

Selective Fidelity Across Borders: Transnational Transmission of a Pesantren-Linked Qur'anic Reading Pedagogy for Indonesian Migrant Children in Malaysia

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Abstract

Many Indonesian migrant workers' children in Peninsular Malaysia cannot enter national schools because their parents lack enrolment documents. Studies of community education for them have centered on secular, state-linked provision. This article examines a contrasting case: the At-Tanzil network of Qur'anic learning studios (*sanggar bimbingan*) in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, founded and run by IKABA and IMABA, alumni associations of the Madurese Islamic boarding school Pesantren Mambaul Ulum Bata-Bata. This qualitative single-case study with embedded units draws on interviews with a coordinator, five managers, and ten teachers, field observations, and a documentary corpus. Bernstein's pedagogic device and Levitt and Glick Schiller's transnational social fields frame the analysis, separating institutional transmission, pedagogical enactment, and learning outcome. Evidence covers transmission and enactment, not learning outcomes. The network reproduces the pesantren's method across the border through alumni-mediated organization rather than direct control. Centralized coordination and recruitment through *sanad*, the chain of transmission, make *sanad* both epistemic authority and transnational connection. The central contribution, selective fidelity, describes how institutional actors protect a pedagogical core (the per-juz method, session structure, and advancement rules) and license adaptation in the organization and linguistic mediation of learning: multigrade grouping, compressed time, and pronunciation across Malay, Indonesian, and Arabic. Teachers' claims to represent the pesantren, nation, and religion conflict rather than align, and their transnational participation intersects with legal and material precarity. It yields propositions for comparative testing, not a validated model.

Keywords: Qur'anic literacy; migrant children; pedagogic recontextualization; transnational social fields; non-formal Islamic education.

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Introduction

Children living across borders still struggle to secure meaningful access to education. For children of migrant workers, exclusion often arises from a mismatch between mobility, legal status, and the administrative boundaries through which national school systems allocate educational rights, despite their educational needs.¹ When enrolment depends on residency documents, citizenship, or recognized schooling records, children present in a destination country can remain outside its public education system.² These children face an institutional paradox: they live, learn, and participate in everyday social life within the destination society, yet remain administratively marginal to the formal structures intended to guarantee schooling.

Malaysia is a relevant setting because immigration status and documentation shape migrant children's access to formal education. Foreign workers on the Visitor's Pass (Temporary Employment) cannot bring family members to Malaysia, and children who nevertheless reside there face varying requirements for lawful residence and school enrolment.³ Four conditions should be distinguished, as they describe different situations: undocumented, non-citizen, stateless, and without recognized prior schooling records. Where children of foreign migrant workers cannot attend public schools, many rely on alternative learning centers, whose progression and certification differ from those of the formal system.⁴

Educational responses to these constraints differ across Malaysia's regions. In Sabah and Sarawak, where plantation-based migrant workers may bring dependants, Community Learning Centers (CLCs) have become an established form of educational

¹ V Rajan, "Migrant Childhoods and Schooling in India: Contesting the Inclusion-Exclusion Binary," *Children's Geographies* 20 (2021): 760–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2021.2015288>; Halleli Pinson and M Arnot, "When the Universal Right to Education Meets the Liminal Legality of Migrant Children," *Citizenship Studies* 28 (2024): 818–37, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2025.2480027>.

² Pinson and Arnot, "When the Universal Right to Education Meets the Liminal Legality of Migrant Children."

³ Immigration Department of Malaysia, "Foreign Worker," *Malaysian Immigration Department* (Putrajaya: Immigration Department of Malaysia (Ministry of Home Affairs), September 30, 2026), <https://www.imi.gov.my/index.php/en/main-services/foreign-worker/>.

⁴ Tharani Loganathan et al., "Barriers and Facilitators to Education Access for Marginalised Non-Citizen Children in Malaysia: A Qualitative Study," *PLoS ONE* 18, no. 6 June (2023): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0286793>; Catherine Allerton, "Impossible Children: Illegality and Excluded Belonging among Children of Migrants in Sabah, East Malaysia," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44, no. 7 (2018): 1081–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1357464>; Catherine Allerton, "Contingent Legality and Noncitizen Schooling among Children of Migrants in Sabah, Malaysia," *Citizenship Studies* 28, no. 8 (2024): 802–17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2025.2480026>.

provision. These centers commonly use the Indonesian curriculum and receive support from plantation employers and the Indonesian consulate, with certificates that help students continue their education in Indonesia.⁵

The situation in Peninsular Malaysia is different. Indonesian migrant workers are more concentrated in urban areas, formal learning centers are less institutionalized, and few operate with direct consular support. In this context, *sanggar bimbingan* community-based learning studios have emerged as a practical response for Indonesian children excluded from mainstream schooling, often because of documentation barriers. Recent reporting from the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur indicates that approximately 75 such studios were operating across Peninsular Malaysia by April 2026 and served around 2,215 primary-age students. Most were concentrated in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur.⁶ These studios raise a question that goes beyond access: when formal educational institutions do not reach migrant children, how do community-based institutions organize, sustain, and give substantive meaning to education?

Existing scholarship explains the organizational and regulatory dimensions of migrant education, but it leaves part of this question unresolved. Research on CLCs, for example, identifies adaptive governance across Indonesian and Malaysian regulatory environments and shows how curriculum and language can sustain national identity. Other studies show that legal status and institutional recognition shape the educational vulnerability of migrant children, particularly when external shocks expose the fragility of their access to services.⁷ Broader scholarship on migrant, non-formal, and supplementary education shows that community-based arrangements can sustain educational participation when mainstream systems exclude marginalized populations.

⁵ Tharani Loganathan et al., “Undocumented: An Examination of Legal Identity and Education Provision for Children in Malaysia,” *PLoS ONE* 17, no. 2 (2022): e0263404, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0263404>; B W.-K. Wong, S Ghazali, and N Yusof, “The Condition and Challenges of Community Learning Centres in the Oil Palm Plantations of Sarawak,” *International Journal of Business and Society* 22, no. 3 (2021): 1656–72, <https://doi.org/10.33736/ijbs.4328.2021>.

⁶ “Pendidikan Anak Pekerja Migran Di Malaysia, Dari Bandar Hingga Ladang,” *Antara News*, 2026, <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/5662699>.

⁷ N Heryati, C Wijaya, and L M Jannah, “The Dynamic Governance for Basic Education Access of Indonesian Migrant Workers’ Children in Malaysia,” *Cakrawala Pendidikan* 45, no. 1 (2026): 43–56, <https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v45i1.91176>; Arif Saefudin, Jumintono, and Rejokirono, “National Identity in Transnational Life: The Case of Dual Education of Indonesian Migrant Children in Sabah, East Malaysia,” *Kajian Malaysia* 42, no. 1 (2024): 117–38, <https://doi.org/10.21315/km2024.42.1.6>; Chayanit Chamchan et al., “Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Education of Cross-Border Migrant Children in Thailand,” *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 13 (2026): 102953, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2026.102953>.

However, such arrangements often remain precarious and only partially recognized by formal regulatory structures.⁸ Yet this work has largely concentrated on educational access, academic equivalence, standardized attainment, and citizen formation. Researchers have paid much less attention to what happens to religious competence in these alternative educational spaces: what forms of religious knowledge are transmitted, who is authorized to transmit them, and how pedagogical methods are maintained when education is organized outside the institutional environment in which those methods originated.

This omission matters most for Indonesian pesantren traditions. Pesantren are institutional environments that reproduce knowledge, authority, identity, and pedagogical practice across generations. Scholarship has shown how the pesantren tradition sustains chains of transmission through *sanad*, establishes scholarly authority, and negotiates the relationship between inherited practices and institutional change.⁹ Contemporary pesantren have also experienced pedagogical standardization, including shifts from classical practices such as *sorogan* and *bandongan* toward more structured instructional arrangements.¹⁰ Recent research on Madurese pesantren shows that standardization can generate internal negotiation over pedagogical authority, institutional identity, and acceptable forms of educational change, rather than imposing uniformity.¹¹ In Qur'anic education specifically, the diffusion of reading methods has come to depend on the interaction between *sanad*-based authority and organizational mechanisms such as curriculum standardization, teacher preparation, certification, and inter-pesantren

⁸ Berenice Nyland et al., "The Si Huan Playgroup: A Case Study of Non-Formal Early Childhood Education for Migrant Children in Beijing," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 36, no. 3 (2016): 319–31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2014.934783>; Colin Latchem, "Out-of-School Children and Youth," in *Open and Distance Non-Formal Education in Developing Countries*, SpringerBriefs in Open and Distance Education (Singapore: Springer, 2018), 63–75, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6741-9_8.

