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REDEFINING ISLAMIC PEDAGOGY: A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH TO 21ST-CENTURY EDUCATION IN INDONESIAN PESANTREN

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the implementation of transformative pedagogy in the context of pesantren education in the digital era, focusing on Al Mawaddah Entrepreneurial Islamic Boarding School in Kudus, Central Java. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews to fourteen informans with Kiai, Uztaz and Senior santri, participatory observation, and documentation. The discoveries appear this pesantren has successfully integrated Islamic values, entrepreneurial skills, and digital technology into the curriculum and daily learning practices. Strategies such as practice-based learning, integration of social media for da'wah and business, and 21st-century adaptive curriculum strengthen the relevance of *pesantren* education in facing global challenges. Despite facing challenges such as limited infrastructure and cultural resistance, pesantren shows excellent potential in shaping a contextualized and progressive model of Islamic education.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's Islamic education system has gone a long way in influencing the country's culture and spirituality (Al-Fairusy dkk., 2024; Junaidi dkk., 2024; Taufikin, 2021). The *pesantren* is one of the organizations that is crucial to this process because it has historically served as a hub for the transmission of Islamic sciences, character development, and the maintenance of classical scientific traditions. Based on the *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts) (Anshori & Pohl, 2022; Ayubi & Masruri, 2025; Marzuki dkk., 2020; Saleh, 2025; Zulfikar dkk., 2023). In response to the evolving times,





especially in the digital era and globalization, *pesantren* are faced with new challenges that require a more adaptive and visionary pedagogical response (Muzayanah dkk., 2025).

Several recent studies have shown that traditional educational institutions such as *pesantren* tend to experience gaps in technology integration and 21st-century skills-based learning approaches. For example, (Bashori dkk., 2024; Hefner, 2022; Saiin dkk., 2020; Taufikin, 2022) highlight how *pesantren* retain their authority as Islamic scientific institutions but face limitations in responding to the dynamics of the digital era. This is reinforced by (Humaidi dkk., 2024; Maulidati & Abbott, 2024), who indicate the dominance of the classical Islamic texts-based curriculum with little attention to digital competence, critical thinking, and creativity, which are the primary needs of today's generation. Therefore, the urgency to reformulate the pedagogical approach in *pesantren* becomes increasingly apparent.

The biggest challenge is how *pesantren* can change to meet the demands of the modern world without sacrificing its distinctive scientific identity. Indeed, several *pesantren* have attempted to modernize by adopting the national curriculum and incorporating technology equipment into their instruction (Hadi dkk., 2024; Mahsusi dkk., 2024; Mutammam dkk., 2024; Taufikin, 2018; Thoha & Hannan, 2022). However, many have not adopted a pedagogical approach that systematically and transformatively bridges between Islamic values and the demands of modernity. Therefore, pedagogical solutions that are technical and pragmatic but also philosophical and transformative are needed.

One approach that is considered relevant in this context is transformative pedagogy, which emphasizes changing mindsets, critical awareness, and empowering learners to become agents of social change. (Mezirow, 1991), as a pioneer of this theory, views learning as a deep and reflective process of perspective transformation. In the context of Islamic education, this approach can be adapted to develop teaching methods that focus on not only the transmission of knowledge but also character-building, critical reasoning, and contextual competence (Astuti, 2024; Masturin, 2024).

In particular, a number of studies have started looking at how important transformative pedagogy is to Islamic education. (Fauzi dkk., 2018; Haddade dkk., 2024; Salim dkk., 2024), For example, examine the dynamics of *pesantren* modernization through an approach that balances preserving tradition and adopting innovation. They

emphasize the importance of curriculum reformulation that reflects the needs of the times without ignoring fundamental Islamic values. However, most studies still focus on technical aspects, such as using social media or online platforms as learning tools (Budiharso & Suharto, 2022).

This gap indicates a lack of literature that comprehensively examines how transformative pedagogy can be implemented contextually in the *pesantren* environment regarding curriculum design, teaching methods, and institutional and cultural aspects. Furthermore, the restricted ability of instructors to combine transformative methodologies with Islamic principles is a difficulty that has not been extensively studied in academia.

