

Bridging Tradition and Innovation: Phenomenological Perspectives of Pesantren Educators on Pedagogical Strategies for Gen Alpha Learners

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the pedagogical disconnect between the rigid traditions of Kitab Kuning (classical Islamic texts) and the digital-based characteristics of Generation Alpha within the Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) environment. The study aims to explore teachers' experiences in transforming instructional strategies for classical literature (Turath) without compromising traditional sacredness. Utilizing a qualitative design with an interpretative phenomenological approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with Pesantren educators in a gadget-free setting. The findings reveal that teachers implement a "Methodological Syncretism" pattern, transforming themselves into "living multimedia" through analog visualization techniques and the minimalist use of technology (laptops/projectors) as cognitive bridges. The results indicate that prohibiting mobile phones actually triggers the emergence of "Adaptive-Traditional Pedagogy," effectively balancing textual authority with the interactive needs of students. This study contributes a new theoretical framework for the moderation of traditional Islamic education in the era of disruption, while offering practical solutions for Pesantren to maintain the relevance of the Turath curriculum for digital natives without losing institutional identity.

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INTRODUCTION

Social changes resulting from the digital revolution have transformed how the younger generation learns, interacts, and constructs meaning from knowledge (Salmela-Aro & Motti-Stefanidi, 2022; Strielkowski et al., 2025). Amidst this wave of globalization, religious educational institutions such as *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) face the challenge of maintaining the authenticity of scholarly traditions while responding to contemporary dynamics (Wahono et al., 2023). This research is vital for the broader community because *pesantren* are not merely educational institutions but also centers for the transmission of values, morality, and the cultural identity of Muslims in Indonesia. When *turath* pedagogy—rooted in the teaching of *kitab kuning* (classical texts), *talaqqi* (face-to-face learning), and scholarly genealogies (*sanad*)—encounters the characteristics of Generation Alpha, who grew up in a digital ecosystem, a significant shift in learning interaction patterns occurs. Various educational reports indicate increasing digital distractions, a preference for visual-interactive learning, and changes in student attention spans (Gourneau, 2025; Мухаметжанова et al.,

2025). If not deeply understood, this tension could hinder educational effectiveness and weaken the *pesantren's* function as a guardian of tradition. Therefore, a phenomenological study of teachers' experiences is crucial to constructively bridge tradition and transformation.

The general problem underlying this research is the pedagogical gap between traditional *turath*-based approaches and the learning characteristics of Generation Alpha. This generation is known for being technologically adaptive, accustomed to instant information, and having expectations for participatory and dialogic interactions (Miller, 2023). Meanwhile, *turath* pedagogy emphasizes patience, persistence, memorization, and strong teacher authority (Amirova, 2025; Rahman, n.d.). This mismatch creates methodological and psychological challenges in the learning process. Many teachers report a decline in students' learning endurance, diminished interest in classical texts perceived as non-contextual, and an increasing need for creative approaches. On the other hand, society maintains high expectations for *pesantren* to preserve the purity of tradition and Islamic epistemological integrity. This tension creates a structural dilemma: how to maintain the authority of *turath* without ignoring the pedagogical needs of the new generation. This problem necessitates research to understand the subjective experiences of teachers in managing these changes reflectively and adaptively.

Field phenomena demonstrate complex and diverse dynamics. Some *pesantren* have begun integrating digital media into text-based teaching, such as using projectors, Arabic dictionary applications, and online discussion platforms (Pratama, 2025). However, many others strictly maintain the *sorogan* and *bandongan* methods as a form of preserving tradition (Abdurrahman, 2020; Karimah, 2018; Kurniawan & Sudarno, 2025; Subagyo & Arifin, 2025). Teachers report that Generation Alpha students tend to be more responsive to visual approaches, contextual storytelling, and problem-based learning compared to classical lecture methods. Conversely, concerns have emerged that excessive adaptation might reduce the depth of textual understanding and weaken the *adab* (etiquette) toward teachers. Initial observations also reveal creative strategies used by teachers, such as linking *turath* to contemporary issues or utilizing digital analogies to explain concepts of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *ushul* (principles). These phenomena illustrate a process of pedagogical negotiation that has not been widely documented scientifically. Thus, phenomenological exploration is required to capture the meaning of teachers' experiences authentically and contextually.

