

TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE INTERNALIZATION OF QUR'ANIC VALUES

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Abstract

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This study aims to analyze the transformation of Islamic boarding school education in the digital era with a focus on the internalization of Qur'anic values as the core of Islamic education. The rapidly growing digitalization phenomenon has brought opportunities and challenges for Islamic boarding schools, both in terms of management, learning methods, and the transmission of religious values. The method used is library research with a descriptive qualitative approach, through a critical review of reputable journals, academic books, and relevant documents discussing the digitalization of Islamic education and the practice of internalizing Qur'anic values. The results show that digitalization not only affects the technical aspects of the implementation of Islamic boarding school education, but also impacts the pattern of teacher-student relationships, the authority of kiai, and the depth of internalization of Qur'anic values. On the one hand, digital technology expands access to knowledge, enriches learning methods, and increases the effectiveness of Islamic boarding school management. However, on the other hand, there is a risk of reducing the meaning of Qur'anic values, spiritual degradation, and the penetration of external cultures that are not always in line with Islamic boarding school traditions. This research emphasizes that the integration of digital technology and the internalization of Quranic values must be carried out critically and selectively, while still upholding the role of the exemplary role of Islamic scholars (kyai). The academic contribution of this research lies in the presentation of a new conceptual framework that connects digital transformation with the internalization of Quranic values, thus serving as a reference in developing adaptive, authentic, and transformative Islamic education strategies.

Keywords: digital transformation, Islamic boarding schools, internalization, Qur'anic values, Islamic education.

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INTRODUCTION

As the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) play a fundamental role in preserving the tradition of Islamic scholarship and shaping the character of the Muslim generation. For centuries, pesantren have served as centers for the transmission of religious knowledge, the internalization of Qur'anic values, and the moral and spiritual development of students (Azra, 2019). The

tradition of pesantren education has relied on the traditional method sorogan, bandongan, And halaqah which emphasizes the closeness between kiai, teachers, and students. However, entering the digital era, Islamic boarding schools face both significant challenges and new opportunities in maintaining the relevance of Islamic education.

The apparent reality regarding the transformation of education in Islamic boarding schools is that it is beginning to be influenced by the development of digital technology. A number of Islamic boarding schools are integrating platform e-learning, digital Quran applications, and social media to support learning activities. Students are increasingly accustomed to accessing religious knowledge through digital media, including interpretation applications, interactive hadiths, and learning forums. This aligns with the findings of Rahman and Shah (2015), which show that madrasas and Islamic boarding schools in Asia are beginning to adopt digital resources to expand access to learning. However, this adoption has not been smooth sailing, as limitations in teachers' digital literacy, affordability of technological infrastructure, and concerns about the erosion of the traditional authority of Islamic boarding school education remain.

Modern developments demand that Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) not simply follow the digital trend but also utilize technology to strengthen the internalization of Quranic values. Ideally, the digitalization of Islamic boarding school education is aimed at enriching learning methods, motivating students to understand and practice Quranic values, and instilling 21st-century life skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and information literacy (Griffin, Care, & McGaw, 2012). Thus, digital transformation should be a bridge to strengthening spirituality, not merely a technical innovation.

International literature confirms that digital-based educational transformation can increase learning effectiveness when linked to a clear pedagogical framework. Mishra and Koehler (2006), through the concept Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), emphasizes that technology integration must align with the learning content and pedagogy used by teachers. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this means the use of digital technology should be directed at strengthening Quranic content and unique methods, rather than shifting the traditional values that have become the school's identity.

