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## A HYBRID ISLAMIC PEDAGOGY MODEL FOR GENERATION ALPHA CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Received: 28<sup>th</sup> September 2025; Revised: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025; Accepted: 28<sup>th</sup> December 2025

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### Abstract

Digital culture has influenced how students learn, interact, and form moral references, creating new challenges for character education in Islamic boarding schools. This study examines character education for Generation Alpha at Al-Raisiyah Islamic Boarding School, Sekarbela, Mataram, and formulates a digital-adaptive model grounded in pesantren traditions and Sasak local values. The research used a qualitative approach with an interpretivist paradigm and an intrinsic case study design. Data were collected from January to April 2025 through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation studies. Participants included 14 Generation Alpha students, 6 kyai/ustadz, and 4 pesantren managers selected purposively. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. The findings indicate that digital culture affects students' concentration, learning patterns, and moral references. Al-Raisiyah responds through daily habituation, relational exemplarity of kyai and ustadz, communal supervision, Sasak cultural values, selective guidance in digital media use, and digital ethical literacy. The study proposes a hybrid Islamic pedagogy model that combines religious discipline, local wisdom, moral authority, and responsible digital engagement in pesantren education.

**Keywords:** character education, generation alpha, pesantren, hybrid Islamic pedagogy, digital ethical literacy

### Abstrak

*Budaya digital telah memengaruhi cara siswa belajar, berinteraksi, dan membentuk rujukan moral, sehingga menghadirkan tantangan baru bagi pendidikan karakter di pesantren. Penelitian ini mengkaji pendidikan karakter Generasi Alpha di Pesantren Al-Raisiyah, Sekarbela, Mataram, dan merumuskan model adaptif berbasis tradisi pesantren serta nilai lokal Sasak. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan paradigma interpretatif dan desain studi kasus intrinsik. Data dikumpulkan pada Januari–April 2025 melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan studi dokumentasi. Partisipan terdiri atas 14 siswa Generasi Alpha, 6 kyai/ustadz, dan 4 pengelola pesantren yang dipilih secara purposif. Analisis data mengikuti model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña melalui kondensasi data, penyajian data, penarikan kesimpulan, dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya digital memengaruhi konsentrasi, pola belajar, dan rujukan moral siswa. Al-Raisiyah meresponsnya melalui pembiasaan sehari-hari, keteladanan relasional kyai dan ustadz, pengawasan komunal, nilai budaya Sasak, bimbingan selektif penggunaan media digital, dan literasi etika digital. Penelitian ini menawarkan model pendidikan karakter berbasis pesantren yang menghubungkan disiplin keagamaan, kearifan lokal, otoritas moral, dan keterlibatan digital yang bertanggung jawab. Temuan ini memberi kontribusi praktis bagi penguatan pendidikan karakter pesantren di era digital secara berkelanjutan.*

**Kata kunci:** pendidikan karakter, generasi alpha, pesantren, hybrid Islamic pedagogy, literasi etika digital

**How to Cite:** Murdianto, Yorman, & Che Mat, A. (2025). A Hybrid Islamic Pedagogy Model for Generation Alpha Character Education in the Digital Era. *TARBIYA: Journal of Education in Muslim Society*, 12(2), 193-212. doi:10.15408/tjems.v12i2.51267.

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## Introduction

Islamic boarding school education has historically functioned not only as a space for the transmission of religious knowledge, but also as an institution for the formation of morality, spirituality, and social identity among students. The orientation of pesantren education based on *tafaqquh fi al-din* places the mastery of religious knowledge as inseparable from the cultivation of *akhlaq al-karimah* rooted in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the scholarly traditions of Islamic learning (Jurumiah et al., 2025; Wahidin & Mahmudi, 2024; Mujahid, 2021). In practice, pesantren develop a holistic educational system that integrates cognitive, affective, spiritual, and social dimensions through religious learning, collective habituation, disciplinary culture, and everyday communal life (Najiyah & Prasetia, 2023; Supa'at & Muslim, 2023; Supriyanto et al., 2022). Through this system, pesantren have long been recognised as institutions capable of nurturing moral resilience, religious commitment, and communal solidarity among students (Barhia et al., 2025; Yorman et al., 2025).

Character education in pesantren has distinctive features because it is holistic, culture-based, and relational (Warosah & Savitri, 2023). Moral formation is not carried out only through classroom instruction, but also through the internalisation of values embedded in daily religious practices, collective discipline, kyai exemplarity, communal supervision, and interpersonal interaction between teachers and students (Anwar et al., 2023; Syafaat et al., 2024). Students learn morality not only by listening to religious instruction, but also by repeatedly participating in worship, discipline, social responsibility, and respectful relations with teachers and peers. Habituation practices such as congregational prayer, kitab recitation, obedience to rules, social manners, and mutual responsibility become mechanisms for cultivating moral awareness and social ethics. In many pesantren communities, moral authority is traditionally centred on kyai and ustadz as respected religious figures whose behaviour, speech, and social conduct function as the primary reference for students' moral formation (Musadad et al., 2025).

