



**BAZNAS RI and the Madrasah Layak Belajar Program: Evaluating
Social Intervention in Educational Infrastructure and Student
Learning**

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Madrasah Layak Belajar (MLB) Program by BAZNAS RI in supporting the learning process in madrasahs, with a focus on infrastructure conditions and their psychological implications for students. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews at one of the program recipient madrasahs, namely MI Al-Muslimun NW. Participants included the madrasah principal, teachers, and students. The results indicate that the program successfully improved the basic infrastructure conditions of the madrasah, such as classrooms, lighting, ventilation, and sanitation, making them more feasible and conducive to learning. Infrastructure improvements positively impacted teaching effectiveness and enhanced student motivation, comfort, discipline, and engagement in the learning process. From an educational psychology perspective, adequate physical environments function as external supporting factors that strengthen students' emotional comfort and readiness to learn. This study concludes that infrastructure-based interventions through Islamic philanthropic programs such as MLB play a strategic role in improving the quality of madrasah education, both academically and psychologically. Program sustainability through facility maintenance and stakeholder collaboration is essential to maintain the positive impacts achieved.

Keywords: Madrasah Layak Belajar, BAZNAS, Educational Infrastructure, Educational Psychology, Islamic Philanthropy, Learning Quality

INTRODUCTION

Educational infrastructure is an important component of effective teaching and learning because the physical conditions of classrooms and school facilities shape the environment in which teaching and learning occur. Recent evidence indicates that school infrastructure is associated with student learning outcomes, although the strength of this relationship varies across types of facilities and educational contexts (Espinosa Andrade et al., 2024). Research in Indonesian madrasah settings also shows that effective management of educational facilities involves planning, procurement, maintenance, supervision, and the continuous adaptation of facilities to educational needs (Noviyanti, 2025). Similarly, recent qualitative research indicates that comfortable classrooms, sanitation, learning facilities, and equitable access to infrastructure can contribute to students' perceptions of safety, comfort, and motivation (Hannisa & Wakhudin, 2026). Thus, infrastructure should be understood as an enabling condition for effective learning rather than as an independent guarantee of educational achievement.

From an educational psychology perspective, the physical learning environment is closely related to students' school well-being, motivation, and engagement. A recent systematic review found that school well-being is associated with academic performance, interpersonal relationships, self-concept, motivation, and students' broader learning experiences (Sturiale & Espino-Díaz, 2024). Empirical evidence from Indonesian Islamic vocational education also demonstrates a significant positive relationship between school well-being and learning motivation (Priambadi & Nastiti, 2024). These findings suggest that a supportive school environment can contribute to students' psychological readiness to learn. Nevertheless, physical infrastructure should not be assumed to directly produce motivation; its influence is likely to operate through students' perceptions of comfort, safety, belonging, and the quality of their everyday learning experiences.

These principles are consistent with Islamic values that emphasize the importance of knowledge, human dignity, and social responsibility. The Qur'an states, "Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge by degrees" (Qur'an, Al-Mujādilah 58:11). In Indonesia, madrasahs provide both Islamic and general education, yet infrastructure management remains

an important institutional challenge. Recent research at MTs Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung demonstrates that madrasah infrastructure requires systematic planning, procurement, maintenance, supervision, and accountability to support educational quality (Noviyanti, 2025). This indicates that infrastructure development should be understood not simply as the provision of physical facilities but as part of sustainable institutional improvement (Hutagaol et al., 2025).

Islamic philanthropy provides an important mechanism for addressing educational inequality through instruments such as zakat, infaq, and sadaqah. Recent research on BAZNAS in Yogyakarta shows that Islamic philanthropy contributes to educational development through targeted support for educational institutions and disadvantaged communities (Sa'adah et al., 2023). More recently, Aminah (2025) conceptualizes BAZNAS's educational philanthropy as an ecosystem combining infrastructure facilitation through the Madrasah Fit to Learn program, educational assistance, and institutional collaboration. This perspective demonstrates that philanthropic intervention can extend beyond charitable resource distribution toward longer-term educational development.

One relevant initiative is the Madrasah Layak Belajar (MLB) Program implemented by BAZNAS RI, which focuses on improving the physical feasibility and learning environment of madrasahs. Recent research specifically examining BAZNAS's educational philanthropy confirms that infrastructure facilitation is an important component of its broader educational development strategy (Aminah, 2025). However, empirical research examining how such infrastructure interventions are experienced by teachers and students, particularly from an educational psychology perspective, remains limited. Existing studies tend to examine infrastructure management, school well-being, or Islamic philanthropy as separate domains rather than examining their interaction within a specific philanthropic intervention.

