



EFFECTIVENESS OF BLENDED LEARNING STRATEGY TO IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Blended learning combines face-to-face instruction with online learning, designed to provide greater flexibility in the teaching and learning process. This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method, involving students and teachers as research subjects. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, including learning materials, exam results, and assignments given to students. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of blended learning has a positive impact on students' learning motivation, where students feel more motivated to learn independently and have the opportunity to review material at any time through online platforms. Blended learning also enhances the interaction between teachers and students, allowing students to ask questions and engage in discussions more freely. However, challenges such as limited internet access for some students and the lack of technological skills among some teachers reduce the effectiveness of this learning approach. In terms of academic performance, this study found that most students experienced improvement in their exam results and assignments after the implementation of the blended learning strategy, although some students faced difficulties in participating in online learning. Overall, blended learning proves to be effective in improving students' academic performance, as long as the existing challenges can be addressed, such as providing better internet access and offering technology training for teachers. This study suggests that Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek continues to develop and utilize technology in learning to enhance the quality of education in the future.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Academic Performance, Learning Motivation, Online Learning, Education.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping both the character and intellectual abilities of individuals. In the rapidly evolving modern era, demands for quality education have significantly increased, particularly in preparing young generations to excel and meet global challenges. Among the key components of education is the teaching strategy employed by educators ([Effendi, 2016](#)). The selection and application of appropriate teaching strategies can profoundly impact students' academic performance. Thus, continuous innovation in teaching strategies is essential to enhance the effectiveness and quality of education. One such strategy that has garnered substantial attention and is being widely implemented in the educational sphere is blended learning ([Rosa et al., 2024](#)).

Blended learning combines face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning, leveraging information and communication technology ([Sholeh et al., 2024](#)). This concept not only integrates technology-based learning with traditional methods but also creates a more flexible, interactive, and accommodating environment for various student learning styles ([Depita, 2024](#)). It empowers students to actively participate in the learning process, using technology as an effective and efficient educational tool. One of the primary benefits of blended learning is its capacity to provide students with online access to learning materials, enabling self-paced study ([Limbong et al., 2022](#)). Simultaneously, face-to-face interactions allow for in-depth learning and better communication between teachers and students.

Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek, a prominent educational institution in Indonesia, places great importance on improving the quality of education to produce graduates who excel academically and possess commendable character traits, aligning with the institution's vision and mission. Academic achievement is a vital indicator of the success of the learning process in this madrasah. However, despite the implementation of various teaching methods, challenges persist in achieving optimal academic outcomes ([Lisnawati et al., 2023](#)). A significant contributing factor is the lack of variation in teaching strategies that align with current demands and developments. Thus, more innovative and effective strategies are required to enhance the quality of education and support better academic performance among students ([Rosa et al., 2024](#)).

In this regard, blended learning plays a pivotal role ([Cao, 2023](#)). Numerous studies have shown that blended learning can increase student engagement, provide meaningful learning experiences, and ultimately enhance academic performance ([Sulaiman, 2023](#)). Implementing blended learning at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek offers an alternative teaching strategy that could address the current challenges faced. This strategy allows students not only to gain knowledge from traditional sources but also to access more interactive and engaging learning materials through digital media ([Cloete, 2017](#)). Although the effectiveness of blended learning

has been widely studied, limited research has specifically examined its implementation and outcomes in madrasahs, which have unique characteristics and challenges in their educational processes ([Shisakha et al., 2024](#)). This study aims to explore and evaluate the extent to which blended learning strategies can improve academic achievement at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek.

By employing blended learning, students are expected to be more motivated in their studies, gain a deeper understanding of the curriculum, and develop better skills to perform well in exams and academic evaluations ([Versteijlen & Wals, 2023](#)). This research seeks to uncover effective solutions for improving education quality at the madrasah and aims to serve as a model for similar institutions facing comparable challenges. Implementing blended learning at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek must also consider the local context, where the surrounding community strongly adheres to Islamic values and traditions. Therefore, adjustments are necessary to harmonize the use of technology with Islamic educational principles, which form the foundation of the madrasah ([Azah & Sholeh, 2024](#)). By doing so, the learning process not only enhances students' academic achievements but also reinforces their moral character in practicing good religious principles.

