 of 1993 concerning Health. The law defines that health is a state of physical, mental, and social well-being that enables individuals to live productively in both social and economic dimensions. Health shall be understood as an integral whole, which comprises physical, mental, and social aspects, within which mental health constitutes an inseparable component. Thus, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is especially significant during adolescence as teenagers are highly sensitive in terms of character, physical development, mental state, social relations, and economic conditions.<sup>6</sup> Simultaneously, the knowledge acquired by students, whether consciously or unconsciously, serves as a guide in fostering a culturally grounded life within a healthy environment.

Preliminary observations and interviews in the Pesantren (Islamic Boarding School) Sultan Hasanuddin Gowa showed that the institution has well-developed and satisfactory infrastructure. The pesantren is also equipped with complete facilities, including classrooms, a library, a canteen, administrative offices, and teachers' rooms. The classrooms are clean, and the school grounds appear green, organized, and well-maintained, all of which create a comfortable learning atmosphere both inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, the learning environment is quite democratic, wherein students are encouraged to study independently and engage in peer tutorials. At the same time, the pesantren

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<sup>4</sup>Catherine Albertyn, "Contested Substantive Equality in the South African Constitution: Beyond Social Inclusion towards Systemic Justice," *South African Journal on Human Rights* 34, no. 3 (2018); Yosari Iriantara, *Pendidikan Berbasis Mutu Prinsip-Prinsip Perumusan Dan Tata Langkah Penerapan*, IV (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007), p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Tilaar, *Standarisasi Pendidikan Nasional Suatu Tinjauan Kritis*, p. 67.

<sup>6</sup>Law Number 23 of 1993 concerning Health

fosters a conducive, enjoyable, and productive atmosphere that reflects its distinctive learning culture.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of education, most pesantren and other educational institutions integrate ethical and moral instruction into their curricula to help students understand and apply ethical principles in daily life. Teachers become role models in order to exemplify ethical conduct for their students. The pesantren also enforces rules and policies that students must abide to maintain a safe and conducive learning environment. In a similar vein, educational law defines the rights and responsibilities of students, including the right to quality education and freedom from discrimination. Violations of pesantren regulations or national laws, such as violence, bullying, or drug abuse, may result in disciplinary or legal sanctions. Furthermore, the law protects students from harmful actions such as violence or harassment within the school environment. The implementation of ethics and law in education is essential to cultivating a positive, safe, and supportive learning culture that promotes the holistic development of students.

Islamic culture, as the foundation of Islamic civilization, has played a significant role in the growth, dissemination, and enduring influence of Islamic civilization throughout history. Islamic culture has also become the central source of inspiration and guidance for the development of Islamic society, which is grounded in the following core principles. *Tawhid* (monotheism or the belief in the oneness of Allah) forms the foundation of all aspects of life, which directs individual and collective actions toward attaining Allah's pleasure. *Akhlaq* (morality and ethics) puts emphasis on the importance of virtuous and ethical conduct in all spheres of life, including social, political, and economic interactions. Knowledge (*ilm*) encourages the pursuit of learning as both an act of worship and a religious duty for every Muslim, inspiring significant advancements in various fields of science and human endeavor.

### Democratic Learning in Theoretical Perspective

Democratic learning, despite being traditionally associated with political contexts where the emphasis is on ensuring equal treatment for all members of society, has gained relevance in education. Although its use in educational settings is less conventional, its practices and objectives are increasingly evident in learning processes, especially through active, participatory, and creative teaching methods.

#### 1. The Concept of the Democratization of Learning

The issue of democratizing learning in Indonesia is relatively new and has not yet become a familiar topic in academic discourse, even though democratic

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<sup>7</sup>Observation results with Marwan, Principal at Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024; Interview with Suhardi, Teacher at Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024; Interview with Muslimah, Teacher at Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

practices in education have existed for quite some time, though not in a systematic or explicit form. The term democracy, derived from ancient Greek, literally means power of the people.<sup>8</sup> In general, democracy refers to an idea or worldview that upholds equality of rights and obligations, as well as fair treatment for all citizens.<sup>9</sup> The term democratic, therefore, describes attitudes and actions that reflect these principles.<sup>10</sup> In this context, the democratization of learning emphasizes creating open spaces that allow students to explore, solve problems, and appreciate learning outcomes based on their own abilities.

Democratization in education involves the equitable dissemination of knowledge, equal learning opportunities, holistic perspectives, individual freedom, respect for personal differences, recognition of children's intelligence, appropriate treatment according to their level of reasoning, and kindness in interaction. This understanding highlights that the democratization of learning is a process that positions students according to their unique characteristics. Every learner is given equal opportunity to express opinions, share ideas based on their abilities, and receive fair and respectful treatment from the teacher. Since students in any classroom vary in age, talents, interests, abilities, and backgrounds, these differences should be managed effectively by the teacher to enhance the learning process. Diversity, when properly handled, becomes a valuable resource for fostering unity, cooperation, and mutual understanding among students.

