

Microsoft Office Training: Building Digital Skills of Students at Walisongo Ngabar Ponorogo Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract: Microsoft Office training at Walisongo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School, Ponorogo, is a strategic initiative to improve the digital skills of students. In the digital era that demands technological literacy skills, this training aims to equip students with basic competencies in the use of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with observation, interview, and documentation methods to measure the effectiveness of the training. This program is designed so that students are not only proficient in religious practices, but also ready to face the challenges of the world of work and higher education that demand digital skills. Training methods include direct learning, independent practice, and task-based evaluation. The results of the training showed a significant increase in understanding and skills in using office applications, especially in creating documents, managing data, and preparing presentations. In addition, this training encourages students to be more confident in using technology as a means of preaching and modern communication. This activity also strengthens the role of Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions that are adaptive to the development of the times. With the integration of digital training in the non-formal curriculum, students not only gain added value personally, but also contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the institution. This training is a model for developing soft skills that are relevant and applicable for the generation of students in the 21st century.

Keywords: Microsoft Office training, digital skills, Islamic boarding school, technological literacy

Introduction

The increasingly massive digital transformation in various sectors of life has created a new need for digital literacy and skills in all levels of society, including the Islamic boarding school environment. Islamic boarding schools as traditional Islamic educational institutions have an important role in forming a young generation that is not only strong in Islamic knowledge, but also able to adapt to the development of the times (Wahono, Budimansyah, Malihah, & Fitriyani, 2023). However, a major challenge arises when most Islamic boarding schools, especially those in non-urban areas such as the Walisongo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School, Ponorogo, have not fully integrated information technology education systematically into teaching and learning activities.

In fact, basic technology skills such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) are a fundamental need in the digital era. Not only for academic and administrative purposes, these skills are also important in supporting the activities of students after Islamic boarding schools, both in the world of work and further education. Unfortunately, based on the results of field observations and interviews with Islamic boarding schools, digital skills training in this environment is still sporadic and unstructured. The material provided is also limited, focusing more on general computer introduction without touching on the practical aspects of using productivity software.

This gap indicates an urgent need for research-based interventions that can fill the gap between the need for digital skills and the reality of available training. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of digital literacy for the younger generation (Duke, 2024), as well as the challenges of integrating technology into Islamic education (Wahid, 2024). However, there are not many community services that specifically target Islamic boarding school students with a technical training approach that is applicable and appropriate to the context of Islamic

boarding schools. In addition, a study by (Sobaih, Salem, Hasanein, & Abu Elnasr, 2021) confirmed that Microsoft Office training has been shown to increase work efficiency and productivity among school and college students. Another study by (Muthmainnah, Ibna Seraj, & Oteir, 2022) showed that mastery of office applications increases students' confidence in compiling assignments and presentations, which also has an impact on improving the quality of their academic communication.

The literature review also indicates that Islamic boarding school students have great potential in developing digital literacy, as long as they are supported by appropriate training methods. For example, research by (Anggraini, Septiana, Khotib, & Rofiq, 2024) showed that technology training linked to the context of Islamic preaching and learning is more easily accepted by Islamic boarding school students. This opens up opportunities for community service that not only emphasizes technical aspects, but also the relevance of Islamic values in the use of technology.

Seeing this need, Microsoft Office training at the Walisongo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School was designed as a research-based service activity with a participatory approach and direct practice. This service aims to improve the digital competence of students as a whole, strengthen their self-confidence in facing the digital era, and make Islamic boarding schools an educational institution that is adaptive and responsive to the challenges of the times. With this approach, it is hoped that there will be an increase in digital literacy of students as well as a real contribution from Islamic boarding schools in developing technology-based human resources.