Numerous previous studies have examined the transformation of *pesantren* education and the challenges of the digital era. Studies on *pesantren* modernization highlight the integration of general and religious curricula (Arifin, 2022; Fuady et al., 2024; Salim et al., 2024), while other research discusses the digitalization of *kitab kuning* learning (Pratama, 2025) and changes in the *kyai's* authority (Abdullah & Kusaeri, 2024; Huda & Muslih, 2024). Research on Generation Alpha generally focuses on psychological characteristics, visual learning styles, and digital multitasking tendencies (Drugas, 2022; Duisenbekova, 2023; Fernando & Premadasa, 2024; SAIFUDDIN et al., 2025). Some phenomenological studies investigate teachers' experiences in facing Millennials and Gen Z (Erişen & Bavlı, 2026; Hayati et al., 2024; Marrero Galván et al., 2023), yet few have specifically linked them to *turath* pedagogy. Furthermore, research on *turath* tends to emphasize historical and epistemological aspects rather than actual

pedagogical practices in the classroom. Consequently, there is a limitation in understanding the concrete encounter between classical text traditions and the digital-native character of the newest generation. This gap indicates the need for research that integrates classical Islamic pedagogical perspectives with a phenomenological approach to understand teachers' experiences deeply and reflectively.

Furthermore, most previous studies have utilized normative or policy-based approaches rather than exploring the "lived experience" of teachers. Much of the literature treats teachers merely as objects of curriculum implementation rather than subjects experiencing a pedagogical identity crisis when facing Gen Alpha. As a result, the emotional dynamics, adaptive strategies, and personal meanings constructed by teachers in dealing with Generation Alpha have not been comprehensively explored. Existing quantitative research tends to measure methodological effectiveness without understanding the value negotiation process involved. In the *pesantren* context, the dimensions of spirituality, *adab*, and the teacher-student relationship play a central role in the success of *turath* pedagogy. The absence of a phenomenological perspective leads to a lack of understanding of how teachers perceive changes, feel challenges, and formulate innovative strategies. This research gap serves as the strategic position of this study. By delving into the subjective experiences of teachers, this study aims to fill the literature void while providing theoretical and practical contributions to developing *turath* pedagogy that is relevant to the new generation without losing its traditional roots.

The novelty of this research lies in its phenomenological approach, which specifically examines the evolution of *turath* pedagogy in the context of Generation Alpha. This study does not merely capture changes in methods but also traces transformations in meaning, teachers' professional identity, and relational dynamics within the *pesantren* classroom. The state-of-the-art of this research resides at the integration of *turath* studies, generational theory, and the phenomenology of Islamic education. This approach allows for a holistic understanding of how tradition adapts without being reduced. The significance of this research lies in its effort to formulate a model of pedagogical adaptation rooted in values rather than just technology. Thus, the research results are expected to serve as a conceptual reference for *pesantren* education policymakers, teacher training, and the development of a *turath* curriculum that is responsive and sustainable amidst rapid and complex social changes.

Based on this background, this research focuses on three primary questions: (1) how *pesantren* teachers perceive the characteristics of Generation Alpha within the context of *turath* learning; (2) how they experience the emerging pedagogical challenges; and (3) what adaptive strategies are developed to maintain a balance between tradition and innovation. The preliminary argument of this study is that the evolution of *turath* pedagogy is not a form of deconstructing tradition but rather a process of contextual reinterpretation rooted in classical values. Teachers do not merely adapt technically; they engage in a complex negotiation of meaning between textual authority, student needs, and the demands of the times. The contribution of this research lies in the development of a conceptual framework regarding