Democratic learning can thus be understood as the dynamic interaction that occurs within the classroom, e.g., between teachers and students, among students themselves, and between students and various learning materials or resources. Teachers play a central role in facilitating this interaction because, rather than functioning solely as a transmitter of information, they act as a motivator and facilitator who nurture a friendly, inclusive, and supportive learning environment. A democratic classroom emerges when teachers provide students with ample time and opportunities to learn, explore, and engage actively. In such an environment, teachers should promote mutual respect, collaboration, and encouragement among students in order to foster a sense of shared purpose and community within the learning process.<sup>11</sup>

The mechanisms of political democracy are not entirely the same as those applied in education. However, in essence, a democratic school embodies the spirit of democracy in the planning, management, and implementation of education. This democratic spirit is also reflected in the following core principles:

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<sup>8</sup>Martin Strouhal, "On the Current Problems of Education for Democracy," *Journal of Pedagogy* 11, no. 2 (2020).

<sup>9</sup>Leonardo Morlino, "'Good' and 'Bad' Democracies: How to Conduct Research into the Quality of Democracy," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 20, no. 1 (2004).

<sup>10</sup>Edda Sant, "Democratic Education: A Theoretical Review (2006–2017)," *Review of Educational Research* 89, no. 5 (2019).

a) providing open-mindedness and equal access to ideas for everyone, b) creating space for each member of the school community to contribute their abilities in solving problems within the school, c) recognizing and respecting differing opinions as valuable input for evaluating ideas, issues, and regulations applied in the school, and d) showing concern for dignity, individual rights, and minority rights.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, a more specific understanding of democracy is also necessary within the learning process itself, wherein students should not be treated merely as objects of instruction, but also as active subjects in their own learning. Thus, the *quality of education*<sup>13</sup> depends largely on the quality of the learners, and high-quality education is typically characterized by classrooms that allow for freedom of learning while maintaining *accountability*.<sup>14</sup>

Several aspects of education should embody democratic values, which include: 1) learning without discrimination, where all students are treated equally regardless of their background; 2) developing skills and competencies that are aligned with current knowledge and societal needs; 3) ensuring the continuity of learning through peer tutoring and group-based assignments; and 4) cultivating diverse intelligences and providing opportunities for students to explore and develop a variety of skills and talents.<sup>15</sup> In learning, democratic principles can be seen through various instructional models, such as: a) *The Classical Model*, in which the teacher focuses mainly on delivering content and transmitting knowledge through structured lessons, and b) *The Technological Model*, which emphasizes the transmission of information and the enhancement of individual competencies through modern learning tools and media.

## 2. The Direction of the Democratization of Learning

Democratic learning can be positioned as a central element that gives depth and quality to the continuity of Islamic education. The spirit of democratization in learning is not a new concept; it has long existed within traditional Islamic educational practices. Traditionally, learning in Islamic education has emphasized close interaction between teachers and students. In

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<sup>12</sup> Fait A. Muedini, "Teaching 'Islam and Human Rights' in the Classroom," *PS - Political Science and Politics* 45, no. 1 (2012); Muhammad Mawardi Djalaluddin et al., "The Implementation of Ta'zīr Punishment as an Educational Reinforcement in Islamic Law," *Samarah* 7, no. 1 (2023).

<sup>13</sup> Johannes Kiess, "Learning by Doing: The Impact of Experiencing Democracy in Education on Political Trust and Participation," *Politics* 42, no. 1 (2022); Linnea M. Haren Conely and Leslie A. Cordie, "The Learning Democracy: The Relationship Between Adult Informal Learning, Lifelong Learning Mindset, and Civic Engagement," *Adult Learning* 34, no. 3 (2023).

<sup>14</sup> Iriantara, *Pendidikan Berbasis Mutu Prinsip-Prinsip Perumusan Dan Tata Langkah Penerapan*, 19.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Nadeau, Jean François Daoust, and Ruth Dassonneville, "Winning, Losing, and the Quality of Democracy," *Political Studies* 71, no. 2 (2023).

*halaqah* (circle-based learning), for example, students sit around the teacher, which creates psychological closeness and open communication. Additionally, when teachers assign tasks such as memorization or other exercises, students are given the freedom to choose their own methods and approaches to complete the assignments. Therefore, if democratic learning is understood as an effort to empower students' potential in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, it can be concluded that the essence of democratic learning has long been embedded in Islamic educational traditions for centuries. Incorporating democratic learning into education represents a progressive and systematic attempt to align long-standing educational practices with democratic principles. Furthermore, democratic learning can become a platform for generating new ideas, which ensures that educational processes evolve in a more holistic and meaningful way. The orientation of democratic learning can be described in the following.

The first is *humanistic interaction*, in which students are regarded as unique individuals with diverse capabilities and characteristics. Their uniqueness may be reflected in their intelligence, spirituality, awareness, and skills. Thus, while each learner is treated according to their individual needs and abilities, all students are given equal opportunities to participate, express themselves, and experience a shared sense of fulfillment in the learning process. Students are guided to discover their true identity, including their intellectual abilities, talents, and interests. Learning is not merely transformative; it also allows students to experience psychological satisfaction and to be valued for who they are, not merely for their achievements or family background. They are encouraged to be active learners, i.e., to think critically about what they learn and to develop maturity in evaluating the problems they encounter.<sup>16</sup>

Another essential aspect of democratic learning is that teachers must understand the various issues students face, whether social, political, cultural, or economic, that often occur outside the classroom or in the community. Each student is connected to certain cultural values that continually shape personal habits and identity. Democracy, through the freedom it fosters, creates a positive learning atmosphere in which students train themselves to make decisions, form opinions, and manage their interactions independently. Students are free from psychological pressure when such freedom becomes part of their daily lives. They complete their schoolwork based on their own abilities and tend to avoid relying on others as long as they can manage tasks independently. Students' leaps of thought and creativity must be responded to constructively by teachers as a means to encourage their personal growth and shape humanistic social behavior.