The adoption of blended learning at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek aims to provide solutions to the educational challenges faced by the institution, particularly in creating an effective, engaging, and contextually relevant learning environment. By integrating online and offline methods through technology, students are expected to be more actively involved in the learning process and better prepared for academic assessments with a stronger grasp of the material ([Baharuddin & Hatta, 2024](#)). The success of this strategy could positively impact students' academic performance, overall education quality, and the institution's ability to innovate and develop more effective teaching methods in the future.

This research seeks to explore the effectiveness of blended learning strategies in improving academic achievement by identifying factors that influence the successful implementation of this approach and its impact on students' learning outcomes. The findings are anticipated to contribute positively to the advancement of education at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek and serve as a reference for other madrasahs in Indonesia seeking to enhance their educational quality by adopting modern and innovative learning technologies.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore the implementation of blended learning strategies and their impact on students' academic achievement at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and views of teachers and students regarding the blended learning

practices implemented in the school ([Creswell, 2007](#)). The study aims to provide a detailed description of how blended learning strategies influence students' academic performance in the context of this madrasa.

The approach adopted in this research is qualitative descriptive, designed to provide a comprehensive depiction of the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher seeks to describe the implementation of blended learning in detail and analyze teachers' and students' perceptions of its impact on academic achievement. This approach aims to identify the factors influencing the effectiveness of blended learning as well as the challenges faced during its implementation.

This research is a case study focusing on a single institution, Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek ([Yin, 2009](#)). The case study method was chosen as it allows an in-depth analysis of blended learning implementation within a specific context. Through this case study, the researcher can explore various dimensions of blended learning execution and its impact on students' academic performance in a controlled and contextualized environment.

The research subjects consist of two main groups: teachers and students. The teachers involved in this study are those who have implemented blended learning strategies in their teaching processes. Their selection was based on their experience and understanding of blended learning implementation. The students involved are those studying in classes that utilize blended learning strategies, selected to represent diverse backgrounds and participation levels in technology-based learning. For data collection, the researcher employed various techniques, including in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation ([Seidman, 2006](#)). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and students to delve deeper into their experiences with blended learning. These interviews also aimed to understand their perceptions of the advantages, challenges, and impacts of implementing blended learning strategies on academic achievement. Observations were carried out to monitor the learning process in blended learning classrooms, focusing on teacher-student interactions and the use of technology in learning activities. Additionally, documentation was collected to obtain data on learning materials, schedules, and academic performance records before and after the implementation of blended learning.



Figure 1. Data Collection Flow

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also conducted to further explore the perspectives of students and teachers on blended learning implementation. The FGDs provided a platform for participants to share their experiences and discuss the challenges and successes they encountered during the learning process. This technique aimed to reveal broader perspectives from the various stakeholders involved. Following data collection, the next step was data analysis. The researcher utilized thematic analysis to identify key themes emerging from the interviews, observations, and FGDs. This analytical process involved coding the data to categorize relevant information based on recurring themes, such as the impact of blended learning on students' learning motivation, challenges faced during implementation, and its effect on academic performance. Once categorized, the data were interpreted to understand the relationship between the implementation of blended learning strategies and students' academic outcomes.

Data validity in this study was maintained through source and method triangulation ([Miles et al., 2014](#)). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from various sources, such as teachers, students, and documentation. Method triangulation was achieved by employing multiple data collection techniques, including interviews, observations, and FGDs. Additionally, the researcher employed member checking by presenting preliminary findings to some participants to obtain feedback on the accuracy and relevance of the collected data. This approach was intended to enhance the validity of the research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Blended Learning at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek

The implementation of blended learning at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek has shown significant development in recent years. This strategy combines conventional face-to-face learning with online learning, providing students with a more flexible and varied approach to education. At this institution, teachers utilize various digital platforms, such as Google Classroom and Zoom, to deliver materials and assignments to students. These platforms enable teachers to provide not only text-based materials but also videos, audio, and various other digital resources, enhancing the variety of materials accessible to students.