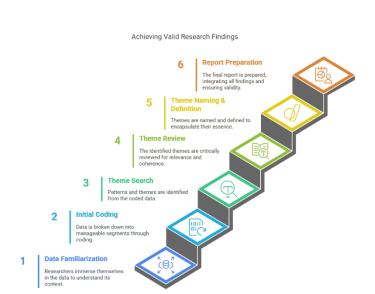
Thus, this study aims to critically explore how *pesantren* in Indonesia adopt a transformative pedagogy approach in facing the challenges of the digital era. The study aims to determine the transformative pedagogy models that have been implemented, the obstacles and opportunities encountered, and how this strategy might increase the relevance of *pesantren* education in the 21st century. This study raises three key issues: (1) How have Indonesian *pesantren* adapted the transformative pedagogy method in the digital age? (2) What obstacles and possibilities do *pesantren* encounter while implementing transformative pedagogy? Additionally, (3) How might the transformative pedagogy paradigm increase the relevance of *pesantren* education in the twenty-first century?

The novelty of this research lies in its efforts to fill the gap of studies on transformative pedagogy in the context of *pesantren*, which so far tend to be seen as conservative institutions. This research not only offers a conceptual framework but is also based on empirical data from case studies that represent a variety of approaches and experiences in implementing transformative pedagogy in the *pesantren* environment. With this approach, this study is expected to make a real contribution to the development of contemporary Islamic education theory and become a reference for policymakers, educators, and practitioners in formulating relevant and contextual Islamic education transformation strategies in Indonesia.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2014) with a case study design focused on Al Mawaddah Entrepreneur Islamic Boarding School in Kudus,

Central Java (https://www.mawaddah.id/), aiming to explore the implementation of transformative pedagogy based on Islamic values in student pesantren education. Case studies allow for a deeper understanding of social and cultural phenomena in a specific context (de Vries, 2020; Hassan, 2024; Robert K. Yin, 2018), which emphasizes leadership, entrepreneurship, and Islamic spirituality. The study involved 14 informants, including pesantren caregivers, teachers, and senior *santri* who were actively engaged in the school's educational and business programs.



Data were collected using in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather insights on educational philosophy, learning strategies, and the integration of entrepreneurial values and spirituality. Observations focused daily activities, on including

routines, book learning, and business practices such as managing Pertamini, shoe shops, and local food production units. Documentation reviewed internal curriculum, training modules, awards, and promotional media (Carter dkk., 2014; Meydan & Akkaş, 2024; Morse, 1991).

Data analysis followed a thematic approach (V. Braun & Clarke, 2006; Cernasev & Axon, 2023), identifying patterns and relationships between Islamic values and entrepreneurship in the context of pesantren education. Validity was ensured through triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail, incorporating direct quotes and cross-confirmation of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ethically, the research adhered to qualitative research principles, obtaining permission from the pesantren caregivers, ensuring participant confidentiality, and using data exclusively for academic purposes. This research is expected to provide valuable insights into transformative pedagogy in pesantren education and its relevance to the challenges of the 21st Century.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Transformative Pedagogy Approach in the Digital Age

This study's initial research question explores how *pesantren* in Indonesia, notably Pondok *Pesantren* Entrepreneur Al Mawaddah Kudus, embraces a transformative pedagogical strategy in the face of the digital age's dynamics. The qualitative and quantitative data gathered through interviews, field observations, and documentation reveals a wide range of approaches and practices that demonstrate pedagogical change systemically and contextually.

The results of in-depth interviews with key informants, namely *pesantren* caregivers, teaching staff, and *santri*, show a process of internalizing leadership, entrepreneurship, and spirituality values packaged in a contextual and experience-based learning approach. The learning strategy relies not only on conventional lecture or recitation methods but is also equipped with field practice activities, management of business units, and integration of information and communication technology in teaching.