The rapid transformation of digital culture has reshaped the social and educational landscape faced by pesantren. The emergence of Generation Alpha, a generation growing up within highly connected digital ecosystems, marks a shift in learning behaviour, communication patterns, identity construction, and moral orientation (McCrindle & Fell, 2022; Nurpratiwi et al., 2024). This study understands Generation Alpha not as a uniform category, but as students whose learning and social experiences are increasingly shaped by visual media, instant access to information, algorithmic platforms, and networked communication. Digital technology opens opportunities for pedagogical innovation, flexible learning, and broader access to information. At the same time, unregulated and excessive exposure to digital media may create risks for attention, interpersonal interaction, self-control, online conduct, and moral judgement (Livingstone & Stoilova, 2021; Odgers & Jensen, 2020; Rosa, 2023; Twenge & Campbell, 2023).

These changes create new challenges for Islamic education institutions, particularly pesantren, whose educational traditions are grounded in direct interpersonal relationships, collective discipline, moral habituation, and communitarian religiosity. Students today do not receive moral references exclusively from kyai and ustadz, but also from social media influencers, digital content creators, online religious figures, and algorithm-driven virtual communities. Moral formation increasingly takes place in two social spaces: the collective moral environment of the pesantren and

the virtual moral ecosystem shaped by digital media. This condition does not simply weaken pesantren authority; it creates a new field of negotiation in which pesantren must guide students to distinguish between religiously grounded moral references and rapidly circulating digital influences. Thus, the challenge of pesantren education is not only technological, but also ethical, relational, and cultural (Livingstone & Stoilova, 2021; Hefner, 2022).

Pesantren are therefore confronted with a complex pedagogical dilemma. On one side, they are expected to preserve Islamic values such as discipline, simplicity, respect, patience, humility, and communal ethics as the foundation of character education. On the other side, they must respond to the realities of Generation Alpha, who are familiar with fast-paced, visual, interactive, and instant digital culture. The main issue is not whether pesantren should accept or reject digital culture, but how they can preserve moral authority while preparing students to live ethically in digital environments. Contemporary Islamic education needs to move beyond a purely restrictive response to technology and develop character education strategies that combine moral habituation, ethical reflection, digital literacy, and responsible media use (Büyükbaykal, 2023; UNESCO, 2023).

Previous studies have extensively discussed character education in pesantren from the perspectives of moral value internalisation, habituation, religious discipline, and Islamic identity formation (Mujahid, 2021; Nashuddin, 2020; Tohri et al., 2021). Existing research generally highlights the effectiveness of pesantren culture in cultivating moral behaviour, collective discipline, and religious character through communal living systems and traditional Islamic learning practices (Arthur et al., 2022; Berkowitz & Bier, 2021). Other studies have examined the transformation of Islamic education in the digital era, yet most of them focus primarily on technological integration, digital learning media, online instruction, and educational innovation (Parhanuddin et al., 2023; Sugito, 2024; Wahyudi & Lestari, 2023). These studies are important, but they have not sufficiently explained how pesantren reconstruct moral authority, regulate students' digital behaviour, and negotiate Islamic values within virtual social spaces.

Studies concerning Generation Alpha also tend to be situated within general school or urban educational settings, focusing on digital learning behaviour, technology dependency, and media consumption patterns (Fitri et al., 2025). Research specifically examining Generation Alpha within pesantren environments, particularly those embedded in local cultural traditions such as Sasak society, remains limited. Existing studies rarely explain how pesantren negotiate traditional Islamic values with virtual culture or how local wisdom contributes to digital-age character education. This gap is significant because pesantren-based character education cannot be understood only through formal curriculum or digital learning tools. It must also be read through everyday religious practice, communal supervision, kyai–student relations, and local cultural ethics. For this reason, further investigation is needed to explain how pesantren-based character education adapts to digital transformation while maintaining religious identity, local cultural values, and moral authority.

Hybrid Islamic pedagogy in this study refers to an adaptive educational approach that integrates pesantren habituation, relational exemplarity of kyai and ustadz, communitarian social control, Sasak local wisdom, and ethical engagement with digital culture. Digital ethical literacy refers not merely to technical digital competence, but to students' ability to practise Islamic *adab*, *tabayyun*, self-control, responsibility, and moral accountability in online spaces. In the Sasak

pesantren tradition, local values such as *tindih* or respect, *maliq* or moral restraint, and *saling tulung* or mutual help can strengthen Islamic character education by connecting religious norms with everyday social ethics (Nashuddin, 2020; Tohri et al., 2021).

This study addresses the gap by formulating a digital-adaptive character education model for Generation Alpha in pesantren education. The novelty of this research lies in its effort to integrate four important dimensions simultaneously: pesantren habituation practices, relational moral authority of kyai and ustadz, Sasak local wisdom, and Islamic digital ethical literacy. Rather than viewing digital culture solely as a threat to Islamic education, this study positions pesantren as institutions capable of negotiating, adapting, and reconstructing moral pedagogy in response to contemporary digital realities (Hefner, 2022; Mujahid, 2021). Through this approach, the study proposes a hybrid Islamic pedagogy model that integrates collective moral regulation, interpersonal exemplarity, communitarian social control, contextual digital adaptation, and ethical literacy within a socio-religious educational ecosystem.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of socio-digital religious pedagogy in contemporary Islamic education by expanding discussions on character education beyond normative moral transmission toward adaptive moral formation in digital society (Babys & Pramana, 2025; Firmansyah & Rahman, 2025). Practically, this study offers a character education framework for Islamic boarding schools facing the challenges of Generation Alpha and digital transformation without abandoning Islamic values and local cultural identity.