Research Method

This community service program uses the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach (Hennink, Hutter, 2017). This approach was chosen because it involves active participation from the target community, in this case the students and administrators of the Walisongo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School, Ponorogo, in the entire activity process, starting from problem identification, solution formulation, training implementation, to evaluation of results. The PAR approach emphasizes collaboration and empowerment, so this method is relevant for building direct involvement of participants in solving their problems contextually and sustainably (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

The subjects of this community service activity were 30 final year students selected using purposive sampling techniques. The criteria for selecting participants were based on their limitations in mastering Microsoft Office applications, but they had an interest in the field of information technology. The training focused on three main applications in Microsoft Office, namely Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

The types of data collected in this activity consisted of primary and secondary data (Sugiono, 2014). Primary data were obtained through participatory observation during the training process, semi-structured interviews with students and administrators of the Islamic boarding school, and evaluation of practical tasks given during and after the training. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from Islamic boarding school documentation, applicable non-formal curriculum, and previous literature reviews on digital skills training in Islamic boarding school and Islamic education environments.

The data collection techniques (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) used include three main methods. First, observation of participant activities during the training to assess engagement, understanding, and skill development. Second, semi-structured interviews were used to explore participants' experiences, the obstacles they faced, and perceptions of the training provided. Third, performance evaluation was carried out through simple project-based assignments, such as creating documents, data tables, and presentations, which were then assessed using a qualitative assessment rubric.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively qualitatively (Ceswell, 1991). The analysis was carried out by comparing the initial conditions before training (pre-training) and the results after training (post-training), both in terms of technical aspects of Microsoft Office usage skills

and changes in participant attitudes towards the use of digital technology. The results of this analysis are used to measure the effectiveness of the program as well as to prepare further recommendations to support the development of digital literacy in Islamic boarding school environments.

Results and Discussion

Comparison of Microsoft Office Skills Before and After Training

Microsoft Office training conducted at Walisongo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School showed a significant increase in the digital skills of students. This is reflected in the pre- and post-training evaluation data collected through practical assignments and performance assessments. Students showed progress in understanding the basic functions of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

Before the training, the majority of students were at the beginner level. The average Microsoft Word comprehension score was 40, Excel 30, and PowerPoint 35 on a scale of 100. After the training, the average score increased to 85 for Word, 78 for Excel, and 80 for PowerPoint. This increase shows the effectiveness of the practice-based approach in building technical skills.

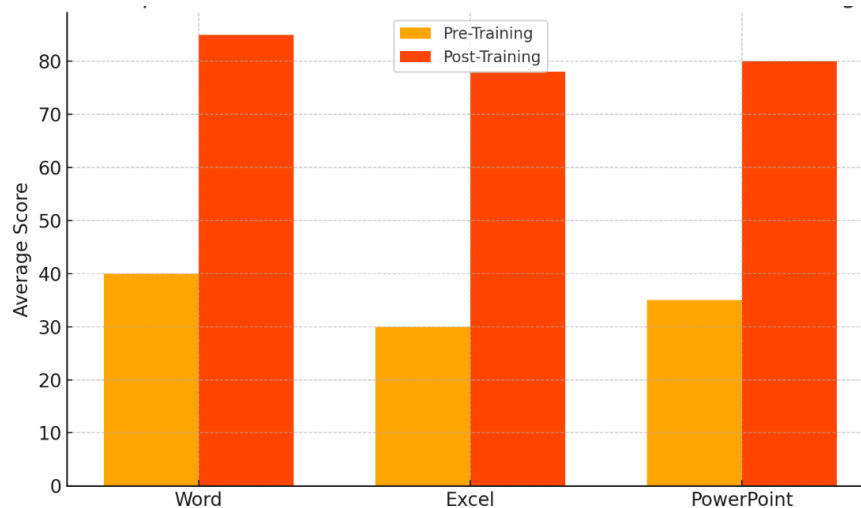


Figure 1. Comparison of Microsoft Office Skills Before and After Training



Figure 2. Training Activities in Progress

Figure 1 presents a visual comparison between the average pre- and post-training scores on the three main Microsoft Office applications. The striking difference in the graph emphasizes the finding that practice-based training has a positive impact on participants' understanding.

In addition to improving scores, the training also brought about changes in participants' attitudes and confidence towards using technology. Based on the interview results, 83% of students felt more confident in operating computers and Office applications after the training. In Microsoft Word, students are able to compose formal documents such as official letters, papers, and CVs. They also begin to understand the use of heading, numbering, and formatting features that were previously unknown. In Excel, participants are able to create simple data tables, use basic formulas such as SUM, AVERAGE, and IF, and create simple graphs to present data. This is an important competency that was previously very limited. For PowerPoint, students can create informative presentations with neat slides, use light animations and insert media such as images and videos. This ability supports them to appear more confident in public presentations or digital preaching.