"adaptive-traditional pedagogy," which can serve as a theoretical foundation for the transformation of *pesantren* education in the Generation Alpha era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach, aiming to understand the "lived experience" of teachers in managing *turath* learning for Generation Alpha (Creswell, 2009, 2013). This approach was selected based on the assumption that pedagogical reality is not merely objective but is shaped through teachers' subjective interpretations of generational shifts, textual authority, and the dynamics of the *pesantren* classroom. Phenomenology allows the researcher to delve into dimensions of consciousness, reflection, and the negotiation of meaning that cannot be measured quantitatively. The research was conducted in several traditional *pesantren* that maintain the teaching of *turath* texts while interacting with Generation Alpha students. The selection of research sites was conducted purposively based on the following criteria: the sustainability of *turath* practices, the presence of students in primary and early secondary school age (born after 2010), and the institution's openness to pedagogical reflection. This context is considered representative for capturing the authentic and contextual dynamics of the evolution of *turath* pedagogy within contemporary *pesantren* education.

Data collection techniques include semi-structured in-depth interviews with *turath* teachers, participant observation of the learning process, and documentary studies of teaching materials and curriculum notes. The interviews focused on exploring subjective experiences, perceptions of Generation Alpha's characteristics, and the adaptive strategies developed. Observations were carried out to directly understand teacher-student interactions, methodological applications, and classroom dynamics. Data analysis was performed using thematic phenomenological steps: *epoche* (bracketing), horizontalization, clusters of meaning, and the construction of textural and structural descriptions to uncover the essence of the experience (Sundler et al., 2019). The analysis process was iterative and reflective. Data trustworthiness was maintained through source and technique triangulation, member checking with participants, an audit trail to track the analytical process, and reflexive journaling to minimize researcher bias in interpreting the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Teachers' Perception of Generation Alpha Characteristics

The cognitive and affective construction of *pesantren* teachers in identifying the shift in learning orientation among Generation Alpha students, who were born and raised in a purely digital ecosystem. In the field, this perception is not merely a sociological labeling but a "pedagogical consciousness" that today's students possess a brain structure accustomed to rapid visual stimulation and instant gratification. Teachers perceive Gen Alpha as educational subjects with significant ambivalence; on one hand, they possess technical skills that surpass

previous generations, yet on the other, they experience fragility in the persistence required to read *Turath* texts, which are linear and profound. This perception includes the teachers' recognition of the need for synchronization between the static-sacred authority of *kitab kuning* and the dynamic-interactive mindset of the students. This phenomenon forces teachers to redefine their roles—from mere messengers to architects of meaning who must package classical narratives into the thinking frequency of the digital generation without reducing the essence of spirituality.

The first informant, Ustaz Ahmad (Head of Madrasah Diniyah), revealed in an in-depth interview: "Teaching Gen Alpha is like holding water; we cannot grasp them with the rigidity of the pure *bandongan* method. They need the 'why' (reasoning) and the 'how' (visualization), not just the 'what' that is written in the book." The researcher interprets this statement as an acknowledgment of the shift in traditional authority. Teachers are no longer seen as the sole source of truth but must act as facilitators capable of answering the students' critical curiosity. There is a profound realization that classical methods emphasizing blind obedience have lost their relevance. Ustaz Ahmad views the "visual hunger" of Gen Alpha as an opportunity for the digitalization of meaning, where unvocalized texts must be presented schematically to keep the students' logic focused amidst digital attention distractions.

The second informant, Kiai Abdullah Sam (Leader of the Pesantren), provided a more existential perspective: "Today's students are 'smart but on the run.' They grasp the point quickly but get bored with the process just as fast. *Kitab kuning* is a process, whereas they are products." The researcher's interpretation of this data indicates a tension between the "culture of process" in the *pesantren* tradition and the "instant culture" of Gen Alpha. Kiai Abdullah Sam interprets this characteristic as a challenge of intellectual *riyadhah* (discipline). Teachers are required to break down heavy book materials into small, gradually digestible segments (micro-learning). This pattern of perception shows that *pesantren* teachers are beginning to adopt modern cognitive psychology in viewing students, where attention span is recognized as a primary variable determining the success of *Turath* knowledge transfer in the current era.

