Transformation of Traditional Values to the Phenomenon of Santri Courtship in the Digital Era

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Abstract:

This research aims to analyze how traditional values in Islamic boarding schools have transformed in the context of the dating phenomenon among Islamic boarding school students in the digital era. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, this research explores the influence of communication technology, such as social media, on student dating, which was previously strictly controlled by Islamic boarding school norms. Data was collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, providing an in-depth picture of interactions between students and the use of digital media in romantic contexts. The research results show that Islamic boarding school students use social media as a means of dating, which often deviates from hard-line traditional values. This research identifies new dynamics where traditional and modern values collide and interact, creating a third space where norms and values are shaped and renegotiated. The implications of this research are essential for Islamic boarding school caregivers in formulating educational strategies relevant to today's technology and for policymakers in designing interventions that balance traditional values and students' freedom in the digital era.

Key Words: *Traditional Values, Student Dating, Social Media*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang bagaimana nilai-nilai tradisional di pesantren telah mengalami transformasi dalam konteks fenomena pacaran di kalangan santri di era digital. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif jenis fenomenologi, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pengaruh teknologi komunikasi seperti media sosial terhadap student dating, yang sebelumnya dikontrol ketat oleh norma-norma pesantren. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan analisis dokumen, memberikan gambaran mendalam tentang interaksi antara siswa dan penggunaan media digital dalam konteks romantis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa santri menggunakan media sosial sebagai sarana untuk menjalin pacaran, yang seringkali menyimpang dari garis keras nilai-nilai tradisional. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi dinamika baru di mana nilai-nilai tradisional dan modern berbenturan dan berinteraksi, menciptakan ruang ketiga di mana norma dan nilai dibentuk dan dinegosiasikan ulang. Implikasi dari penelitian ini penting bagi pengasuh pesantren dalam merumuskan strategi pendidikan yang relevan dengan teknologi saat ini, serta bagi pembuat kebijakan dalam merancang intervensi yang menyeimbangkan antara nilai-nilai tradisional dan kebebasan individu siswa di era digital.

Kata Kunci: *Nilai Tradisional, Pacaran Santri, Media Sosial*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an inseparable part of daily life, including among students at Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School (Dewi et al., 2020; Akbar et al., 2022; Arsyad, 2023). The use of social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook have changed the way students communicate, interact, and express themselves (Subaidi, 2020; Diana & Zaini, 2023). This transformation is interesting to examine because it indicates a significant shift in traditional values that have been embraced by students (Branch et al., 2021; Bradshaw et al., 2021; Syihabuddin et al., 2023). This phenomenon has broad implications for the formation of the character and morals of santri, who are the next generation who are expected to maintain and develop Islamic values in everyday life (Roqib, 2021; Hastasari et al., 2022; Rochmat et al., 2022).

According to social adaptation theory, individuals tend to adjust their behavior and values according to the existing social and technological environment (Susilo et al., 2022; Zenrif & Mustofa, 2022; Zaini et al., 2022). In this context, the use of social media can affect how students perceive and live their lives in pesantren, especially in terms of social interaction and the values they profess (Mustofa, 2011). This theory is relevant because it provides a framework for understanding how santri adapt to the changing environment brought about by digitalization, and how this affects traditional values taught in pesantren (Crawford, 2020; Castillo et al., 2020; Constantino et al., 2021).

The main problem in this study is how social media affects the traditional values of courtship among Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School students. The widespread use of social media among students has changed the way they interact and connect. On the one hand, social media facilitates communication and expands students' social networks, but on the other hand, this can also affect their perception of moral and ethical values taught in pesantren. Some students admitted that they felt influenced by the modern lifestyle displayed on social media, which often contradicted the teachings of pesantren. This issue is important to research because it can provide a deeper understanding of the positive and negative impacts of social media use among students, as well as find solutions to overcome emerging challenges.

The influence of Islamic-based character education on bullying behavior in Islamic boarding schools has been the subject of serious concern in scientific research. Several studies with international standards have explored this phenomenon in depth. One significant study is the one conducted by Adha (2020), which examined the concrete impact of Islamic values education on reducing the incidence of bullying in Islamic boarding schools. The results of this study provide valuable insights into how the implementation of Islamic values in character education can change social dynamics in the pesantren environment.

In addition, Wibowo (2021) conducted an in-depth analysis of the integration of Islamic character education into anti-bullying programs in Islamic boarding schools. This research highlights the importance of collaboration

between aspects of religious education and bullying prevention efforts to create a safe and inclusive educational environment. A qualitative study conducted by Rahman (2020) provides a deeper picture of the role of Islamic boarding schools in reducing bullying behavior among adolescents. By involving the perspective of pesantren as Islamic educational institutions, this study reveals effective strategies in dealing with this problem. Furthermore, Hidayat (2022) conducted a longitudinal study investigating the long-term effectiveness of Islamic character education programs in addressing bullying. Through careful analysis of long-term data, this study provides a deeper understanding of changes in student behavior over time.