There is a gap in research which is quite significant. Most research on the digitalization of education focuses more on public schools and universities, while specific studies on Islamic boarding schools are still limited. For example, the study by Ally & Tsinakos (2014) discusses mobile learning to increase access to education in general, but does not specifically discuss its integration into traditional Islamic education. Hashim's (2017) research also emphasizes the importance of rethinking Islamic education in facing the 21st century, but has not yet thoroughly reviewed the transformation of Islamic boarding schools as a unique Indonesian entity. This demonstrates the need to critically examine how Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) as traditional institutions respond to digitalization within the framework of internalizing Qur'anic values. Furthermore, previous research has tended to focus on the technical aspects of technology use, such as infrastructure readiness, digital literacy, or the effectiveness of application use. However, a more fundamental issue is how digitalization impacts the internalization of Qur'anic values, which are at the heart of Islamic boarding school education. In other words, there is a gap between technological studies and the need for more philosophical, pedagogical, and normative research. This gap is what this research aims to address, by examining digitalization not solely as a technical phenomenon but also as a process of value transformation.

The academic urgency of this research can be explained in two dimensions. First, from a theoretical perspective, this study seeks to enrich the literature on technology

integration in Islamic education, particularly in Islamic boarding schools. Through critical analysis, this research is expected to produce a conceptual model of how the internalization of Quranic values can be strengthened through digitalization practices that remain rooted in the traditions of Islamic boarding school education. Second, from a practical perspective, this research provides strategic recommendations for Islamic boarding schools so that they become not merely consumers of technology but also able to develop digital approaches that align with the vision of Islamic education.

In a global context, the issue of transforming Islamic education in the digital era has also attracted academic attention. A study by El-Hussein & Cronje (2010) highlighted the importance of redefining mobile learning in higher education, while Nasir & Bakar (2020) showed that mobile learning applications can enhance student engagement in religious learning in Malaysia. However, academic debate remains open regarding how traditional institutions like Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) can adapt to digital innovation without losing their identity. This makes this literature review relevant not only locally but also globally.

The reasons for choosing Islamic boarding schools as the focus of this research are also highly strategic. First, Islamic boarding schools have unique characteristics that distinguish them from schools or universities, namely their foundation in Qur'anic values and the close relationship between teachers (*kiai/ustadz*) and students. Second, Islamic boarding schools currently find themselves at a crossroads between maintaining tradition and facing the demands of modernization. Third, Islamic boarding schools have great potential in shaping a generation of Muslims who are not only religious but also adaptive to changing times. Therefore, studying the transformation of Islamic boarding school education in the digital era will make a significant contribution to understanding how traditional institutions respond to structural changes in the global era.

Based on this background, this research is directed to answer the questions: (1) How is the transformation of Islamic boarding school education in the digital era understood in contemporary literature? (2) How can the process of internalizing Qur'anic values be critically analyzed in the context of the digitalization of Islamic boarding school education? (3) What are the challenges and opportunities of digitalization in strengthening Qur'anic values in Islamic boarding schools from a theoretical perspective? By examining these questions, this research is expected to provide a real contribution to the development of academic literature and the practice of Islamic education. The results of this research will not only enrich the theoretical discourse on the digitalization of Islamic education, but can also be a reference for policy makers and practitioners of Islamic boarding school education in formulating transformation strategies oriented towards strengthening Qur'anic values in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses the method library research (library research). Library research allows researchers to examine ideas, theories, and previous research findings in depth to build new academic arguments (Zed: 2014). The focus of this research is to analyze the transformation of Islamic boarding school education and the internalization of Qur'anic values in the digital era based on theoretical studies, previous research results, and relevant academic literature. There is no primary field data collection, but analysis is conducted on secondary sources (books, journals, proceedings, official documents). A qualitative approach is suitable for understanding socio-cultural phenomena through the exploration of meaning (Creswell & Poth: 2018). Meanwhile, a critical approach according to Kincheloe & McLaren (2005) is used to uncover power relations, ideology, and challenges in education. literature analysis with a content analysis approach (content analysis). content analysis allows researchers to

systematically interpret texts to find patterns, themes, and meanings that are relevant to Krippendorff's (2019) research objectives.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Transformation of Islamic Boarding School Education in the Digital Era

The results of the literature review indicate that the transformation of Islamic boarding school education in the digital era is occurring gradually, encompassing infrastructure, pedagogical, and managerial aspects. Modern Islamic boarding schools in urban areas are relatively quicker to adopt digital technology through the development of smart Islamic boarding schools, the use of learning management system(LMS), digital Quran applications, and social media for da'wah (Alwi, 2021; Hefner, 2021). Conversely, traditional Islamic boarding schools in rural areas still face limitations in infrastructure, digital literacy, and human resources (Asy'ari, 2020).