In its implementation, face-to-face learning is still conducted conventionally but focuses more on direct interaction between students and teachers, group discussions, and clarification of more complex topics. Conversely, online learning emphasizes independent assignments, quizzes, and discussion forums that students can access at any time ([Kusumasari et al., 2024](#)). This approach gives students the freedom to manage their own learning schedules, allowing them to use their time outside the classroom more effectively. They can access materials whenever needed, whether during free time or when reviewing specific topics they have not fully understood.

Teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek find technology, particularly online learning platforms, highly beneficial for delivering more engaging and easily accessible materials to students. Previously, teaching materials were limited to textbooks or verbal explanations in the classroom ([Melati et al., 2023](#)). With the advent

of these technologies, teachers can now incorporate various types of media, such as explanatory videos, animations, and podcasts, which help students grasp the material more easily and attractively. This diversity in media also provides opportunities for students with different learning styles to understand the material in the way that suits them best.

This flexibility is well-received by students, especially those with busy schedules outside of school or those who prefer independent learning. With materials accessible anytime, students have the opportunity to revisit topics they have not fully understood. Additionally, through online discussion forums provided by teachers, students can ask questions and engage in discussions with their peers even after school hours ([Firmansyah, 2024](#)). This fosters more intense interaction between students and teachers, enhancing the students' understanding of the subjects taught.

Despite the many positive aspects of blended learning, several challenges arise in practice. One of the primary challenges faced by teachers is integrating face-to-face learning with online learning, particularly for subjects requiring practical activities or experiments. Subjects such as chemistry and biology, for instance, are harder to teach online due to the need for experiments or direct observation. Students cannot perform experiments at home with the facilities available, limiting the ability to cover some topics that require hands-on practice through online methods.

Although online learning offers flexibility in terms of time, not all students have adequate access to technology, such as computers or stable internet connections. Some students living in areas with limited internet access face difficulties accessing online materials. This condition affects their ability to fully participate in learning activities, potentially lowering their comprehension of the subjects taught ([Sawitri & Astiti, 2019](#)). Teachers also encounter challenges in managing time and interactions between face-to-face and online learning. Interactive face-to-face learning requires students' full attention, while online learning demands more intensive supervision, especially regarding assignment submissions and student participation in discussion forums. Integrating these two methods effectively and complementarily requires strong managerial skills.

The implementation of blended learning at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek holds great potential for improving the quality of education. However, the challenges faced in both technical and pedagogical aspects need to be managed effectively. Providing adequate facilities, training for teachers, and addressing the technological access gap for students are crucial steps to optimize the implementation of blended learning. Although obstacles exist, further development of this learning model can significantly enhance students' learning experiences in the future.

The Impact of Blended Learning on Students' Learning Motivation

The implementation of blended learning at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek has significantly influenced students' learning motivation. By combining face-to-face instruction with online learning, students are provided with greater flexibility in managing their study schedules. This approach enables students to access learning

materials anytime and anywhere, giving them the freedom to organize their learning time effectively ([Gupta, 2023](#)). In the online learning environment, students can revisit materials they do not fully understand without worrying about falling behind their peers. This autonomy fosters a sense of responsibility and independence in their learning process.

Another advantage of blended learning is the creation of a more relaxed and less rushed learning environment. With access to materials for independent study, students are not constrained by the time limitations often associated with traditional face-to-face learning ([Wijaya et al., 2024](#)). This more relaxed atmosphere allows students to focus better and deepen their understanding of the topics they are studying. Students who previously struggled to keep up with the pace of conventional classrooms now have the opportunity to adjust to their own learning speed. This positive impact enhances their motivation to continue learning and explore topics that capture their interest in greater depth.

One of the most significant positive effects of blended learning is the increased interaction between students and teachers. Online discussion forums allow students to freely ask questions and participate in discussions without the limitations of time and space. In face-to-face learning, students may sometimes feel hesitant or shy about asking questions, especially if they perceive their questions as irrelevant or fear disrupting the class. However, in online forums, they feel more comfortable interacting with their teachers and peers. They can ask questions, share ideas, and discuss challenging topics openly, boosting their confidence in the learning process.