No	Informant	Thematic Theme	Interview Excerpt	Frequency	Interpretation
1	Pesantren caregiver	Digital Integration	"We equip santri not only with the classical Islamic texts (Kitab kuning) but also with digital skills such as social media management for their business."	4	There is an active effort to digitize santri learning and business.
2	Ustadz/ Ustadzah	Interactive Learning	"We encourage students to present, discuss, not just listen."	5	The participatory approach represents a paradigm shift in teaching.
3	Santri	Practice-based Learning	"I prefer to learn directly in the field, for example, when managing Nyoklat stalls or Umrah bureaus."	7	Santri appreciates learning models that are applicable and contextualized.
4	Pesantren caregiver	Transformation Value	"Education is not just knowledge, but character building and business courage."	3	Strong indications are that education is geared towards identity transformation and self-reliance.

Table 1. Excerpts of Interview Results on the Implementation of Transformative Pedagogy

Taufikin | MAHAROT Vol. 9, No. 1, 2025

Based on the interview excerpt above, the transformative pedagogy approach is implemented through learning based on real practices, digital technology, and an approach that emphasizes character development and critical thinking.

No.	Thematic	Observed Digital Activities	Frequency	Interpretation
1	Social Media Usage	Santri promote pesantren MSME products through Instagram and TikTok	6	Digitalization is focused on strengthening the branding and marketing of <i>santri</i> businesses.
2	Digitization of Learning	Use of laptops and projectors in teaching kitab and entrepreneurship materials	4	Transforming learning towards a blended learning model.
3	Digital Business Documentation	Santri create financial reports using digital applications	5	Increasing digital literacy is directed at professionalizing <i>santri</i> businesses.
4	Eduwisata Virtual Tour	Promotion of educational tourism based on creative videos and online registration applications	2	Utilize technology to disseminate interactive learning models to the general public.

Table 2. Results of Observation and Documentation of Digital Activities in *Pesantren*

The discussion in this chapter aims to interpret and critically analyze the research findings related to implementing the transformative pedagogy approach at the Al Mawaddah Kudus Entrepreneurial Boarding School in the context of the digital era. The findings are reviewed based on key theories such as transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991) and complemented by contemporary literature reviews from reputable journals.

According to interviews, observations, and documentation, *pesantren* have implemented a transformative pedagogy strategy that integrates Islamic principles, entrepreneurship, and digitalization. The *santri*'s character development and entrepreneurial attitude, the application of technology, and the practice-based learning process all reflect this strategy. This is consistent with (Kitchenham, 2008) and (Mezirow, 1981, 1996, 1991), who argue that transformative learning entails "critical reflection" and a shift in the meaning of past experiences. In the context of *pesantren*, *santri* learning experiences are cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.

According to Table 1, the pedagogical transition process occurs through interactive approaches (discussions and presentations), technology integration (media and report digitization), and entrepreneurial practices (*pesantren* business management). This is consistent with the findings of (Damianakis dkk., 2025; Farooq, 2023; Maiese, 2023), who found that experiential learning environments are where transformative pedagogy is most effective.

Table 2, this new pedagogical model requires the integration of digital technology into the learning process and the management of the business unit. Virtual tours, business management software, and social media demonstrate that *pesantren* have transformed into a contemporary, digital-based learning environment that goes beyond just imparting traditional religious knowledge. The study by (Abidin, 2020; Ibda dkk., 2023; Kawakip, 2020) on the rapid digitalization of Islamic education in the Muslim world is supported by this phenomenon.

The transformative pedagogy method, however, differs greatly from the secular approach in the setting of *pesantren*. The shift in *pesantren* is not simply a shift in thinking or methods; it is also a shift in ideology and spirituality. This adds an Islamic perspective to Mezirow's Western-context-based discourse, which places emphasis on tazkiyah al-nafs (purification of the soul) as the foundation of education (Hanin Hamjah dkk., 2020; Hartati, 2018; Picken, 2005; Syahrizal, 2021; Uyun dkk., 2019; Wargadinata dkk., 2019).