Humanistic learning can be seen in students' ability to recognize their strengths and weaknesses while avoiding egoism, realizing that their individuality

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<sup>16</sup>Armai Arief, *Reformasi Pendidikan* (Jakarta: CRS Press, 2005), p. 93.

is valuable and meaningful among peers. They use their abilities fully and persist despite various limitations and challenges, accepting themselves and others as they are.

Humanistic education is also reflected in the reciprocal roles of teachers and students. Teachers act as guides and mentors who understand the developmental changes that students experience. Likewise, students also take part in the process of knowledge transfer as a way to acquire new understanding. Communication in this context takes the form of two-way interaction, e.g., between teacher and student, and among students themselves, which fosters humanistic relationships that enhance learning success. This humanistic communication is developed with the aim of shaping students into human people, i.e., individuals who possess faith, knowledge, and respect in treating others with dignity. In another sense, being truly human means developing one's capacity to understand oneself and one's life more deeply.<sup>17</sup> Students are thus expected to change and grow not only for their own benefit but also with genuine concern for others around them.

The second is *developing innovative learners*. Education, as both an institutional and systemic activity, aims to shape the personality and character of learners. Being innovative means being an intellectual thinker with strong analytical ability to understand natural phenomena and processes through both inductive and deductive scientific methods. An innovative individual builds self-awareness and adaptability in any situation or condition, thus being able to utilize natural processes and resources for the benefit and well-being of all humankind.<sup>18</sup>

The concept above reflects innovation as an ideal of human perfection, which can be understood through the following characteristics: 1) Being earnest in seeking knowledge and always grateful for the blessings of Allah present in the heavens and the earth; 2) Being able to distinguish between good and bad, and choosing to uphold goodness even when standing alone in doing so; 3) Being critical and reflective when listening to others, capable of evaluating theories, propositions, and arguments presented by different people, and 4) Being willing to share knowledge with others to improve society, and having the courage to voice truth and provide reminders when inequality or injustice occurs.

### **Forms of Democratization in Learning within the Context of Legal Ethics and Socio-Cultural Behavior**

The democratic perspective of learning within legal ethics is carried out by involving various elements, such as students, educators, learning materials,

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<sup>17</sup>Arief, *Reformasi Pendidikan*.

<sup>18</sup>Pavel Shlykov, "The Secularization and Desecularization Nexus in the Turkish Context: What Is Behind?," *Politics and Religion Journal*, 2019; Rhys Williams and Peter L. Berger, "The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics," *Sociology of Religion* 62, no. 1 (2001).

media, strategies, and teaching methods, as well as other essential components, including learning evaluation. In particular, students, who are in the stage of personal development and maturation, require both freedom and structure in the learning process. Every individual possesses freedom i.e., “natural rights that inherently belong to each person”,<sup>19</sup> and thus, freedom cannot be denied, restricted, or taken away by any individual or group.

At the same time, learning must be supported by order and adherence to the law, whether in the form of school regulations or higher-level laws, such as those related to education. Law No. 20 of 2023 concerning the national education policy, for example, affirms that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and process through which students actively develop their potential, enabling them to acquire spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills necessary for themselves, society, the nation, and the state from birth onward.<sup>20</sup>

In this context, law can be understood as the set of objectives to be achieved and internalized by students, encompassing aspects of religiosity, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills. This is more strongly emphasized within the framework of legal ethics. The term *ethics* originates from the Greek word *ethos*, which, in its broader meaning, relates to modes of thought, cultural customs, feelings, attitudes, character, morality, and traditions.<sup>21</sup>

Ethics and law are inseparable in society. Society itself is built upon a legal system, not only because of an inherent inclination to obey the law but also because the law provides a guarantee for creating a conducive environment. Obedience to the law consistently reflects human values, such as mutual respect, protection, cooperation, and dignity, which hold significant importance in social life. Furthermore, the law plays a vital role in preserving balance and harmony within an orderly society by restraining excessive desires and egoism, which could otherwise disrupt social peace and harmony.

Ethics encompasses a broad scope, including ways of thinking, habits, customs, emotions, attitudes, character, and morality. These dimensions are

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<sup>19</sup>Syafa'atun Almirzanah, “On Human Rights and The Qur’anic Perspective: Freedom of Religion and the Rule of Apostasy,” *Al-Jami’ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 45, no. 2 (2007): 367–88; Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, “Qur’an, Shari’a and Human Rights: Foundations, Deficiencies and Prospects,” *Concillium* 2 (1990).

<sup>20</sup>[https://jdih.kemdikbud.go.id/sjdih/siperpu/dokumen/salinan/UU\\_tahun2003\\_nomor020.pdf](https://jdih.kemdikbud.go.id/sjdih/siperpu/dokumen/salinan/UU_tahun2003_nomor020.pdf)

<sup>21</sup>Jonathan Law, *A Dictionary of Law, A Dictionary of Law*, 2022; Oxford Paperback Reference, *Oxford Dictionary of Law, Oxford Paperback Reference*, vol. 20, 2003; Omar Madhloom, “A Kantian Moral Cosmopolitan Approach to Teaching Professional Legal Ethics,” *German Law Journal* 23, no. 8 (2022); Lijana Valanciene and Dovile Valanciene, “Trends in Legal Ethics Research: A Bibliometric Analysis,” *Legal Ethics* 25, no. 1–2 (2022); David Luban and Bradley Wendel, “Philosophical Legal Ethics: An Affectionate History,” *Revista de Derecho* 33, no. 2 (2020); Luban and Wendel.

closely related to human life; when individuals embody them, they may experience progress, transformation, and development that ultimately contribute to the advancement of human civilization.

