International Journal of Education, Vocational and Social Science
https://e-journal.citakonsulindo.or.id/index.php/IJEVSS
E-ISSN : 2963 4954
IJEVSS

Ethical and Digital Intelligence: The Contribution of Uswatun Hasanah Values in the Psychoeducational Development of Santri in Facing Information Challenges in the Modern Era

Lalu Ali Murtada[1]
[1]Pascasarjana, Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia
M. Sobry[2]
[2]Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia
Ahmad Sulhan[3]
[3]Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia
Maimun[4]
[4]Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia
Hilmiati[5]
[5]Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: 250401059.mhs@uinmataram.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the contribution of uswatun hasanah values in the development of ethical and digital intelligence among santri through a psychoeducational approach in addressing information challenges in the modern era. The acceleration of digital technology has significantly transformed patterns of communication, learning systems, and social interaction, while simultaneously generating ethical, psychological, and cultural challenges within Islamic educational environments. In the context of pesantren education, these transformations require adaptive educational strategies capable of integrating Islamic moral values with digital literacy in order to maintain the ethical and spiritual identity of santri amidst the dynamics of contemporary information society. This research employs a qualitative approach with a library research design. The primary data sources consist of Qur'anic verses, Hadith, classical and contemporary Islamic educational literature, educational psychology references, digital literacy and digital ethics studies, character education theories, and scientific articles published in reputable national and international journals. Data collection was conducted through systematic documentation and

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

literature review techniques, while data analysis utilized interpretative-critical content analysis through stages of data reduction, categorization, interpretation, conceptual synthesis, and reflective conclusion drawing. The findings of this study demonstrate that the values of uswatun hasanah contribute multidimensionally to the development of ethical and digital intelligence among santri. These contributions include strengthening moral awareness, critical thinking skills, self-regulation, empathy, spiritual consciousness, social responsibility, and reflective participation in digital environments. Furthermore, the study reveals that a psychoeducational approach grounded in exemplary Islamic values provides an integrative educational framework capable of harmonizing spirituality, psychological resilience, and digital literacy within the pesantren ecosystem. The implications of this study indicate the necessity for pesantren institutions to formulate adaptive educational models integrating Islamic character education, psychoeducational reinforcement, and ethical digital literacy in order to cultivate generations of santri who are intellectually competent, morally grounded, technologically adaptive, and socially responsible in contemporary digital civilization.

Keywords: Uswatun Hasanah, Ethical Intelligence, Digital Intelligence, Psychoeducational Approach.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology in the modern era has brought about a fundamental transformation in patterns of social interaction, learning culture, and the psychological construction of society, including within the sphere of Islamic education. The rapid flow of information through social media, digital platforms, and artificial intelligence has created new opportunities for santri to acquire knowledge in a broader and more open manner (Nikmatullah, C., et al., 2023; Ansori, A., et al., 2022). However, on the other hand, such developments have also generated ethical problems in the form of disinformation, digital moral degradation, crises of scholarly authority, and patterns of communication that no longer reflect the values of Islamic etiquette (adab). From the perspective of Islamic educational theory, the formation of insan kamil (the complete human being) does not merely emphasize intellectual mastery, but also the balance between spiritual, emotional, social, and digital ethical intelligence. Therefore, Islamic education is required to integrate moral dimensions with digital literacy competencies so that learners are able to confront the challenges of modernity without losing their ethical identity and religiosity (Suncaka, E., 2024; Nada-Qisthina, D. S., & Musyafak, N., 2025).

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

Normatively, the urgency of strengthening ethics and character education has been emphasized in various national regulations as well as Islamic teachings. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System states that education aims to develop the potential of learners to become individuals who are faithful, pious, noble in character, competent, creative, and responsible (Wijaya, I. S., et al., 2023). In addition, the concept of exemplary conduct or uswatun hasanah in Islam possesses a strong theological foundation as stated in Qur'an Surah Al-Ahzab verse 21: "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example." This verse emphasizes that moral education in Islam is rooted in exemplary conduct as an instrument of value transformation. In the context of the digital era, the principle of uswatun hasanah becomes highly relevant as the foundation for developing the ethical and digital intelligence of santri, enabling them to use technology responsibly, wisely, and for the benefit of society.

Nevertheless, social realities indicate the existence of a gap between the ideals of Islamic education and empirical conditions in the field. The rapid penetration of digital media among santri has not always been accompanied by ethical and psychological readiness in filtering information. Many santri have begun to be exposed to instant culture, social media dependency, the dissemination of unverified information, and reactive patterns of digital communication that do not reflect the values and etiquette of pesantren traditions. This phenomenon demonstrates that digital transformation has significantly influenced the mindset, behavior, and social orientation of santri. Such conditions pose a serious challenge for Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), which have long been recognized as institutions for moral and Islamic character development (Wijaya, I. S., et al., 2023).

This gap becomes increasingly evident when the values of exemplary conduct that have traditionally formed the core of pesantren education have not yet been fully internalized within the digital sphere. In general, santri receive moral education conventionally through face-to-face interaction, yet they have not obtained systematic reinforcement regarding digital media ethics, information literacy, and psychological resilience in dealing with social media pressures. Consequently, contradictions emerge between the religious identity of santri and their digital behavior, which at times does not reflect the principles of prudence, tabayyun (verification), and moral responsibility (Rois, C., & Yazdani, G., et al., 2026.) In this context, pesantren are confronted with new challenges to reconstruct educational approaches capable of addressing digital problems in a more integrative and contextual manner.

The challenges of information in the modern era are not solely related to technological aspects, but also involve psychological and pedagogical issues. Excessive exposure to information

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

(information overload) can affect emotional stability, critical thinking abilities, and the mental health of santri. Phenomena such as fear of missing out (FOMO), social media addiction, and cyberbullying have become integral parts of digital life that may hinder the psychological development of learners. From a psychoeducational perspective, these conditions require educational approaches that are not merely cognitive in nature, but also address affective, moral, and self-control dimensions (Calista, S. A., 2025). Therefore, the development of ethical and digital intelligence has become an urgent necessity within the pesantren educational system.