⁹ Yanwar Priyadi, "Religious Networks in Madura: Pesantren, Nahdlatul Ulama and Kiai as the Core of Santri Culture," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 51, no. 1 (2014): 1–32, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2013.511.1-32>; Rofiqi et al., "Living under the Gaze: An Ethnographic Study of Authority, Embodied Learning, and Social Reproduction in Indonesian Pesantren Educational Practices," *Ethnography and Education*, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2026.2614516>; M Latif Fauzi, "Traditional Islam in Javanese Society: The Roles of Kyai and Pesantren in Preserving Islamic Tradition and Negotiating Modernity," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 6, no. 1 (2012): 125–44, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2012.6.1.125-144>.

¹⁰ E Suresman, A Faqihuddin, and M Abdullah, "From Sorogan to Digital Learning: A Systematic Literature Network Analysis of Pesantren Learning Models," *Cogent Education* 12, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2580776>.

¹¹ Ahmad Muhlis et al., "Transformation beyond Transgression: Resistance-Based System Improvement in Kitab Kuning Reading Acceleration Program," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 3 (2025): 535–49, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v8i3.214>.

networks.¹² These studies help explain how a pedagogical tradition becomes institutionally durable, but explain much less about how it is reproduced when it travels beyond the pesantren's original institutional and national setting.

Scholarship on migrant religious socialization and supplementary faith-based education offers a second perspective. Studies have examined how migrant children acquire religious knowledge, sacred language, and religious identity through family, community, and supplementary educational settings.¹³ In Malaysia, however, citizenship boundaries shape state-supported religious-literacy initiatives such as the j-QAF program, and these initiatives do not adequately include migrant children.¹⁴ Together, these literatures suggest that migrant education, community provision, religious socialization, pesantren transmission, and pedagogical standardization are all established areas of inquiry. Their intersection remains under-explained. Existing studies do not adequately account for how an intermediary organization can move a standardized religious pedagogy across a national border, reproduce it in a new educational environment, and maintain its stability. At the same time, its delivery adapts to different organizational, linguistic, and regulatory conditions.

The gap is both analytical and empirical. The case challenges assumptions in two common ways of understanding educational movement across borders. First, theories of educational transfer and glocalization suggest that a pedagogical practice entering a new environment is likely to be adapted, simplified, or reconstituted in response to local conditions. Second, theories of transnational social connection explain how migrants sustain relationships, practices, and identities across territorial boundaries, but offer less insight into how the substantive content of a pedagogy stays stable when the originating

¹² M Sulaeman, M N Ichwan, and A Rafiq, "Market Islam in Qur'an Reading Methods in Indonesia: Tradition and the Dynamics of Emerging Diversity," *Ascarya: Journal of Islamic Science, Culture and Social Studies* 6, no. 1 (2026): 108–28, <https://doi.org/10.53754/s4a1rg45>.

¹³ Carrie Alkoutli, "Pedagogies in Becoming Muslim: Contemporary Insights from Islamic Traditions on Teaching, Learning, and Developing," *Religions* 9, no. 11 (2018): 367, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9110367>; Farid Wajdi et al., "Nurturing Islamic Knowledge: The Contribution of Jamaah Nur's Religious Literacy Programs," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 13, no. 1 (2026): 2629089, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2026.2629089>; Aya Elassi, "The Languages of Faith and Belonging: Sociolinguistic Repertoires of Two American Muslim Girls of West African Descent," *Linguistics and Education* 93 (2026): 101543, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2026.101543>; Manuel A Vásquez and José deWind, "Introduction to the Religious Lives of Migrant Minorities: A Transnational and Multi-Sited Perspective," *Global Networks* 14, no. 3 (2014): 251–72, <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12058>.

¹⁴ Mohd Mohd M Zarif, N Mohamad, and B A Bakar, "Assessing Quranic Reading Proficiency in the J-QAF Programme," *International Education Studies* 7, no. 6 (2014): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v7n6p1>.

institution has neither direct bureaucratic authority nor financial control over those responsible for its delivery.

This study addresses that puzzle through the At-Tanzil learning studio network in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, established and coordinated through the alumni organizations of Pesantren Mambaul Ulum Bata-Bata in Madura, namely the Bata-Bata Alumni Association (IKABA) and the Bata-Bata Student Association (IMABA). The home pesantren supplies epistemic and symbolic authority for the method, while the alumni network provides the organizational infrastructure that translates that authority into sustained pedagogical practice abroad.

The study asks three interrelated questions. First, how does the alumni network establish and coordinate the studio system across national borders? Second, how is the At-Tanzil method recontextualized as it moves from a boarding-based pesantren environment into community-based learning studios? Third, how do the coordinator, managers, and teachers interpret their roles as agents of cross-border educational transmission? The questions move from organizational structure, to pedagogical process, to actor meaning-making. The sequence matters because institutional authority alone does not achieve cross-border transmission. Every day, organizational relationships and educators' interpretive work enact it. These educators must reconcile fidelity to an inherited pedagogical tradition with the practical realities of a different social and linguistic environment.

The study's central contribution is the concept of selective fidelity. The case suggests that successful cross-border pedagogical transmission depends on neither complete replication nor unrestricted local adaptation. Actors appear to preserve a defined pedagogical core and allow adaptation in the organizational and linguistic mediation through which they teach that core. Centralized coordination and affiliation-based recruitment help protect continuity. At the same time, local educators negotiate how they communicate the method to learners whose social, linguistic, and educational circumstances differ from those of the method's originating context. The study shifts attention from the conventional opposition between standardization and adaptation to a more differentiated question: which elements of pedagogy are treated as non-negotiable, which are open to recontextualization, and what social mechanisms sustain that

distinction across borders? The study presents the concept as an analytically derived proposition rather than a universally validated or replicable model.

To interpret this process, the study combines Bernstein's¹⁵ theory of the pedagogic device with Levitt and Glick Schiller's¹⁶ concept of transnational social fields. Bernstein provides a vocabulary for analyzing how knowledge is selected, authorized, recontextualized, and evaluated, including the boundaries and degrees of control surrounding pedagogical transmission. Levitt and Glick Schiller,¹⁷ In turn, help explain how cross-border relationships sustain social practices and forms of belonging. Neither framework is sufficient on its own for the present case. The pedagogic device clarifies how the method's core can be regulated, but it says less about the cross-border location of recontextualizing authority. Transnational social-field theory explains the relational infrastructure through which actors remain connected across borders, but it is less specific about how pedagogical content is stabilized. Together, they enable the study to examine cross-border transmission as an organizational, pedagogical, and transnational process. In this process, *sanad* may operate both as a rule of authorization and as a durable transnational tie linking educators to the originating pesantren.

By examining a pesantren-linked learning network outside Indonesia, this study extends the discussion of migrant education beyond the question of whether marginalized children gain access to schooling. It asks how an educational tradition travels, how authority is maintained without direct institutional command, and how pedagogical continuity is negotiated when learning takes place in a new linguistic, organizational, and regulatory environment. The study contributes to the literature on migrant and non-formal education, transnational religious education, and Islamic pedagogical transmission by showing that community-based educational institutions can compensate for formal-school exclusion and can also serve as sites where an educational tradition is selectively reproduced and recontextualized across national boundaries.

¹⁵ Basil Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*, Rev. ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9798216401735>.

¹⁶ Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society," *International Migration Review* 38, no. 3 (2004): 1002–39, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00227.x>.

¹⁷ Levitt and Glick Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society."

Methods

This study used a qualitative single-case design with embedded units.¹⁸ The case is the At-Tanzil studio network coordinated by IKABA/IMABA in Malaysia, with individual studios and their actors as embedded units. The boundary covers studios operating under the At-Tanzil arrangement in urban Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, from the first studio's founding in 2020 to the end of fieldwork in 2026. It excludes the originating pesantren in Madura and state-linked provision, namely Community Learning Centers (CLCs) and the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL). Observation and documentary evidence, not coordinators' accounts alone, tested whether the network could be treated as a single case.