This gap is particularly relevant to the MLB Program because improvements in physical facilities cannot be fully understood through physical outputs alone. It is also necessary to examine how infrastructure improvements are translated into changes in teaching practices and students' experiences of comfort, motivation, discipline, and engagement. Therefore, this study analyzes the implementation of the Madrasah Layak Belajar Program by BAZNAS RI at MI Al-Muslimun NW, focusing on infrastructure conditions, the learning process, and students' psychological experiences. The study

contributes to the literature by connecting educational infrastructure, educational psychology, and Islamic philanthropy within a specific madrasah context and provides practical insights for BAZNAS, madrasah administrators, and policymakers.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated examination of infrastructure improvement, students' psychological experiences, and Islamic philanthropic intervention through the BAZNAS RI Madrasah Layak Belajar Program. By examining MI Al-Muslimun NW as an empirical case, the study moves beyond viewing infrastructure as a physical output and investigates how infrastructure-based philanthropy is reflected in the learning environment, teaching practices, and students' comfort, motivation, discipline, and engagement. This integrated perspective constitutes the study's principal contribution to research on educational infrastructure, educational psychology, and Islamic philanthropy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Educational Infrastructure and Learning Quality

Educational infrastructure provides the physical conditions necessary for effective teaching and learning, including classrooms, sanitation, lighting, ventilation, furniture, and instructional facilities. Recent evidence from Ecuador shows that several forms of school infrastructure are positively associated with student achievement, although the strength of these relationships differs across facility types and contexts (Espinosa Andrade et al., 2024). This finding suggests that infrastructure matters, but its educational value cannot be reduced to a simple assumption that more facilities automatically produce better outcomes.

Recent research in Indonesian madrasahs further emphasizes that infrastructure effectiveness depends on systematic management, including planning, procurement, maintenance, and supervision (Noviyanti, 2025). Similarly, Hannisa and Wakhudin (2026) found that comfortable and safe facilities, including classrooms, sanitation, libraries, and learning media, contribute to students' positive perceptions of the learning environment and support their motivation. Thus, infrastructure is more appropriately conceptualized as an enabling condition that creates opportunities for effective learning rather than as a sufficient determinant of educational achievement.

2. Infrastructure from an Educational Psychology Perspective

The relationship between physical learning environments and students' psychological experiences can be explained through the concept of school well-being. A recent systematic review identifies school well-being as a multidimensional construct associated with academic performance, self-concept, interpersonal relationships, anxiety, and the learning process (Sturiale & Espino-Díaz, 2024). In Indonesia, Priambadi and Nastiti (2024) found a significant positive relationship between school well-being and learning motivation among Islamic vocational students. Hannisa and Wakhudin (2026) similarly reported that students experienced greater comfort, safety, and motivation in learning environments supported by appropriate facilities.

These findings can be interpreted through complementary theoretical perspectives. Self-Determination Theory proposes that supportive environments facilitate psychological conditions associated with motivation and engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes reciprocal relationships among individuals, behavior, and environmental conditions (Bandura, 1997), while Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective explains development through continuous interaction between individuals and their surrounding environments (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). These theories suggest that infrastructure does not automatically generate motivation. Rather, physical improvements may influence psychological experiences through students' perceptions of safety, comfort, environmental support, and classroom interaction. This distinction is important because the present study examines how infrastructure improvements are actually experienced by students and teachers.

3. Challenges of Infrastructure in Madrasah Education

Madrasahs have a distinctive role in providing Islamic and general education, but infrastructure management remains an important challenge. Noviyanti (2025) found that madrasah infrastructure management involves multiple stages, including planning, procurement, inventory, maintenance, disposal, supervision, and accountability, with maintenance and administrative capacity remaining important challenges. Hannisa and Wakhudin (2026) further demonstrate that infrastructure is related not only to physical

comfort but also to students' perceptions of safety, fairness, participation, and motivation.

However, infrastructure should not be considered the sole explanation for differences in educational quality. School leadership, teacher competence, socioeconomic conditions, institutional management, and community support may also shape students' educational experiences. Consequently, infrastructure improvement should be understood as one component of a broader educational ecosystem. This perspective is particularly relevant to the present study because the MLB intervention primarily changes physical conditions, while its potential educational and psychological effects emerge through interactions among students, teachers, and the school environment.