Furthermore, changes in digital communication patterns have also affected the structure of scholarly authority among santri. Religious knowledge that was once primarily obtained from kiai and classical Islamic texts can now be accessed instantly through the internet without adequate verification processes. This situation has the potential to produce fragmented, superficial, or even radical religious understandings if not accompanied by strong digital literacy skills. Under such circumstances, the value of uswatun hasanah occupies a strategic position as an educational approach based on exemplary conduct that can strengthen the ethical and spiritual awareness of santri in filtering information wisely. Exemplary conduct should not merely be understood as a traditional teaching method, but also as a strategy for developing humane and religious digital character (Lundeto, A., et al., 2021; Fajar, A. S. M., et al., 2025).

On the other hand, pesantren as Islamic educational institutions possess strong social and cultural capital in shaping the character of santri. Traditions of adab, respect for teachers, discipline, and spiritual habituation constitute important elements that may serve as the basis for developing digital ethical intelligence. However, such potential has not yet been fully developed within a systematic framework of digital education. Most pesantren educational programs still focus primarily on strengthening conventional religious literacy and have not substantially integrated psychoeducational dimensions based on digital information challenges. Therefore, an educational formulation is required that is capable of connecting pesantren values with the demands of modern technological adaptation in a proportional and sustainable manner.

Based on these conditions, this research offers both conceptual and practical approaches through strengthening the value of uswatun hasanah as the foundation for developing the ethical and digital intelligence of santri. This approach positions exemplary conduct as the primary instrument in the process of value internalization, self-control formation, and the enhancement of critical thinking abilities toward digital information. Through a psychoeducational approach, santri are not only directed to understand the technical use of technology, but are also guided to develop moral awareness, social empathy, and ethical responsibility in their digital activities.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

This study also offers an integrative perspective between Islamic education, educational psychology, and digital literacy as a framework for the development of santri character in the modern era. Such integration is essential because digital problems cannot be resolved solely through normative religious approaches, but instead require educational strategies that address the psychological dimensions of learners. Accordingly, the value of uswatun hasanah is projected not merely as a theological moral concept, but also as a transformational educational paradigm relevant to confronting the complexity of contemporary information challenges.

Studies on character education and digital literacy have in fact been widely conducted by previous scholars. Research conducted by Henry Jenkins emphasizes the importance of participatory digital literacy in building the critical capacities of younger generations in confronting new media culture (Muhsyanur, M., Mahas, N. H., & Gusni, G., 2024; Mustapa, K., et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the research of Zakiah Daradjat demonstrates that Islamic education plays a strategic role in shaping personality and the mental health of learners through the internalization of moral and spiritual values (Irfan, A., et al., 2026). Another study conducted by Azyumardi Azra also confirms that pesantren possess significant capacity in shaping the socio-religious character of society through traditions of exemplary conduct and value habituation (Nuraeni, E., & Khairudin, A., 2025). Nevertheless, these studies still have limitations because they tend to discuss digital literacy, character education, and pesantren in a partial manner. There remains a scarcity of research specifically integrating the concepts of ethical and digital intelligence with the value of uswatun hasanah from the psychoeducational perspective of santri. Moreover, previous studies generally focus on pedagogical or moral aspects in general without linking them to the increasingly complex challenges of digital information. Based on these conditions, there exists a research gap in the limited integrative studies concerning the contribution of uswatun hasanah values to the development of ethical and digital intelligence among santri. The novelty of this research lies in its effort to construct a conceptual model for the psychoeducational development of santri based on Islamic exemplary values in responding to the dynamics of modern digital information.

The urgency of this research becomes increasingly significant considering the growing use of digital technology within pesantren environments, which is not always accompanied by the ethical and psychological preparedness of santri. Strengthening ethical and digital intelligence has become an urgent necessity to enable santri to maintain their moral identity amidst the rapid flow of information globalization. This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of contemporary Islamic educational studies, while also providing practical contributions for pesantren in formulating educational strategies that are adaptive to the advancement of digital

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

technology.

Based on preliminary observations at the research location, it was found that some santri actively use social media and various digital platforms as means of communication and learning. However, the utilization of such technology has not been fully accompanied by adequate understanding of digital ethics, information verification, and behavioral control in media usage. Furthermore, character-building patterns within pesantren remain predominantly based on traditional approaches and have not yet been optimally integrated with the challenges of the digital lives of santri. These conditions indicate the necessity of developing educational approaches capable of internalizing the value of uswatun hasanah within the context of digital interaction in a more systematic and contextual manner. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the contribution of uswatun hasanah values to the development of ethical and digital intelligence among santri through a psychoeducational approach in addressing the challenges of information in the modern era. This research is expected to produce conceptual constructions and implementative strategies that may serve as references for pesantren institutions in developing a generation of santri who are not only intellectually and spiritually excellent, but who also possess mature, critical, and responsible ethical and digital literacy competencies within social life

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with the type of research categorized as library research (Azizah, L., 2026). The qualitative approach was selected because this study is oriented toward understanding, interpreting, and constructing meaning in depth regarding the phenomenon of ethical and digital intelligence from the perspective of uswatun hasanah values in the psychoeducational development of santri in the modern era. This approach enables the researcher to comprehensively explore philosophical, normative, pedagogical, and psychological dimensions through the interpretation of various relevant scholarly sources. Meanwhile, the library research method is utilized because the focus of the study is not based on empirical quantitative measurement, but rather on conceptual, analytical, and critical exploration of ideas, theories, and previous research findings related to the research theme.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data sources (Alfarisi, S., & Susetyo, A. B., 2025). Primary data sources are derived from various principal literatures that have direct correlation with the focus of the study, such as books on Islamic education, Islamic educational psychology, digital literacy, digital ethics, character education, the concept of uswatun hasanah, as well as scientific articles published in reputable national and international

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

journals. In addition, the primary sources also include Qur'anic verses, Hadith, national educational regulations, and academic works discussing the development of santri character in confronting the challenges of digital information. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are obtained from supporting documents, conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, research reports, and various other relevant references intended to strengthen the construction of the research argumentation.

