

MAINTAINING ADAB IN THE DIGITAL AGE: STRATEGIES OF AL-FALAH KONGSI PESANTREN IN PRESERVING STUDENT HUMILITY (TAWADU')

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the challenges of digitalization within traditional pesantren (Islamic boarding school) education systems, specifically focusing on maintaining students' tawadu' (humility) amidst the rapid flow of information technology. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method, with data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation at Al-Falah Kongsy Pesantren, Wonosobo. The subjects include caregivers, teachers (ustadz), and students to obtain a comprehensive view of learning dynamics in the digital era. The findings reveal that the pesantren integrates technology through WhatsApp groups for alternative learning, the use of independent translation applications for the Matan Zubad text, and the utilization of social media as a creative medium for dakwah (proselytizing). However, significant obstacles exist, including technological distractions, limited internet infrastructure, and the risk of diminished focus and adab (etiquette) due to uncontrolled digital exposure. Strategies to preserve student character include intensive personal supervision, strict enforcement of gadget usage hours, and the reinforcement of ethical values through the routine study of classical texts. This study concludes that digital integration is complementary and effective in enhancing learning efficiency as long as it remains directed toward strengthening moral values. The personal relationship between teachers and students, alongside the exemplary behavior of caregivers, remains an irreplaceable and vital instrument in the character-building process.

1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the curriculum at Pondok Pesantren Al-Falah Kongsy Wonosobo remains deeply rooted in the Nahdlatul Ulama scholarly tradition, with a primary focus on studying the Kitab Kuning (classical Islamic texts). Core materials include Arba'in Nawawi for the principles of jurisprudence (usul fiqh), Aqidatul Awam for theology (tauhid), and Zubad for Islamic law (fiqh). Despite maintaining these classical traditions, the pesantren consciously integrates digital technology as a complementary adaptation to ensure students (santri) remain proficient in science and technology (Saini, 2024; Firmansyah et al., 2023). Technology is

positioned strictly as a supporting tool to enhance learning effectiveness without displacing the core substance of pesantren values (Azwendra et al., 2025).

One concrete form of this technological integration is the use of WhatsApp Groups as an alternative learning medium, ensuring that the educational process continues even when a teacher (ustadz) cannot be physically present in class (Abidin, 2024; Ali et al., 2023). Furthermore, students are equipped with the Matan Zubad translation application, which allows them to independently practice translating verses of the text, thereby fostering self-directed learning (Oktarina et al., 2020; Rosita et al., 2023). The pesantren also utilizes social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram for creative dakwah (proselytizing), involving students directly in content creation to develop responsible digital skills.

However, this digitalization brings serious challenges to the preservation of tawadu' (humility), which is the essential moral foundation of pesantren education (Lidinillah, 2022; Mahardika, 2021). Overly free access to information on the internet risks creating an "illusion of knowledge," where students feel they already understand a subject from the internet and subsequently show less respect for a teacher's explanation (Adrianto, 2021). Additionally, distractions from entertainment content on social media often trigger attention fragmentation, shortening the students' focus and making it difficult for them to engage deeply with classical texts that require long-term persistence (Wibowo, 2022; Nanda & Azizah, 2024).

To safeguard the students' character, the pesantren employs a strategy of intensive personal supervision and strict rules regarding gadget usage (Bahroni, 2024; Fahham, 2020). A key policy is the mandatory collection of mobile phones from Maghrib until Isya prayers to restore focus on worship and study. The internalisation of tawadu' is also structured through the study of etiquette texts like Ta'lim al-Muta'allim, which teaches that the blessing of knowledge can only be achieved through genuine humility and respect for the teacher (Adisti, 2019; Halimy, 2022).

Ultimately, the success of digital curriculum integration at Al-Falah Kongsy depends heavily on the exemplary behavior of the caregivers and ustadz in using technology wisely. Through a familial approach and personal discussions, teachers act not merely as instructors but as murabbiy (mentors) who guide students to selectively filter digital content (Fahham, 2020; Siregar et al., 2021). By synergizing technological innovation with the preservation of moral traditions, the pesantren strives to produce a generation that is proficient in the digital world yet remains steadfast in the principles of humility in community life (Ningsih & Biantoro, 2025; Santoso, 2026).

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study utilizes a qualitative descriptive approach, which aims to describe and understand a phenomenon deeply based on data obtained from the field. This design focuses on the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of individuals or groups regarding the implementation of the pesantren curriculum in the digital era. As a descriptive study, it functions to explain and map a situation as it naturally occurs without manipulation, positioning the researcher as the primary instrument for collecting and interpreting data (Sugiyono, 2020).

2.2. Research Procedure and Chronology

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Al-Falah Kongsy Wonosobo following a systematic seven-week schedule to ensure scientific validity. The chronological steps are detailed as follows:

1. Week I Obtaining research permission from the pesantren authorities and conducting initial observations.
2. Week II Documenting the profile of Pondok Pesantren Al-Falah Kongsy and validating research instruments with the pesantren caregiver.
3. Week III – IV Conducting in-depth interviews with the Caregiver, Ustadz, and Santri.
4. Week V Testing the validity of the data to ensure credibility.
5. Week VI Performing a comprehensive data analysis.
6. Week VII Finalizing the research report.