The network is community-run by the Bata-Bata alumni associations (IKABA/IMABA). Studios offer general instruction aligned with the Indonesian curriculum in the morning, administratively supported by SIKL, and At-Tanzil Qur'anic instruction in the afternoon. At the time of the network's own studio census used here, fifteen studios were operating with a total of 515 enrolled students; participants also gave rounded verbal estimates of about 550 (KO; PS1), a small difference consistent with roll fluctuation during the fieldwork period. The analysis addresses children of Indonesian migrant workers excluded from Malaysian public schooling. Evening At-Tanzil sessions attended by local Malaysian children fall outside its scope.

Table 1.
The At-Tanzil studio network in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur (n = 15)

No.	Studio location	Enrolled students
1	Kajang	45
2	Lindungan	58
3	Bukit Lanchong	14
4	Kayuara	49
5	Jinjang	35
6	Cheras	23
7	Serdang	33
8	Padang Jawa	15
9	Seri Petaling	24
10	Setia Alam	10
11	Hicom	17
12	Kota Damansara	20
13	Putra Kajang	35
14	Lembah Jaya	117
15	Alam Damai	20

¹⁸ Robert K Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018).

Total **515**

Participants were selected purposively from adults currently responsible for transmitting the At-Tanzil method through coordination, studio founding or management, or classroom teaching.¹⁹ The sample of 16 comprised one network coordinator (KO), five studio managers/founders (PS1–PS5), and ten teachers (G1–G10) (Tables 2 and 3). It spans the managerial, institutional, and classroom levels at which coordination, pedagogical recontextualization, and meaning-making occur, which is adequate for an embedded single-case design. Sampling maximized variation in institutional affiliation, length of involvement, training location, and studio role, enabling convergent, divergent, and contested accounts to be compared across positions. Parents and volunteers without teaching or management duties were excluded because the study examines the supply-side organization and transmission of the pedagogy.

Table 2.
Manager/founder participants (n = 5) and the coordinator

Code	Role	Studio(s)	Notes on variation
KO	Network coordinator	Network-level (all branches)	Bata-Bata alumnus (2010–2013); postgraduate study in Malaysia from 2018; co-founder of the network from 2020
PS1	Founder/manager	Founding studio	Most detailed account of daily routine, finances, and pedagogy
PS2	Manager	Branch studio	Emphasis on community-demand-driven expansion and site selection
PS3	Teacher/manager	Branch studio	Dual classroom and management role; emphasis on evaluation and grouping
PS4	Manager	Branch studio	Emphasis on recruitment criteria and cross-studio mutual support
PS5	Founder/manager	Branch studio	Emphasis on staged expansion and the fidelity–adaptation distinction

Table 3.
Teacher participants (n = 10)

Code	Pesantren of origin	Year of arrival	Involvement	At-Tanzil training site
G1	Bata-Bata	2023	3 years	Bata-Bata
G2	Bata-Bata	2023	3 years	Bata-Bata
G3	Al-Birowi (affiliated)	2024	1.5 years	Malaysia
G4	Other pesantren	late 2023	>2 years	Malaysia
G5	Other pesantren	2023	3 years	Malaysia
G6	Bata-Bata	early 2024	>2 years	Bata-Bata & Malaysia
G7	Mauidzul Amin (affiliated)	2025	1 year	Bata-Bata & Malaysia

¹⁹ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, 4th ed. (SAGE Publications, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406915624573>.

G8	Bata-Bata	2022	4 years	Bata-Bata
G9	Darul Ulum Banyuanyar	early 2023	3.5 years	Malaysia
G10	Bata-Bata (women's section)	2025	10 months	Bata-Bata

Notes. “Affiliated” denotes a pesantren that participants described as belonging to the wider Bata-Bata network; G3, G7, and G9 are not direct Bata-Bata alumni, providing variation on institutional origin. “Involvement” is the time spent teaching at the studio during the interview; rounded figures are marked with a tilde. All teachers are referred to with the gender-neutral code G; forms of address used by students (ustadz/ustadzah) are reported where relevant.

Data were collected between February and July 2026 through three sources: semi-structured interviews, field observation, and documentary analysis (Table 4). Interviews used three guides tailored to the category (coordinator, manager, teacher), each covering establishment and coordination, method adaptation, and role interpretation, with depth-seeking probes. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in Indonesian, averaging 45–55 minutes; each was audio-recorded with prior written consent and transcribed verbatim. Reported quotations were translated into English with key Arabic and Indonesian terms retained and glossed (*sanad*, *khidmah*, *kelas rangkap*, *makhraj*) to avoid semantic loss.

Table 4.
Data sources

Source	n	Tier/focus	Timing	Contribution to findings
Coordinator interview	1	Network governance	Feb–Jul 2026	Coordination, recruitment, pesantren tie, SIKL relation
Manager interviews	5	Institutional organisation	Feb–Jul 2026	Founding, finance, daily routine, grouping, fidelity
Teacher interviews	10	Classroom pedagogy and identity	Feb–Jul 2026	Enactment, language work, role meaning-making
Classroom observation	5 sessions	Enacted pedagogy	Feb–Jul 2026	Session structure, grouping, correction, conditions
Documentary corpus	13 categories	Method, organization, ties	Feb–Jul 2026	Corroboration of self-report (see Table 5)

The study used non-participant classroom observation to corroborate interview accounts of how the At-Tanzil method is enacted. Five recorded sessions covered the morning general-instruction block and the afternoon At-Tanzil block (08:00–10:00 and 12:30–16:00). A schedule of fifteen predefined foci structured the observation: method enactment, teacher demonstration, read-and-listen practice, ability- and volume-based grouping, differentiation, error correction, repetition, teacher–student and student–student interaction, language of instruction, discipline and *adab*, diaspora adaptation, material conditions, perceived parental involvement, evaluation and level advancement,

and observable religious routines. For each session, the observer wrote descriptive field notes on these foci and brief analytic memos, for example, noting that adaptation occurred in classroom organization rather than in the method's substance. The study coded the field notes using the same reflexive thematic procedure as the interviews, so that observations could be matched with or set beside specific interview claims.

The study examined thirteen categories of documents to corroborate and extend the interview and observation data (Table 5). It selected them for direct relevance to the three research questions: the method and its delivery, the organization and coordination of the network, and the tie to the home pesantren. The corpus comprised the At-Tanzil teaching manual and per-*juz* volumes (DOK-02); teacher lesson plans (DOK-03); student progress cards (DOK-04); group/volume allocation lists (DOK-05); the daily activity schedule (DOK-06); level-advancement evaluation records (DOK-07); the teacher-recruitment SOP and criteria (DOK-08); teacher-training records, including certificates, attendance lists, and training materials (DOK-09); coordination records among managers and teachers, including minutes, agendas, and attendance (DOK-10); communication records between the Malaysian network and the home pesantren (DOK-11); graduation (*wisuda*) documentation (DOK-12); records of the physical learning environment and facilities (DOK-13); student-administration documents relating to SIKL (DOK-14); and documentation of routine religious activities (DOK-15). The study analyzed the documents thematically with the interview and observation data. It used them to test claims that might otherwise rest on self-report: whether the network's own records evidenced the recruitment criteria, the method's structure, the grouping arrangement, and the pesantren tie.