This study focuses on three main objectives. First, it analyses the influence of digital culture on the character formation of Generation Alpha students in pesantren education. Second, it identifies character education practices implemented by pesantren in responding to digital culture. Third, it formulates a digital-adaptive character education model for Generation Alpha students in Islamic boarding schools.

## Method

This study used a qualitative approach with an interpretivist paradigm to examine character education practices for Generation Alpha at Al-Raisiyah Islamic Boarding School, Sekarbela, Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. An intrinsic case study design was chosen because the research focused on one pesantren with distinctive educational, religious, cultural, and digital characteristics (Creswell & Poth, 2021; Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2022; Yin, 2021). The case was selected purposively because Al-Raisiyah maintains traditional pesantren practices such as *halaqah*, kitab recitation, collective habituation, dormitory discipline, and kyai-centred moral guidance, while also facing the growing presence of digital media among Generation Alpha students. The pesantren is also situated within Sasak society, where communal values, respect for religious authority, and social harmony remain important in daily life.

The participants consisted of 24 informants selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in character education practices. They included 14 Generation Alpha students aged 11–15 years, 6 kyai and ustadz with 5–20 years of teaching and mentoring experience, and 4 pesantren managers responsible for curriculum implementation, student

supervision, and institutional management. Participant selection continued until the data showed repeated patterns and no substantially new themes emerged. See table 1.

Table 1. Research Participants

Participant Group	Number	Main Characteristics	Role in the Study
Generation Alpha students	14	Aged 11–15 years; elementary and junior secondary levels	Provided information on daily routines, learning experiences, digital habits, peer interaction, and moral guidance in pesantren life
Kyai and ustadz	6	Teaching and mentoring experience of 5–20 years	Explained religious instruction, moral authority, character habituation, digital supervision, and pedagogical adaptation
Pesantren managers	4	Responsible for curriculum, student supervision, and institutional management	Provided information on pesantren policy, disciplinary regulations, digital device rules, and character education programmes

Data were collected from January to April 2025 through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were conducted three to four times each week and focused on students’ religious routines, kitab learning, dormitory activities, discipline enforcement, teacher–student interaction, peer supervision, and patterns of digital media use. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants to explore students’ digital habits, learning experiences, moral guidance, kyai and ustadz authority, gadget supervision, and institutional strategies for character education. Documentation studies involved pesantren regulations, student disciplinary guidelines, daily schedules, learning materials, institutional profiles, digital device rules, activity photographs, and character education programme documents.

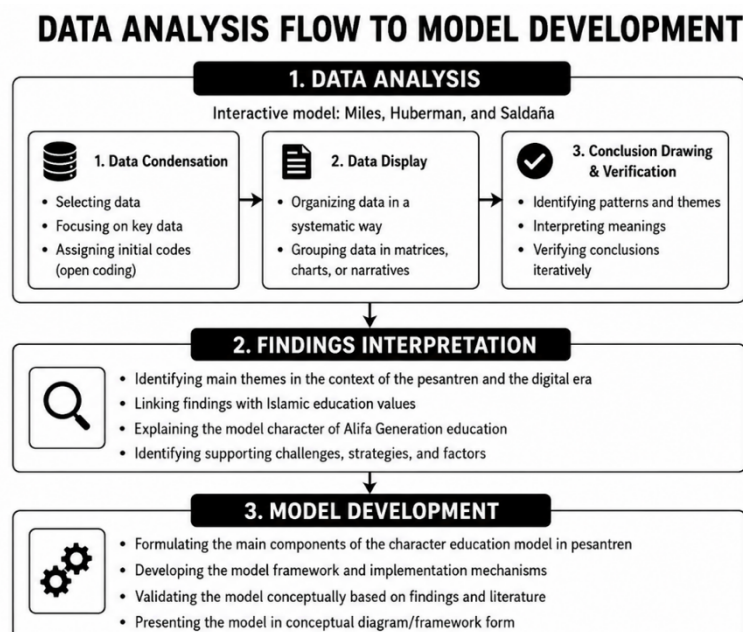


Figure 1. Stages of Data Analysis to Model Development

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. The analysis began with repeated reading of interview transcripts, observation notes, and institutional documents. Open

coding was used to identify meaningful units related to digital habits, collective discipline, moral authority, religious habituation, Sasak local values, gadget supervision, and digital ethics. These codes were grouped into broader categories, including collective moral regulation, relational moral authority, negotiation with virtual culture, digital adaptation, and Islamic digital ethical literacy. The categories were then developed into themes that formed the basis of the proposed hybrid Islamic pedagogy model. The stages of analysis are presented in Figure 1.

Research trustworthiness was strengthened through source triangulation, technique triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and reflexive field notes. Data from students, kyai/ustadz, and pesantren managers were compared with observation notes and institutional documents to ensure consistency. Selected participants were also asked to confirm interview summaries and preliminary interpretations. The study followed ethical principles by ensuring informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity. Since several participants were minors, permission was obtained from the pesantren authority and students' guardians, while student assent was also requested. Pseudonyms were used in all interview quotations and research records.