Classroom observations showed interesting dynamics; when teachers used digital whiteboards to map *l'rab* (syntax) schemes, student participation increased significantly compared to when teachers only read the book monotonically. The researcher observed that Gen Alpha students tend to be more active when allowed to perform "interventions" on the text through interactive discussions. The researcher's interpretation of this observational data reinforces the finding that the visual-interactive characteristics of Gen Alpha require intermediary media that bridges classical text abstraction with concrete reality. Teachers sensitive to this phenomenon often insert contemporary analogies close to the students' gadget world to explain complex *fiqh* (jurisprudence) or *tasawuf* (Sufism) concepts. This proves that the pedagogical adaptation of teachers in the field has transcended narrow traditionalist boundaries and moved toward a more inclusive methodological syncretism for the newest generation.

In terms of restatement, the data above shows that *pesantren* teachers perceive Gen Alpha as a generation with "high visual literacy but low textual literacy endurance." Their main

characteristics are the need for interactivity, visualization, and direct relevance in every *Turath* learning material. Teachers no longer view students as empty vessels but as dialogic partners requiring multimedia approaches to understand the depth of *kitab kuning*. The emerging pattern shows a shift from authoritative teacher-centered methods toward adaptive-contextual student-centered ones. The essence of all this data is that the success of *kitab kuning* learning today highly depends on the teacher's ability to re-encrypt traditional values into digital formats compatible with the way Generation Alpha's brains work.

Table 1. Essence of Experience and Indicators in Adaptive Pedagogy

Informant Position	Essence of Experience	Indicators
Pesantren Leader	Reconstruction of Traditional Authority	Decrease in dogmatic methods; increase in dialogic discussion in teaching sessions.
Head of Madrasah	Digitalization of Methodology	Use of visual media; preparation of concise modules (<i>micro-content</i>).
Kitab Kuning Teacher	Psycho-Cognitive Negotiation	Adaptation of modern analogies; flexible management of student focus duration.

A deep interpretation of the table above shows an "Integrated Adaptation Hierarchy" pattern. At the managerial level (Leader and Madrasah Head), the ideal influence manifests in curriculum policy changes that are more moderate toward technology. They experience the essence of change as an effort to save the institution to remain competitive. The indicator that emerges is a willingness to loosen tradition for the sake of student cognitive effectiveness. This reflects a transformational leadership pattern where the sacred values of *Turath* are maintained through a methodologically updated vessel to prevent cultural lag between the *pesantren* institution and the developments of the times.

At the practical level (Kitab Teacher), the emerging pattern is "Pedagogical Syncretism." Teachers are at the forefront, negotiating meaning every day in the classroom. Their experience shows that success indicators are no longer measured by how many pages of the book are read, but by how deeply students can relate classical concepts to their digital reality. This pattern reinforces the argument that adaptive pedagogy in *pesantren* is a form of organic evolution, not forced deconstruction. *Pesantren* teachers have successfully mapped that Gen Alpha characteristics are not obstacles but new variables requiring higher instructional creativity to maintain the originality of *Turath* knowledge.

Teachers' Experience in Facing Pedagogical Challenges Without Digital Devices

The operational definition of this sub-finding is the construction of teachers' subjective experiences in managing the technological disconnect between the students' outside world (Gen Alpha) and the internal *pesantren* environment, which is gadget-free. This experience includes the instructional struggle to maintain the cognitive engagement of students who are biologically and psychologically programmed for digital stimulation but must learn in an analog

ecosystem relying on physical texts and hearing. This challenge is not merely technical but a "pedagogical burden" where teachers must act as a substitute for multimedia functions, becoming independent sources of visualization and the primary motivators to prevent extreme boredom due to the loss of digital stimuli they are accustomed to.

Table 2. Essence of Teachers' Experience toward Non-Digital Policy

Interview Quote	Essence of Experience	Informant
"I have to act more expressively and use many visual metaphors because they get bored quickly without a screen."	Personality as Multimedia	Ustaz Zaim (Grammar Teacher)
"The toughest challenge is digital 'withdrawal'; students daydream about games while we explain the chapter on Marriage (<i>Munakahat</i>)."	Management of Mental Distraction	Ustaz Fauzi (Jurisprudence Teacher)
"We must create a positively 'noisy' classroom atmosphere so they don't feel like they've returned to the Stone Age."	Analog Classroom Activation	Ustazah Laila (Arabic Teacher)
"Without phones, they are indeed more focused, but the teacher's energy is drained twofold to keep that focus there."	Escalation of Instructional Energy	Ustaz Mansur (Theology Teacher)