Table 5.
Documentary corpus and analytic use

Code	Document	Primarily corroborates
DOK-02	At-Tanzil manual and per- <i>juz</i> volumes	Protected method core (RQ2)
DOK-03	Teacher lesson plans	Systematic lesson preparation (RQ2)
DOK-04	Student progress cards	Individual tracking; evaluation (RQ2)
DOK-05	Group/volume allocation lists	Ability-based multigrade grouping (RQ2)
DOK-06	Daily activity schedule	Morning-general / afternoon-At-Tanzil structure (RQ1–RQ2)
DOK-07	Level-advancement evaluation records	Mastery-based advancement (RQ2)
DOK-08	Teacher-recruitment SOP and criteria	<i>Sanad</i> -based recruitment (RQ1)

DOK-09	Teacher-training records and certificates	Method transmission to teachers (RQ1)
DOK-10	Coordination records (minutes, agendas)	Centralized coordination (RQ1)
DOK-11	Network–pesantren communication	Informal transnational tie (RQ1)
DOK-12	Graduation (<i>wisuda</i>) documentation	Institutionalization of provision (RQ1)
DOK-13	Learning-environment records	Material conditions (RQ2)
DOK-14	SIKL-related administration	Division of formal/religious domains (RQ1)
DOK-15	Religious-activity documentation	Wider religious-education setting (RQ3)

Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) through its six phases. The study's orientation is interpretive: themes are treated as analytic constructions produced through the researcher's engagement with the data, not as objective entities that emerge, and “reflexive” here means that the researcher's position (see *Researcher positionality*) is taken as part of the analytic apparatus rather than a bias to be eliminated. Coding was abductive: inductive codes from the data were held in dialogue with deductive categories from the framework.²⁰ Where interpretations diverged within the team, they were retained and examined rather than resolved by majority, and disconfirming and contested instances were actively sought and are reported in the Findings. Consistent with this interpretive stance, member checking was used to confirm that participants recognized their words and meanings, not to “validate” the analytic themes, and the audit trail records coding decisions for transparency rather than to claim inter-coder objectivity.

To make the analytic process demonstrable rather than merely labeled, one worked example traces the path from datum to theory. A manager's statement that any adjustment “is in the management of the class, not in the core of the method” (PS3), an observation memo noting that “the adaptation observed occurs mainly at the level of organising learning, not in changing the substance of the method” (Obs 5), and a coordinator's account of grouping “*juz* 1 to 3 in one group... because teachers and space are limited” (KO) were each coded *protected-core* / *adaptable-organisation*. These codes, grouped with others (refusal of local innovation; multigrade as necessity; identical volumes) into the core–delivery distinction category, became the theme of *selective fidelity*. At the

²⁰ Charlene B W.-K. Tan, “Contesting Reform: Bernstein’s Pedagogic Device and Madrasah Education in Singapore,” *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 42, no. 2 (2010): 165–82, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220270903494311>; Levitt and Glick Schiller, “Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society.”

theoretical level, this theme was read through Bernstein's distinction between the rule of recontextualization (what may change) and the pedagogic discourse it protects, yielding the interpretation that fidelity and adaptation operate at different layers of the pedagogic system rather than trading off along one dimension. Each analytic claim in the Findings follows the same sequence: evidence, cross-participant pattern, interpretation, with the provenance of evidence (interview, observation, or document) indicated. Themes were organized around the three research questions, with a fourth reporting cross-source triangulation and negative cases.

Quality was addressed using Lincoln and Guba's four criteria.²¹ *Credibility* rests on source triangulation across the three informant tiers and on method triangulation across interviews, five observation sessions, and a thirteen-category documentary corpus, supplemented by member checking, in which transcripts were returned to participants for confirmation. *Transferability* is supported by a thick description of the setting and its routines. *Dependability* rests on an audit trail of coding decisions, and *confirmability* on the positionality and reflexivity reported above. The most important use of triangulation here is evidentiary discipline: the study's central claims, the protected method core, ability-based multigrade grouping, *sanad*-based recruitment, and the informal pesantren tie, are corroborated across interviews, observation, and documents, as set out in the Findings, rather than resting on the coordinator's account alone. Two boundaries are stated explicitly. Observation covered five sessions, so it evidences enactment at the observed studios but cannot establish uniformity across all fifteen. Because parents and students were not included and no learning-outcome data were collected, the study addresses the organization and transmission of pedagogy, not *measured learning outcomes*, a boundary consistently maintained throughout the Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion.

Results

Findings are organized by research question, then by a fourth section on cross-source triangulation and negative cases. Within each theme, evidence is presented first, followed by the cross-participant pattern (whether a view was widely shared, dominant, contested, or confined to individuals), and finally by interpretation. Evidence provenance

²¹ Yvonna S Lincoln and Egon G Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (sage, 1985).

is marked as interview (with informant code), observation, or document. Quotations use the codes in Tables 2 and 3.

Three levels of claim are kept distinct throughout, and the study's evidence is uneven across them. *Level A, institutional transmission*: how the network organizes itself to reproduce the method; here, the evidence is strongest, combining interviews across tiers with organizational documents. *Level B, pedagogical enactment*: how teachers implement the method in classrooms, with adaptation; here, the evidence is partial, resting on interviews and five observed sessions. *Level C, learning outcome*: whether students actually acquire the intended competence; here, the study has no independent evidence, because neither learners nor parents were assessed or interviewed. Accordingly, no claim about learning effectiveness is advanced, and statements by participants about learners or parents are marked throughout as participants' *perceptions* rather than as findings about learners.

Evidence provenance is marked as interview (informant code), observation (Obs 1–5), or document (DOK code). Where a claim is corroborated across sources, the sources are named together; where it rests on a single source, this is stated plainly.

Institutional Architecture: Alumni-Mediated Coordination

The coordinator described a shared framework as “a single managerial system” that standardized schedules, procedures, textbooks, and operational financing across branches. A formal structure supports it: a chair, vice-chair, person-in-charge, treasurer, and one responsible person per studio, with quarterly meetings and tiered messaging groups (KO). Managers confirmed the financial arrangement. Other studios can cover a shortfall in one studio, which managers framed as studios “reinforcing and completing one another” (PS1). Meeting minutes, agendas, and attendance lists (DOK-10) show that coordination took place through regular documented meetings, not only in the coordinator's report. A shared daily activity schedule (DOK-06) sets the same morning-general and afternoon-At-Tanzil structure across the network.

These sources indicate that shared organizational routines institutionalized coordination, so coordination did not depend solely on the coordinator's informal communication. Centralization matters beyond reducing administrative variation. The common procedures also define the authorized form of At-Tanzil that studios reproduce. Two findings support this reading: deviations must be referred to a written common

agreement, and the network controls teacher recruitment (discussed below). The documents establish institutionalized coordination. They do not establish that every studio enacts the procedures identically, because direct observation covered only five sessions (see *Trustworthiness*).

Recruitment required at least a bachelor's degree and, more decisively, that teachers be alumni of Bata-Bata or an affiliated pesantren. The coordinator said this requirement maintains “the continuity of the scholarly *sanad*” (KO). Managers added that teachers must complete At-Tanzil training first (PS1). Table 3 supports this account but shows that the network applied the affiliation criterion flexibly. Most teachers were Bata-Bata alumni, while G3, G7, and G9 came from other pesantren, and G7 described their institution as part of “the Bata-Bata pesantren family.” The recruitment SOP and criteria document (DOK-08) lists affiliation and minimum education as formal requirements. Certificates and attendance lists from teacher training (DOK-09) document the At-Tanzil requirement. Recruitment was therefore both an administrative procedure of the network and a practice that participants reported.

All sources gave the same picture. Recruitment centered on shared institutional affiliation and formation, but the boundary of affiliation stretched to include teachers from connected pesantren traditions. The evidence supports interpreting the mechanism as a means of maintaining continuity of authority and boundaries, rather than as a proxy for pedagogical quality. The study did not assess classroom effectiveness or test any link between *sanad* status and teaching quality. Recruitment determines who may transmit the method and ties that authorization to shared formation, affiliation, and tradition. This finding grounds the later theoretical discussion of how distributed rules of access and transmission reproduce the pesantren's authority.

Participants described the relationship with the home pesantren as close but informal. Communication ran through digital messages and ceremonial visits at annual graduations. The coordinator reported no routine written reporting and no standing system of mandatory instruction. Compliance rested partly on the symbolic authority of the method: “the At-Tanzil method is a pure product of Bata-Bata, so we must use it” (KO). The coordinator also said that no funds flowed from the home pesantren to the Malaysian network, and that the Malaysian alumni body sometimes supported the pesantren instead (KO). Communication records between the two (DOK-11) nonetheless contain activity

reports, requests for guidance, and instructions. The channel was informal but substantive, and it did not amount to routine bureaucratic reporting.