Aspects	This Study	Previous Research	
Context	Digital-based entrepreneurial boarding	Traditional pesantren (Anshori & Pohl,	
	school	2022)	
Theory	Integration of Mezirow and Islamic values	Mezirow, without a religious perspective	
Strategy	Blended learning + business practice	Conventional lecture	
Model Learning by doing in the context of <i>santri</i>		Passive learning	
Technology Social media, financial apps, virtual tours		Minimal use of technology	

Table 3. Research Novelty

As a result, this study makes theoretical and practical contributions to the creation of transformative pedagogical models in Islamic religious organizations that use digital technology. The results extend the scope of transformative learning theory and demonstrate that *pesantren* can face the difficulties of the digital age while still maintaining the foundation of their religious identity.

Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Transformative Pedagogy

Additionally, this research emphasizes the difficulties and possibilities that *pesantren* confront in adopting the transformative pedagogy strategy in the digital age. Information was gathered by directly observing and recording learning activities in *pesantren*, conducting in-depth interviews with caregivers, Ustadz, and *santri*. Thematic analysis revealed two primary categories: internal and external opportunities and challenges for changing the learning system.

No.	Theme	Informant	Excerpt of Statement	Frequency	Interpretation
1	Technology	Ustaz A,	"We do not have	5	Digital infrastructure

	Limitations	Santri B, C	adequate equipment for all students."		is still minimal in some pesantren.
2	Digital Competency	Caregiver, santri D	"Ustaz are not yet familiar with digital learning technology."	4	The digital competence of teachers still needs to be improved.
3	Cultural Resistance	Ustaz E, Santri F	"Some reject renewal because they think it is against tradition."	3	There is internal resistance to innovation in pesantren education.
4	Regulatory Support	Caregiver, Ustaz B	"We need support from the government for the digital curriculum."	2	Education policies that support transformative pedagogy are needed.
5	<i>Santri</i> Spirit	Santri A, B, C	"We are passionate about learning business while reciting the Quran."	6	Santri is highly motivated to integrate knowledge and skills.
6	Business Development	Caregiver, Student D	"The <i>pesantren</i> business can be a means of applicative learning."	4	Entrepreneurial activities are an opportunity to integrate learning and practice.

Table 4. Excerpts of Interview Results: Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing
Transformative Pedagogy

No.	Thematic	Research Location	Frequency	Interpretation
	Observation			
1	Limited Internet	Pesantren in Jekulo,	3 of 3	All locations experienced problems
	Access	Kudus		with internet connectivity.
2	Unevenness of	Computer lab & study	2 of 3	ICT devices are limited; not all santri
	Devices	room		can access digital learning.
3	Limited Digital	Teacher training	1 of 3	Only one <i>pesantren</i> conducted digital
	Training	activities		literacy training for Ustaz.
4	Productive	Eco-tourism,	3 of 3	Pesantren utilize business units as part
	Business Unit	agriculture, student		of practice-based pedagogy.
		shop		
5	Active Santri	Daily business	3 of 3	Santri is actively involved in business
	Participation	management program		unit operations as a learning medium.
6	Community	Photo Documentation	3 of 3	The wider community enthusiastically
	Enthusiasm	of educational visit		participated in the educational tour
				program, showing openness to
				innovation.

Table 5. Observation and Documentation Results: Challenges and Opportunities

The *pesantren* environment presents complicated dynamics for implementing transformative pedagogy, particularly in the face of digital age challenges both within and outside. The findings of this research point out two major factors that affect the effectiveness of pedagogical change: structural obstacles and prospects for renewal. The topic of discussion in this framework is how these opportunities and barriers come together to create educational practices that are more contextualized and relevant at the Entrepreneur Al Mawaddah Kudus Islamic Boarding School.

The first challenge is the limited digital infrastructure, as reflected in the high frequency of interviews and observations. The lack of technological devices and uneven internet connection are the main obstacles to integrating digital-based learning. This finding is in line with the (Arim dkk., 2024; Hamdani, 2023; Isiaka dkk., 2021) study, which states that the adoption of information technology in education is strongly influenced by infrastructure readiness. In addition, teachers' digital competence is still low, which hinders the adaptation process to new learning methods (Abubakari & Kalinaki, 2024; Maulyda dkk., 2025; Mulyanti dkk., 2024; Pintaningdyah dkk., 2024; Zakiyyah dkk., 2024). This shows the importance of systematic training for educators in the *pesantren* environment.