On the other hand, Fitriana (2021) takes a more specific approach by comparing the impact of Islamic ethics education on bullying behavior among female students in Islamic boarding schools. In this study, gender interactions and the influence of religious values in social contexts are explored in detail. Finally, Sujarwo (2020) provides a broad perspective on the influence of Islamic moral education on bullying behavior in Islamic boarding schools. Through a thorough analysis, this study illustrates the complex and important role of religious values in shaping student behavior.

Although there have been several studies highlighting the influence of social media on social interactions and the values of Muslim adolescents, research specifically examining the impact of social media on traditional dating values among students in pesantren environments is still very limited. This research seeks to fill the gap by focusing on Pondok Pesantren Miftahul Ulum , providing a more comprehensive insight into how social media affects traditional values in the pesantren environment.

The novelty of this research lies in the specific approach taken to understand the transformation of traditional values among students through the perspective of social media use. This study not only examines the influence of social media on social interaction, but also how social media affects students' perceptions of moral and ethical values taught in pesantren. This approach provides unique insights into how technology can interact with religious values in the context of Islamic education. Thus, this study offers a significant contribution in the academic literature and practice of pesantren education in the digital age.

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the impact of social media use on traditional dating values among Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School students. This study aims to understand the extent to which social media affects social interactions, moral perceptions, and ethics of students. In addition, this study also seeks to provide practical recommendations for pesantren managers in managing the use of social media among students, as well as offering strategies to maintain traditional values in the digital era. Thus, this research is expected to make an important contribution in the academic literature and practice of Islamic education in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research used is qualitative research with a phenomenology approach. Qualitative research is used to understand bullying in Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School deeply. At the same time, the case study approach allows researchers to explore the phenomenon comprehensively in an accurate and specific context (Farquhar et al., 2020). Using this approach, researchers can understand the internal and external dynamics of pesantren and the factors that influence the incidence of bullying.

The data collection techniques used in this study included in-depth interviews with Islamic boarding school administrators, teachers responsible for students, and some students involved in bullying incidents (Johnson et al., 2020). The interview was designed to deeply understand their experiences, perceptions, and views regarding bullying at Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School. In addition, direct observations were made on social interactions and environmental dynamics in Islamic boarding schools. These observations help researchers to understand the context and behavior patterns associated with bullying cases.

The data analysis technique used in this study is qualitative analysis. Data collected from interviews, observations, and documentation were analyzed thematically (Alam, 2021). The first step involves data coding, where data is sorted into smaller units and labeled according to relevant themes or concepts. Next, the themes are grouped, and their patterns or relationships are identified. In-depth analysis is conducted to understand the context and meaning behind the data, focusing on rich and in-depth interpretation. This approach allows researchers to explore the complexity of the bullying phenomenon in Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School holistically and thoroughly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School to reveal the transformation of traditional values in the practice of dating students in the digital era. Based on interviews with students, it was found that the use of social media played a major role in this change. The following are findings that include the role of social media in student social interaction, the influence of digitalization on traditional values, and the dynamics of courtship among students in the pesantren environment. The main findings of the study are as follows.
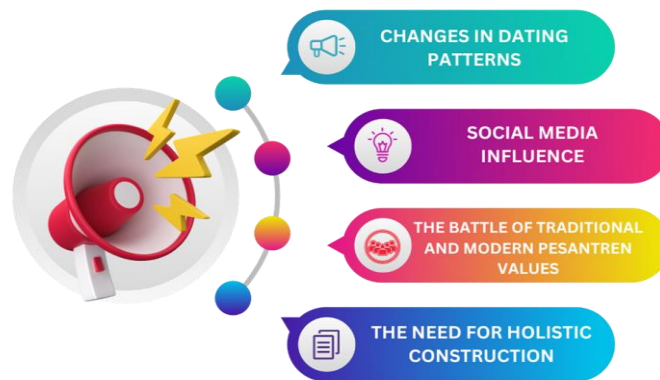
Figure 1. Transformation of Traditional Values

Transformation of Traditional Values in Santri Dating in the Digital Age

The research revealed that there have been significant changes in the way students date in the digital age, with the main influence coming from the use of technology and social media. Based on interviews with a number of students, it was found that social media is the main means of communicating and establishing relationships. One of the students stated, "I communicate more often with friends through WhatsApp and Instagram because it's easier and faster (I_S_2024)."

The results of this interview show that social media has taken an important role in the social life of students, replacing traditional forms of direct interaction in pesantren environments. The first statement reflects that the ease and speed of communication through platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram has made social media the main tool in students' daily interactions. This not only facilitates more efficient communication but also allows students to stay connected with their friends without time and place restrictions. Another student added, "Social media helps me get to know more people outside the pesantren, which is difficult to do if I only rely on in-person meetings (I_S_2024)."