This finding is consistent with previous research by (Asihati et al., 2025) which showed that practice-based training can significantly increase digital literacy among Islamic boarding school students. In addition, research by (Nurdin et al., 2023) revealed that Microsoft Office training in Islamic boarding schools can open up opportunities for students in the world of work and further education because this skill is a basic requirement in many institutions.

The impact of training is not only technical, but also psychological. Participants stated that they felt more prepared to enter the outside world because they had basic digital skills that had been the main obstacle. Institutionally, this training strengthens the role of Islamic boarding schools as institutions that are responsive to the challenges of the times. Students are not only equipped with religious knowledge, but also life skills that are relevant to the needs of the 21st century.

This program also encourages Islamic boarding school administrators to consider integrating digital curriculum into non-formal learning so that training does not stop at one point, but continues continuously. The training evaluation also showed that the direct learning method (hands-on training) is more effective than the lecture method. Participants find it easier to understand concepts if they are directly practiced. However, there were several obstacles encountered during the training, such as limited devices (laptops and projectors) and limited study time due to the busy activities of the Islamic boarding school.

To overcome these obstacles, the service team arranged training in small sessions with a rotation system and provided independent video tutorial-based modules that students can access in their spare time. This training also opened up a discussion space between students and administrators regarding the importance of digital literacy as part of the transformation of preaching and learning in the modern era.

In general, the results of this community service answer the main objectives of the activity, namely to improve the basic digital skills of students and encourage Islamic boarding schools to be more adaptive to technological changes. Data analysis and interviews show that the skills acquired by students are applicable and have a direct impact on their readiness to face the outside world. In other words, this training is not only remedial for limited technological knowledge, but also strategic in building a bridge between Islamic boarding school traditions and the demands of the times. The results of this community service show that the PAR-based training model is very effective to be implemented in Islamic boarding school environments because it actively involves participants in designing and evaluating the learning process. Overall, this activity proves that developing digital skills in Islamic boarding schools is a strategic step that can bridge the gap between traditional values and the needs of the modern world.

Changes in Students' Confidence Levels in Using Microsoft Office

This training also had a significant impact on the level of self-confidence of students in using digital devices. If before the training only around 28% of students felt confident using Microsoft Office, after the training this figure jumped to 83%. This shows that improving

technical skills also shapes the psychological aspects and self-confidence of students in facing digital challenges.