## Results and Discussion

### Digital Culture and the Repositioning of Pesantren Character Education

Interviews, observations, and institutional documents indicate that digital culture has reshaped the learning habits, social interactions, and moral references of Generation Alpha students at Al-Raisiyah Islamic Boarding School. Students involved in this study were familiar with visual media, instant information, online entertainment, and virtual communication. This familiarity affected their engagement with kitab learning, collective discipline, and the internalisation of Islamic values. Several teachers observed that students responded more quickly to visual and digital information but often found it difficult to maintain attention during long kitab recitation sessions. This pattern is in line with studies showing that Generation Alpha grows within hyperconnected learning environments characterised by visual media, fast information flow, and technology-mediated interaction (İlhan & Çetin, 2024; Karakose et al., 2022; Büyükbaykal, 2023; Salsabila et al., 2023).

One kyai explained: "Students today grasp visual and digital information quickly, but they often struggle to sustain concentration during lengthy kitab recitation sessions." (Interview with kyai, February 2025)

These findings suggest that digital technology does not merely change learning media; it also influences students' attention patterns, learning rhythms, and relationships with religious authority. While pesantren continue to position kyai and ustadz as central moral figures, students are also exposed to alternative references from social media influencers, online preachers, digital content creators, gaming streamers, and algorithm-driven virtual communities. As a result, moral formation no longer occurs solely within the communal environment of the pesantren but is increasingly shaped by digital spaces that influence students' language, preferences, and behaviour. This confirms the argument that digital media has become a social environment where young people construct identity, negotiate relationships, and encounter moral references beyond formal

educational institutions (Livingstone & Stoilova, 2021; Vanden Abeele, 2021; Shah & Barkhuus, 2023).

This situation creates a dual moral space. The first is the pesantren environment, shaped by collective worship, dormitory discipline, teacher–student relations, and religious habituation. The second is the virtual environment, shaped by entertainment platforms, social media trends, online peer interaction, and digital personalities. From this perspective, the challenge of pesantren character education is not only to transmit Islamic values but also to help students navigate competing moral influences in everyday life. Intensive digital interaction has been associated with changes in attention regulation, interpersonal relations, emotional control, and identity formation among young people (Brailovskaia et al., 2023; Odgers & Jensen, 2020; Rosa, 2023; Twenge & Campbell, 2023). These studies help explain why pesantren responses must address not only technology use but also moral guidance and social formation.

The findings also show that Al-Raisiyah does not respond to digital culture through outright rejection. Instead, the pesantren adopts a negotiated approach by maintaining religious discipline while introducing selective guidance on digital behaviour. This finding positions pesantren not as passive traditional institutions but as educational communities capable of reconstructing moral pedagogy through the integration of Islamic values, local culture, and digital ethical awareness. Although some studies describe digital culture as a source of moral degradation and religious authority disruption in Muslim youth education, the present findings show that pesantren can also function as adaptive moral communities when they combine discipline, guidance, and ethical literacy (Hefner, 2022; Sari & Arifin, 2023; Abi-Jaoude et al., 2021; Babys & Pramana, 2025). Character education in the digital era can therefore be understood as a process of moral negotiation rather than a one-way transmission of values.

### Habituation, Sasak Local Wisdom, and Collective Moral Regulation

Character education at Al-Raisiyah is strongly rooted in habituation. Daily routines such as congregational prayer, kitab recitation, communal cleaning, dormitory discipline, respect for teachers, and mutual care form the moral structure of pesantren life. These practices function not only as disciplinary routines but also as mechanisms of collective moral regulation through which students learn responsibility, self-restraint, respect, and social awareness. This finding is consistent with studies that describe pesantren character education as a process of value internalisation through repeated practice, communal discipline, and relational ethics (Mujahid, 2021; Nashuddin, 2020; Warosah & Savitri, 2023; Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2023). It also resonates with broader character education literature which emphasises habituation, moral practice, and community-based discipline as important foundations for virtue formation (Arthur et al., 2022; Berkowitz & Bier, 2021; Lovat et al., 2022).

At Al-Raisiyah, habituation is also connected with Sasak local values. Observations, interviews, and institutional documents indicate that values such as *tindih* (respect), *maliq* (moral restraint), and *saling tulung* (mutual help) are embedded in students' everyday interactions. Students are expected to speak politely to kyai, ustadz, senior students, and guests. They are also encouraged to demonstrate modest behaviour, avoid interrupting religious discussions, maintain cleanliness, and

participate in communal responsibilities. This supports previous studies showing that Sasak local wisdom contributes to character education through respect for elders, communal responsibility, moral restraint, and social harmony (Nashuddin, 2020; Tohri et al., 2021; Parhanuddin et al., 2023).

One ustadz stated: “In Sasak culture, students are taught not only to obey rules but also to maintain *tindih*, which means respecting elders, teachers, and other people sincerely. This value is very important in pesantren life.” (Interview with ustadz, March 2025)

A pesantren manager added: “Students who speak impolitely or ignore communal responsibilities are usually reminded because good character in Sasak society is closely related to respect, humility, and social harmony.” (Interview with pesantren manager, April 2025)

The value of *maliq* emerged as an internal form of moral control. Students were reminded to feel ashamed when neglecting worship, arriving late to congregational prayer, ignoring cleaning duties, or behaving disrespectfully toward teachers and peers. Rather than humiliating students, this form of shame was intended to cultivate moral sensitivity and social responsibility. In this sense, *maliq* works as a cultural mechanism of self-regulation that strengthens Islamic teachings on discipline, humility, and accountability (Tohri et al., 2021; Syafaat et al., 2024).