Pedagogically, learning yellow books and tahfiz The Quran is beginning to be integrated with memorization apps, learning videos, and digital books. Research by Fitriani (2022) shows that the use of gamification in Quran memorization can improve students' motivation and memory. From a managerial perspective, Islamic boarding schools are also beginning to digitally manage administrative data, finances, and da'wah programs (Zuhdi, 2020).

The digital transformation of Islamic boarding schools aligns with Selwyn's (2016) theory of educational transformation, which asserts that technology is not merely a technical instrument but also has implications for social interaction patterns, power relations, and learning culture. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, this transformation is not a uniform process but rather asymmetrical depending on infrastructure availability, the readiness of caregivers, and the socio-economic context of the surrounding community (Hefner, 2021). Thus, it is understandable that the transformation of Islamic boarding school education in the digital era presents continuity and change while maintaining tradition face-to-face kiai and santri, but also opens up space for innovative technology-based adaptation.

2. Internalization of Qur'anic Values in the Context of Digitalization

Literature research shows that the internalization of Quranic values in Islamic boarding schools in the digital era occurs through three main models: integrative, contextual, and reflective (Abidin, 2022). The integrative model is evident in the use of Quranic applications, digital books, and online learning platforms as the primary learning media. The contextual model is evident in the efforts of Islamic boarding schools to instill Quranic values through digital ethics, such as social media etiquette, content filtering, and digital literacy awareness. The reflective model is implemented through personal guidance from kiai (Islamic scholars) who emphasize good morals as the core of internalizing Quranic values.

Internalization of these values, as per Tafsir's (2012) view, is that Islamic values education must go through three stages, namely: transfer knowledge, transfer value, and internalization through practice. In the digital age, level transfer knowledge made easier through digital Quran applications and online platforms. However, the stage transfer value and practice still demands the direct role of the kiai as role models. This suggests that technology serves only as an instrument, while the spiritual and moral dimensions still require personal interaction. Therefore, internalizing Quranic values in the digital era must be done through an integrative-adaptive approach, utilizing technology to facilitate access to knowledge while maintaining the authority of the kiai as a source of moral role models. A criticism that has emerged is the risk of value reduction, when internalization stops only at the digital cognitive aspect without

experiencing a process of deepening meaning and life practice (Hassan & Jamaludin, 2021).

3. Challenges and Opportunities of Digitalization for Strengthening Qur'anic Values

The research findings demonstrate a dialectic between the challenges and opportunities of digitalization in strengthening Qur'anic values in Islamic boarding schools. The main challenges include: (a) limited infrastructure in small Islamic boarding schools (Asy'ari, 2020); (b) cultural resistance to digitalization because face-to-face traditions are considered more authentic (Rohman, 2021); and (c) ideological risks in the form of penetration of negative or secular content that is inconsistent with Qur'anic values (Nurdin, 2022). On the other hand, digitalization presents strategic opportunities: (a) expanding access to Qur'anic knowledge through digital books, interpretation applications, and electronic hadith (Al-Harithi, 2021); (b) increasing learning innovation through interactive methods and gamification (Fitriani, 2022); and (c) expanding Islamic boarding school da'wah globally through social media and digital channels (Zuhdi, 2020; Hassan, 2021).

These challenges and opportunities can be linked to the theory/critical pedagogy (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005), that education in the digital context is a tug-of-war between the reproduction of values and the penetration of external ideologies. Therefore, Islamic boarding schools are required to develop religious digital competencies, namely the ability to master technology while selecting content according to Qur'anic values. This strategy allows Islamic boarding schools not only to survive but also to play an active role in shaping a digital space that is more nuanced by the Qur'an. Thus, the digital transformation of Islamic boarding schools should be seen not as a threat, but as an opportunity to expand the horizons of Qur'anic da'wah, as long as it is accompanied by strong digital literacy and strict monitoring of values.