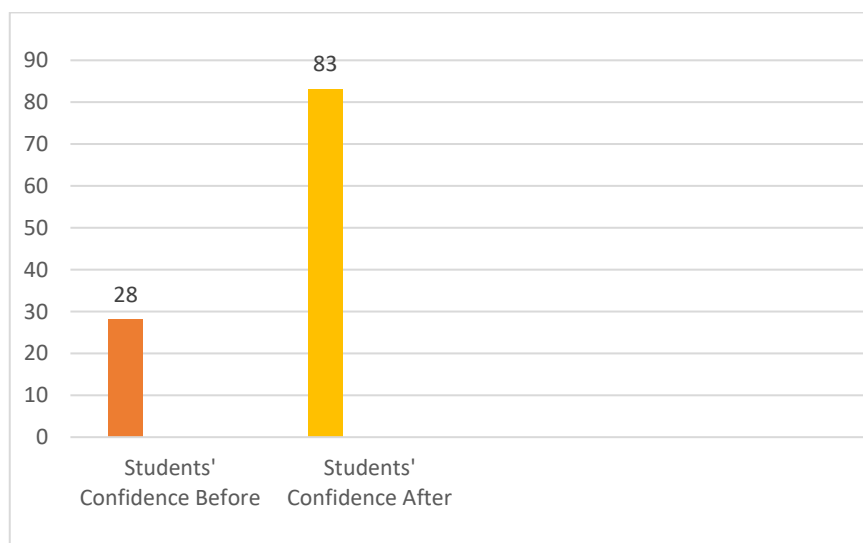


Figure 3. Changes in Students' Confidence Levels in Using Microsoft Office

This finding is in line with the results of research by (Shao, Liu, Dong, & Liu, 2024), which shows that practice-based training not only improves participants' cognitive abilities, but also affective aspects such as motivation and self-confidence. This is an important capital in building a generation of digitally independent students. Furthermore, this training also has an impact on students' perspectives on technology. In group discussions, most students admitted that previously they thought that computers and Office software were only needed in the office world. However, after the training, they realized that these skills are also very relevant in digital preaching, creating Islamic content, and managing Islamic boarding school administration.

Another impact can be seen from the emergence of students' initiatives to develop similar training independently. Several students who mastered the material faster began to help their friends in additional study sessions outside the schedule. This shows the creation of a collaborative learning climate and a culture of sharing knowledge in the Islamic boarding school environment. In addition, the boarding school administrators have also begun to consider providing a computer room as a means of more structured digital learning. This shows that this training has succeeded in raising collective awareness of the importance of technology integration in the Islamic boarding school education system.

When compared to other literature, the results of this activity strengthen the statement of (Hayat, Qamar, & Wulandari, 2024) that training that is designed contextually and based on the community is more easily accepted and sustainable in non-formal environments such as Islamic boarding schools. Although this training went relatively smoothly, several challenges still emerged. One of the main obstacles was the limited number of devices, which caused the training to be carried out in turns in small groups. This reduced the intensity of practice time for each participant. However, this obstacle was creatively overcome by providing video tutorials and independent teaching materials that could be accessed at any time. This approach allows students to continue learning even though not all of them can access the device at the same time. This strategy is known as simple blended learning which is very suitable for environments with limited resources (Kumar et al., 2021)

One interesting aspect of this training is the emergence of students' interest in developing digital content. Several participants began to explore how to create lecture or study materials in the form of attractive visual presentations. This opens up opportunities for Islamic boarding

schools to be more active in the world of digital preaching. Thus, this training not only provides skills, but also triggers a transformation in the role of students as agents of change in the digital field. This is in accordance with the vision of Islamic boarding school education which integrates Islamic values and technological advances (Efendy, Rahman, & Karim, 2023).

In terms of learning outcomes, more than 90% of participants were declared to have passed the training based on the criteria for the success of the final assignment, which included creating formal Word documents, processing Excel data, and PowerPoint presentations with the correct structure. This activity also showed that students have great potential to develop in the field of technology, as long as they are given learning opportunities that suit their learning styles, namely direct practice, mentoring, and small group discussions.

From all these results and findings, it can be seen that Microsoft Office training not only improves technical skills, but also forms an important foundation for digital integration in the Islamic boarding school environment. This firmly answers the initial objective of the community service program, namely to build digital skills in students that are applicable and sustainable.

Conclusion

The Microsoft Office training conducted at the Walisongo Ngabar Islamic Boarding School, Ponorogo, has proven to be a strategic step in building the digital skills of students. This program has succeeded in answering the need for increased technological literacy among students, while also addressing the digital skills gap that previously existed. The results of the training showed that students not only experienced significant improvements in their technical mastery of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, but also experienced a change in their perspective on the importance of digital skills in supporting their religious, educational, and social activities. In addition, this training also strengthened the role of Islamic boarding schools as institutions that are adaptive and responsive to the challenges of the times, by encouraging the creation of a collaborative and participatory learning culture among students. The success of this program is the starting point for designing broader and more structured follow-up activities. It is recommended that this training be made part of the routine program of Islamic boarding schools with adequate infrastructure support, including the addition of computer devices and the development of more comprehensive digital learning modules. In addition, the involvement of students as peer tutors can be a sustainable strategy to expand the impact of the training. In the future, this research-based community service program can also be developed towards the integration of digital technology in the methods of preaching, book learning, and application-based pesantren management, so that pesantren not only become centers of religious knowledge, but also centers of digital literacy that are contextual and relevant to the needs of the 21st century.

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