Another concept derived from the above analysis is *the history of culture* as an inseparable unity with humanity given that it is consciously created by humans, and in turn, humans shape cultural history. However, not every event experienced by humans constitutes history or civilization, and only certain events are regarded as historical, based on their uniqueness and the values or lessons they offer for the wider community. In the opinion of Koentjaraningrat, culture encompasses the entire system of human ideas, actions, and creations within social life, which becomes part of human existence through learning.<sup>22</sup>

Democratic learning takes the form of active and participatory learning, which can serve as a trigger for the emergence of new ideas on an individual basis. *Praktek individu* biasanya disebut *seatwork*.<sup>23</sup> To implement this in the learning process, teachers need to firstly prepare *seatwork* by providing appropriate instructional materials and resources in accordance with the number of students for individual practice activities.

Enhancing students' creativity is highly prioritized through various methods or approaches that emphasize learner-centeredness. Within the framework of democratizing education, educational "reform" must be able to give rise to a new paradigm of learning. This paradigm views the school not merely as a mechanically structured organization with the sole aim of fostering students' holistic, intellectual, personal, and social development. Rather, it conceives the school as a constellation of diverse interactions, both academic and non-academic, including teacher–student interactions in the learning process, teacher–administrative staff interactions, as well as students' engagement with other units within the school environment.<sup>24</sup>

Educational institutions play a highly strategic role in fostering and cultivating a democratic culture by adhering to several key principles: (1) Both teachers and students should actively participate in the learning process; (2) The surrounding environment must be involved and enhanced in the learning process, where textbook-based materials are presented in ways that relate to real-life contexts; (3) Effective leadership is required, with teachers managing and guiding the learning process to achieve instructional goals; (4) The practice of education

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<sup>22</sup>Koentjaraningrat, *Manusia Dan Kebudayaan Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2002).

<sup>23</sup>Daniel Muijs et al., "School Effectiveness and School Improvement : An International Journal of Research, Policy and Practice State of the Art – Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Learning," *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 25, no. 2 (2014); Keith Saunders, "Effective Teaching: Evidence and Practice – By Daniel Muijs & David Reynolds," *British Journal of Educational Technology* 43, no. 1 (2012).

<sup>24</sup>Doug Lombardi et al., "The Curious Construct of Active Learning," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 22, no. 1 (2021); Zamroni, *Pendidikan Dan Demokrasi Dalam Transisi* (Jakarta: PSAP, 2007), p. 97.

should reflect democratic life by consistently upholding democratic principles; (5) All students should be given opportunities to actively participate in decision-making; (6) Students must also be provided with opportunities to understand differences, particularly concerning normative issues; (7) Learners should be encouraged to explore, discover, and solve problems encountered in the learning process; and finally, (8) hierarchical relationships should be minimized to promote inclusivity and collaboration.

The democratization of learning is regarded as a crucial instrument for fostering harmonious communication between teachers and students. It encompasses both active and participatory learning.

Active learning is oriented toward students' involvement in the learning process, whether in classroom activities or at home. As a new approach in instructional practice, active learning seeks to balance the teacher's role with the tasks and responsibilities assigned to students. Ideally, learning should not be perceived merely as the teacher's domain, in which students are viewed as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge that may not align with their talents, interests, or needs. This kind of a perception should be transformed, particularly among educators, who should no longer regard themselves as superior figures entitled to treat students according to their own preferences. Teachers should instead acknowledge and value students' inherent abilities and capacities to develop naturally along with proper direction and assistance from educators. While teachers strive to ensure that students receive the required knowledge, students are also encouraged to grow their own abilities, which will allow them to properly integrate and master the subject matter.

Learning, in essence, is the empowerment of students so that their potential can gradually grow and develop in accordance with their own individual efforts. Students need extensive practice that involves direct observation, exploring various alternatives they wish to use, and finding solutions to problems based on their own abilities. Empowerment-oriented learning offers a number of advantages, which include: 1) recognizing oneself, 2) understanding one's strengths and weaknesses, 3) having a strong desire to change, 4) being able to respect and accept others as they are, 5) being open to receiving criticism from others, 6) possessing strong principles, and 7) maintaining self-control.<sup>25</sup>

The descriptions outlined above signify that the democratization of learning is a complex task, as it requires teachers to understand students' talents, interests, differences, and diverse backgrounds. Teachers must also adapt instructional materials to suitable methodologies, while overcoming the challenge of guiding learners toward becoming well-rounded individuals. Such

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<sup>25</sup> Srividya Sheshadri et al., "Towards Synergistic Women's Empowerment-Transformative Learning Framework for TVET in Rural India," *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 75, no. 2 (2023); Aunurrahman, *Belajar Dan Pembelajaran* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2009), p. 12.

completeness is characterized not only by biological or physical changes that can be directly observed, but also by mental development, which is reflected in social behavior and interaction. In this regard, students are expected to achieve several qualities: (a) possessing strong mental resilience, (b) developing a high level of self-confidence, (c) maintaining a forward-looking mindset, (d) continuously developing their personal potential, (e) demonstrating initiative and creativity, (f) cultivating a strong enthusiasm for life, and (g) being able to communicate effectively.<sup>26</sup>

It is a fundamental necessity that learning must undergo a profound and comprehensive transformation, one that aligns with the needs of students. Such change begins with rethinking how students learn and how teachers teach, rather than focusing solely on outcomes.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, learning should be viewed as a unique process that emphasizes the following aspects, namely: (a) learning as a means of acquiring new information, (b) learning strategies that help students complete tasks effectively, and (c) the learning process itself as the central element, as it can be influenced through both direct and indirect interaction.