A critical interpretation of the table above reveals the phenomenon of "Teacher as Technology Proxy." When digital devices are removed, the burden of stimulation shifts entirely to the teacher's shoulders. Informants show that they are no longer just teaching but performing a theatrical act to offset the visual expectations of Gen Alpha. There is a pattern where teachers experience higher physical and mental fatigue because they must manually create the classroom dynamics usually triggered by digital tools. The mobile phone ban policy creates a "vacuum" that, if not filled by teacher creativity, will be filled by daydreaming and student alienation from *Turath* texts.

Furthermore, this data shows that teachers perform complex "Sensory Negotiations." Without audio-visual assistance, teachers must rely on the power of rhetoric and analogies very close to the students' digital world to maintain relevance. Ustaz Fauzi's experience regarding "digital withdrawal" confirms that neurologically, Gen Alpha students still carry their digital mindset into the analog classroom. Therefore, the primary pedagogical challenge is no longer the understanding of material, but how to win the "battle of attention" against the students' digital memories suppressed by *pesantren* rules.

Observation results support these findings; teachers are often seen using expressive hand gestures, dramatic changes in voice intonation, and the intensive use of physical media such as cards or colorful whiteboards. The researcher observed that in classes where the teacher tended to be passive, students showed signs of faster "disengagement," such as propping their chins or doodling on the edges of the book. The researcher's interpretation confirms that pedagogical success in a non-digital environment highly depends on the teacher's ability to perform "human-to-human interaction," the quality of which surpasses screen interaction, ensuring the process of knowledge transfer continues effectively.

In terms of restatement, these findings show that the ban on digital devices for Gen Alpha forces teachers to transform into "living multimedia." The formed pattern is an escalation of personal-pedagogical competence demands, where teachers must independently produce visual and auditory stimuli through analog creativity. The main challenge faced is not the difficulty of *kitab kuning*, but the effort to maintain the stability of student focus accustomed to instant gratification. Teachers in this *pesantren* have successfully created a "pedagogy of presence" as an answer to the absence of technology in the classroom.

Table 3. Non-Digital Challenges

Informant Position	Essence of Experience	Indicators
Senior Teacher	Transformation from Authority to Empathy	A more personal and fatherly approach in explaining the books.
Junior Teacher	Innovation in Manual Teaching Aids	Creation of creative physical media from scrap materials/paper for visualization.
Curriculum Coordinator	Redesign of Time Allocation	More frequent breaks and discussion intervals to refresh student focus.

Interpretation of this table shows a "Collective Creative Compensation" pattern. *Pesantren* educators do not give in to tool limitations but seek solutions through behavioral and environmental modifications. Junior teachers tend to innovate physical media as digital visualization proxies, while senior teachers strengthen emotional and spiritual aspects to bind student attention. This pattern shows that the absence of technology actually triggers the rebirth of classical methods enriched with a modern psychological understanding of the latest generation's attention span.

This leads to the description of the "Analog-Adaptive" pattern, where all *pesantren* elements work together to create an ecosystem that remains stimulating even without electricity or screens. Indicators of this pattern's success are seen in the students' ability to "love" the process of reading physical texts again without notification distractions. Teachers successfully turn the phone ban challenge into an opportunity to train "deep work" habits that are currently fading in the outside world, making the *pesantren* an oasis of deep literacy for Generation Alpha.

Adaptive Strategies in Maintaining a Balance between Tradition and Innovation

The operational definition of adaptive strategy in these findings refers to hybrid instructional tactics implemented by teachers to integrate the noble values of *kitab kuning* with the cognitive needs of Gen Alpha through the measured use of technology. This strategy is "minimalist-strategic," where digital tools such as laptops and projectors function only as visual stimulants, not as substitutes for physical text. In the field, this strategy manifests in the form of "Digitalized-Turath Presentation," a method that maintains the sacredness of manual book reading but is supported by digital concept mapping on a TV screen or projector to clarify complex grammatical structures (*Nahwu-Sharaf*). The main focus is to maintain *sorogan* and

bandongan methods as the core *pesantren* identity while modifying delivery to be more accommodative of the visual mindset of today's students.