Cultural resistance is the next challenge. Some people in *Pesantren* view technological innovation as a threat to traditional values. This phenomenon confirms the study of (Bashori et al., 2024 Falikul Isbah, 2020; Hargreaves, 2003) emphasizes that educational change must consider the local social and cultural context. However, this resistance can also be a reflection point to develop a contextualized form of pedagogy and not simply imitate the model of modern institutions (Abdul-Jabbar & Makki, 2024; Alkouatli dkk., 2023; Memon dkk., 2021, 2024; Parhan dkk., 2024).

On the other hand, this study also found great opportunities in entrepreneurship integration and *santri* enthusiasm for practice-based learning. Business unit activities such as educational tourism, agriculture, and *santri* shops are concrete vehicles for *santri* to develop 21st-century skills. This is in line with the (Kolb, 1976) experiential learning approach, which emphasizes the importance of learning through direct experience. The active participation of *santri* in business management shows that learning transformation can occur organically if it is related to the needs and interests of learners (Mezirow, 1996).

Aspects	Findings of this study	Previous Research	Novelty
Digital Infrastructure	Limited and uneven in all units	Same: (Arim dkk., 2024; Hamdani, 2023; Isiaka dkk., 2021)	Focus on <i>pesantren</i> as tradition-based institutions
Teacher Competency	Low, minimal training	Same: (Maulyda dkk., 2025; Pintaningdyah dkk., 2024)	Context-specific analysis of <i>pesantren</i> and cultural challenges
Cultural Resistance	Innovation is seen as disrupting tradition	Same: (Hargreaves, 2003)	Emphasis on resistance as an opportunity for recontextualization
Practical Learning	Santri are active in pesantren business	Support: (Kolb, 1976; Mezirow, 1981, 1996, 1991)	Strong integration of spirituality, practice and technology

Taufikin | MAHAROT Vol. 9, No. 1, 2025

Community	Positive towards	Different: Rural education	Showing <i>pesantren</i> as
Support	boarding school eco-	study (Hudaefi & Heryani,	community innovation
	tourism	2019)	centres

Table 6. below shows a comparison of the findings of this research with previous studies

As a result, these findings demonstrate that the implementation of transformative pedagogy in *pesantren* is impacted by cultural preparedness, technological considerations, and institutional architecture. To close the divide between traditional values and the requirements of 21st-century education, a holistic and contextual perspective is necessary. Therefore, creating an inclusive, pertinent, and transformative Islamic education environment requires a multi-stakeholder partnership between the government, *pesantren*, and the community (Athoillah dkk., 2024; Basori dkk., 2023; Mariyono, 2024).

Transformative Pedagogy Model and Relevance of *Pesantren* Education in the 21st Century

The research findings on how the transformative pedagogy model might increase the relevance of *pesantren* education in the modern world are covered in this section. The data were gathered via extensive interviews, observation, and documentation. The main emphasis is on the integrative approaches used by *pesantren* in creating an educational paradigm that can address the issues of the twenty-first century.

No.	Theme	Interview Excerpt	Frequency	Interpretation
1	Integration of Islamic and digital values	"We instil Islamic values in every use of technology so that it is not just technical." (Ustaz B)	8	Pesantren began to formulate an Islamic value-based pedagogical approach integrated with digital.
2	21st-century responsive curriculum	"We have developed a curriculum that is not only kitab kuning but also includes soft skills and business training." (Ustaz C)	7	Pesantren developed a hybrid curriculum based on competency and spirituality.
3	Character and entrepreneurship education	"Santri are educated to be leaders and entrepreneurs, not just recite the Quran." (ustaz F)	6	The pedagogical model includes aspects of leadership and entrepreneurship to support <i>santri</i> competitiveness.
4	Learning by doing	"They directly practice, for example, opening a small business, so they get hands-on experience." (Uztaz C)	5	Contextual learning is implemented through a practice-based and experiential learning model.