In addition to *active learning*, there is also *participatory learning*, which refers to “voluntary contributions, both material and non-material, through shared roles and cooperation in solving problems and fulfilling collective needs.” Providing greater opportunities for community involvement in the educational process can generate positive impacts and support sustainable development.<sup>28</sup>

Students, as central participants in the learning process, should experience instruction designed with media, methods, and approaches that are tailored to their individual conditions and understood holistically. Learning becomes a means to convey and construct knowledge through structured stages, while also granting students the freedom to explore, discover, communicate, and make their own decisions. Students are able to grow independently with stimulation from their

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<sup>26</sup>Aunurrahman, *Belajar Dan Pembelajaran*, 12.

<sup>27</sup>Alexandra C. Lau et al., “Characteristics of Departments with High-Use of Active Learning in Introductory STEM Courses: Implications for Departmental Transformation,” *International Journal of STEM Education* 11, no. 1 (2024); Jesse Eickholt, Matthew R. Johnson, and Patrick Seeling, “Practical Active Learning Stations to Transform Existing Learning Environments into Flexible, Active Learning Classrooms,” *IEEE Transactions on Education* 64, no. 2 (2021); Isabel Vale and Ana Barbosa, “Active Learning Strategies for an Effective Mathematics Teaching and Learning,” *European Journal of Science and Mathematics Education* 11, no. 3 (2023).

<sup>28</sup>Halar Memon et al., “Active Learning-Driven Uncertainty Reduction for in-Flight Particle Characteristics of Atmospheric Plasma Spraying of Silicon,” *Engineering Applications of Artificial Intelligence* 128 (2024); Susanna Hartikainen et al., “The Concept of Active Learning and the Measurement of Learning Outcomes: A Review of Research in Engineering Higher Education,” *Education Sciences* 9, no. 4 (2019); Kameryn Denaro et al., “Predicting Implementation of Active Learning by Tenure-Track Teaching Faculty Using Robust Cluster Analysis,” *International Journal of STEM Education* 9, no. 1 (2022).

environment, e.g., parents, siblings, family, teachers, and peers, and this requires only the necessary space to fully explore and express their potential.

Within this learning process, various theories of instruction can be identified, namely: 1) *The Classical Model*, i.e., the teacher focuses on delivering information through subjects and teaching materials; 2) *The Technological Model*, i.e., the teacher views education as the transmission of information aimed at developing students' individual competencies; 3) *The Personalized Model*, i.e., learning is designed based on students' interests, experiences, and developmental stages to actualize their individual potential, and 4) *The Interaction Model*, i.e., learning emphasizes interdependence between teachers and students, fostering dialogic communication throughout the learning process.<sup>29</sup>

The aforementioned descriptions depict that learning is inherently transformative since it involves not only the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student, but also the cultivation of students' abilities through active engagement in the learning process. Participatory learning, in this case, means that students are given the opportunity to explore and discover knowledge independently, with their discoveries later reinforced through the teacher's guidance and knowledge sharing. Students' findings may also vary; some accurate, others less so. Therefore, the teacher must exercise wisdom in finding a balanced approach, by integrating differing viewpoints into a shared understanding that all students can agree upon. Within the perspective of participatory learning, instructional approaches can be further explored through different group models, such as the social interaction model, role-play model, information-processing model, and personal model.<sup>30</sup>

Firstly, the social interaction model is grounded in the view that every aspect of learning is inseparable from reciprocal relationships among individuals. Consequently, learning should be constructed through broad interactive engagement among students by cultivating collaboration both inside and outside the classroom. Cooperation in the learning process is essential for students, as it allows knowledge to be shared with peers, enables individual abilities to be recognized by others, fosters mutual understanding, encourages respect for differing opinions, and sharpens interpersonal comprehension.

The group interaction learning model can be observed in several instructional forms, including group investigation, role-playing, jurisprudential inquiry, laboratory training, and social science research.

#### 1. Group Investigation.

Group investigation serves as a medium to encourage and guide students' engagement in the learning process. Student involvement is essential, as it enables learners to optimally fulfill their basic needs related to knowledge, values, and

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<sup>29</sup>Aunurrahman, *Belajar Dan Pembelajaran*, p. 146.

<sup>30</sup>Aunurrahman, p. 146.

experiences. Active participation in group investigation may take the form of exchanging ideas through open and free communication, as well as collaborating in activities ranging from planning to selecting topics for discussion.

The characteristics of group investigation learning can be identified in several ways: 1) students work in small groups with relative independence from the teacher, 2) their activities are directed toward addressing pre-formulated questions, 3) the learning process requires them to collect data, analyze it, and draw conclusions, 4) students employ a variety of approaches in their learning, and 5) the outcomes of student learning are shared and exchanged with their peers.<sup>31</sup>

Reflecting on this perspective, the *group investigation learning model* demonstrates that the focus of learning lies entirely on the students. The teacher's strategic role is consistently directed toward managing and developing students' abilities by taking into account their talents, interests, skills, and potential for optimal growth. Students are trained to work collaboratively in groups, where they learn to reconcile differing opinions and desires within the team.