The coordinators' and managers' accounts agreed, and the communication records supported them. The relationship is better described as a hybrid authority arrangement than as authority operating “without bureaucratic mediation.” The Malaysian network runs on SOPs, a formal structure, minuted meetings, and coordination with SIKL. Its link to Bata-Bata rests mainly on informal communication, symbolic legitimacy, and the authority attributed to the At-Tanzil method. This weakens the view that “the pesantren exports its system” as an organisationally complete package. Instead, an alumni network reproduces the originating institution's authority and legitimacy, and its own formal machinery organizes provision in Malaysia. Participants did not describe routine managerial control or the movement of financial resources from the home pesantren. The evidence points to alumni-mediated institutional projection, developed in the *Discussion*.

Three dimensions need to be separated: the network's legal status, its institutional recognition, and its public visibility. First, the network is not a formally recognized school. It operates in the space that the relevant immigration framework leaves for informal provision. Second, recognition is partial and selective, mainly through interactions with SIKL and KBRI. Third, participants described a deliberately low public profile. According to the coordinator, opening a studio follows a standard sequence: registering minimum enrolment, assessing the premises, coordinating with local authorities and KBRI/SIKL, and holding an inauguration. The same account described avoiding social-media publicity and large public gatherings (KO).

Participants described the relationship with SIKL as complementary and not formalized through a memorandum of understanding. SIKL supports administration and formal-track certification, while the network controls the religious curriculum (KO; PS1). Student-administration records (DOK-14) and the network's own graduation documentation (DOK-12) support this division of functions. The network can thus draw on selected support for students' formal educational attainment while keeping responsibility for its religious pedagogic core. The evidence indicates selective recognition rather than full integration into the formal school system.

The state is not absent from this arrangement. Formal public-school access and network-based religious provision run through different channels, and SIKL and KBRI

offer selective points of administrative coordination without taking responsibility for the religious curriculum. Low visibility, however, cannot be treated as a formal policy across all studios. Participants described it as a shared practice, but the data document it primarily as reported conduct rather than as a network-wide rule. The network, therefore, combines limited formal institutional interfaces with internally controlled religious provision and a relatively low public profile.

Pedagogic recontextualization: a protected core and an adaptable delivery layer

Managers described the same daily structure across studios (PS1 and PS2), and the schedule document confirms this (DOK-06). The day usually began at around 08:30 with congregational *dhuha* prayer, *shalawat*, short *surah* recitation, and the Asmaul Husna litany. General instruction, including literacy and numeracy, science, and social studies, ran from about 09:00 to 11:00. A rest, meal, and nap period followed until about 13:30. After *zuhur* prayer and *Juz 'Amma* reading, the At-Tanzil session ran from about 14:00 to 16:00 (PS1). Observations during this afternoon period, particularly in rooms where several juz-based groups shared, revealed a recurring instructional sequence. The teacher opened with a 10–15-minute review of prior material, which managers said helps children recall the previous lesson and connect it to new material (PS1). The teacher then read a passage aloud as a demonstration. Students followed a read-and-listen sequence: one child read while the others followed, and the teacher corrected errors immediately and had the child repeat until the reading was judged accurate (Obs 3; Obs 4; PS1; PS3). One teacher often handled several ability groups at once, so the teacher circulated between groups and gave individual guidance to a child who stalled while the other groups continued (Obs 1; Obs 5). Time alone did not move students up. They advanced only after completing all pages in a volume and passing a level-advancement test (PS1, PS3, PS5, DOK-07). Managers stated that progression was “not based only on the teacher's feeling” (PS3).

The coordinator and managers all described the recurring sequence as part of the At-Tanzil method itself. The coordinator said the method was applied “in principle the same” as at the home pesantren, including the *juz*-based organization of teaching (KO). Managers from the five studios described the same components: a short review, teacher demonstration and imitation, read-and-listen practice with immediate correction, and a level-advancement test after each volume (PS1; PS3; PS5). Asked about local innovation,

managers distinguished between the core method and classroom management. One said, “We try to maintain it as it is applied at Bata-Bata” (PS1). Another said, “for the core method, no, we follow what already exists at Bata-Bata” (PS5), and a third said adjustment occurs “in the management of the class, not in the core of the method” (PS3). One manager called the method “one of our identities” (PS5). Observation independently recorded the sequence in the field notes as “teacher gives an example - student reads - others listen - teacher corrects - student repeats” (Obs 4). Documents describe the same sequence and its assessment: the manual and *juz*-specific volumes (DOK-02), lesson plans specifying material, level, and target (DOK-03), and mastery-based advancement records (DOK-07). Participants also confirmed that the volumes used in Malaysia are identical to those used at Bata-Bata.

The coordinator's account, several manager accounts, observations, and documents converge on a stable core instructional sequence and shared materials. No participant reported a change to the core method, and no observed session showed a substantive alteration of the sequence. The evidence supports interpreting fidelity as concentrated in the method's core components, with adaptation occurring mainly in how those components are organized and delivered. This is the empirical basis for the study's concept of selective fidelity. The evidence shows consistency in the observed sessions and documented procedures. It does not show identical enactment across all studios under all conditions.

Adaptation centered on how students' and teachers' attention was organized. Managers described ability-based grouping across several *juz*, with one teacher handling multiple levels at once. They framed this as a resource constraint and not a pedagogical preference: “because the number of teachers and space is limited” (PS1); “if teachers and rooms were sufficient, it would be easier to separate them, but resources are limited” (PS4). One called it “more precisely a necessity” than a choice (PS4). Placement followed ability more than age or school grade: “We do not rely mainly on age... a child of a different age can be in the same group if the ability level is the same” (PS1). Managers also named consequences. With several *juz* groups running at once, “the child's concentration is sometimes divided” (PS1; PS5), while the teacher “has to be cleverer at managing focus” and children “learn to wait their turn” (PS3). Teachers described the arrangement differently, from grouping “by *juz*, ability, and character” (G1) to a

“combined classical and private (*sorogan*)” approach (G6). Observation confirmed ability- and level-based groups, with the teacher moving between groups and giving individual guidance as several groups worked in the same room (Obs 1; Obs 2; Obs 5). Group and volume allocation lists (DOK-05) show that the administration planned this arrangement.

The observation memo states the distinction directly: “the adaptation observed occurs mainly at the level of organizing learning, not in changing the substance of the method” (Obs 5). Across managers, teachers, observations, and documents, content and sequence stayed stable, while grouping, teacher movement, and allocation of attention varied with local conditions. The evidence supports reading this as an adaptation of organization and delivery, not a modification of the method's core. The coordinator's statement that the arrangement “does not significantly change learning outcomes” (KO), along with similar reassurances from managers, reflects participants' perceptions. The study did not measure learning outcomes, so it cannot say whether the adaptation affects achievement.

Material conditions also differed from the boarding-pesantren setting where the method originated. Managers placed religious instruction in an afternoon slot of about two hours and described studios in rented premises with limited capacity, citing “limited space and a rental system” (PS1). One teacher recalled teaching “in a very limited room... noisy and often crowded” (G8). Observation recorded confined rooms where several groups worked at once, and the neighboring groups' voices remained audible throughout the sessions. Teachers adjusted their delivery to these conditions (Obs 1; Obs 5). The daily schedule (DOK-06) shows where At-Tanzil sits within the full-day program, and learning-environment records (DOK-13) document the constrained facilities.

Managers, teachers, observation, and documents agree that time and space in Malaysia differ materially from the originating pesantren's setting. The adaptation of these conditions required, therefore, concentrated on orchestrating instruction: how teachers distributed attention, managed simultaneous groups, and kept the sequence going in a constrained environment. The evidence does not show that these conditions reduce instructional quality. It shows the conditions under which teachers reported, and were observed, maintaining the method.

Language was a further site of adaptation. Teachers said many learners grow up in a Malay-speaking environment, receive instruction mainly in Indonesian, and learn an Arabic textual tradition. One teacher linked pronunciation difficulties partly to the child's everyday dialect affecting *makhraj*, as well as to infrequent reading and irregular attendance (G10). That teacher's response was concrete: children watched the teacher's mouth movements and repeated the pronunciation until it was judged accurate (G10). Another teacher said the main difference from teaching *santri* in Madura is that teaching begins “with their language” (G4), and a third stressed the need to introduce Indonesian cultural and educational practices, both general and religious (G5). Observation confirmed Indonesian as the main language of instruction, with a more varied linguistic repertoire audible in student interaction (Obs 1; Obs 5). Observation also recorded teachers demonstrating articulation and correcting *makhraj* immediately before students repeated the target pronunciation (Obs 3; Obs 4).