One student explained: “If we ignore communal work or skip prayer, the ustadz remind us that we should feel *maliq* because our behaviour affects other people and the pesantren environment.” (Interview with student, March 2025)

Meanwhile, *saling tulung* was visible in dormitory life. Students cleaned rooms together, prepared communal activities, helped younger students adapt to pesantren discipline, and reminded one another to attend worship and study routines. Senior students also played a role in supervising younger students. These observations indicate that moral education is carried not only by formal teachers but also by peer relationships and the social structure of the dormitory. Such communal supervision reinforces the argument that pesantren character education is built through collective responsibility and everyday social practice (Arthur et al., 2022; Berkowitz & Bier, 2021; Najiyah & Prasetya, 2023). From the perspective of social norms, repeated communal practices can become shared expectations that regulate behaviour and sustain collective discipline (Bicchieri, 2021).

One caretaker explained: “Students are taught that living in pesantren means learning to care for others, not only thinking about themselves. Helping friends, maintaining cleanliness, and reminding each other are part of both Islamic teaching and Sasak tradition.” (Interview with caretaker, February 2025)

Institutional documents further support these findings. Dormitory regulations and student disciplinary guidelines emphasised obedience to religious leaders, discipline in worship, politeness in communication, environmental cleanliness, and collective harmony. These rules were framed not merely as institutional obligations but as part of maintaining *akhlaq*, social respect, and communal dignity. The integration of Islamic teachings and Sasak communal ethics creates a socio-religious moral ecosystem in which students learn ethical behaviour through formal instruction,

daily practice, cultural interaction, and collective social control. This finding strengthens the view that pesantren culture integrates religious morality, communal discipline, and local socio-cultural ethics in everyday educational practice (Mujahid, 2021; Nashuddin, 2020; Najiyah & Prasetia, 2023).

These local values were also mobilised to address digital challenges. Kyai and ustadz frequently connected Sasak ethics with students' online behaviour. Students were reminded that insulting others online violated both Islamic *akhlak* and the Sasak principle of *tindih*. Excessive smartphone use was also criticised because it weakened communal participation, mutual care, and face-to-face interaction. This connection between local wisdom and online conduct is important because digital culture may reduce direct interpersonal engagement and intensify individualised patterns of social interaction (Vanden Abeele, 2021; Rosa, 2023; Twenge & Campbell, 2023).

One kyai stated during a religious lecture: "Digital technology should not remove our manners. In Sasak culture and Islam, respecting people is important both in direct interaction and on social media." (Observation note, March 2025)

Another ustadz explained: "Students today often become too focused on phones and online entertainment. Therefore, communal activities in pesantren are important to rebuild togetherness, discipline, and direct social interaction." (Interview with ustadz, April 2025)

These findings indicate that Sasak local wisdom is not merely a cultural complement to pesantren education. Rather, it functions as part of the moral mechanism through which Islamic values are practised, supervised, and adapted to digital challenges. Collective routines such as congregational prayer, dormitory cleaning, communal meals, and face-to-face discussions serve as counterbalances to excessive digital dependence while strengthening interpersonal attachment, moral awareness, and social cohesion among students. This confirms that local culture can become a practical bridge between Islamic character education and the ethical challenges of digital society (Tohri et al., 2021; Livingstone & Stoilova, 2021; Parhanuddin et al., 2023).

### Relational Exemplarity and the Contestation of Moral Authority

Moral authority at Al-Raisiyah is maintained through relational exemplarity. Kyai and ustadz do not only teach values verbally; they demonstrate discipline, simplicity, politeness, emotional restraint, and social responsibility in daily life. Observations showed that teachers joined congregational prayers, supervised dormitory routines, participated in communal activities, and guided students experiencing disciplinary or emotional difficulties. This everyday presence strengthens moral authority because students perceive teachers as living examples rather than merely rule enforcers. Such relational guidance is consistent with moral education theories that emphasise modelling, care, trust, and interpersonal relations in character formation (Noddings, 2013; Arthur et al., 2022; Berkowitz & Bier, 2021).

One student explained: "I respect the ustadz because they do not only teach us, but also show us how to behave. They pray with us, clean together with students, and speak politely even when students make mistakes." (Interview with student, March 2025)

Another student stated: “The kyai often remind us that social media must be used carefully because what we post reflects our *akhlaq*.” (Interview with student, April 2025)

These accounts suggest that relational closeness remains important in pesantren character education. For students, moral authority becomes stronger when religious figures are consistently present in daily routines and demonstrate alignment between speech and behaviour. This finding supports the view that character education requires not only normative instruction but also modelling, care, and repeated moral practice. In pesantren, the authority of kyai and ustadz is sustained through everyday exemplarity, religious knowledge, and social proximity with students (Musadad et al., 2025; Warosah & Savitri, 2023; Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2023).

At the same time, interviews revealed that moral authority is increasingly challenged by digital culture. Students admitted following social media influencers, YouTube preachers, TikTok creators, gaming streamers, and online celebrities. Several students also adopted online slang, communication styles, and entertainment habits obtained from digital platforms. Digital figures appear attractive because they are accessible, entertaining, repetitive, and closely connected to students’ everyday interests. This situation reflects a broader transformation in which moral references are increasingly shaped by digital communities, platform visibility, and algorithmic circulation (Livingstone & Stoilova, 2021; Boyd, 2022; Shah & Barkhuus, 2023).