The data collection procedure was conducted through documentation techniques and literature exploration in a systematic, structured, and critical manner (Thoriquttyas, T., & Rohmawati, N., 2024). The stages of data collection began with the process of theme identification and conceptual mapping of the principal issues of the study, namely ethical intelligence, digital intelligence, the value of uswatun hasanah, psychoeducational development, and information challenges in the modern era. Subsequently, the researcher carried out a comprehensive exploration of literature sources through academic databases, digital libraries, scientific journals, reference books, and normative documents possessing substantive relevance to the focus of the study. Thereafter, a data selection process was conducted based on the levels of credibility, relevance, academic authority, and conceptual correlation with the research problems. The selected data were then classified according to thematic categories to facilitate deeper interpretation and analysis.

The data analysis technique employed in this study is content analysis using an interpretative-critical approach. Content analysis was utilized to reveal substantive meanings, conceptual patterns, theoretical relationships, and value constructions contained within the analyzed literature sources (Wahid, S. H., & Abdulloh, S., 2026; Kakanda-Sinkala, N. A., 2026). The stages of data analysis were carried out through several systematic procedures, namely: (1) data reduction, which refers to the process of selecting, focusing, and simplifying data relevant to the research focus; (2) data categorization, namely grouping data based on major themes such as digital ethics, character education, information literacy, the value of uswatun hasanah, and psychoeducational approaches; (3) data interpretation, namely interpreting interconceptual relationships critically and profoundly to discover coherent constructions of thought; (4) conceptual synthesis, namely integrating various theoretical perspectives in order to construct a new conceptual formulation regarding the contribution of uswatun hasanah values to the development of ethical and digital intelligence among santri; and (5) drawing conclusions reflectively and argumentatively based on the overall results of the analysis.

The validity of the data in this study was established through tests of credibility,

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Cicmil, S., 2006; Webster, N. A., & Zhang, Q., 2025; Jnanathapaswi, S. G., 2021; Coetsee, D., 2011). Data credibility was achieved through source triangulation by comparing various primary and secondary literatures related to the research theme. Dependability was maintained by ensuring the consistency of the research procedures in a systematic and well-documented manner so that the research process could be academically traceable. Confirmability was attained through analytical objectification, namely ensuring that the interpretation results were grounded in scientific data and argumentation rather than the researcher's subjectivity alone (Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Weate, P., 2016). Meanwhile, transferability was carried out by presenting conceptual descriptions in a profound, detailed, and contextual manner so that the findings of this study may serve as both theoretical and practical references in the development of Islamic education based on ethical and digital intelligence across various pesantren educational contexts. Thus, the overall methodological procedures employed in this study are expected to generate a valid, systematic scientific construction that contributes significantly to the advancement of contemporary Islamic educational studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The development of information technology in the modern era has generated profound transformations in educational systems, patterns of social interaction, and the cultural construction of younger generations, including within the pesantren environment. Based on various studies in Islamic education and digital literacy, it has been found that digital transformation not only provides easier access to knowledge but also presents complex ethical challenges (Huda, M., Borham, A. H., & Dewantara, M. I., 2024). In this context, santri as part of the digital generation are confronted with new realities in the form of rapid information flows, disinformation, media manipulation, digital moral degradation, and shifts in social orientation that potentially affect their character and Islamic identity. Therefore, the development of ethical and digital intelligence has become a fundamental necessity within the pesantren educational system so that santri are able to adapt to technological advancement without losing their moral foundations and Islamic spirituality.

Based on the analysis of both classical and contemporary Islamic educational literature, the concept of ethical intelligence in Islam cannot be separated from the formation of morality (akhlaq) and human spiritual consciousness. From the Islamic perspective, intelligence is not merely intellectual capability, but rather an integration of cognitive, affective, moral, and spiritual dimensions (Mukhlis, M., & Cahyadi, A., 2026). The thought of Al-Ghazali emphasizes that the

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

ultimate goal of education is the formation of noble character through purification of the soul (tazkiyatun nafs) and habituation of virtuous behavior. This concept demonstrates that ethical intelligence in Islam is rooted in the individual's capacity to distinguish truth from falsehood and to implement moral values within social life. In the digital context, this concept becomes highly relevant because the use of technology requires a high level of ethical awareness so that human beings do not become trapped in the misuse of information and destructive behavior in cyberspace (Sari, W. D. 2025).

The findings of the study on Qur'anic verses indicate that Islam had already established fundamental principles concerning information ethics long before the emergence of modern digital technology. One of the most relevant verses is Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6, which emphasizes the importance of information verification (tabayyun) before accepting and disseminating news. According to the interpretation of Ibnu Katsir, the verse contains a command for Muslims to be cautious regarding information whose truth has not been clearly established, as it may lead to social harm and future regret. Within the context of the digital era, the principle of tabayyun possesses strong relevance to the problems of hoaxes, disinformation, and the spread of hate speech on social media. Therefore, the digital intelligence of santri should not merely be measured by their ability to access technology, but also by their ethical capability to verify and utilize information responsibly (Marita, A. I., et al., 2025).

In addition to the principle of tabayyun, the Qur'an also emphasizes the importance of exemplary conduct as an instrument of moral education. Qur'an Surah Al-Ahzab verse 21 states that the Prophet Muhammad represents uswatun hasanah, or the best example for humanity. In the interpretation of M. Quraish Shihab, the concept of uswatun hasanah is explained not merely as outward behavior, but also as encompassing moral integrity, social wisdom, and spiritual responsibility. Based on this interpretation, this study finds that the value of uswatun hasanah contributes significantly to the formation of ethical and digital intelligence among santri, because exemplary conduct serves as a more effective mechanism for internalizing values compared to purely normative approaches (Ubaedullah, D., & Suryono, F., 2025). Santri tend to develop ethical awareness more easily when they witness the practical implementation of Islamic values within the social and digital behavior of educators and the pesantren environment.