Teacher accounts and observation agree that language distinguished the Malaysian studios from the Madurese setting. Teachers used different techniques, but all identified language as a practical feature of classroom adaptation. This extends recontextualization beyond a change of place or timetable: the method reaches learners whose everyday language differs from that of its origin. The effect is clearest in pronunciation instruction, where teachers reported and observations recorded adjustments to *makhraj* teaching. The Discussion considers the theoretical implications of this sociolinguistic recontextualization.

Teachers also linked students' progress to parental support and named limited support at home as a constraint, including “the lack of parental involvement when children are at home” (G10). Managers said the concerns most often raised about children involved behavior: overreliance on gadgets, defiance, and coarse language (PS1; PS2; PS4; PS5). Teachers and managers widely shared these accounts, but they are staff perceptions. Parents were not interviewed, so the data cannot verify parental practices or children's home environments. They do show where staff locate constraints on progress and how they understand the studios' purpose as extending beyond academic instruction to behavioral and moral formation.

Table 6 synthesizes these findings by dimension of selective fidelity. It separates what is conserved, what is adapted, the degree and location of adaptation, and the actors who authorize each element.

Table 6.
Fidelity and adaptation across dimensions of the At-Tanzil system

Dimension	Home pesantren (as described)	Malaysia studio	Degree of adaptation	Who authorizes it
Core reading sequence (review - demonstration - read-and-listen - correction)	Same instructional cycle	Same instructional cycle	Low (protected)	Network/pesantren norm; no local change
Per- <i>juz</i> progression and materials	Per- <i>juz</i> ; standard volumes	Identical per- <i>juz</i> volumes	Low (protected)	Network; volumes stated identically
Advancement rule	Mastery test on volume completion	Mastery test on volume completion	Low (protected)	Network; documented (DOK-07)
Grouping	Age/level, as conditions allow	Multigrade, ability-based across <i>juz</i>	High	Local managers, under resource constraints
Time	Intensive, boarding rhythm	2-hour afternoon slot within a fuller day	High	Local, set by the studio day
Space	Pesantren dormitory	Rented house, limited, shared rooms	High	Local, set by premises
Pronunciation support	Within an Arabic/Madurese milieu	Visual <i>makhraj</i> demonstration for Malay-dominant learners	Moderate	Teacher, in the classroom
Local innovation (games, ice-breaking)	Not applicable	Declined to protect the method	Low (deliberately withheld)	Managers, as a fiduciary choice

Teacher Agency and Identity

Teachers described their role as more than instruction. Several called themselves "a teacher and a volunteer" (G1; G8) or "an instructor and a fellow servant" (G6). One described "a motivator who wants to humanize people, so more than all three" (G2). Another said he adjusts his stance "as the situation requires... but the responsibility as a teacher remains primary" (G5). Observation supports this wider view. Teachers delivered instruction, but they also corrected conduct, encouraged students, redirected distractions, and praised successful reading aloud (Obs 1; Obs 3). Records of communal prayer and recitation (DOK-15) situate teaching within a broader context of religious habituation.

Teachers, therefore, saw their role as extending beyond content transmission to include encouragement, character formation, and participation in religious routines. Emphasis differed. Some stressed volunteering or service, others motivation, and others the continuing responsibility of teaching. The evidence supports reading this as a role orientation with several dimensions rather than a shared professional identity. Service and moral formation recur in the accounts, but the study cannot show that every teacher sees the role as a personal calling or gives it the same meaning.

Teachers also differed on whether they "represented" Bata-Bata, Indonesia, or Islam. Most accepted some form of representative role, but its scope and basis varied. One teacher linked all three: Bata-Bata with scholarly value and discipline, Indonesia with love of homeland and being a good Indonesian, and Islam with "compassion, tolerance, honesty" (G4). He then qualified this, saying, "What matters most is benefiting the students through real action, not the identities I carry" (G4). Others set narrower limits. One described his role as "practicing the knowledge obtained from the pesantren," argued that representing Islam "seems to be the task of the *ulama* and the prophets," and thought national representation applied less because "I am not a civil servant" (G5). Another accepted representation, but called it "still very far from optimally" (G1). A fourth grounded his role in the method's provenance, saying it was "strongly" connected to Bata-Bata because the At-Tanzil knowledge came from there (G9).

The pattern was predominant but qualified identification. Teachers did not repeat a single institutional view of representation. They accepted, narrowed, or qualified the claim in different ways, showing they exercised judgment in deciding what their participation meant. The evidence supports treating identification with the originating pesantren, the nation, or Islam as negotiated self-positioning rather than an imposed identity. This applies to the teachers interviewed and does not extend to all members of the network.

Participants often described their involvement as service. The coordinator framed his involvement as devotion to the Bata-Bata pesantren, not a response to demand or economic opportunity (KO), and one teacher spoke of "serving from Bata-Bata" (G3). The same interviews also showed material and professional considerations. Managers described honoraria that differed by permanent or non-permanent status (PS1). Teachers

named the need for legal documentation, transport, adequate remuneration, training, and organizational coordination (G1; G5; G6; G8).

Read the language of service alongside these material and institutional factors. Devotion is not the sole explanation for participation. Service is one meaning-making frame participants use to describe their involvement, and remuneration, professional needs, institutional belonging, and legal circumstances sit within the same employment context. Reading participation only as religious devotion would hide the material conditions and practical constraints that participants themselves named.

Questions about unmet support needs showed the weight of legal and occupational security. Several teachers named "teacher legality" (G6), "official documents for teaching staff" (G8), or "eased documentation for teachers who are not students or have no permit" (G5). Others raised welfare and coordination issues, including remuneration and organizational support (G1; G5; G6). Not all shared these views. One teacher called current conditions adequate (G2), and another described the need more broadly as "security and stability" (G8).

The pattern is prominent but unevenly experienced concern about legal and institutional security. Teachers take part in the network by teaching, communicating, organizing, and transmitting knowledge from the originating pesantren, yet several reported uncertainty about documentation or formal standing. The evidence shows a tension between active participation and uneven institutional security. It does not reduce teachers' experience to legal precarity, nor does it establish any teacher's precise legal status. The finding covers only the security and documentation concerns reported by participants.

Cross-Source Triangulation and Negative Cases

Table 7 sets out, claim by claim, the primary evidence, any contradictory evidence, and the scope of inference the study can support, an evidence-to-claim audit that keeps the reach of each claim visible.

Table 7.
Evidence-to-claim matrix

Claim	Primary evidence	Contradictory / limiting evidence	Scope of inference
The method is standardized across the network.	SOP and criteria (DOK-08); coordination records (DOK-10); managers	Local grouping adaptations	Institutional level (Level A): well supported

	(PS1; PS3; PS4; PS5); KO		
The instructional core is enacted as specified	Observation (Obs 3, Obs 4); manual (DOK-02); advancement records (DOK-07)	Divided concentration in multigrade groups	Enacted level (Level B): supported for observed studios only
Adaptation is confined to organization/delivery.	Five managers; observation memo (Obs 5); allocation lists (DOK-05)	“Organization is part of pedagogy” (analytic caveat)	Level B: supported; boundary is conceptual, addressed in Discussion
<i>Sanad</i> -based recruitment governs who may teach.	KO; managers; recruitment SOP (DOK-08); training records (DOK-09)	Elastic application to affiliated pesantren (G3, G7, G9)	Level A: supported, with a stated boundary condition
The pesantren tie is symbolic, not bureaucratic/financial	KO; communication records (DOK-11)	None identified	Level A: supported
Learning outcomes are preserved under adaptation.	None (participant perception only: KO; managers)	Divided concentration reported	-
Teachers identify with Bata-Bata/nation/Islam.	Teacher interviews	Selective refusal (G5); “not optimal” (G1)	Actor meaning-making: supported as contested, not uniform
Teachers' legal standing is precarious.	Teacher accounts (G5; G6; G8)	Some report conditions adequate (G2)	Context-specific: supported, with variation

Two points of evidentiary discipline follow. First, on triangulation: convergent interview accounts across tiers support recruitment, and the pesantren ties well. Documents and observations at the studios observed corroborate the "single managerial system" and the stability of the method in practice. Still, they do not establish either as uniform across all fifteen studios.