4. Islamic Philanthropy and Educational Support Programs

Islamic philanthropy can contribute to educational development by directing zakat and other philanthropic resources toward communities and institutions with limited resources. Sa'adah et al. (2023), in a qualitative study of BAZNAS in Yogyakarta, found that Islamic philanthropy contributes to educational development through institutional support and targeted interventions. Aminah (2025) extends this perspective by conceptualizing BAZNAS's educational philanthropy as an ecosystem that combines infrastructure facilitation through the Madrasah Fit to Learn program, educational assistance, and institutional collaboration.

These studies suggest that philanthropic intervention should be distinguished from educational impact. Infrastructure provision represents an intervention or input, whereas changes in learning conditions, teaching practices, and students' experiences represent potential outcomes. Therefore, the success of educational philanthropy cannot be evaluated solely from the amount of infrastructure provided. Its educational significance depends on how the intervention responds to institutional needs and how the resulting facilities are incorporated into everyday teaching and learning.

5. Research Gap and Purpose of the Study

Recent literature has generated substantial evidence concerning school infrastructure, school well-being, and Islamic philanthropy, but these areas remain insufficiently integrated. Infrastructure research has primarily examined physical facilities and

learning outcomes (Espinosa Andrade et al., 2024), while educational psychology research has emphasized school well-being and motivation (Sturiale & Espino-Díaz, 2024; Priambadi & Nastiti, 2024). At the same time, recent studies of Islamic philanthropy have focused on BAZNAS's contribution to educational development and infrastructure facilitation (Sa'adah et al., 2023; Aminah, 2025). Limited research has examined how these three dimensions interact within a specific infrastructure-based philanthropic intervention at the madrasah level.

This gap is particularly relevant to the Madrasah Layak Belajar Program implemented by BAZNAS RI. Although recent research has documented BAZNAS's educational philanthropy model, limited empirical evidence explains how infrastructure improvements are experienced by teachers and students in a specific recipient madrasah. Therefore, this study analyzes the implementation of the MLB Program at MI Al-Muslimun NW, focusing on infrastructure conditions and their implications for the learning process and students' psychological experiences. By integrating educational infrastructure, educational psychology, and Islamic philanthropy, the study provides an analytical perspective on how infrastructure-based philanthropic intervention may shape the physical, instructional, and psychological dimensions of madrasah education.

METHODS

1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the implementation of the Madrasah Layak Belajar (MLB) Program initiated by BAZNAS RI and its implications for the learning environment at the recipient madrasah. A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of infrastructure improvements within their natural educational context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The descriptive design was appropriate because the study aimed to provide an in-depth account of the physical learning environment and to examine how infrastructure improvements were experienced by school stakeholders (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

2. Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at MI Al-Muslimun NW, a recipient of the Madrasah Layak Belajar Program implemented by BAZNAS RI. The school was purposively selected because it had received tangible infrastructure improvements through the program, including classroom renovation, roof and floor repairs, improvements to lighting and ventilation, sanitation upgrades, and supporting learning facilities. The principal reported that before the program, several classrooms had leaking roofs, inadequate lighting and ventilation, and sanitation facilities that did not adequately support comfort and cleanliness. Following the intervention, the facilities were reported to be safer, more functional, and more conducive to learning.

The site was therefore considered an information-rich case because it directly represented the phenomenon under investigation: an infrastructure-based educational intervention implemented through Islamic philanthropy. Selecting a site that closely corresponds to the research objectives is consistent with purposive sampling, which enables researchers to deliberately identify participants and cases capable of providing relevant and information-rich evidence (Campbell et al., 2020).

Participants were also selected purposively because they had direct experience with the MLB Program and its effects on the learning environment. The study involved 11 participants, consisting of one madrasah principal, five teachers, and five Grade V students. The principal was selected because of their responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the program and managing the madrasah facilities. The five teachers were selected because of their direct involvement in classroom instruction and their experience using the improved facilities. The five Grade V students were included because they could provide firsthand accounts of changes in classroom comfort, motivation, discipline, and engagement.

The teacher participants were Hirmayadi, S.HI; Rohmatul Ummah, S.Pd.; Hajrur Rasyidin, S.Pd.; Sumarni, S.Pd.; and Muharni, S.Pd. The student participants were Nabil, Hana, Iqbal, Bintang, and Gina. The inclusion of multiple stakeholder groups enabled the study to compare perspectives concerning the implementation and perceived effects of the infrastructure intervention.

3. Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews. These methods were used complementarily

to examine both the observable physical conditions of the learning environment and participants' perceptions and experiences of the infrastructure improvements. The combination of observation and interviews is also consistent with recent qualitative research examining educational facilities and learning motivation (Hannisa & Wakhudin, 2026).

3.1 Non-Participant Observation

Non-participant observation was conducted on 2 February 2026 using a structured observation guide. The observation focused on classroom conditions, furniture, classroom layout, lighting, ventilation, cleanliness, sanitation, building safety, learning comfort, and learning equipment. The researcher observed the learning environment without directly participating in classroom activities.

The observation documented that the classrooms were clean and adequately furnished, lighting was sufficient, ventilation was comfortable, sanitation facilities were available, the building was considered safe, and the classroom atmosphere was conducive to learning. These observations were used to complement participants' accounts and reduce reliance on interview data alone.

3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted once with each of the 11 participants, comprising the principal, five teachers, and five Grade V students. The interviews were structured around participant-specific themes while allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions when participants provided information requiring further clarification. This approach enabled the researcher to maintain consistency across interviews while capturing individual experiences and perspectives.

The interview with the principal focused on the condition of infrastructure before the MLB intervention, the types of assistance received, implementation of the program, changes in teaching and learning conditions, perceived effects on students' comfort and motivation, implementation challenges, and expectations for program sustainability.

The five teacher interviews focused on the condition and usefulness of the improved facilities, changes in students' motivation and engagement, the relationship between classroom conditions and students' concentration and comfort, facilities considered most influential for learning, and recommendations for future infrastructure development. Teachers generally described the improved classrooms, lighting, ventilation, cleanliness, furniture, and sanitation as contributing to more conducive learning conditions and perceived improvements in students' focus, participation, confidence, discipline, and motivation.

The five student interviews used age-appropriate questions concerning their perceptions of the classroom and school environment, changes in comfort after the infrastructure improvements, preferred facilities, motivation to learn, and remaining infrastructure needs. The students generally described the classrooms as cleaner, brighter, more comfortable, and safer, while also identifying several areas requiring further improvement, including classroom decoration, toilet cleanliness, waste bins, and the school yard.

The use of multiple participant groups enabled source triangulation, while the combination of interviews and direct observation provided methodological triangulation. Observation provided evidence of the physical learning environment, whereas interviews captured participants' interpretations and experiences. The triangulation was important because the study examined both the physical outcomes of the MLB intervention and the ways in which those outcomes were experienced during everyday teaching and learning.

4. Data Analysis

The interview and observation data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis. This approach was selected because the study sought to identify patterned meanings across participants' accounts while recognizing the interpretive role of the researcher in constructing themes from qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Reflexive thematic analysis is particularly appropriate when qualitative researchers seek to move beyond simple description and develop interpretive patterns across a dataset (Byrne, 2022).

The analysis proceeded through several stages. First, the researcher repeatedly read the interview transcripts and observation notes to become familiar with the dataset. Second, relevant segments of the data were coded according to their substantive meanings. Third, related codes were grouped into preliminary themes. Fourth, the themes were reviewed against the interview and observation data to determine their coherence and distinctiveness. Finally, the themes were refined and interpreted in relation to the research objectives and the theoretical perspectives concerning educational infrastructure, learning environments, and students' psychological experiences.

The final analytical categories included (1) infrastructure improvement, (2) teaching and learning conditions, (3) student comfort, (4) learning motivation, (5) discipline and engagement, and (6) remaining infrastructure needs and program sustainability. Data from the principal, teachers, and students were compared to identify converging and divergent perspectives. The observational findings were then used to contextualize and corroborate participants' accounts.

5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical procedures were applied throughout the research, particularly because the study involved student participants. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the relevant madrasah authorities, participation was voluntary, and participants' identities were treated confidentially. Student participants were approached using age-appropriate questions, and the interviews were conducted in a manner intended to minimize discomfort. The collected information was used solely for research purposes, with participants' personal identities excluded from the presentation of findings where appropriate.