One ustadz explained: “Students today do not only follow kyai or teachers. Sometimes they imitate influencers more quickly because online content is entertaining and constantly accessible.” (Interview with ustadz, February 2025)

A pesantren manager added: “The challenge today is not only maintaining discipline but also competing with the attraction of digital culture that shapes students’ attention and moral perspectives every day.” (Interview with pesantren manager, March 2025)

Observations also indicated tensions between pesantren regulations and students’ digital habits. Some students secretly accessed smartphones at night for social media and online games despite dormitory restrictions. Teachers acknowledged that many students entered the pesantren with strong emotional attachments to digital media. These findings suggest that strict regulation alone is insufficient. Pesantren require forms of moral guidance that help students understand why digital self-control matters for worship, learning, social relations, and personal discipline. This aligns with studies showing that digital media use among young people cannot be addressed only through restriction, but also requires guidance, self-regulation, and ethical awareness (Odgers & Jensen, 2020; Vanden Abeele, 2021; Twenge & Campbell, 2023).

Thus, the reconstruction of moral authority at Al-Raisiyah depends on two related strategies. First, kyai and ustadz maintain moral legitimacy through relational exemplarity and consistent presence in students’ daily lives. Second, pesantren extend moral guidance into digital issues, including online manners, information verification, digital entertainment, and responsible media use. Moral authority is therefore reconstructed not by isolating students from digital culture but by accompanying them in developing ethical judgement within it. This strengthens the argument that Islamic education in the digital era needs to preserve religious authority while adapting its

pedagogical language to students' changing social realities (Hefner, 2022; Sugito, 2024; Wahyudi & Lestari, 2023).

### Negotiating Traditional Values and Digital Ethical Literacy

The findings indicate that Al-Raisiyah continuously negotiates traditional pesantren values with the digital habits of Generation Alpha students. Pesantren education traditionally emphasises simplicity, discipline, collective responsibility, direct interpersonal interaction, obedience to religious authority, and reflective religious learning (Mujahid, 2021; Supa'at & Muslim, 2023; Supriyanto et al., 2022). Digital culture, by contrast, often encourages instant communication, rapid content consumption, online self-expression, entertainment-driven attention, and continuous virtual connectivity. This tension becomes visible in students' adaptation to gadget restrictions, dormitory discipline, and face-to-face religious learning. The tension also reflects wider debates on the relationship between digital acceleration, attention crisis, and social alienation in contemporary society (Rosa, 2023; Brailovskaia et al., 2023; Twenge & Campbell, 2023).

Several students admitted that before entering the pesantren they spent substantial time using TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, online games, and messaging applications. Some initially experienced boredom, anxiety, or distraction when separated from regular digital access.

One student explained: "At home I often used social media until late at night. When I entered the pesantren, it was difficult because there were strict rules about gadgets and internet access." (Interview with student, February 2025).

Another student stated: "Sometimes I still want to check online content because I am used to following trends and chatting with friends on social media." (Interview with student, March 2025).

Pesantren managers recognised that gadget regulation had become one of the most challenging aspects of student supervision. They also acknowledged that the issue could not be addressed solely through prohibition because digital media had already become part of students' everyday lives before entering the boarding school.

One pesantren manager explained: "Today students grow up with smartphones from childhood. Therefore, the challenge is not simply prohibiting gadgets, but teaching students how to use digital media ethically and responsibly." (Interview with pesantren manager, March 2025).

For this reason, Al-Raisiyah developed digital ethical literacy as part of its character education strategy. In this study, digital ethical literacy refers to students' ability to use digital media responsibly according to Islamic values, moral self-control, social respect, and accountability. Based on interviews, observations, and institutional documents, digital ethical literacy at Al-Raisiyah consists of six main indicators: digital *adab*, *tabayyun*, self-control in digital consumption, ethical media behaviour, awareness of digital footprints, and maintenance of religious identity online. This approach is consistent with digital literacy studies that understand children's online development

as involving not only technical competence, but also moral, social, and wellbeing dimensions (Livingstone & Stoilova, 2021; Vanden Abeele, 2021).

The first indicator is digital *adab*. Kyai and ustadz reminded students to avoid insulting language, hate speech, mockery, and disrespectful comments on social media. Online communication was treated as part of one's *akhlaq*, not as a morally separate space.

One ustadz stated: "Students are reminded that social media communication must follow Islamic *adab*. Speaking harshly online is still morally wrong even if it happens in virtual spaces." (Interview with ustadz, April 2025).

The second indicator is *tabayyun*, namely verifying information before believing or sharing it. Teachers discussed misinformation, religious hoaxes, provocative content, and misleading online religious messages during learning sessions. Students were encouraged to consult teachers or trusted sources before spreading information. This finding shows how Islamic epistemological values can be translated into digital literacy practices, especially in responding to misinformation and online religious content (Hefner, 2022; Firmansyah & Rahman, 2025).

One kyai explained during a religious lecture: "Not all information on social media is true. Students must practise *tabayyun* and verify information before sharing it because spreading false information is against Islamic ethics." (Observation note, March 2025).