The results of the analysis also indicate that information challenges in the modern era have transformed the patterns of character formation among younger generations. Educational psychology literature explains that excessive exposure to digital information can affect emotional stability, learning concentration, and students' patterns of social interaction. The phenomenon of

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

information overload causes individuals to experience difficulty in filtering valid and relevant information. In the context of santri, such conditions potentially diminish depth of thought, perseverance in learning, and the quality of spiritual interaction if not balanced with the strengthening of self-control and ethical awareness. Therefore, a psychoeducational approach becomes highly important in helping santri develop self-regulation abilities in the use of digital media.

Studies on Islamic educational psychology theory indicate that character development cannot be achieved merely through knowledge transfer, but must also involve habituation, emotional reinforcement, and exemplary environmental influence (Juhairiah, S., et al. 2024; Nasution, H. S., et al., 2025). The thought of Zakiah Daradjat emphasizes that the mental health and moral formation of students are strongly influenced by a conducive educational environment and positive emotional relationships between teachers and learners. In the pesantren context, the relationship between kiai and santri possesses a very strong psychological dimension, enabling exemplary values to be more easily internalized into the behavior of santri. This study finds that educational patterns based on exemplary conduct possess high effectiveness in developing digital ethical awareness because santri do not merely receive theoretical instruction, but also directly observe moral practices.

Furthermore, the findings of the literature review demonstrate that digital intelligence cannot be narrowly understood as merely the technical ability to operate technological devices. Based on the concept of digital literacy proposed by Henry Jenkins, digital intelligence includes critical thinking skills, responsible social participation, collaborative abilities, and awareness of the impacts of digital media. From the Islamic perspective, these dimensions are closely related to the principles of trustworthiness (amanah), social responsibility, and communication ethics. Therefore, the development of digital intelligence among santri must be directed toward the simultaneous formation of critical and moral capacities so that technology becomes not only an instrument for information consumption, but also a means for the development of humanitarian and Islamic values.

This study also finds that pesantren possess significant potential in building an ethical digital culture (Warisno, A., et al., 2025). Traditions of respect for teachers, habituation of adab, discipline, and the strengthening of spirituality constitute social capital that is highly relevant for confronting modern digital challenges. Based on the study of the thought of Azyumardi Azra, pesantren possess strong characteristics of moral education because they place character formation at the core of the educational process. In this context, the value of uswatun hasanah

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

can serve as the primary foundation for constructing a pesantren digital ecosystem oriented toward ethics, social responsibility, and self-control.

Nevertheless, the results of the analysis indicate that some pesantren still face limitations in integrating digital education with the character formation of santri. Many Islamic educational institutions continue to perceive digital technology as a moral threat, leading to approaches that tend to be restrictive in nature. In fact, modern educational literature demonstrates that technological restriction without strengthening digital literacy may instead result in students' low adaptability to societal developments. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of an integrative approach that not only stresses supervision, but also strengthens ethical awareness and the critical thinking abilities of santri in utilizing technology.

The results of the study also demonstrate that the concept of uswatun hasanah possesses pedagogical dimensions highly relevant to modern psychoeducational approaches. In the social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura, individuals learn through observing the behavior of models considered authoritative and credible (Sugito, S., 2024). This concept aligns with the Islamic principle of exemplary conduct, which positions educators as the primary source for value internalization. Thus, the value of uswatun hasanah not only possesses theological legitimacy, but also strong psychological and pedagogical foundations in the formation of the digital character of santri.

From the perspective of Islamic education, ethical intelligence represents a form of moral consciousness arising from the integration of knowledge, faith, and action. Based on the analysis of the works of Islamic educational scholars, it is found that the ultimate objective of education is to form individuals capable of utilizing knowledge for social benefit. Therefore, digital intelligence without ethical intelligence has the potential to generate technological misuse, the spread of hate speech, information manipulation, and individualistic behavior. This study finds that the value of uswatun hasanah functions as a moral control mechanism that maintains balance between technological development and humanitarian responsibility (Huda, M. N., et al., 2025).

The interpretation of various prophetic traditions (hadith) demonstrates that Islam strongly emphasizes communication ethics and responsibility in speech. The prophetic saying stating, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent," indicates that communication in Islam must be based on the principles of benefit and self-restraint. Within the context of social media, this hadith possesses significant relevance to the phenomena of hate speech, cyberbullying, and the spread of slander. Therefore, the development of digital intelligence among santri must be accompanied by strengthening ethical communication

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

awareness grounded in Islamic teachings (Alhifni, A., et al., 2026).

This study also finds that psychoeducational approaches based on Islamic values contribute significantly to building the mental resilience of santri in confronting digital social pressures. Modern psychological literature demonstrates that social media may trigger social anxiety, depression, and the phenomenon of fear of missing out (FOMO). From the Islamic perspective, peace of mind is achieved through strengthening spirituality and self-control. Therefore, the value of uswatun hasanah can serve as a means for establishing psychological balance because the exemplary conduct of teachers and the pesantren environment is capable of creating emotional security and reinforcing the self-identity of santri amidst the pressures of digital culture.

In addition to psychological aspects, this study also finds that strengthening ethical and digital intelligence has implications for reinforcing the Islamic identity of santri. The flow of information globalization causes younger generations to become highly susceptible to popular cultures that are not always aligned with Islamic values. Under such circumstances, pesantren possess a strategic role in preserving the moral and cultural identity of santri through the internalization of exemplary values. The value of uswatun hasanah helps santri understand that modernity and technology do not necessarily conflict with religiosity as long as their use is directed toward benefit and moral responsibility.