6. Trustworthiness

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed triangulation across data sources and data collection methods. Information obtained from the principal, teachers, and students was compared with direct observations of the school environment. This process enabled the researcher to examine whether reported improvements in infrastructure and learning experiences were consistent across different sources. The use of purposive sampling also ensured that participants had direct and relevant

experience with the phenomenon under investigation (Campbell et al., 2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Improved Madrasah Infrastructure after the Madrasah Layak Belajar Program

The observation and interview data indicate substantial improvements in the physical learning environment at MI Al-Muslimun NW following the implementation of the Madrasah Layak Belajar (MLB) Program. The observation checklist recorded the classrooms as clean, with adequate desks and chairs, a classroom layout that supported learning, sufficient lighting, comfortable ventilation, a reasonably clean environment, available sanitation facilities, a safe building, and a comfortable learning atmosphere. Learning equipment, including the blackboard and supporting instructional facilities, was also available.

These observations correspond with the principal's account of the conditions before and after the intervention. The principal explained:

"Before receiving the Madrasah Layak Belajar Program, the condition of our infrastructure was still relatively limited. Several classrooms had minor to moderate damage, such as leaking roofs, inadequate lighting, suboptimal ventilation, and sanitation facilities that did not meet comfort and cleanliness standards."

The principal further explained that the intervention included classroom renovation, roof and floor repairs, improvements to lighting and ventilation, sanitation improvements, and supporting learning facilities.

The findings therefore indicate that the MLB intervention addressed several basic environmental constraints that had previously interfered with the learning process. The improvement was not limited to the visual appearance of the school but involved functional aspects of the learning environment, particularly lighting, ventilation, classroom safety, sanitation, and furniture. This distinction is

important because infrastructure becomes educationally meaningful when it improves the conditions under which teaching and learning take place.

The finding is consistent with the argument that educational infrastructure functions as an enabling condition for learning rather than an independent determinant of educational achievement. Espinosa Andrade et al. (2024), for example, demonstrate that different forms of school infrastructure are associated with learning outcomes, although their effects vary according to the type of facility and educational context. Similarly, recent research in Indonesian madrasahs emphasizes that infrastructure quality depends not only on availability but also on systematic management, maintenance, and utilization (Noviyanti, 2025).

From an ecological perspective, the improvement can be interpreted as a change in the immediate learning environment surrounding students. Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective emphasizes that individual development is shaped through continuous interaction with environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In this case, improvements in the classroom environment created different physical conditions in which students interacted with teachers, peers, and learning materials.

However, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that infrastructure alone determines educational quality. The study observed and documented infrastructure improvements at one madrasah, and the participants perceived corresponding improvements in learning experiences. Other factors—including teacher practices, school leadership, student characteristics, and institutional management—may also contribute to these experiences. Thus, the MLB intervention is more appropriately interpreted as an environmental enabling intervention rather than a single-factor explanation of educational improvement.



Figure 1: Teaching and Learning Process

2. Infrastructure Improvement and Teachers' Instructional Experiences

The second major finding concerns the perceived influence of infrastructure improvement on teachers' instructional practices. Interviews with the teachers indicated that improved physical conditions allowed them to conduct classroom activities more comfortably and systematically. One teacher stated:

"The available facilities help me create a more organized and conducive learning atmosphere."

The same teacher explained:

"I see students becoming more disciplined and more focused during learning."

The teacher also emphasized the importance of classroom comfort:

"A comfortable classroom environment makes it easier for students to concentrate and prevents them from becoming bored quickly."

In addition, sanitation and environmental cleanliness were identified as particularly important:

"Sanitation facilities and environmental cleanliness are, in my opinion, very influential in students' overall comfort."

The teacher also stressed the need for long-term planning to maintain the facilities.

These findings suggest that infrastructure improvements may influence teaching indirectly by reducing physical constraints that compete with teachers' instructional attention. Before the intervention, problems such as inadequate lighting, leaking roofs, and uncomfortable ventilation could interfere with classroom activities. After the intervention, teachers reported being able to focus more effectively on instruction because the physical environment was more functional. The principal similarly reported that the improved classrooms were safer, more comfortable, and more conducive to interactive learning.

This finding can be interpreted through Social Cognitive Theory, which conceptualizes learning as a reciprocal interaction among environmental conditions, individual factors, and behavior (Bandura, 1997). The physical environment does not operate independently. Instead, improved facilities can alter the conditions in which teachers teach and students participate, while teachers' pedagogical practices and students' engagement also determine how facilities are actually utilized.

Therefore, the contribution of the MLB Program appears to extend beyond the provision of physical resources. Improved infrastructure created conditions that teachers perceived as more supportive of classroom management and student participation. This supports the theoretical argument that infrastructure should be viewed as an enabling component of the instructional environment, rather than as a direct substitute for effective pedagogy.