4. Research Gap and Academic Urgency

Literature analysis reveals a significant research gap. Most research on Islamic boarding schools in the digital era still focuses on the technical aspects of technology adoption (Alwi, 2021; Asy'ari, 2020) or administrative and managerial aspects (Zuhdi, 2020). Relatively few studies have critically examined how the internalization of Qur'anic values proceeds amidst the current digitalization, and how the risks and opportunities of digitalization impact the spiritual dimension of Islamic boarding school education (Hassan & Jamaludin, 2021). The academic urgency of this research is to provide a conceptual contribution to fill this gap by offering a critical analysis of how digitalization can synergize with the internalization of Qur'anic values. This aligns with the actual needs of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, which are simultaneously facing the challenges of globalization, modernization, and digitalization.

From the presentation of the results and discussion above regarding the transformation of Islamic boarding school education in the digital era: a critical analysis of the internalization of Qur'anic values, researchers can concretize this in the form of a conceptual table as follows.

Aspect	Description	Implications	Reference
Digital Transformation of Islamic Boarding Schools	Application of technology in Islamic boarding school learning, administration, and preaching (LMS, social media, digital books, Qur'an applications).	Changes in learning patterns, more efficient management of Islamic boarding schools, wider reach of da'wah.	Alwi (2021); Hefner (2021); Zuhdi (2020)

Aspect	Description	Implications	Reference
Internalization of Qur'anic Values	The process of instilling Qur'anic values through learning the book, the role model of kiai, and adaptation of digital media (Qur'an applications, media ethics, Islamic digital literacy).	Qur'anic values remain the core of education, even though methods are adapted to digital developments.	Interpretation (2012); Abidin (2022); Hassan & Jamaludin (2021)
The Challenge of Digitalization	Infrastructure limitations, cultural resistance, risk of negative content penetration.	Potential degradation of values, gaps between Islamic boarding schools, and conflicts between tradition and modernity.	Asy'ari (2020); Rohman (2021); Nurdin (2022)
Digitalization Opportunities	Wider access to Quranic knowledge, interactive learning innovation, and global Islamic boarding school preaching through digital platforms.	Islamic boarding schools can become centers of global preaching based on the Qur'an.	Fitriani (2022); Al-Harithi (2021); Hefner (2021)
Research Output	Critical analysis of the relationship between digital transformation and internalization of Qur'anic values.	Theoretical & practical contributions to the development of Islamic boarding school management.	Snyder (2019); Selwyn (2016)

CONCLUSION

Digital transformation in Islamic boarding school education is not merely a technical process of modernization, but also a paradigm shift that influences interaction patterns, learning methods, and the mechanisms for internalizing Quranic values. This study found that digitalization opens up opportunities for expanded access, pedagogical innovation, and management efficiency, but also carries the risk of loss of spiritual depth, fragmentation of the authority of the kiai, and the penetration of external values that are not always aligned with the pesantren tradition. Thus, internalizing Quranic values in the digital era requires an integrative approach that not only utilizes technology but also upholds the role of the kiai's exemplary role and the classical scholarly traditions of the pesantren.

Academically, this research makes a new contribution by filling a gap in studies that have focused more on the technical aspects of Islamic boarding school digitalization, while the dimension of internalization of Qur'anic values has rarely been explored in depth. The urgency of this research lies in offering a conceptual framework that critically connects digital transformation and internalization of Qur'anic values, thereby serving as a reference in developing adaptive and authentic Islamic education strategies. With the right integration, Islamic boarding schools have the potential to become pioneers in building digital spaces that are Qur'anic, humanistic, and transformative, while maintaining their relevance amidst the challenges of modernity.

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