The findings also indicate that digital literacy from the Islamic perspective must encompass spiritual and social dimensions (Munawaroh, M., 2025; Halimah, S., et al., 2024). Digital literacy should not merely be understood as the ability to read digital information, but also as the ability to comprehend the moral and social impacts of technological usage. Therefore, this study emphasizes that the concept of digital intelligence among santri must be constructed holistically by integrating intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and social aspects into an integral framework of Islamic education.

Within the context of character education, this study finds that the method of exemplary conduct possesses deeper effectiveness compared to purely instructional approaches. When santri observe teachers or kiai utilizing digital media wisely, courteously, and responsibly, such behavior becomes easier to emulate than through normative lectures alone. Therefore, the implementation of uswatun hasanah within digital spaces must begin with educators as the central figures in shaping the character of santri.

The analysis of various national educational regulations also demonstrates that character strengthening and digital literacy have become essential components within the Indonesian educational system. Nevertheless, their implementation within pesantren institutions still

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

requires more contextual formulation. This study finds that the integration of uswatun hasanah values with digital education may serve as an alternative model for the development of contemporary Islamic education because it is capable of connecting religiosity with the demands of modern technological adaptation.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the primary challenge of Islamic education in the digital era lies not merely in technological access, but in the crisis of ethical awareness in information usage. Therefore, the development of ethical intelligence becomes the foremost priority so that santri are able to position technology as a means of worship, da'wah, and scientific development. In this context, the value of uswatun hasanah possesses a transformative function because it is capable of shaping the moral orientation of santri in utilizing technology productively and responsibly.

The findings of this study also reveal that the internalization of exemplary values within pesantren can strengthen the culture of information verification (tabayyun) among santri. This culture is highly important in confronting the widespread dissemination of hoaxes and digital propaganda that potentially threaten social unity. Thus, pesantren education functions not only to develop individual piety, but also social piety within digital spaces.

Furthermore, this study finds that psychoeducational approaches based on uswatun hasanah can help santri develop reflective abilities and self-awareness in using social media. Such reflective capacities are essential to prevent santri from becoming trapped in impulsive, consumptive cultures and excessive social validation-seeking behavior within digital media. Therefore, Islamic education must develop learning models emphasizing self-control, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility in digital activities (Maulana, M. M., 2024; Nikmatullah, C., et al., 2023).

This study also confirms that the value of uswatun hasanah possesses universal relevance in modern education because it emphasizes integrity, empathy, and social responsibility. These values are greatly needed within digital societies that tend to be individualistic and competitive. Thus, pesantren possess substantial opportunities to become models of digital moral education grounded in humane and moderate Islamic values.

The findings of the study indicate that the integration of Islamic education and digital literacy may generate a new educational paradigm that is more adaptive to societal developments. This paradigm positions technology not as a threat to morality, but as an instrument for the advancement of knowledge and da'wah that must be directed through the strengthening of ethics and spirituality. In this context, uswatun hasanah becomes the principal foundation connecting

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

moral, psychological, and social dimensions in the use of digital technology.

This study also finds that the success of developing ethical and digital intelligence among santri is greatly influenced by educational environments that consistently implement exemplary values. If the pesantren environment is capable of creating a healthy, courteous, and responsible digital communication culture, santri will more easily internalize these values within their daily lives. Therefore, the transformation of pesantren education in the digital era must begin with the establishment of a value-based educational culture.

Conceptually, the results of this study demonstrate that the value of uswatun hasanah contributes multidimensionally to the development of ethical and digital intelligence among santri. Such contributions include the formation of moral awareness, critical thinking abilities, strengthening of self-control, development of social empathy, and the formation of religious identity within digital spaces. Thus, exemplary values function not merely as theological moral concepts, but also as psychoeducational approaches relevant to confronting the complexity of modern information challenges.

Ultimately, this study emphasizes that the development of ethical and digital intelligence among santri must be conducted integratively through synergy between Islamic education, psychological approaches, and digital literacy. Such an approach is important because the challenges of the modern era are not solely related to technological advancement, but also to crises of morality, identity, and the psychological well-being of younger generations. Therefore, the internalization of uswatun hasanah values through psychoeducational approaches becomes a fundamental strategy for building a generation of santri capable of confronting modern information challenges critically, wisely, and while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic value.

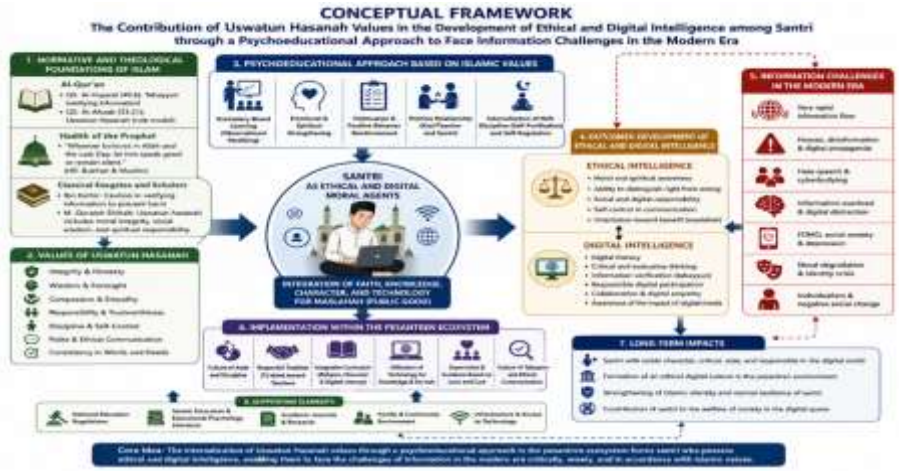


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

The conceptual framework illustrates that the development of ethical and digital intelligence among santri is not positioned merely as a technical educational objective, but rather as a transformative civilizational project rooted in Islamic epistemology and psychoeducational humanism. The structure of the framework demonstrates a systemic relationship between normative Islamic foundations, psychoeducational processes, pesantren cultural ecosystems, and the multidimensional challenges of the contemporary digital era. Conceptually, the framework places uswatun hasanah not only as a moral doctrine, but as an integrative paradigm that mediates the interaction between spirituality, cognition, emotional maturity, and digital consciousness.