The third indicator is self-control in digital consumption. The pesantren regulated smartphone access during learning sessions, congregational worship, and evening study hours. Students who violated these rules received educational sanctions and moral guidance. The purpose of regulation was not merely to control behaviour, but to train discipline and self-restraint. This practice is relevant to studies on digital media dependency and attention regulation among young users (Brailovskaia et al., 2023; Odgers & Jensen, 2020; Rohani et al., 2025).

One student stated: "The ustadz remind us not to become addicted to phones because too much social media can make us lazy and neglect our studies and prayers." (Interview with student, April 2025).

The fourth indicator is ethical media behaviour. Dormitory regulations prohibited access to pornography, gambling-related games, violent content, cyberbullying, and misuse of social media. Teachers also used examples of online conflict, cyberbullying, and irresponsible posting as material for moral reflection. This shows that pesantren supervision is directed not only at offline discipline, but also at the moral risks of digital media consumption (Sari & Arifin, 2023; Shah & Barkhuus, 2023).

One caretaker explained: "Students are supervised not only in worship but also in media behaviour because digital content can influence morals, emotions, and social interaction." (Interview with caretaker, March 2025).

The fifth indicator is awareness of digital footprints and moral consequences. Kyai and ustadz repeatedly reminded students that online actions have ethical, social, and religious implications. Uploaded photos, comments, and messages were described as part of moral accountability before

society and God. This emphasis on accountability expands pesantren character education from direct interpersonal behaviour to digitally mediated conduct (Livingstone & Stoilova, 2021; Firmansyah & Rahman, 2025).

One student explained: “The kyai told us that what we post online can affect ourselves and other people, so we must think carefully before uploading or commenting.” (Interview with student, April 2025).

The sixth indicator is religious identity in digital spaces. Students were encouraged to use digital media for learning, Qur’anic recitation, religious knowledge, and positive communication rather than excessive entertainment. Several teachers recommended Islamic educational content and Qur’anic applications as alternatives to entertainment-based media consumption. This selective use of educational media aligns with studies on digital pedagogy in Islamic education, which stress that technology should support religious learning rather than replace moral formation (Sugito, 2024; Wahyudi & Lestari, 2023; Salsabila et al., 2023).

Digital ethical literacy at Al-Raisiyah was not taught as a separate subject. It was inserted into sermons, kitab learning, dormitory supervision, communal discussions, and informal mentoring. This integration made digital ethics part of pesantren life rather than an isolated lesson. Sasak values also strengthened this process. *Tindh* was used to teach respectful online communication, *malig* to cultivate moral restraint, and *saling tulung* to maintain care and responsibility in both physical and digital interaction. Through this approach, Al-Raisiyah negotiated digital culture without abandoning pesantren discipline, Islamic morality, and local cultural ethics. The integration of Islamic values, local wisdom, and digital ethical literacy confirms that character education in pesantren can adapt to digital society while preserving its socio-religious foundation (Nashuddin, 2020; Tohri et al., 2021; Mujahid, 2021; Hefner, 2022).

### Hybrid Islamic Pedagogy and the Digital-Adaptive Character Education Model

The findings above show that Al-Raisiyah has developed a hybrid Islamic pedagogy through the integration of pesantren traditions, relational moral authority, Sasak local wisdom, and digital ethical literacy. This model does not separate traditional religious education from digital adaptation. Instead, it connects collective habituation, teacher exemplarity, communal supervision, selective technology use, and ethical guidance into one character education framework. The model builds on the pesantren tradition of moral habituation while responding to the digital realities of Generation Alpha (Mujahid, 2021; Supa’at & Muslim, 2023; Sugito, 2024).

Digital adaptation at Al-Raisiyah was selective. Institutional documents showed that smartphone use was regulated through scheduled access, restrictions during worship and learning sessions, and supervision of inappropriate content. At the same time, teachers recognised that technology could not be removed entirely from students’ lives. Several teachers used Qur’anic applications, Islamic educational videos, and online religious references in learning activities. They also discussed viral issues, misinformation, cyberbullying, and online communication ethics during religious learning. Digital media were therefore accepted only when they supported learning, religious understanding, and ethical formation. This confirms that technological integration in

Islamic education should be guided by pedagogical purpose, moral supervision, and contextual relevance (Parhanuddin et al., 2023; Sugito, 2024; Wahyudi & Lestari, 2023).

One pesantren manager stated: “Technology is part of students’ lives today. The important thing is not only restriction but guidance regarding how technology should be used ethically.” (Interview with pesantren manager, March 2025)

One kyai also stated during a religious lecture: “Social media is not free from moral responsibility. What students write online is still part of their *akhlak* before Allah and society.” (Observation note, April 2025)

Based on observation, interviews, and documents, the operational components of the hybrid Islamic pedagogy model are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Operational Components of Hybrid Islamic Pedagogy in Pesantren Character Education