Several central claims rest on all three sources, not on interviews alone. The coordinator and managers affirm the protected method core (KO, PS1, PS3, PS5). The manual and per-juz volumes (DOK-02) and mastery-based advancement records (DOK-07) document it, and observation shows it as a recurring session structure (Obs 3, Obs 4). Managers and teachers describe ability-based multigrade grouping (PS1; PS4; G6). Allocation lists document it (DOK-05), and observation of seating and teacher circulation across simultaneous groups confirms it (Obs 1, Obs 2, Obs 5). Interviews state *sanad*-based recruitment (KO; PS1), and the recruitment SOP (DOK-08) and training records (DOK-09) record it. The coordinator describes the informal pesantren tie (KO), and

communication records evidence it (DOK-11). For these claims, the triangulation described in the Methods holds. An observation memo that records the same core delivery distinction (Obs 5) adds support.

Two limits apply. First, the observation covered five sessions. It corroborates that the observed studios enacted the shared structure, but it cannot establish uniformity across all fifteen. The "single managerial system" claim remains bounded for that reason: documents show that coordination is institutionalized, and observation confirms its enactment only where it occurred. Second, no source measures learning outcomes independently, so every statement about outcomes reflects participants' perceptions.

The study considers divergent and negative cases. On representation, G5 rejects the national and religious claims that oppose the dominant affirmation. On teacher relations, most described harmony while acknowledging that "differences of pedagogical view certainly exist" (G8). One teacher pressed for greater standardization of "the scope of material, the depth of concepts, and assessment standards, not the teacher's personal style" (G5), indicating that uniform delivery is an aspiration rather than a settled fact. On support needs, responses ranged from specific legal demands (G5; G6; G8) to the view that nothing was lacking (G2). Observation also recorded uneven student concentration and distraction within sessions (Obs 1), which calls into question any impression of frictionless delivery. These divergences bound the study's claims, and the Discussion carries them forward.

Discussion

The findings are interpreted below in terms of three contributions: transnational pedagogic authority and alumni-mediated institutional projection; selective fidelity; and the interaction of belonging and being under constraint. For each, the discussion moves from what the study found, to what existing scholarship explains, to what remains unexplained, to what this case adds, and to how the relevant theory might be extended.

Alumni-Mediated Institutional Projection of Pedagogic Authority

What the study found. A pedagogic tradition from Bata-Bata is reproduced across a border through an alumni network. The network combines centralized coordination with *sanad*-based recruitment. The originating pesantren exercises no routine bureaucratic reporting and no financial control.

What scholarship explains. Bernstein shows that control over distribution, recontextualization, and evaluation governs which knowledge circulates.²² Tan applies this to Islamic education, where whoever controls the pedagogic device controls reform.²³ Studies of Qur'anic-method governance find that methods scale as organizations translate charismatic, sanad-based authority into standardized structures.²⁴ Research on Madurese pesantren establishes the centrality of kiai and networks to santri culture.²⁵

What remains unexplained. These accounts place the recontextualizing authority within a bounded field, usually national, and assume an administrative relationship between that authority and the people who transmit the knowledge. They do not explain cross-border pedagogic continuity when the authority sits in another country and cannot command the teachers. In this case, teachers comply because they attribute authority to the method's origin, not because anyone administers compliance.

What this case adds. The case specifies a mechanism: alumni-mediated institutional projection. The originating institution supplies epistemic and symbolic authority, seen in the description of the method as "a pure product of Bata-Bata." An alumni network supplies the transnational organizational means: coordination, recruitment, financing, and regulatory navigation. This replaces the framing that "the pesantren exports its system". The change matters empirically, because the evidence shows no bureaucratic or financial control by the pesantren. It matters theoretically because it separates the source of authority from the agent of organization, two functions that studies of domestic pesantren usually place within one institution.

How theory might be extended. Integrating Bernstein with Levitt and Glick Schiller turns two parallel frameworks into one argument.²⁶ The analysis first has to justify a preliminary claim: that the alum network qualifies as a recontextualizing field. In Bernstein's terms, this field is where knowledge from the field of production is selected,

²² Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*.

²³ Tan, "Contesting Reform: Bernstein's Pedagogic Device and Madrasah Education in Singapore."

²⁴ Sulaeman, Ichwan, and Rafiq, "Market Islam in Qur'an Reading Methods in Indonesia: Tradition and the Dynamics of Emerging Diversity"; Muhlis et al., "Transformation beyond Transgression: Resistance-Based System Improvement in Kitab Kuning Reading Acceleration Program."

²⁵ Pribadi, "Religious Networks in Madura: Pesantren, Nahdlatul Ulama and Kiai as the Core of Santri Culture"; Moh. Dannur, Ikram Shaliadi, and Zainullah, "Pastoral Datafication and Wasathiyah in Practice: Digital Behaviour Governance as Religious Moderation in an Indonesian Pesantren," *Al-Insyiroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 12, no. 2 SE-Articles (n.d.): 174–89, <https://doi.org/10.35309/2mc64w25>.

²⁶ Levitt and Glick Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society."

relocated, and refashioned into pedagogic discourse for a field of reproduction. Agents in it decide what may cross and how. The IKABA/IMABA structure fits this description. It does more than administer studios. It decides which version of At-Tanzil is legitimate, who may transmit it, and which features may change, drawing on the pesantren's production context and refashioning its delivery for the diaspora. A plain governance account would miss this. The Bernsteinian reading adds that the network holds authority over the pedagogic device itself, not only over logistics.

With that justification in place, *sanad*-based recruitment does two things at once. As a rule of distribution, it governs who may transmit the method. As a tie within a transnational social field, it binds teachers to the originating institution through ways of belonging.²⁷ The rule that protects pedagogic authority is also the relationship that sustains cross-border belonging. Neither framework shows this alone. Table 8 maps each Bernsteinian concept to its empirical mechanism, the evidence for it, and its analytical consequence, with qualifications, and it tests each mapping against the evidence

Table 8.
Mapping the case onto Bernstein's pedagogic device

Bernsteinian concept	Empirical mechanism in At-Tanzil	Evidence	Analytical consequence (and qualification)
Field of production	Home pesantren where At-Tanzil was developed	Interviews (KO); manual and per- <i>juz</i> volumes (DOK-02)	Establishes the original pedagogic text; the source of authority, distinct from its diaspora agent
Recontextualising field	IKABA/IMABA coordination relocating the method into the studio provision	Coordination records (DOK-10); interviews (KO; PS1)	Controls what may move and change; qualifies as a device because it governs the pedagogic text, not only logistics
Rule of distribution (who may transmit)	<i>Sanad</i> -based recruitment (Bata-Bata/affiliated alumni; At-Tanzil training)	Recruitment SOP (DOK-08); training records (DOK-09)	Authorizes transmission; applied elastically (affiliated pesantren included), so a boundary condition rather than an absolute rule
Rule of recontextualization (what may change)	Protect the per- <i>juz</i> core; license adaptation only in the organization and delivery.	Interviews (KO; PS1); allocation lists (DOK-05); observation (Obs 5)	Produces selective fidelity; strongly evidenced across sources for the observed studios

²⁷ Yovie Djundjuran, Moh Ali, and Saefudin Zuhri, "Islamic Religious Education and Student Academic Achievement and Motivation: A Systematic Review of Pedagogical Strategies and Value Internalization Mechanisms," *FIKROTUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Manajemen Islam* 15, no. 01 (2026): 58–78.

Pedagogic discourse	The session order: review, demonstration, read-and-listen, advancement	Observation (Obs 3, Obs 4); lesson plans (DOK-03)	Shows the enacted instructional order; observed stable where observed, not across all fifteen studios
Rule of evaluation	Level-advancement testing on volume completion	Advancement records (DOK-07); progress cards (DOK-04)	Defines legitimate acquisition; controls competence at Level B, with no independent Level-C learning-outcome data
Classification/framing	Strong classification of the authorized method; framing negotiated in multigrade delivery	Observation (Obs 1, Obs 2); interviews	Core strongly classified; framing (pacing, sequencing) weaker and locally negotiated in delivery.

Selective fidelity: fidelity and adaptation at different layers

What the study found. Participants protect the method's core while adapting the organization and delivery of learning (multigrade grouping, compressed time, pronunciation work).