## 2. Role-Playing

The essence of the *role-playing model* lies in emphasizing participation and observation in real-life situations or problems while striving to resolve them. The benefits of role-playing include expanding knowledge, exploring one's feelings, values, and perceptions, developing skills and attitudes for problem-solving, and examining lessons through various approaches.

The steps in implementing this model can be outlined as follows: (a) stimulating group motivation by introducing students to a problem so that they recognize it as an area to be studied, (b) selecting participants, during which teachers and students describe various roles, including their appearance, feelings, and possible expressions, (c) determining the stage setting, where role players prepare an outline of the scenario, (d) preparing observers who will evaluate and comment on the effectiveness of the performance, (e) carrying out the activity, in which role players assume their roles, internalize the situation spontaneously, and respond realistically to one another, (f) conducting discussion and evaluation to determine the importance of the problem and the extent to which participants and observers were engaged both intellectually and emotionally, (g) repeating the role play, allowing students and teachers to share new interpretations of the roles and to decide whether the activity should be performed by new individuals or by the same participants, (h) holding further discussion and evaluation, where students may accept solutions while teachers encourage realistic alternatives and guide reflection on the subsequent steps of problem-solving, and (i) sharing experiences and generalizing. Although immediate generalizations are not expected regarding

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<sup>31</sup>Chanakan Sojayapan and Jintavee Khlaisang, "The Effect of a Flipped Classroom with Online Group Investigation on Students' Team Learning Ability," *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences* 41, no. 1 (2020).

human relations in specific situations, teachers should guide discussions so that, after extended experience with role-playing strategies, students are able to generalize about approaches to problems and the consequences of the strategies employed.

### Democratic Learning Model at Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin

Active learning is a learning process in which students are given opportunities to engage more deeply in learning activities through direct interaction with the material. The goal is to identify the main ideas of the lesson and solve related problems, as well as to apply what they have just learned to real-life situations.<sup>32</sup> Through this model, students become active and independent participants in the learning process.

Jumriana asserts that students are expected to be active in the teaching and learning process, to think critically, and to be fully engaged in classroom activities.<sup>33</sup> In addition, by applying problem-solving learning, students are encouraged to find their own solutions.<sup>34</sup> This freedom, however, must still uphold legal ethics, especially when students actively seek out learning materials presented by the teacher. They do so through careful observation of texts and the meanings they contain, while engaging in discussions with peers in ways that uphold ethical and legal values. In this way, the tasks assigned by the teacher can be completed with joy, enthusiasm, and peace.<sup>35</sup>

Active learning also helps students complete their tasks responsibly while simultaneously emphasizing Islamic educational values such as *tawadhu'* (humility) and other core Islamic principles. Students are thus encouraged to communicate politely within their groups and to express their ideas and thoughts creatively.<sup>36</sup> They consistently showcase courteous and positive behavior, especially toward their peers, through offering one another space to share opinions, counterarguments, and constructive criticism to achieve deeper and more comprehensive understanding. Students also motivate and support one another in completing their assigned tasks.<sup>37</sup>

Another model applied is *participatory learning*. This approach involves teachers actively engaging students in the learning process. Participation, in this

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<sup>32</sup>Sojayapan and Khlaisang.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Jumriana, Vice Principal of Curriculum Affairs at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 26, 2024

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Ilham, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 25, 2024

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Suhardi, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 25, 2024

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Muslimah, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 25, 2024

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Rinaldi, Teacher of Qur'an Hadis at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 26, 2024

sense, refers to students' active involvement in planning, engaging with, and reflecting on the participatory learning experience.<sup>38</sup>

Participation in learning means that students are open to receiving input and advice from guidance and counseling teachers as well as other teachers. This is done when a student encounters learning difficulties, and at such times, coordination and collaboration are carried out with the homeroom teacher and other relevant parties.<sup>39</sup> Students are given the freedom to express their opinions when they face learning challenges. In one case, if a student struggles with mathematics, they are encouraged to share their difficulties openly, after which appropriate solutions are provided.<sup>40</sup>

Direct participation in the learning process increases students' motivation and interest in learning while also developing their critical thinking skills.<sup>41</sup> In this context, students participate not only with their peers, e.g., as peer tutors, but also with teachers, by asking questions to which teachers actively respond and provide guidance.<sup>42</sup> This learning model is essential because such skills are fundamental to human development; they represent life skills that form the foundation for appropriate behavior in daily life.<sup>43</sup> Participation through collaboration and communication is crucial both in their current daily interactions and in their future professional lives.

Overall, teachers recognize that active learning is an effective approach to creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences for students.<sup>44</sup> Thus, as illustrated above, both students and teachers implement an active and participatory interaction pattern throughout the learning process.