Practically, this finding implies that infrastructure programs should involve teachers in identifying facility priorities. Facilities are more likely to contribute to educational quality when they correspond to actual instructional needs. Infrastructure provision should therefore be accompanied by mechanisms for teacher feedback, facility management, and maintenance.

3. Students' Comfort, Motivation, and Engagement

The third major finding concerns students' experiences after the infrastructure improvements. All five Grade V students described the learning environment positively, particularly in relation to classroom cleanliness, temperature, lighting, furniture, and structural safety. Importantly, the students did not merely describe the facilities as physically improved; they connected these conditions with their willingness and ability to learn.

Nabil stated:

"I feel more comfortable learning because the classroom is not hot and the chairs are comfortable."

He also explained:

"I am more motivated because learning is comfortable and not disturbed."

Nabil particularly appreciated that the classroom was brighter and no longer leaked during rain.

Hana similarly reported:

"I feel more comfortable because the classroom is not dirty and is brighter."

She particularly appreciated the classroom windows because they provided airflow and prevented the classroom from becoming too hot.

Iqbal emphasized furniture and temperature:

"I feel comfortable learning because the desks do not wobble and the classroom is cool."

He also stated that the new desks and chairs were comfortable for writing and that he felt more motivated and willing to stay in the classroom.

Bintang highlighted structural safety and furniture:

"I feel comfortable because the classroom does not leak anymore."

He also stated that the desks and chairs were comfortable to use for writing.

Gina emphasized visibility and classroom cleanliness:

"I feel more comfortable because the classroom is tidy and does not smell."

She also reported that she was more motivated because the classroom environment was more pleasant.

Across the five students, the interviews reveal a consistent pattern: physical improvement → perceived comfort → greater

willingness to participate in learning. The students' responses particularly emphasized environmental qualities that are immediately experienced through the body—temperature, airflow, seating comfort, cleanliness, lighting, and protection from rain.

This finding is theoretically relevant to educational psychology because it demonstrates how the physical environment can function as a contextual condition for students' psychological experiences. Sturiale and Espino-Díaz (2024) identify school well-being as a multidimensional construct connected with students' academic and psychological experiences. Similarly, Priambadi and Nastiti (2024) found a positive relationship between school well-being and learning motivation among students in an Indonesian Islamic educational context.

The findings also complement Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2017). The theory does not suggest that physical facilities directly generate intrinsic motivation. Rather, a supportive environment may facilitate the psychological conditions under which students can participate more comfortably and autonomously. In the present study, students' comments suggest that improved physical conditions reduced distractions and discomfort, thereby creating a more supportive context for engagement.

This distinction is important. The study does not demonstrate that better classrooms independently caused students to become more motivated. Instead, students perceived that the improved environment made learning more comfortable and less distracting. The psychological implication therefore lies in the relationship between environmental conditions and students' subjective experiences.

4. Infrastructure Improvement, Discipline, and Classroom Engagement

In addition to comfort and motivation, the findings indicate perceived changes in student discipline, concentration, participation, and engagement. Teachers reported that students appeared more focused and disciplined after the infrastructure improvements. One teacher stated:

"I see students becoming more disciplined and more focused during learning."

Teachers also reported that a comfortable classroom reduced student restlessness and helped students maintain attention.

The students' accounts support this perception. Nabil stated that he was more motivated because learning was "comfortable and not disturbed," while Iqbal reported that he became "more motivated and willing to stay in the classroom." Bintang similarly reported that he was "more motivated and comfortable in the classroom." These findings can be interpreted through Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997). Students' behavior is influenced not only by internal characteristics but also by the environments in which behavior occurs. A classroom that is physically comfortable, organized, and safe may reduce environmental distractions and make sustained participation easier.

Nevertheless, the findings require a critical interpretation. Discipline and engagement are multidimensional behaviors and cannot be attributed solely to physical infrastructure. Teacher-student relationships, classroom management strategies, instructional methods, peer interaction, and individual student characteristics may also influence these behaviors. The contribution of infrastructure should therefore be understood as supportive rather than determinative.

This interpretation strengthens the study because it moves beyond the simplistic claim that "better facilities produce better behavior." Instead, the findings suggest that improved infrastructure may create environmental conditions that make positive classroom behavior easier to sustain. This is consistent with an ecological understanding of learning, in which behavior emerges from interactions between individuals and their environments (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

5. Remaining Infrastructure Needs and the Limits of the Intervention

Although the overall findings were positive, the student interviews also identified several remaining needs. These responses are important because they demonstrate that the MLB intervention did not eliminate all infrastructure-related challenges.