Four informants provided deep insights into this strategy. Ustaz Rahmat stated: "Projectors are only for displaying concept maps so that students do not get lost in long texts." This indicates a Visual Mapping strategy. Ustazah Hana added: "We use laptops to play audio of *qari'* (reciters) so that student pronunciation is standardized, but the book remains in hand." This is an Auditory Modeling strategy. Meanwhile, Ustaz Yusuf emphasized: "Group discussions are guided with interactive slides so they are not passive." This refers to Guided Interactive Discussion. Finally, Ustaz Bashir opined: "The TV screen is used to dissect manuscript copies so they see the aesthetics of *Turath*." The researcher interprets this data as the teacher's effort to perform "digital scaffolding"—providing technological assistance at the beginning of understanding, only to be released once students become independent in reading physical texts.

Interaction between informants shows a "Techno-Traditionalism" pattern. Teachers do not simply replace old methods but strengthen them with technology as teaching aids. The researcher observed that the use of laptops and projectors is not for entertainment but for cognitive efficiency. By displaying *I'rab* schemes on the screen, teachers successfully reduced time spent writing on the whiteboard and diverted it to Q&A interactions. This interpretation confirms that *pesantren* teachers' adaptive strategies are highly selective; they choose technologies that strengthen literacy depth rather than distract from it. Teachers act as "cultural filters" ensuring that innovation remains under the control of tradition, so the essence of blessing (*barakah*) in learning *kitab kuning* is preserved despite using modern devices in the classroom.

Documentation of the curriculum and teaching materials shows the existence of a "Digital Companion Module" containing book material summaries in the form of infographics and slides. In the curriculum document, there are instructions to use visual media for at least 15 minutes in each session to maintain the attention of Gen Alpha students. The researcher interprets this data as a form of formalizing innovation within the *pesantren* system. Tradition is no longer left to run purely on an organic-traditional basis but is systematically designed in instructional documents combining classical competency standards with modern delivery methods. This documentation proves that adaptation is not just a personal teacher initiative but an institutional movement to respond to new student characteristics without sacrificing the core *Turath* curriculum.