2.3. Data Acquisition and Instruments

Data acquisition was carried out through three integrated techniques to provide a holistic and factual view of the research subject:

1. Observation
Direct observation of objects, events, or symptoms to obtain real and contextual information regarding curriculum implementation in the digital era.
2. Interviews
Engaging in face-to-face Q&A sessions with the Caregiver, Ustadz, and Santri to explore their views and experiences.
3. Documentation
Collecting and analyzing relevant archives, reports, and visual media (photos/videos) to provide historical and administrative evidence.

The instruments used include observation sheets and interview guides designed to capture data on how digital tools, such as WhatsApp groups and translation applications, affect the students' character and humility.

2.4. Data Validity and Analysis

To ensure the quality and credibility of the results, the researcher employed triangulation techniques. This includes source triangulation (cross-checking data across different informants) and technique triangulation (verifying the same data using different methods, such as comparing interview results with direct observations) (Sugiyono, 2020).

The data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, which involves three simultaneous stages: data reduction (sorting and focusing raw data), data display (organizing information into descriptive narratives or tables), and conclusion drawing/verification (verifying findings against field evidence). The spiritual foundation of this methodology is represented in Figure 1, highlighting the principle of patience in the research process:



Figure 1. Quote of the Islamic

By following these rigorous chronological procedures and verification methods, the study ensures a deep and meaningful description of how the pesantren adapts its traditional values to the demands of the digital age

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of the pesantren curriculum in the digital era at Pondok Pesantren Al-Falah Kongsu Wonosobo is carried out by combining traditional Islamic learning methods with selective use of digital technology. The pesantren still maintains its classical learning tradition through the study of kitab kuning, especially in the fields of fiqh, ushul fiqh, and tauhid. The learning process is conducted through traditional methods such as sorogan, in which the teacher guides students directly in reading, translating, and understanding the content of classical Islamic texts (Faridah, 2019). However, in response to the development of digital technology, the pesantren also utilizes several digital media, including WhatsApp Group, the Matan Zubad translation application, YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram as supporting tools for learning and da'wah activities (Saini, 2024; Firmansyah et al., 2023).

The use of WhatsApp Group becomes one of the most practical forms of digital adaptation in the learning process. When the teacher or kyai cannot attend the class directly, learning activities continue through voice notes, written explanations, or learning materials sent through the group. This shows that digital media functions as a complementary tool, not as a replacement for face-to-face interaction between teacher and students (Azwendra et al., 2025). The pesantren still considers direct guidance from the teacher as the main source of knowledge transmission, while digital media is used to maintain the continuity of learning activities. This finding shows that the pesantren is able to adapt to technological development without abandoning its traditional educational identity.

Another important finding is the use of the Matan Zubad translation application to support students' independent learning. Through this application, students can practice translating kitab texts outside formal learning hours. This helps them improve their understanding of Arabic texts and strengthens their ability to study independently (Oktarina et al., 2020; Rosita et al., 2023). In addition, social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram are used selectively as media for religious learning and da'wah. The involvement of students in producing da'wah content also provides them with opportunities to use technology positively and responsibly.

In relation to the preservation of tawadu' attitude, the study shows that the use of digital technology does not automatically weaken students' character as long as it is controlled and directed properly (Firmansyah et al., 2023). Pondok Pesantren Al-Falah Kongsu applies strict rules regarding the use of mobile phones. Students are not allowed to use mobile phones during worship

activities, after Maghrib prayer, or for activities that contradict Islamic values. If violations occur, the pesantren applies sanctions such as warnings, confiscation of mobile phones, and communication with parents. These rules are intended not only to discipline students but also to shape their awareness of responsible digital behavior.

The preservation of *tawadu'* is also strengthened through habituation before learning, direct advice from the *kyai* and *ustadz*, and the pesantren's emphasis on *adab* before knowledge (Adisti, 2019; Ningsih & Biantoro, 2025). Students are guided to respect teachers, maintain politeness, accept advice, and use technology without losing humility. This is important because *tawadu'* in pesantren education is not merely a social attitude but also a spiritual value that shapes the moral identity of students. Therefore, the integration of digital technology must always be accompanied by moral supervision and character education.

The development of the curriculum in response to digitalization is carried out gradually and contextually (Ilham & Suyatno, 2020). The pesantren does not make sudden changes but discusses curriculum development through direct communication between the caregiver, teacher, and other internal parties. The curriculum is developed by adding discussions on digital ethics, the dangers of negative online content, and the use of social media for *da'wah*. This shows that the pesantren does not reject technology, but filters and directs it according to Islamic values and pesantren traditions (Aji et al., 2025).