At the foundational level, the framework emphasizes that ethical and digital intelligence are constructed upon normative-transcendental principles derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical Islamic scholarship. This signifies that the digital transformation experienced by santri cannot be approached solely through technological adaptation, but must also involve the reconstruction of moral consciousness grounded in revelation-based values. The inclusion of the principles of tabayyun, moral integrity, and prophetic exemplarity indicates that the framework interprets information ethics as a spiritual responsibility rather than merely a communicative competence. In this regard, digital literacy becomes inseparable from ethical intentionality and accountability before both society and God.

The psychoeducational dimension represented in the framework reflects a shift from mechanistic educational approaches toward transformative and human-centered educational processes. The framework suggests that character formation in the digital era cannot rely exclusively on cognitive instruction or normative regulation. Instead, it requires emotional reinforcement, spiritual cultivation, behavioral habituation, and relational attachment between educators and santri. This interpretation implies that educational success is fundamentally determined by the internalization of values through meaningful psychosocial interactions rather than by the transfer of information alone. Consequently, the educational process becomes an arena of value embodiment in which moral awareness is cultivated experientially and relationally.

Furthermore, the framework conceptualizes santri as active moral agents situated within a dynamic digital ecosystem. The positioning of the santri figure at the center symbolizes the integrative locus where religious values, psychoeducational processes, and technological realities intersect. This centrality reflects the assumption that ethical and digital intelligence emerge through continuous interaction between internal spiritual consciousness and external sociotechnological realities. Thus, the framework does not perceive santri as passive recipients of

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

digital influence, but as subjects capable of critically negotiating modernity while preserving Islamic moral identity.

The section concerning contemporary information challenges demonstrates that the framework adopts a critical perspective toward digital modernity. Information overload, disinformation, cyberbullying, identity crises, and digital individualism are interpreted not merely as technological side effects, but as manifestations of deeper epistemological and moral disruptions within modern society. The framework therefore implies that the crisis of the digital age is fundamentally a crisis of meaning, ethics, and psychological stability. In this context, the strengthening of ethical intelligence functions as a moral filtering mechanism, while digital intelligence operates as an epistemological competency enabling santri to navigate information critically and responsibly.

The conceptual distinction between ethical intelligence and digital intelligence within the framework also reveals a significant theoretical contribution. Ethical intelligence is represented as the foundation of moral discernment, self-regulation, and spiritual orientation, whereas digital intelligence is conceptualized as the operational capacity to engage critically, responsibly, and reflectively within digital spaces. The relationship between the two dimensions illustrates that digital competency without ethical consciousness risks producing technologically skilled yet morally fragmented individuals. Conversely, ethical awareness without digital competency may lead to social irrelevance and intellectual marginalization in contemporary society. Therefore, the framework proposes an integrative synthesis in which ethical consciousness and digital literacy mutually reinforce one another.

The pesantren ecosystem represented in the framework carries profound sociocultural implications. The inclusion of traditions such as ta'dzim, disciplined adab, ethical communication, and spiritually grounded supervision indicates that pesantren culture possesses latent pedagogical resources capable of responding to digital disruption. This suggests that pesantren are not inherently resistant to technological modernization; rather, they possess the cultural infrastructure necessary to domesticate technology within an Islamic ethical framework. Consequently, the framework repositions pesantren not as isolated traditional institutions, but as adaptive moral communities capable of producing ethically resilient digital citizens.

Moreover, the framework reflects an interdisciplinary orientation by integrating Islamic education, psychology, communication ethics, and digital literacy into a coherent conceptual model. This interdisciplinary structure indicates that the complexity of digital challenges cannot be adequately addressed through single-dimensional educational approaches. Instead, the

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

framework advocates a holistic paradigm in which intellectual development, psychological resilience, moral consciousness, and social responsibility are interconnected dimensions of human formation. Such integration signifies an epistemological departure from fragmented educational models toward a more comprehensive and humanistic conception of Islamic education in the digital age.

The long-term impacts presented within the framework further reinforce its transformative orientation. The expected outcomes are not limited to individual moral improvement, but extend toward the creation of an ethical digital culture within the broader pesantren environment. This indicates that the framework envisions educational transformation as both personal and collective. Ethical and digital intelligence are therefore interpreted as social capital capable of strengthening communal harmony, sustaining religious identity, and fostering constructive participation in digital civilization. In this sense, the framework positions santri as potential agents of ethical reconstruction within increasingly fragmented digital societies.

From a theoretical standpoint, the framework also implies that uswatun hasanah possesses epistemological relevance beyond its classical theological context. The concept is reconstructed as a psychoeducational paradigm capable of mediating the relationship between spirituality and technological modernity. This reinterpretation expands the function of prophetic exemplarity from merely moral imitation toward a dynamic educational methodology for shaping reflective, resilient, and socially responsible digital identities. Hence, uswatun hasanah is no longer confined to symbolic religiosity, but becomes an operational principle for cultivating ethical consciousness in the digital sphere.

Ultimately, the framework articulates a broader philosophical vision concerning the future of Islamic education in the era of digital civilization. It suggests that the central challenge of contemporary education lies not merely in technological adaptation, but in preserving human dignity, moral coherence, and spiritual integrity amidst accelerating informational complexity. Through the integration of psychoeducational approaches and Islamic exemplary values, the framework offers a transformative educational paradigm aimed at producing santri who are intellectually adaptive, emotionally mature, spiritually grounded, and ethically responsible in navigating the realities of modern digital life.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the values of uswatun hasanah possess a profound and multidimensional contribution to the development of ethical and digital intelligence among santri