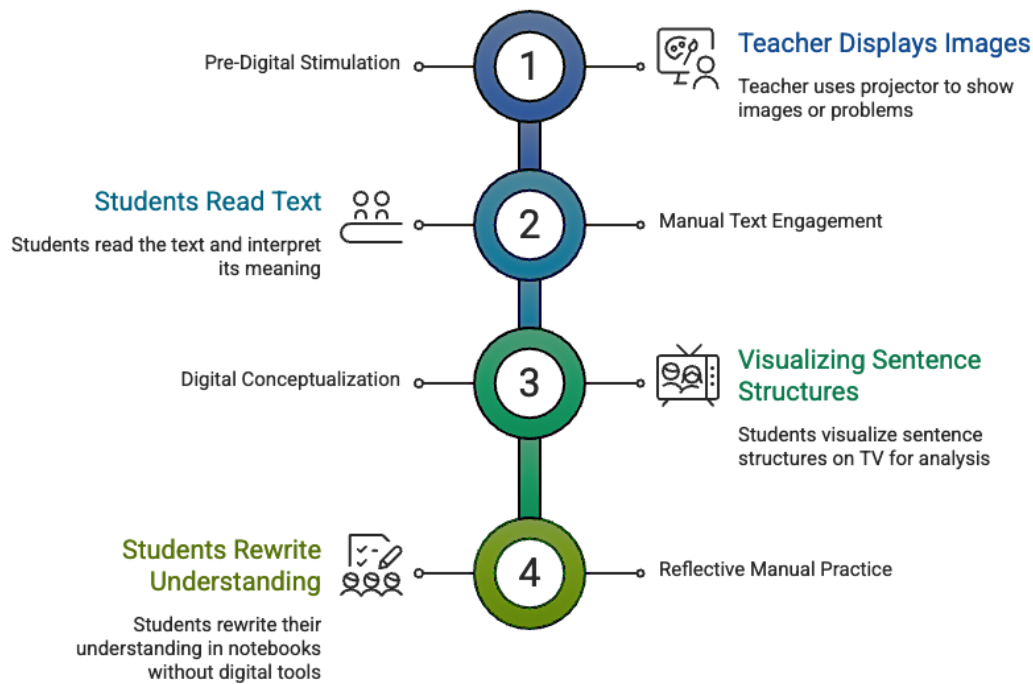


Figure 1. Adaptive Strategy Flow: The Hybrid-Circle Model

The flow of this adaptive strategy begins with (1) Pre-Digital Stimulation, where the teacher presents images or contextual problems via a projector. It continues to (2) Manual Text Engagement, involving the traditional reading of the text (*maknani*). This is followed by (3) Digital Conceptualization, which utilizes visualizations of sentence structures on a TV screen for syntactical analysis. The final stage is (4) Reflective Manual Practice, where students rewrite their understanding in their respective notebooks without the aid of digital tools.

The interpretation of the "Hybrid-Circle Model" indicates that digital technology is only positioned during the opening and concept reinforcement phases, rather than at the core of the literacy process. This pattern ensures that the students' motor skills and visual acuity in examining physical texts remain sharpened. The use of a projector mid-session serves as an "anchor" for memory, preventing students from losing focus when encountering monotonous text. Symbolically, this flow illustrates that tradition (the book) is the center, while innovation (projectors/laptops) acts as a satellite that surrounds and illuminates that center, creating a harmonious pedagogical balance for Generation Alpha students.

Observation results show that the teacher's use of a projector is capable of awakening a distinct passion for learning; students appear more focused while gazing at the screen during the sentence analysis session, yet return to a state of solemnity, looking down at their books during the meaning-reading session. Teachers masterfully play the dual roles of a "presenter" in front of the screen and a "Kiai" (traditional scholar) in front of the book. The researcher interprets this strategy as highly effective in mitigating boredom without creating a dependency on devices. The presence of this minimalist technology actually strengthens the teacher's authority, as it bridges two worlds: the sacred world of classical scholarship and the

technological world familiar to the students, resulting in a classroom atmosphere that is dynamic yet remains controlled.

As a restatement, these findings indicate that the adaptive strategy of *pesantren* teachers in the Gen Alpha era is "Tradition-Based Innovation." Minimalist technology, such as laptops and projectors, is used as a visual bridge to help students understand the complex structures of *Turath* texts. The emerging pattern shows that technology does not dominate the classroom but instead serves only as an instructional aid to reinforce the *sorogan* and *bandongan* methods. This strategy succeeds in maintaining a balance between the students' need for visual stimulation and the *pesantren's* need for textual depth. Teachers have developed a "bridge pedagogy" that ensures classical values remain accessible and relevant for digital natives without losing the original identity of the Islamic scholarly tradition.

The pattern emerging from the data above is Methodological Syncretism. This pattern is characterized by three main features: first, Selective Integration, which is the selection of technology that only supports concept visualization. Second, Traditional Supremacy, which is the placement of physical texts as the primary source of truth over digital media. Third, Contextual Bridging, which is the use of digital media to bring contemporary issues into classical texts. This pattern proves that *pesantren* possess high cultural resilience; they do not reject innovation but rather "tame" it to align with the rhythm and spirit of traditional *pesantren* education, which emphasizes blessing (*barakah*) and the depth of knowledge.

DISCUSSION

Teachers' perception of Generation Alpha as "Digital Visual Learners" with short attention spans aligns with findings by (Prensky, 2001; Vitvitskaya et al., 2022) regarding Digital Natives; however, this study extends these concepts into the context of *pesantren* sacredness. This finding is supported by (Ziatdinov & Cilliers, 2021) who state that Generation Alpha requires constant stimulation—a need addressed in this study through "Digitalized-Turath Presentation". Consistent with the study by (Handler & Linnekin, 1984) which views tradition as a non-static entity, these results indicate an "adaptive consciousness" where teachers negotiate meaning between unvocalized texts and a multimedia mindset. While alignment was also found with (Boekaerts, 1996) research on the psychology of learning, this study provides a novel update: *pesantren* teachers now position themselves as "architects of meaning" who bridge the epistemological gap between classical texts and digital reality.