Table 7. Excerpts of Interview Results on the Transformative Pedagogy Model and the Relevance of *Pesantren* Education

No.	Theme	Observation/Documentation Results	Frequency	Interpretation
1	Spiritual-based eco-tourism	Educational tourism programs based on Islamic values, agriculture, and entrepreneurship are available.	4	Edu-tourism is an effective medium for transformative pedagogy that integrates values and practices.
2	Student business unit	Santri manages Pertamini, shoe shops, chocolate shops, and Umrah bureaus.	4	Business projects are part of the entrepreneurship-based pedagogy strategy.
3	Digitalization of da'wah	Santri manages the digital content of da'wah through social media and YouTube.	3	Strengthening santri digital literacy shows the successful integration of digital and Islamic values.
4	Curriculum adjustment	There is an additional syllabus on leadership and business management in the curriculum.	2	The relevance of education is strengthened through a 21st-century contextualized curriculum.

Table 8. Results of Observation and Documentation on the Transformative Pedagogy Model and the Relevance of *Pesantren* Education

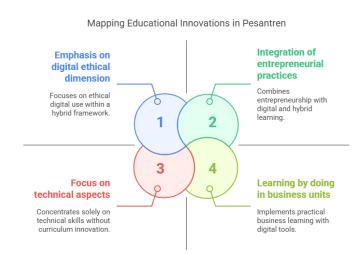
The results showed that the transformative pedagogy model applied by Pondok *Pesantren* Entrepreneur Al Mawaddah Kudus significantly contributed to the relevance of *pesantren* education in the 21st Century. This finding strengthens the (Mezirow, 1981, 1996, 1991) concept of transformative learning as a process of perspective change through critical reflection and direct experience. It is relevant to the 21st-century pedagogical approach, emphasizing critical, collaborative, and creative thinking competencies (Balsiger, 2024; A. Jones, 2023; P. Jones, 2020).

According to interview and observation data, the four main pillars of this model are practice-based learning, character education and entrepreneurship, a 21st-century responsive curriculum, and the integration of Islamic and digital values. The integrative approach shows how pesantren have worked to meet the challenges of globalization without sacrificing their spiritual identity. The informants' descriptions of the integration of Islamic principles into the use of technology demonstrate that, in accordance with (H. Campbell, 2010; H. A. Campbell & Evolvi, 2020)'s argument about the importance of value integrity in Islamic digital literacy, pesantren do not merely embrace digitalization but rather internalize Islamic ethical principles in all uses of technology.

The hybrid curriculum, which combines yellow Islamic classic books, soft skills, and business training, shifts from the traditional teaching model towards a competency-based learning system. This aligns with (S. S. Braun et al., 2019; Brown et al., 1989; Farmer et al., 2019; Refah Faraj's, 2024) findings that contextual learning integrating local and global values can improve students' readiness to face modern social dynamics.

Dimensions of Findings	Findings of this study	Comparison with Previous Research	Novelty
Integration of	Internalization of Islamic	The focus of digitalization	Emphasis on the digital
Values and	values in the use of	in <i>pesantren</i> is generally	ethical dimension
Technology	digital media	limited to technical aspects	based on Islamic
		(Abidin, 2020).	spirituality
Hybrid	Combination of classical	Previous studies focused	Convergent and
Curriculum	texts and	on curriculum dualism	transformative
	entrepreneurship	(Rohman dkk., 2024)	curriculum
	training		formulation
Contextualized	Learning by doing in	Contextual learning is	Integration of
Learning	permanent business	rarely associated with	entrepreneurial
	units	hands-on business	practices as a
		practices (Azra, 2019).	pedagogical tool

Table 9. Novelty of Research Findings



This pedagogical model also strengthens the concept of "learning by doing", which is the core of experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1976). The activities of santri in managing businesses, such as Pertamini, educational tours, and digital da'wah, prove that the learning process occurs not only in the classroom but

through direct interaction with the real world (https://www.mawaddah.id/). Observation of the active involvement of *santri* in business management and digitalization of da'wah shows that contextual learning can be an effective means of strengthening digital as well as spiritual literacy (Achmad & Fitria, 2024; Bashori dkk., 2024; Hefner, 2022; Ibda dkk., 2023; Putri & Fiqiyah, 2025; Ritonga dkk., 2021). Thus, the transformative pedagogy model applied by this *pesantren* not only answers the challenges of 21st-century education but also offers a new framework based on the integration of values, digitalization, and entrepreneurial practices. These findings enrich

the literature on contemporary Islamic education and encourage the development of more adaptive and globally relevant *pesantren* education policies (Kawakip, 2020).