What scholarship explains. Literature on implementation fidelity, curriculum translation, pedagogical transfer, scaling, and glocalization typically treats fidelity and adaptation as a trade-off along a single dimension, more of one means less of the other, and asks how much a practice changes as it moves.

What remains unexplained. A single-dimensional trade-off cannot capture a case in which fidelity and adaptation are simultaneously high but reside in different components: the instructional core is strongly conserved. At the same time, the delivery architecture is substantially reorganized. Nor does the glocalization literature, which tends to describe downward adaptation to local conditions, explain why this case resists simplification of the core.

What this case adds. *Selective fidelity* names a configuration in which a pedagogic system is stratified into a *protected pedagogic core* and an *adaptable organizational/delivery layer*, with fidelity concentrated in the former and adaptation licensed in the latter. A contrast illustrates the point, although it is not a controlled comparison. Among Madurese communities in Malaysia, *haji* and *umrah* practices have been reported to be simplified and selectively expressed under minority conditions,²⁸ whereas At-Tanzil keeps its core intact. The two cases differ in kind: communal ritual on

²⁸ M H Effendy et al., “Haji and Umrah Practices among Madurese Communities in Indonesia and Malaysia,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 14, no. 1 (2026), <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v14i1.1870>.

one side, organized schooling on the other, so the contrast cannot isolate a single cause. It suggests that an institutional device that insulates the core through coordination and recruitment may help explain why one practice is simplified and the other is not. Selective fidelity thus reframes the fidelity–adaptation question from “how much changes?” to “which layer changes, and what holds the other in place?”

How theory might be extended. The concept invites a layered model of pedagogic transfer in which the unit of analysis is not the practice as a whole but its components, each with its own fidelity regime. This is offered as a case-derived proposition to be tested elsewhere, not as an established generalization.

Belonging and being under constraint

What the study found. Teachers actively participate in the transnational field through communication, organizational involvement, and cross-border knowledge transfer, while several report having an insecure legal status.

What scholarship explains. Levitt and Glick Schiller distinguish ways of being (participation) from ways of belonging (identification);²⁹ Scholarship on pesantren service explains commitment through values such as *ruhul jihad* and sincerity rather than material reward;³⁰ and work on migrant education in border zones shows provision proceeding in incompletely recognized legal spaces.³¹

What remains unexplained. These accounts do not fully address how *active participation* in a transnational educational field is sustained precisely by actors whose *legal position* is least secure, nor how belonging and being interact rather than merely co-occur.

What this case adds. Treating ways of being as observable practices, rather than as legal status, shows that teachers' participation is robust: they teach, coordinate, and transmit the method even as the legal *conditions* of that participation are precarious. The

²⁹ Levitt and Glick Schiller, “Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society.”

³⁰ Akmal Mundiri et al., “Beyond the Motive: Lessons Learned from Work Commitment Based on Pesantren,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 14, no. 1 (2026): 97–122, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v14i1.1825>.

³¹ D T Suarno, Y Suryono, and Zamroni, “Equalization Access to Education as an Effort to Foster the Nationalism of Indonesian Migrant Workers’ Children in Border Areas,” *European Journal of Educational Research* 10, no. 4 (2021): 1825–37, <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.10.4.1825>; R Meoded and I BenDavid-Hadar, “Fiscal Decentralization of Education: A Social Network Analysis of Values Underlying Local Decision-Making Processes,” *International Journal of Educational Development* 119 (2025): 103444, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2025.103444>.

two dimensions appear to interact. Identification with the pesantren, together with pay, professional need, and institutional ties, helps sustain participation despite precarity. Precarity may, in turn, increase the weight teachers place on the belonging that authorizes their work, although the data suggest this link rather than establish it. Contested representation, most sharply in G5's refusal of the national and religious claims, shows that belonging is differentiated and reflexively managed rather than uniform.

How theory might be extended. The case suggests specifying, within transnational social-field theory, how the *conditions* of being (including legal precarity) shape the *practices* of being and their relation to belonging, again as a proposition for comparative testing. We retain the phrase “strong belonging amid precarious conditions of being” as a paper-level heuristic. Still, we explicitly identify it as our analytical extension rather than a restatement of Levitt and Glick Schiller: in their formulation, ways of being denote practices and social positions within a field, and we do not equate them with legal status.³² What we add is the observation that, in this case, legal precarity is a condition that intersects with, without redefining, both ways of being and ways of belonging.

A case-derived model, stated as propositions.

Synthesizing the three contributions, the study offers a case-derived analytical model, explicitly a set of propositions generated from one case, not an empirically validated or replicable model. (P1) Cross-border pedagogic continuity can be secured through alumni-mediated institutional projection, in which the originating institution supplies epistemic/symbolic authority and an intermediary network supplies transnational organization. (P2) Where an institutional device insulates a protected pedagogic core, transfer exhibits selective fidelity, conserving the core while adapting the delivery layer. (P3) In such arrangements, *sanad*-type mechanisms operate simultaneously as rules of distribution and as ties of transnational belonging, so that pedagogic control and cross-border connection are aspects of one mechanism. (P4) Active participation in the transnational field can be sustained by actors whose legal conditions are precarious, with belonging and precarity reinforcing one another. These propositions distinguish empirical findings (the preceding sections) from theoretical claims (P1–P3) and from future testable propositions (P2 and P4 as comparative hypotheses).

³² Levitt and Glick Schiller, “Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society.”

Practical implications

Implications are stated as case-derived and provisional. The legal insecurity that teachers report suggests a need for clearer status and protection arrangements for community educators, particularly non-students; this is a contextual inference, not a demonstrated policy effect. For pesantren and alumni networks, the case offers not a proven template but an instance of *potential transferability subject to contextual testing*: whether alumni-mediated projection and selective fidelity travel to other traditions and settings is an empirical question this single case cannot settle. For bodies such as SIKL and KBRI, the observed division of labor, administrative support alongside pedagogic autonomy, illustrates one workable relationship, again subject to testing elsewhere. At-Tanzil should not be presented as a replicable model.

Limitations

The study's evidentiary boundary is its central limitation. Because parents and students were not included, the study cannot speak to student learning outcomes, learner perceptions, learner agency or resistance, or educational effectiveness; it addresses the *transmission and provision* of pedagogy, not *learning outcomes*. Claims about parental involvement are teachers' perceptions. The reliance, at several points, on interview self-reports means that the "single managerial system" and the in-practice stability of the method require fuller observational and documentary corroboration than the present data provide; the extent of that corroboration is to be determined from field records. The generally favorable tone of responses and the researcher's relationship to the field require the positionality and reflexivity disclosures noted in the Methods. Finally, the study examines one network, so its propositions await comparative testing.

Conclusion

This study asked how a pesantren-derived tradition of Qur'anic instruction is reproduced across a border for Indonesian migrant children in Malaysia. The answer is organizational and interpretive; it makes no claim about effectiveness. The network sustains provision not through the home pesantren's direct control but through alumni-mediated institutional projection. Coordination and *sanad*-based recruitment carry the pesantren's epistemic and symbolic authority across the border, IKABA/IMABA supply the transnational organization, and compliance rests on the method's attributed origin, not on command or subsidy. Pedagogical continuity is built through selective fidelity. A

protected per-juz core stays fixed, while an adaptable delivery layer (multigrade grouping, compressed time, and pronunciation work at the Malay–Indonesian–Arabic interface) absorbs the strain of a very different setting. Teachers interpret their roles expansively. Most claim to represent the pesantren, the nation, and Islam, but their claims are weighed and sometimes partly rejected, which shows reflexive agency. Teachers also actively participate in the transnational field while holding precarious legal status, so their devotion rests on an insecure footing. Institutional authority thus travels through belonging rather than bureaucracy, and interacts with material and legal constraints throughout.

The design limits these conclusions. Without learner data or full observational corroboration, the article cannot demonstrate the effectiveness of the At-Tanzil model. The analytical model is a set of case-derived propositions (alumni-mediated projection, selective fidelity, and the belonging–being relation) that still need to be tested comparatively across other networks, traditions, and national settings. The case does establish something narrower but firmer: a specifiable way in which pedagogic authority can be reproduced across borders when an alumni network, rather than the originating institution, does the organizing work.

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