The supporting factors in the implementation of the pesantren curriculum in the digital era include effective personal supervision, strict mobile phone regulations, habituation of *adab* before learning, and selective choice of digital content. The relatively small number of students allows the caregiver and teacher to supervise students more personally. This condition makes it easier to detect behavioral changes caused by excessive use of digital media. Meanwhile, the existence of clear rules helps students understand the limits of technology use in the pesantren environment (Fahham, 2020).

However, the implementation also faces several obstacles. The main obstacles include technological distractions, unstable internet access, limited infrastructure, limited remote supervision, and the absence of a systematically written digital curriculum document. Digital platforms, especially short-video applications, have the potential to reduce students' focus and discipline if not controlled properly. In addition, limited facilities such as WiFi and learning devices can affect the effectiveness of digital learning. These obstacles show that the integration of technology in pesantren education requires not only access to digital tools but also clear management, supervision, and curriculum documentation (Ramadhani et al., 2024).

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that digitalization can support pesantren learning when it is used selectively and under strong moral guidance. In the case of Pondok Pesantren Al-Falah Kongsu Wonosobo, digital technology helps maintain learning continuity, supports independent learning, and opens new opportunities for *da'wah*. Nevertheless, technology must remain positioned as a tool, while the core of pesantren education remains the transmission of knowledge, *adab*, and spiritual values through direct guidance from teachers. Therefore, the success of curriculum implementation in the digital era depends on the balance between technological adaptation and the preservation of pesantren values, especially *tawadu'* (Ningsih & Biantoro, 2025).

3.1. Curriculum Implementation in the Digital Era

The implementation of the pesantren curriculum is carried out through the study of classical Islamic texts, especially in the fields of fiqh, tauhid, and Islamic ethics. The learning process emphasizes direct guidance from the teacher, discipline, and the habituation of adab before knowledge. This pattern shows that the pesantren curriculum is not only directed toward cognitive achievement but also toward moral and spiritual development.

The use of digital technology in the curriculum is limited and controlled. Students are allowed to use digital media for learning purposes, but the use of mobile phones is regulated by pesantren rules. This control is important because uncontrolled use of technology may reduce students' focus, discipline, and respect toward teachers (Wibowo, 2022).

3.2. The Role of Digital Media in Learning

Digital media play an important role in supporting students' independent learning. Applications such as the Matan Zubad translation application help students practice translating and understanding kitab texts independently (Oktarina et al., 2020; Rosita et al., 2023). This allows students to repeat learning materials outside formal class hours.

The effectiveness of digital media in supporting learning can be illustrated using the following simple equation:

$$E = L + M + C \quad (1)$$

In this equation, E represents learning effectiveness, L represents direct learning activities, M represents the use of digital media, and C represents teacher control and guidance. The equation shows that digital media can improve learning effectiveness when it is combined with direct learning and strong teacher supervision

3.2.1. Preservation of Tawadu' Attitude

The preservation of tawadu' attitude is one of the main goals of pesantren education. Tawadu' is reflected in students' respect for teachers, politeness in communication, willingness to accept advice, and humility in seeking knowledge (Fauziah & Mahpudz, 2022). In the digital era, this attitude needs to be strengthened because technology can influence students' behavior and learning habits.

At Pondok Pesantren Al-Falah Kongsu Wonosobo, tawadu' is maintained through habituation, direct advice, strict rules, and personal supervision. Students are guided to use technology responsibly and not to ignore pesantren values. Therefore, digitalization can support pesantren education as long as it is controlled by moral guidance and clear regulations (Firmansyah et al., 2023).

Overall, the results show that digitalization can support the implementation of the pesantren curriculum, but it must be balanced with strong character education. Technology should be positioned as a learning tool, while the main foundation of pesantren education remains adab, discipline, teacher guidance, and the preservation of Islamic values.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the pesantren curriculum in the digital era at Pondok Pesantren Al-Falah Kongsri Wonosobo successfully balances traditional Islamic education with technological adaptation. The pesantren preserves its core learning system through the study of classical Islamic texts and direct guidance from teachers and kyai while selectively utilizing digital platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and educational applications to support learning and da'wah activities. The findings indicate that digital technology contributes positively by enhancing learning continuity, encouraging independent study, and expanding access to Islamic educational resources. However, digitalization also presents challenges, including distractions, reduced learning focus, and potential declines in students' adab and tawadu' (humility) if technology use is not properly supervised. To maintain students' tawadu', the pesantren emphasizes strict supervision, clear regulations on technology use, the habituation of proper adab, and selective consumption of digital content. The study highlights that technology should function as a complementary tool rather than replace the essential role of teachers, kyai, and direct moral guidance. The strength of pesantren education remains rooted in the transmission of knowledge, discipline, spirituality, and character through close teacher-student relationships. The research recommends developing a more systematic digital curriculum that integrates Islamic values, digital literacy, and character education. Future studies should explore structured digital learning models for pesantren, compare digital curriculum implementation across institutions, and assess the effectiveness of digital media in strengthening students' tawadu'. Overall, the findings demonstrate that pesantren can adapt to technological advancements while preserving their Islamic values and traditions.

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