Explanation of the Transformative Pedagogical Model and Its Applicability

The transformative pedagogy model found in this study integrates four essential pillars: Islamic values, digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and experiential learning. At Pondok *Pesantren* Entrepreneur Al Mawaddah Kudus, these pillars are translated into a hybrid curriculum that combines classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*), business practice, digital da'wah, and leadership training. This model is not merely a shift in instructional technique but represents a comprehensive educational transformation that embeds spiritual, cognitive, and entrepreneurial development into the learning process. The learning-by-doing framework is key, as students engage directly in managing enterprises like eco-tourism, digital content production, and small-scale businesses, aligning with Kolb's experiential learning cycle while grounding practice in Islamic ethics.

The primary benefit of this model lies in its capacity to enhance the relevance of *pesantren* education in facing 21st-century challenges without compromising spiritual identity. It equips students (*santri*) with critical thinking, collaboration, and digital competencies—skills essential in today's globalized world—while reinforcing religious values through practical engagement. The model fosters independence, confidence, and moral entrepreneurship, leading to improved student agency and readiness to contribute to broader socio-economic contexts. This holistic development can bridge the often-perceived gap between traditional Islamic education and modern societal demands, making *pesantren* an incubator for spiritually anchored yet socially dynamic Muslim youth.

The broader impact of this model is its potential for replication across other Islamic educational institutions. This is particularly relevant for *pesantren* or madrasah that aim to modernize while maintaining their core values. For successful adoption, several preparatory steps are necessary: (1) curriculum reform that includes entrepreneurship and digital literacy, (2) capacity building for educators to apply transformative learning methods, (3) infrastructure support for ICT tools and connectivity, and (4) community engagement to reduce cultural resistance. Additionally,

institutional commitment to integrating values with innovation is critical to maintain authenticity and local relevance.

Ultimately, the model's strength lies in its adaptability. While rooted in the socio-cultural context of Al Mawaddah, its framework—value-based digital literacy, entrepreneurship as pedagogy, and learning by doing—can inform transformation strategies in other *pesantren*. With proper contextual adjustments, this model serves as a practical example of how Islamic education can evolve without dislocating from its epistemological roots. Future research is encouraged to test this model across multiple *pesantren* settings, assess long-term outcomes, and formulate a standardized roadmap for policy-level adoption at national and regional levels.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that integrating Islamic values, digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and character education into the implementation of transformative pedagogy in pesantren, especially at Pondok Pesantren Entrepreneur Al Mawaddah Kudus, successfully tackles 21st-century educational problems. According to information gathered from interviews, observations, and documentation, this model encourages active *santri* participation via hands-on learning, business development, and the digitalization of da'wah and teaching procedures. By making the curriculum more contextual and globally responsive, graduate students are better prepared for the workforce without losing their spiritual and cultural roots. This aligns with Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation and reflects current practices that integrate soft skills into Islamic education.

According to the research, the success of this strategy depends on cooperation between pesantren teachers, students, and leaders, as well as external stakeholders like the government and the community. Although *santri* excitement and innovation readiness are important assets, barriers still exist in the areas of technology access, teacher digital literacy, and cultural resistance that require systemic solutions. These results underscore the importance of adopting culturally appropriate approaches to long-term educational change, improving educator digital literacy, and investing in digital infrastructure. In reality, this fosters the development of Islamic education policies that are both value-based and adaptable.

This research contributes to the body of knowledge on Islamic pedagogy by proposing a practice-based model that merges traditional and modern educational elements within *pesantren*. This model holds promise for replication in other institutions to increase the relevance of Islamic education globally. However, given the study's limited scope and participant base, findings should be generalized with caution. Future studies should explore implementation across diverse *pesantren* through crosscultural and longitudinal approaches, offering broader insight into strategic pathways for transforming Islamic education in the digital age.

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Taufikin | MAHAROT Vol. 9, No. 1, 2025

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