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

in confronting the increasingly complex challenges of information in the modern era. The rapid expansion of digital technology has transformed not only educational and communicative structures, but also the moral, psychological, and social orientations of younger generations, thereby necessitating an integrative educational paradigm capable of harmonizing technological adaptation with spiritual and ethical consciousness. Within this context, the findings reveal that uswatun hasanah functions not merely as a theological principle of moral exemplarity, but as a transformative psychoeducational framework through which santri are able to internalize values of integrity, critical awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social responsibility, and ethical digital participation. The study further confirms that the integration of Islamic educational values, psychoeducational approaches, and digital literacy creates a holistic model of character formation that enables santri to navigate digital realities critically, wisely, and responsibly without losing their Islamic identity and spiritual foundations. Moreover, the pesantren environment, with its traditions of adab, discipline, respect for knowledge, and spiritual cultivation, possesses substantial pedagogical potential to become a center for ethical digital transformation capable of responding constructively to the dynamics of modern civilization. Therefore, the internalization of uswatun hasanah values through a psychoeducational approach constitutes a strategic and contextual educational effort in producing generations of santri who are not only intellectually adaptive and technologically competent, but also morally grounded, psychologically resilient, socially responsible, and spiritually committed in engaging with the complexities of contemporary digital society.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Future research concerning the development of ethical and digital intelligence among santri grounded in the values of uswatun hasanah should move beyond conceptual and theoretical exploration toward a more comprehensive investigation of the transformative dynamics occurring within contemporary pesantren educational ecosystems. Subsequent studies are encouraged to examine more deeply the qualitative dimensions of psychoeducational interaction in digital religious learning environments, particularly concerning how exemplary-based educational practices are internalized through virtual communication, digital mentoring, and technology mediated social engagement. Such investigations would provide a richer understanding of the mechanisms through which moral values, spiritual awareness, and ethical consciousness are constructed within the intersection of Islamic pedagogy and digital culture. Moreover, future scholars may develop more systematic analytical frameworks capable of identifying the relational

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

balance between cognitive digital literacy, emotional regulation, spiritual cultivation, and ethical participation in online environments, thereby contributing to the formulation of a transformative and contextually responsive model of Islamic digital education.

Furthermore, future studies should explore various mediating and moderating variables that potentially influence the effectiveness of uswatun hasanah-based psychoeducational approaches in shaping the ethical and digital character of santri. Variables such as self-regulation, emotional intelligence, digital resilience, spiritual well-being, socio-cultural identity, media consumption patterns, and family educational background deserve more extensive scholarly attention. The present study indicates that ethical and digital intelligence are multidimensional constructs that cannot be explained solely through technological adaptation or moral instruction in isolation. Rather, they emerge through complex interactions between internal psychological conditions, environmental influences, spiritual experiences, and educational culture. Therefore, future research employing interdisciplinary approaches, including educational psychology, communication studies, sociology of religion, and digital anthropology, would significantly enrich the academic discourse concerning Islamic education in the digital age. The use of mixed-methods designs, phenomenological inquiry, ethnographic studies, or longitudinal approaches would also enable researchers to capture the long-term transformation of santri's ethical awareness, digital behavior, and spiritual identity in more nuanced and comprehensive ways.

Another important direction for future inquiry lies in examining the practical implementation and effectiveness of pesantren-based digital ethics models compared to other educational environments. While pesantren possess strong traditions of adab, spiritual cultivation, and character formation, empirical investigation remains necessary to evaluate how these values are translated into actual digital practices among santri. Comparative studies between pesantren, formal Islamic schools, and secular educational institutions may reveal distinctive pedagogical patterns and varying degrees of effectiveness in developing ethical digital behavior among students. In addition, future research should critically investigate the role of social media and artificial intelligence as emerging spaces of religious learning and identity construction. Open-access digital platforms increasingly shape the religious perspectives, moral orientations, and patterns of information consumption among Muslim youth; therefore, understanding how santri negotiate religious authority, digital culture, and ethical responsibility within these environments becomes highly significant. Such scholarly efforts would contribute not only to the advancement of Islamic educational theory but also to the construction of evidence-based strategies for cultivating morally grounded, critically reflective, and socially responsible

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

digital generations within contemporary Muslim societies.

REFERENCES

Alfarisi, S., & Susetyo, A. B. (2025). Strategy of MSMEs development based on shariah economy in the digital era: Case study of small business in Morombuh Village. Riggs: Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Business, 4(2), 3736-3748.

Alhifni, A., Rusli, R. K., Roestamy, M., & Ahwarumi, B. (2026). From Tradition to Transaction: Architecting a Philosophically-Grounded Digital Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Indonesian Pesantren. Jurnal Ilmiah Gema Perencana, 4(3), 2455-2472.

Ansori, A., Rohmatulloh, D. M., Sudrajat, D., Am, S. A., & Utami, S. (2022). Digital Innovation in Pesantren Education: Prediction to Welcome Global Islam Awakening. Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 5(2), 645-661.

Azizah, L. (2026). Reimagining Islamic Learning: The Role of ArtificialIntelligence in Islamic Educational Transformation. Prosiding OASE, 7(2), 374-378.

Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Weate, P. (2016). Using thematic analysis in sport and exercise research. In Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise (pp. 213-227). Routledge.

Calista, S. A. (2025, August). Revolutionizing pesantren in the society 5.0 era: The synergy of digitalization, ai, and smart education management. In Proceeding of International Conference on Islamic Boarding School (Vol. 2, No. 1).

Cicmil, S. (2006). Understanding project management practice through interpretative and critical research perspectives. Project management journal, 37(2), 27-37.

Coetsee, D. (2011). A comment on research frameworks applied in accounting research. South African Journal of Accounting Research, 25(1), 81-102.

Fajar, A. S. M., Fauzi, A., Darmawan, D., Putra, A. R., & Arifin, S. (2025). Transformation of Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Landscape and its Implications for Pedagogical Innovation. International Journal of Service Science, Management, Engineering, and Technology, 8(1), 15-20.

Halimah, S., Yusuf, A., & Safiudin, K. (2024). Pesantren education management: The transformation of religious learning culture in the age of disruption. Nidhomul Haq: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, 9(3), 648-666.