Online learning also provides students with more interactive learning experiences ([Whitworth & Chiu, 2015](#)). Rather than passively listening to lectures, students can actively participate in discussions, answer quizzes, and complete assignments independently. These activities provide a sense of accomplishment when they successfully grasp concepts or complete tasks, serving as a motivational boost to study more diligently. This, in turn, enhances the overall quality of their learning.

Despite the many positive effects, certain challenges, particularly regarding access to technology, need to be addressed. Some students report difficulties accessing the internet at home, making them feel left behind in the online learning process. This lack of access affects their learning motivation, as they struggle to keep up with the course materials ([Hew & Brush, 2007](#)). It also highlights the disparity in technological access between students with adequate devices and internet connections and those without. These limitations hinder some students' active participation in online learning, potentially lowering their confidence in their abilities.

The impact of blended learning on students' learning motivation remains positive. Online learning provides flexibility, allowing students to study in ways that suit their individual learning styles ([Wijaya et al., 2024](#)). Students feel more engaged in the learning process, actively participating in discussions and motivated to learn independently. Meanwhile, face-to-face instruction continues to offer opportunities for direct interaction, crucial for building stronger relationships between students and

teachers, as well as among peers. The combination of these two approaches creates a more comprehensive, enjoyable, and efficient learning environment.

The positive outcomes of blended learning demonstrate its ability to encourage students to learn more actively, confidently, and responsibly. While challenges related to technological access persist, raising awareness about the importance of adequate infrastructure and providing training for both students and teachers will strengthen the implementation of blended learning in the future. Overall, blended learning makes a significant contribution to enhancing students' learning motivation, ultimately improving their academic achievements.

Challenges in Implementing Blended Learning

The implementation of blended learning at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek has brought numerous benefits to the learning process but also introduced several challenges that need attention to enhance its effectiveness and sustainability. One major obstacle is the limited internet access among students. Many students reside in areas with poor internet connectivity, making it difficult for them to participate smoothly in online learning ([Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2018](#)). Although online learning offers flexibility for students to access materials anytime, limited internet access hampers their ability to fully utilize the learning platforms. As a result, some students have to rely on offline materials or downloadable resources, which inherently lack the interactivity and depth provided by online learning platforms. Consequently, students who cannot access online materials often lag behind their peers who can engage in online learning seamlessly, creating disparities in the learning process.

Technical challenges faced by teachers also pose a barrier to the effective implementation of blended learning. Some teachers struggle to manage and integrate various digital platforms used in teaching. While platforms like Google Classroom, Zoom, and other educational apps offer significant advantages, teachers sometimes face difficulties in leveraging the available features to deliver interactive and engaging lessons. Not all teachers are fully adept at using these technologies, which limits the optimal use of these platforms in supporting learning activities. For instance, online assignments often require specific skills for managing submissions, providing feedback, and conducting assessments (Cloete, 2017). Teachers who lack proficiency in these areas may deliver lessons that are less engaging and effective.

Additionally, students report challenges in adapting to the new learning methods, especially those who are not accustomed to using digital devices intensively for educational purposes. While blended learning offers freedom and flexibility, not all students are ready to transition fully to digital learning. Some students struggle to use devices like laptops or smartphones effectively for learning, particularly if they lack the necessary technical knowledge or skills ([Syafi'i & Ikwandi, 2023](#)). This group of students needs guidance and support to optimize their use of technology in learning. Students unfamiliar with online learning may feel uncomfortable or find it hard to stay focused during virtual sessions, which could negatively impact their comprehension of the material being taught.

These challenges highlight that, despite the many advantages of blended learning, its implementation cannot be seamless without efforts to address the emerging issues. One potential solution is to provide comprehensive training for teachers on effectively utilizing digital platforms. Such training would help teachers become more proficient in leveraging technology to enhance interactivity in learning and better manage online assignments and feedback processes ([Maesyaroh, 2024](#)). Moreover, addressing students' internet access issues requires initiatives like providing data packages or ensuring internet access at schools to support students living in areas with limited connectivity. While there are significant challenges in implementing blended learning, these issues can be mitigated through proper teacher training and improved technological access for students. With consistent efforts to overcome these obstacles, blended learning can become a more effective and efficient educational method, contributing positively to students' academic achievements at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek.