Nabil suggested that classroom decoration could still be improved:

"I think more decorations should be added to the classroom to make it more enjoyable."

Hana stated that:

“The toilet still needs to be cleaned more often.”

Iqbal suggested that:

“The school field could be improved so that it would be better for sports.”

Bintang suggested improving the school field, while Gina identified the need for additional waste bins in front of classrooms. These responses provide an important counterpoint to the generally positive findings. The intervention improved core infrastructure, but students continued to perceive gaps in cleanliness, environmental organization, recreation space, and classroom aesthetics. This indicates that educational infrastructure is not a binary condition of “adequate” versus “inadequate.” Rather, it is a continuing process of adaptation to users’ needs.

The finding also supports the critical perspective developed in the literature review: infrastructure improvement should not be treated as a one-time intervention. Noviyanti (2025) emphasizes that educational facilities require continuous management, maintenance, and supervision. In the present case, the principal similarly identified maintenance as a major challenge and expressed the need for continued support and guidance. The principal stated:

“We hope that the Madrasah Layak Belajar Program can continue and reach more madrasahs in need. In addition to physical improvements, we also hope for further assistance related to the management and maintenance of infrastructure.”

Theoretically, this finding reinforces the distinction between infrastructure provision and infrastructure sustainability. A philanthropic intervention may successfully address immediate physical deficiencies, but the long-term educational value of the intervention depends on whether the recipient institution has sufficient capacity to maintain and develop the facilities.

6. The MLB Program as Infrastructure-Based Islamic Philanthropy

The final finding concerns the broader significance of the MLB Program as an Islamic philanthropic intervention. The principal reported that the program began with an assessment of the madrasah’s priority needs, followed by joint planning between BAZNAS RI and the madrasah. Renovation was implemented gradually, while school

activities continued, and the madrasah was involved in monitoring the implementation.

This process is significant because it suggests that the intervention was not simply a one-directional donation. The program involved needs assessment, planning, implementation, and institutional participation. Such characteristics are consistent with a broader understanding of Islamic philanthropy as an instrument of social development rather than merely short-term charity. Recent research on BAZNAS similarly conceptualizes educational philanthropy as involving infrastructure facilitation, educational assistance, and institutional collaboration (Aminah, 2025; Sa'adah et al., 2023).

The findings therefore extend the understanding of philanthropic educational intervention in two ways. First, infrastructure support can address immediate material inequalities experienced by under-resourced madrasahs. Second, its effects may extend into the instructional and psychological dimensions of schooling when facilities are integrated into everyday educational practices.

However, the findings also reveal that the sustainability of philanthropic intervention depends on institutional ownership. The principal identified maintenance and stakeholder awareness as continuing challenges:

"It is necessary to increase the awareness of all members of the madrasah, both teachers and students, to maintain and use the facilities properly so that the benefits of the program can be sustained."

This finding has important practical implications. BAZNAS and similar philanthropic institutions should not evaluate infrastructure programs solely on the basis of the number of classrooms renovated or facilities provided. Evaluation should also consider facility utilization, maintenance capacity, teacher experiences, student well-being, and the sustainability of educational benefits.

In this sense, the MLB Program can be interpreted as a form of infrastructure-based social intervention whose effectiveness emerges through interaction between material resources and institutional practices. The intervention provides the physical resources, while madrasah leaders, teachers, and students determine how those resources are maintained and incorporated into educational activities.

Discussion

1. Integrated Discussion and Theoretical Implications

Taken together, the findings reveal a connected pathway linking infrastructure improvement, instructional conditions, and students' psychological experiences. The evidence can be summarized as follows:

Infrastructure improvement → reduced physical discomfort and environmental constraints → more supportive teaching conditions → greater perceived comfort and readiness to learn → perceived increases in motivation, concentration, discipline, and engagement.

This pathway should not be interpreted as a linear causal model because the present study is qualitative and based on a single case. Instead, it represents an interpretive explanation emerging from the convergence of observation, principal interviews, teacher interviews, and student accounts.

The theoretical contribution of the study lies in bringing together three perspectives that are often examined separately. First, educational infrastructure research explains the role of physical conditions in supporting learning. Second, educational psychology explains how environmental conditions interact with motivation, well-being, and behavior. Third, Islamic philanthropy explains how social resources can be mobilized to address educational inequality.