Huda, M. N., Ismail, S. N., & Muhammad, A. S. (2025). Pesantren Technology-Friendly: Enhancing Learning Effectiveness in The Modern Era. Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 19(1).

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

Huda, M., Borham, A. H., & Dewantara, M. I. (2024). Opportunities and Challenges of Islamic Education in the Digital Era. Ar-Fachruddin: Journal of Islamic Education, 1(1), 1-11.

Irfan, A., Yunus, A., Ayuhan, A., & Nurhaidah, S. N. (2026). Optimizing Cyber Media as an Islamic Education and Da'wah Tool: A Case Study of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) DKI Jakarta. Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Agama Islam, 2(1), 42-50.

Jnanathapaswi, S. G. (2021). Thematic analysis & coding: An overview of the qualitative paradigm. An introduction to social science research, 1-9.

Juhairiah, S., Yuwono, D., & Kinasih, Q. Y. (2024). Digital transformation in Islamic education: Opportunities, challenges, and its impact on Islamic values. Journal of Vocational Education and Educational Technology Innovations, 1(1), 1-6.

Kakanda-Sinkala, N. A Methodological Presentation of How the Implementation of the Pregnancy Re-Entry Policy Among Stakeholders At Primary School Level in Chongwe District, Zambia was Explored for A Phd Study.

Lundeto, A., Talibo, I., & Nento, S. (2021). Challenges and learning strategies of Islamic education in Islamic boarding schools in the industrial revolution era 4.0. Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan, 13(3), 2231-2240.

Marita, A. I., Asna, A., & Julaiha, S. (2025, October). Digital globalization and the transformation of Islamic education: Challenges, opportunities, and character strategies. In PROCEEDING OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION, SOCIETY AND HUMANITY (Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 203-210).

Maulana, M. M. (2024). Exploring the Impact of Digital Media in Pesantren-Based Education: Enhancing Islamic Studies Learning and Fostering Character Development among Student. Jurnal Islam Nusantara, 8(1), 86-98.

Muhsyanur, M., Mahas, N. H., & Gusni, G. (2024). Integrating Artificial Intelligence in Indonesian Language Learning Bridging Tradition and Innovation at Pondok Pesantren As' adiyah Sengkang, Indonesia. Global Dialogues in Humanities and Pedagogy, 2(5), 50-63.

Mukhlis, M., & Cahyadi, A. (2026). Islamic Digital Literacy and Character Formation in the Cyber Era: Integrating the Concepts of Adab, Akhlaq, and Social Media Ethics into a Digital-Based Islamic Education Curriculum. AL GHAZALI: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam, 6(2), 569-592.

Munawaroh, M. (2025). The Role of Islamic Boarding Schools in Strengthening Students' Digital Literacy and Religious Values in the Era of Society 5.0. DAAR EL-MAKRIFAH: Journal of Islamic Religious Education, 1(01), 11-20.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

Mustapa, K., Gagaramusu, Y. B. M., Palandi, E. H., Syakhrani, A. W., & Towpek, H. (2023). Technology-enhanced education: Nurturing the digital generation-experiences in Islamic schools in Indonesia. International Journal of Teaching and Learning, 1(1), 16-40.

Nada-Qisthina, D. S., & Musyafak, N. (2025). Tradition meets technology: The role of Artificial Intelligence in Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah's digital adaptation. Islamic Communication Journal, 10(2), 427-446.

Nasution, H. S., Basri, H., Batubara, W. W., & Mukhlasin, A. (2025). Islamic education teachers strategies for character building through digital literacy based Islamic values in the Society 5.0 era. Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education, 6(1), 259-271.

Nikmatullah, C., Wahyudin, W., Tarihoran, N. A., & Fauzi, A. (2023). Digital pesantren: Revitalization of the Islamic education system in the disruptive era. Al-Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian, 1-14.

Nuraeni, E., & Khairudin, A. (2025). Smart Chatbot as a Learning Media for Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan Values Based on WhatsApp. International Journal of EduTech, 1(1), 11-23.

Rois, C., & Yazdani, G. (2026). Digital Schism: The Reconstruction of Religious Authority and the Emergence of Islamic Knowledge Elite in the AI Era. Surau Journal of Islamic Studies, 2(1), 96-118.

Sari, W. D. (2025). Transforming the Islamic Education Curriculum for the Society 5.0 Era: Integrating Technology, Ethics, and Pedagogy. Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan, 17(3), 5635-5643

Sugito, S. (2024). Hybrid Learning in Pesantren: Integrating Digital Pedagogy and Islamic Values to Enhance 21st-Century Competencies. Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education, 5(4), 749-764.

Suncaka, E. (2024). Bridging spirituality and technology: Ethical integration of artificial intelligence in pesantren education. Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education, 5(4), 735-748.

Thoriquttyas, T., & Rohmawati, N. (2024). How Far Artificial Intelligence influenced Mu'allim, Murabbi, and Mudarris? Transhumanism and Diffusion of Innovation Theory's Perspective. Suhuf: International Journal of Islamic Studies, 36(2).

Ubaedullah, D., & Suryono, F. (2025). Technology in Islamic education curriculum: Challenges and opportunities. Jurnal Al Burhan, 5(2), 369-391.

Wahid, S. H., & Abdulloh, S. (2026). Digital Islamic authority: a revolutionary shift or mere hype? a systematic review. SN Social Sciences, 6(2), 62.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License

Warisno, A., Anshori, A., Hidayah, N., & Dwianto, A. (2025). Transformative Islamic education management in madrasah and pesantren integrating tradition and digital innovation. Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change, 276-289.

Webster, N. A., & Zhang, Q. (2025). Strategic silences for normative work: Inclusions and exclusions of migrant labour in policy foregrounding of the Swedish gig economy. Geoforum, 158, 104157.

Wijaya, I. S., Ridho, M., Hidayati, D. L., & Mahdi, M. (2023). Utilization of Digital Technology in Islamic Boarding Schools: A Case Study in Samarinda. Lentera: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah Dan Komunikasi, 7(2), 145-157.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License