Components	Empirical Practices in Pesantren	Functions in Character Formation	Expected Outcomes
<b>Collective Habituation</b>	Congregational prayers, Qur’anic recitation, kitab learning, communal cleaning, dormitory discipline	Builds repetitive moral practice, self-control, discipline, and communal responsibility	Moral discipline, emotional regulation, collective awareness
<b>Relational Exemplarity</b>	Kyai and ustadz participate in worship, mentoring, dormitory supervision, and communal interaction	Strengthens moral authority through emotional closeness and ethical modelling	Respect for authority, interpersonal ethics, moral trust
<b>Communal Supervision</b>	Peer monitoring, senior student supervision, collective reminders, educational sanctions	Regulates behaviour through collective moral control and social responsibility	Behavioural consistency, communal solidarity, accountability
<b>Sasak-Based Moral Values</b>	Practising <i>tindih</i> , <i>maliq</i> , and <i>saling tulung</i> in daily interaction	Connects Islamic morality with local communal ethics	Respect, moral restraint, mutual care, social harmony
<b>Contextual Digital Guidance</b>	Gadget regulations, discussions on social media ethics, supervision of online behaviour	Guides students to balance digital use with Islamic morality	Critical digital awareness, responsible technology use
<b>Selective Educational Media Use</b>	Use of Qur’anic applications, Islamic videos, and online religious references	Integrates technology selectively for educational and religious purposes	Positive digital engagement, contextual religious learning
<b>Digital Ethical Literacy</b>	Teaching digital <i>adab</i> , <i>tabayyun</i> , anti-cyberbullying ethics, and awareness of digital footprints	Develops ethical responsibility in virtual interaction	Ethical online behaviour, Islamic digital identity

The model operates through four interconnected dimensions: input, process, output, and evaluation. The input dimension includes Generation Alpha students, exposure to digital culture, pesantren traditions, Islamic values, Sasak local wisdom, and family-social background. The process dimension consists of collective habituation, relational exemplarity by kyai and ustadz, communal supervision, Sasak-based moral reinforcement, contextual digital guidance, selective media use, and digital ethical literacy integrated into daily pesantren life.

The core elements developed through these processes include moral habituation, relational moral authority, collective moral regulation, socio-religious adaptation, and ethical awareness in

digital spaces. The expected outputs are moral resilience, Islamic identity formation, discipline, communal responsibility, interpersonal empathy, balanced digital behaviour, and digital ethical awareness among students. Evaluation is conducted continuously through observation of worship participation, discipline compliance, interpersonal manners, communal involvement, emotional self-control, responsible gadget use, and ethical online behaviour. This evaluation pattern shows that pesantren character assessment is embedded in everyday communal life rather than limited to formal academic indicators (Najiyah & Prasetia, 2023; Suyadi & Sutrisno, 2023; Syafaat et al., 2024).

This model shows that pesantren character education in the digital era cannot be reduced to either traditional moral discipline or technological integration. Its strength lies in the ability to combine both: preserving religious and communal values while guiding students to engage with digital culture ethically. At Al-Raisiyah, hybrid Islamic pedagogy is not an abstract concept, but a practice rooted in everyday pesantren life. It grows through worship, discipline, teacher exemplarity, local wisdom, communal supervision, and digital ethical guidance. In this way, pesantren remain relevant as moral communities for Generation Alpha while contributing to the development of socio-digital religious pedagogy in contemporary Islamic education (Hefner, 2022; Babys & Pramana, 2025; Firmansyah & Rahman, 2025).

## Conclusion

This study shows that character education for Generation Alpha at Al-Raisiyah Islamic Boarding School is shaped through the interaction between pesantren traditions, Sasak local values, and students' everyday encounter with digital culture. Digital media has influenced students' learning habits, attention patterns, social interaction, and moral references. Students continue to learn from kyai, ustadz, religious routines, and dormitory discipline, but they are also exposed to influencers, online preachers, entertainment platforms, and digital communities. This condition makes character education in pesantren more complex because moral formation no longer takes place only within the physical environment of the pesantren, but also through virtual spaces that shape students' language, interests, and behaviour.

The findings indicate that Al-Raisiyah responds to these challenges not by rejecting digital culture entirely, but by developing a selective and guided form of adaptation. Collective habituation, congregational worship, kitab learning, dormitory discipline, peer supervision, and relational exemplarity of kyai and ustadz remain central to character formation. At the same time, Sasak values such as *tindih*, *maliq*, and *saling tulung* strengthen the pesantren's moral culture by cultivating respect, moral restraint, mutual help, and communal responsibility. These values are also used to guide students' online behaviour, especially in relation to digital manners, self-control, and responsibility in social media use.

The hybrid Islamic pedagogy model formulated in this study integrates collective habituation, relational moral authority, communal supervision, Sasak-based moral values, contextual digital guidance, selective educational media use, and Islamic digital ethical literacy. This model shows that pesantren character education in the digital era is not limited to preserving traditional

discipline or introducing technology into learning. Its main strength lies in connecting religious practice, local wisdom, teacher exemplarity, and digital ethics within students' daily lives. Through this model, pesantren can remain a relevant moral community for Generation Alpha while helping students develop discipline, Islamic identity, social responsibility, interpersonal empathy, and ethical awareness in digital spaces.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the discussion of socio-digital religious pedagogy by showing how character education in pesantren can adapt to digital change without losing its religious and communal foundations. Practically, the findings suggest that Islamic boarding schools need to strengthen character education programmes that include digital *adab*, *tabayyun*, responsible gadget use, awareness of digital footprints, and ethical online communication. Since this study was conducted in one pesantren within the Sasak cultural setting, further research involving different pesantren and cultural backgrounds is needed to examine how far this model can be developed, compared, or adapted in other Islamic education settings.

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