The empirical evidence demonstrates that these perspectives can be connected at the level of everyday educational experience. The improved classroom was not simply a physical product of philanthropy. Students experienced the renovated environment through comfort, temperature, lighting, furniture, cleanliness, and safety, while teachers experienced it through classroom management and instructional convenience. Thus, the meaning of infrastructure emerged through human interaction with the improved environment.

This interpretation is consistent with Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes reciprocal relationships among environment, behavior, and personal factors (Bandura, 1997), and with the ecological perspective, which views development as occurring through interaction between individuals and their environments (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). It also complements Self-Determination Theory by suggesting that supportive physical environments can

provide contextual conditions for students' psychological functioning without being treated as direct sources of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2017).

The findings therefore extend the literature by demonstrating that the educational significance of philanthropic infrastructure cannot be adequately assessed through physical outputs alone. The more meaningful question is how infrastructure is experienced, used, and sustained by the educational community.

2. Practical Implications

The findings have several practical implications for educational and philanthropic stakeholders.

First, BAZNAS and other philanthropic institutions should incorporate educational and psychological indicators into the evaluation of infrastructure programs. Evaluation should include not only the number of facilities renovated but also changes in classroom comfort, student engagement, teacher instructional experiences, and facility utilization.

Second, madrasah administrators should develop systematic maintenance plans. The remaining needs identified by students—including toilet cleanliness, waste bins, classroom decoration, and school-yard improvement—demonstrate that infrastructure development requires continuous management rather than a one-time renovation.

Third, teachers should be involved in infrastructure planning, because they directly experience how physical facilities influence classroom management and instructional practices. Their feedback can help ensure that philanthropic resources are directed toward facilities with the greatest educational relevance.

Fourth, students should be included in post-intervention evaluation (Arifin & Setiono, 2018). The student interviews demonstrate that children can identify practical aspects of the learning environment that may not be fully visible through institutional assessments. Their perspectives provide valuable evidence about comfort, usability, cleanliness, and remaining needs.

Finally, the findings suggest that sustainable educational philanthropy requires collaboration among BAZNAS, madrasah administrators, teachers, students, government institutions, and the

wider community. Infrastructure support is most likely to generate sustained educational value when physical improvements are accompanied by maintenance systems, institutional responsibility, and continuous evaluation.

3. Limitations of the Findings

The findings should be interpreted in light of the study's qualitative case-study design. The research focused on one BAZNAS recipient madrasah and involved one principal, five teachers, and five Grade V students. Therefore, the findings are not statistically generalizable to all madrasahs receiving the MLB Program.

In addition, the observation was conducted on a single occasion, while each participant was interviewed once. Consequently, the study captures participants' experiences within a specific period rather than documenting long-term changes in motivation or academic achievement. The positive changes reported by participants should therefore be interpreted as perceived and context-specific effects, rather than as evidence of a direct causal relationship between infrastructure improvement and student outcomes.

Nevertheless, the convergence of observation data, principal accounts, teacher perspectives, and student experiences strengthens the credibility of the interpretation. The evidence consistently indicates that infrastructure improvements were experienced as meaningful changes in the physical learning environment and were associated with more comfortable and supportive teaching and learning conditions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the *Madrasah Layak Belajar* Program by BAZNAS RI has had a positive and meaningful impact on the learning process at MI Al-Muslimun NW. The improvement of basic infrastructure such as classrooms, lighting, ventilation, sanitation, and learning facilities has successfully created a safer, cleaner, and more comfortable learning environment. The findings indicate that improved infrastructure supports teachers in delivering instruction more effectively and contributes to positive changes in students' learning behavior, including increased motivation, concentration, discipline, and classroom engagement. From an educational psychology perspective, a conducive physical

learning environment functions as an external support system that enhances students' emotional comfort and readiness to learn. Furthermore, this study highlights the strategic role of Islamic philanthropic initiatives in addressing educational challenges, particularly in under-resourced madrasahs. However, to ensure long-term impact, continuous maintenance, effective facility management, and sustained collaboration between madrasahs, philanthropic institutions, and the community are essential. Overall, the *Madrasah Layak Belajar* Program demonstrates that infrastructure-based interventions, when implemented thoughtfully, can serve as a foundation for improving educational quality and supporting students' academic and psychological development in madrasah education.

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