Democratic education is also reflected in the spirit of collaboration established between students and various school components, such as teachers and other educational staff. *Collaborative learning* puts emphasis on the importance of active student involvement, where teachers recognize that involving students in group discussions or other cooperative activities helps them develop a sense of ownership over their learning while enhancing their social and communication skills.<sup>45</sup> This process strengthens the interaction between teachers and students, which fosters meaningful communication that acts as an indicator of effective teacher–student engagement.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Sudjana, *Metode dan Tehnik Pembelajaran Partisipatif dalam Pembelajaran Luar Sekolah* (Bandung: Nusantara Press, 1993), p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Ilham, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Suhardi, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Muslimah, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Rinaldi, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Ilham, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Muslimah, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Muslimah, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Ilham, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

Collaboration among students is also encouraged through informal discussions, where they are free to ask questions and share difficulties encountered during lessons, either with peers, teachers, or myself as their instructor.<sup>47</sup> When a student faces learning challenges, coordination and collaboration are carried out with all relevant parties. Students, in such cases, are encouraged to openly express their concerns, e.g., their difficulties in mathematics, and teachers shall provide appropriate guidance and support to help resolve these issues.<sup>48</sup>

This kind of learning implementation is further supported by the curriculum adopted at the Madrasah/Pesantren, i.e., the *Merdeka Curriculum*, which allows students to express their opinions and engage actively with the learning material. The *discovery learning* model, for example, has been applied in biology lessons. In this approach, students observe educational videos on a Smart TV, after which the teacher provides them with student worksheets (LKPD) containing guiding questions. Each group then presents their responses to the class, receives feedback, and finally formulates a collective conclusion or reflection on the learning process, which is followed by an assessment of their work.<sup>49</sup>

The democratization of learning has also been demonstrated in the freedom provided within the educational process. This freedom acts as the foundation for developing students' potential, both in terms of character and foundational knowledge, since students naturally seek opportunities to test their abilities and explore their talents and interests. Students are given the autonomy to determine how they acquire and manage knowledge, not only within the classroom but also beyond it. In lessons on environmental conservation, for example, students are motivated to go outdoors to directly observe and connect with their surroundings.<sup>50</sup>

The teaching and learning process itself represents an aspect of democratic education, wherein teachers identify and utilize factors that support effective learning by connecting lessons to the real-world environment. Learning materials are not limited to abstract theories, but are also contextualized through everyday realities. In this way, the environment becomes an integral part of the learning experience and serves as an effective medium for both teachers and students.

Further, teachers play a significant role in fostering tolerance and providing solutions across various aspects of learning. From the view of both a teacher and a guidance counselor, students at Pesantren Hasanuddin have shown

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with Rinaldi, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Suhardi, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Jumriana, Vice Principal of Curriculum Affairs at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Rinaldi, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

to have strong tolerance in learning, as they respect differing opinions, avoid excluding others, and take responsibility for their own learning.<sup>51</sup>

Tolerance, in this regard, involves mutual understanding and respect among students and between students and teachers. This kind of attitude encourage continuous growth and the development of competencies across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

### **Democratization Strategies in Learning at Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin**

Observation carried out at Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin revealed a number of strategies used to promote democratic learning. These strategies help students engage actively in the learning process, deepen their understanding of ethical values, and internalize the principles of Islamic teachings in their daily lives. The main strategies include inquiry learning, cooperative learning, and discovery learning.

Inquiry learning concerns with students' active involvement in exploring and discovering the values embedded in the learning material. Within the framework of democratic education, this approach allows students to view content from multiple perspectives, encouraging them not only to absorb information but also to interpret, analyze, and connect knowledge with their own experiences. It also promotes independence, creativity, and full participation in the learning process. In practice, the inquiry method trains students to find and construct knowledge independently using various sources, e.g., textbooks and other references. This strategy is commonly supported by scientific and academic activities organized by MGMP, KKM, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag).<sup>52</sup>

The use of inquiry-based learning in the pesantren context has shown its effectiveness in improving students' understanding. It encourages learners to move beyond passive listening by actively observing, interpreting, and exploring learning materials.<sup>53</sup> This model empowers students to become more independent, confident, and capable of utilizing their full potential.

A teacher at the Pesantren mentioned that she frequently provided opportunities for students to seek knowledge independently through reading, observation, and interpretation of learning materials. This process was possible to carry out due to the availability of various reference books at the school, while teachers also continued to offer guidance and assistance whenever students encountered difficulties during learning.<sup>54</sup>

Through this model, students are able to explore their abilities in sourcing knowledge independently and in discovering ethical and cultural values that align

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<sup>51</sup> Interview with Suhardi, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Marwan, Principal of Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Rinaldi, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Muslimah, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

with Islamic teachings. Teachers at the same time provide ample opportunities for students to uncover the many moral and intellectual values embedded in the history of Islamic civilization.

Apart from inquiry learning, cooperative learning has also been implemented at Pesantren Sultan Hasanuddin. Cooperative learning is a strategy in which students work together in small groups to achieve shared academic goals. This approach emphasizes positive interdependence among group members while developing both individual and collective responsibility. Social interaction among students becomes the core of this learning process since each member assists others in understanding materials, solving problems, and developing interpersonal skills. Consequently, cooperative learning not only enhances academic understanding, but also cultivates social competence and effective collaboration skills.

This teaching model also illustrates how students learn in small groups with varying levels of ability. In completing group tasks, each member collaborates and supports one another to understand the learning material. Kunandar notes that cooperative learning focuses on the importance of social interaction among students, where each group member is responsible not only for their own learning, but also for the success of their peers. Thus, this model enhances not only academic understanding, but also social skills, mutual respect, and teamwork among students.<sup>55</sup>

In applying the cooperative learning model, classroom activities are designed to serve as material for discussion, debate, idea exploration, conceptual analysis, and skill development, all of which aim to help students fully comprehend the subject matter. These activities emphasize collaborative learning, where each student contributes according to their assigned role and task. Through this approach, teachers at the Pesantren recognize cooperative learning as an effective method for encouraging collaboration, interaction, mutual support, and a deeper understanding of the material. Moreover, this model aids students in developing communication and social skills, as well as the ability to solve learning challenges. Cooperative learning also boosts students' motivation since they feel more engaged and inspired when learning with their peers. This model in general have allowed for a more effective and enjoyable learning experience.<sup>56</sup>

Hence, cooperative learning can also be viewed as a key mechanism for building motivational strength, even though its function is not limitless.