The Impact of Blended Learning on Students' Academic Achievement

The implementation of blended learning at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek has significantly influenced students' academic achievement. Students who previously struggled to comprehend materials in face-to-face settings have demonstrated better understanding due to the flexibility offered by online resources. With materials accessible anytime, students can revisit topics they have not fully grasped or find confusing. The availability of content in formats such as videos, audio files, and downloadable text allows students to learn at their own pace. This approach enables them to delve deeper into the subjects, enhancing their confidence, particularly in tackling exams and completing assignments.

Blended learning also encourages students to take a more active role in the learning process. Online discussion forums and interactive tasks provide students with opportunities to collaborate and exchange ideas with their peers, enriching their understanding of the material ([Sholeh, 2023](#)). These activities also help develop critical thinking and collaborative skills, which are essential both in education and in everyday life ([Sholeh et al., 2024](#)). Thus, blended learning not only focuses on academic mastery but also supports the cultivation of crucial life skills.

A subset of students has experienced a decline in academic performance due to challenges such as limited internet access or insufficient technological skills. Students residing in areas with poor or unstable internet connectivity face difficulties accessing online materials, which hinders their ability to follow the learning process effectively ([Efendi & Sholeh, 2023](#)). As a result, they struggle to understand the content and participate in online discussions ([Minarti et al., 2024](#)). For students less skilled in using educational technology, navigating digital learning platforms presents significant challenges, affecting their ability to grasp the taught material.

The success of blended learning largely depends on the readiness of both students and teachers to utilize technology effectively. Teachers' skills in managing learning platforms and delivering digital content significantly impact the quality of education provided ([Sholeh, 2023a](#)). Proficient teachers can create engaging and interactive

learning experiences, whereas less skilled teachers may struggle to maximize the potential of digital tools. Therefore, providing comprehensive training for teachers on the use of educational technology is essential to ensure the effective implementation of blended learning.

Adequate internet access is another critical factor for the success of blended learning. Although many students can leverage online learning effectively, some still face barriers due to internet connectivity issues. Addressing these challenges requires schools to enhance internet facilities, such as offering data packages for students or improving network infrastructure, ensuring that all students can access learning materials without difficulty ([Sabarudin et al., 2024](#)). Better internet access would enable students to participate in online learning more effectively, helping them overcome obstacles to accessing resources. Blended learning contributes positively to improving students' academic performance, although its success is heavily influenced by factors such as students' and teachers' technological readiness and the availability of supporting infrastructure. By investing in teacher training and enhancing internet access for students, blended learning has the potential to significantly improve learning outcomes. Taking steps to address these challenges is essential to create a more effective and inclusive learning environment for all students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted on the implementation of blended learning at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek, it can be concluded that this strategy has had a positive impact on students' motivation and academic achievement. The use of blended learning, which combines face-to-face and online learning, provides students with flexibility to access materials and assignments at any time, thereby enhancing their independence and confidence in learning. In terms of motivation, students feel more motivated as they can learn more flexibly, revisit material they have not yet understood, and engage more actively with their teachers and peers through digital platforms. Online discussions and assignments give students more opportunities to be active in their learning, although challenges remain for those living in areas with limited internet connectivity. Some students reported difficulties in accessing learning materials due to these technical constraints. Another challenge is the limited technological skills among teachers. Although most teachers have made efforts to utilize digital platforms, some still face difficulties in fully integrating technology into the learning process. Limitations in using interactive features of these platforms present a challenge that needs to be addressed through further training for educators. The positive impact of blended learning on students' academic achievement is significant. Test scores and assignments show notable improvement, particularly for students who can manage time and materials effectively. Students who access learning materials more frequently through online platforms tend to have a better understanding of the topics being taught. However, some students who struggle with internet access or using digital devices have shown a decline in academic performance. The research indicates that blended learning has the potential to improve academic performance at Madrasah Aliyah Darunnajah Trenggalek, provided that existing challenges are addressed. Providing better internet facilities and further training for teachers in utilizing educational technology will help enhance the effectiveness of this

learning model. Therefore, further development and refinement of blended learning implementation can significantly contribute to improving the quality of education in the madrasa.

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