The pedagogical challenges within a gadget-free policy trigger the phenomenon of the "Teacher as a Technology Proxy," a finding that reinforces (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) theory of scaffolding through intensive instructional assistance. Teachers' experiences dealing with students' "digital withdrawal" align with the concerns raised by (Carr, 2020) in *The Shallows* regarding cognitive shallowing caused by internet exposure. However, this research identifies a significant difference: the absence of technology in *pesantren* actually serves as a counter-culture that trains "Deep Work" (Newport, 2016). While literature from (Tomczyk, 2020) emphasizes teachers' digital literacy, this study proves that in a gadget-free environment, a

teacher's "analog-expressive literacy" is far more decisive for the successful transmission of knowledge than mere technical proficiency.

The "Hybrid-Circle Model" adaptive strategy discovered is a tangible form of highly moderate Blended Learning, aligning with the vision of (Selwyn, 2021; Shneiderman, 2020) regarding human-centered technology. This strategy is consistent with research by (Jaenullah et al., 2022) concerning *pesantren* resilience but offers novelty in the form of "minimalist-strategic" tactics using projectors as attention anchors. This supports (Johnson & Mayer, 2009) theory on Multimedia Learning, where the integration of words and images enhances memory retention. A fundamental difference from (Ritonga, 2020) study is that in *pesantren*, technology never replaces the authority of the physical book; instead, it functions merely as an "illuminator" of classical texts to remain relevant to Generation Alpha.

The theoretical implication of this research is the emergence of the "Adaptive-Traditional Pedagogy" concept, a framework where tradition is maintained not through isolation, but through methodological re-contextualization. Theoretically, this challenges the dichotomous view separating educational modernity from conservatism. This study proves that the stability of classical values can coexist symbiotically with instructional flexibility. Practically, *pesantren* must train teachers not only in book content mastery but also in visual rhetoric skills and instructional message design compatible with the brain functions of digital natives to avoid student alienation from Islamic intellectual heritage.

Overall, the emerging pattern of "Methodological Syncretism" indicates that the continuity of *Turath* teaching highly depends on the teacher's role as an intelligent "cultural filter". These findings contribute to global educational literature by showing that traditional educational environments that strictly limit technology are capable of producing pedagogical innovations based on deep human presence. This pattern supports (Postman, 2011) idea that schools should serve as a "counter-environment" to technological dominance. Thus, *pesantren* are not falling behind the times; rather, they are redefining the best way to educate Generation Alpha by providing a balance between the speed of digital information and the depth of

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study indicates that *pesantren* teachers have transformed from mere text readers into "architects of meaning" who engage in methodological syncretism between *Turath* traditions and the visual needs of Generation Alpha. A valuable lesson learned is that gadget-free policies do not hinder innovation; instead, they trigger the emergence of a "pedagogy of presence," where teachers act as technological proxies through visual rhetoric and contemporary analogies. The "Hybrid-Circle Model" adaptive strategy proves that the strategic use of minimalist technology (laptops and projectors) is capable of maintaining the depth of *kitab kuning* literacy while meeting the interactivity expectations of digital-native students. This study concludes that the key to the successful transmission of classical scholarship in the era of disruption lies in the cognitive flexibility of teachers in performing contextual reinterpretation without deconstructing the sacredness of tradition.

The strength of this research lies in its scholarly contribution to formulating the concept of "Adaptive-Traditional Pedagogy," a new theoretical framework that bridges the dichotomy between conservative education and digital modernity. This paper fills a research gap regarding the lived experiences of *pesantren* teachers as active subjects facing generational shifts. However, this study is limited by a geographical scope confined to hybrid-model *pesantren*, necessitating caution in generalizing the findings. For future research, it is suggested to conduct comparative studies with pure *salaf pesantren* that do not utilize visual aids at all, or longitudinal research to measure the long-term impact of this adaptive pedagogy on the "Deep Work" capabilities and literacy resilience of Generation Alpha students in higher education.

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