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<sup>55</sup> Siribhorn Semathong, "Participatory Action Research to Develop the Teachers on Classroom Action Research," *Shanlax International Journal of Education* 11, no. 3 (2023): 23; Josef De Beer, "Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as a Practical Lens to Guide Classroom Action Research in the Biology Classroom," *American Biology Teacher* 81, no. 6 (2019).

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Muslimah, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

Motivation, as a mental process, is inherently future-oriented. Cooperative learning fosters enjoyment in working together, whether within small or large groups. Its primary goals include enhancing conceptual understanding and social values such as empathy and compassion, teaching teamwork and collaboration, promoting acceptance of students from diverse backgrounds, and improving motivation and learning productivity. As a consequence, this approach helps cultivate noble ethics among students, which serves as a moral foundation for students' participation in community life.

Another strategy used in democratic learning is discovery learning. Discovery learning expects students to engage in independent inquiry, to build upon past experiences and knowledge, and to utilize intuition, imagination, and creativity. Students, in this learning process, actively seek new information to uncover facts, to identify relationships, and to discover new truths, thereby developing their critical and analytical thinking skills.<sup>57</sup> This kind of strategy also guides students to explore ethical and moral values derived from religious teachings, especially from Islam.

The discovery learning strategy is grounded in a psychological understanding that students possess various capacities that can be developed and refined through the learning process. One of the capacities is intuition, which is the ability to grasp meaning without relying on sensory experience or logical reasoning. Intuition allows learners to perceive and understand something directly, without deliberate thought or prior study.<sup>58</sup> This ability is often considered similar to instinct or feeling, although the three differ in meaning. Intuition is abstract and cannot be perceived through human senses, including observable behavior. It is not taught through the transfer of explicit knowledge but cultivated through reflection and the sharpening of one's inner awareness. Typically, intuition provides subtle signals or insights related to the surrounding environment.

Within the context of discovery learning, the learning process focuses on students' ability to construct knowledge independently. Teachers encourage students to develop a comprehensive understanding of the material, with learning success measured by how well students can grasp and internalize key concepts on their own. This process makes learning more purposeful and fosters learner autonomy in building meaningful understanding.<sup>59</sup>

Discovery learning as a learning strategy is highly effective in developing students' entrepreneurial spirit and independence in the learning process. This strategy puts emphasis on the students' ability to investigate independently, build upon prior experiences and knowledge, utilize intuition, imagination, and creativity, and seek new information to uncover facts, correlations, and truths. Intuition, which is abstract and cannot be perceived by the human senses, is

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.ruangkerja.id/blog/discovery-learning>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.detik.com/bali/berita/d-6412984/>

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Ilham, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024

cultivated through reflection to sharpen one's *inner awareness* ("the realm of the heart"), which enables students to perceive signals and meanings from their environment. In this process, teachers stresses on the importance of comprehensive understanding, where the success of learning is measured by the extent to which students can independently grasp key concepts and make sound decisions that correspond with the intended learning goals. This intuitive capacity also nurtures ethical awareness among students, since it equips them with the knowledge and understanding necessary to analyze situations deeply and to reach well-considered conclusions. These insights act as moral guidance for appropriate behavior both within the pesantren and in the broader community.

### Conclusion

The democratization of learning emphasizes granting students the freedom to explore, communicate, and make their own decisions. Such autonomy enables students to more quickly comprehend the learning materials prepared by teachers. With their individual capacities, students are able to independently process knowledge, which ultimately leads to behavioral change rooted in higher cultural values. When students are encouraged to discover knowledge on their own, they naturally cultivate a culture of learning. The democratization of learning, facilitated by teachers through active and participatory approaches, aids in independence, responsibility, and honesty in the learning process. This approach helps students build their ethics and morality, which eventually turn into positive habits and become part of the learning culture grounded in Islamic values. Ethics and law play an integral part in transforming student behavior and culture. Ethics encompasses the moral values and principles that guide students' conduct, e.g., honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect. The law, on the other hand, aims to prevent students from engaging in misconduct that might result in instability in the educational environment. Education, therefore, should not only focus on academic achievement but also on character formation and ethical development. Nurturing students' character and behavior in accordance with Islamic ethics within the school environment can contribute to the establishment of an Islamic culture that supports the advancement of Islamic civilization in the wider Muslim society. Through the democratization of learning, students are empowered to explore knowledge independently and discover ethical and cultural values rooted in Islamic teachings. Teachers also provide the space and guidance necessary for students to uncover the rich moral and intellectual heritage recorded throughout the history of Islamic progress and civilization, thereby making it a foundation for ethical development.

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### Interviews:

- Interview with Ilham, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024
- Interview with Suhardi, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024
- Interview with Muslimah, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024
- Interview with Rinaldi, Teacher at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024
- Interview with Marwan, Principal at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024
- Interview with Jumriana, Vice Principal at Pesantren Hasanuddin, September 24, 2024