The results of the interview above show that social media provides an opportunity for students to expand their social network beyond the physical environment of pesantren. Through social media, students can get to know more people and build wider relationships, something that is difficult to achieve with just an in-person meeting. This reflects social media's ability to transcend geographical boundaries and provide a more inclusive and interactive platform. Another student commented, "With social media, we can share stories and experiences without worrying about being closely monitored by the pesantren (I_S_2024)."

In addition, the use of social media also offers greater freedom for students to share stories and experiences without worrying about being closely monitored by the pesantren. This shows that social media provides a more open and flexible space for students to express themselves and communicate with others. All of these interpretations confirm that social media has become a crucial element in

shaping new patterns of social interaction among students, replacing more strict and limited traditional norms.

The Role of Social Media in Santri Interaction

In a further interview, the students revealed that social media not only facilitates communication but also allows them to express themselves in a more open and creative way. One of the students stated, "I can share my thoughts and feelings on Instagram, something that is difficult to do in an in-person meeting at a pesantren (I_S_2024)."

The interpretation of the results of this interview shows that social media provides a platform that allows students to express their thoughts and feelings more freely compared to meeting directly in a pesantren environment. This reflects the role of social media in providing greater freedom for students to express themselves without having to be burdened by strict norms in pesantren. With social media, students can share and convey what they feel and think more openly. Another Santri added, "Through social media, I can follow my friends and get the latest information quickly (I_S_2024)."

In addition, social media not only facilitates communication but also allows faster and wider access to information. A student's statement about her ability to keep up with friends and get the latest information quickly shows that social media serves as an effective and efficient source of information. This allows students to stay updated with a variety of information that may not be easily accessible through traditional means. Another student said, "We often discuss lessons or other things in WhatsApp groups, it's very helpful in learning together (I_S_2024)."

The use of WhatsApp groups to discuss lessons or other things shows that social media also plays an important role in supporting the learning process together. This shows that social media provides a collaborative platform that allows students to share knowledge and help each other in academic activities. Thus, social media is not only a communication tool but also an important means of learning and developing knowledge among students.

This shows that social media also plays a role in supporting students' academic activities. The following chart illustrates the comparison between traditional and digital interactions among students:

Table 1. Comparison of Traditional and Digital Interactions among Students

Interaction Aspect	Tradisional	Digital
Media	Face to face	Social media (WhatsApp, Instagram)
Space of Freedom	Limited, closely monitored	Free, less closely monitored
Social Networks	Limited to pesantren environment	Extensive, covering outside the pesantren
Self-expression	Limited by pesantren norms	More free and creative

The results of the table above show that traditional interactions among students rely on face-to-face with limited and closely supervised freedom space, as well as limited social networks in the pesantren environment. In contrast, digital interactions through social media such as WhatsApp and Instagram offer greater freedom with less intense supervision, allowing for freer and creative self-expression. Social media has also expanded students' social networks to include people outside the pesantren, significantly changing the way they communicate and interact.

The Effect of Digitalization on Traditional Values

However, this transformation also brings its own challenges to the traditional values espoused by pesantren. Most students admit that the use of social media can affect their perception of moral and ethical values taught in pesantren. One of the students said, "Sometimes I feel influenced by the lifestyle displayed on social media, which is not always in accordance with the teachings in pesantren (I_S_2024)." These findings point to a conflict between traditional values and the modernizing influence brought about by digitalization. Another Santri added, "Seeing friends' posts on social media often makes me question some of the teachings taught in pesantren (I_S_2024)."

This suggests that social media can be a powerful source of influence, which can raise questions and doubts about already existing values. Another student said, "Although I try to stick to pesantren values, sometimes it's hard not to be swayed by what I see on social media (I_S_2024)." This shows that despite the awareness to maintain traditional values, the influence of social media remains difficult to avoid.

The Dynamics of Courtship Among Santri

Dating among students in the digital age has also changed in the way they establish relationships. Based on interviews, some students admitted that they used social media to get to know and interact with the opposite sex. "Through social media, I can get to know more people without having to meet in person, this makes us closer and easier to communicate, (I_S_2024)"

This shows that social media facilitates the process of introduction and initial interaction between students. It also shows that social media has expanded students' ability to build and maintain interpersonal relationships. With social media, students can get to know more people without the need to meet in person, which facilitates closeness and ease of communication. This reflects the role of social media as an effective tool in expanding social networks and facilitating interaction, which previously may have been limited by physical and time limitations in the pesantren environment. The use of social media allows students to stay connected with more individuals, both inside and outside their community, thereby increasing the quality and quantity of their social interactions.

Another Santri said, "I feel more comfortable communicating through social media because I don't have to worry about other people's gazes or judgments (I_S_2024)." This shows that social media provides a sense of security and comfort for students in interacting. Another student added, "However, I also feel that relationships built through social media are less profound than in-person interactions (I_S_2024)."

This statement shows that although social media facilitates communication and expands social networks, there are limitations in the depth of relationships built through digital platforms. Santri feels that the interaction that occurs on social media is less in-depth than direct interaction. This reflects that although social media provides ease and flexibility in communicating, the intimacy and emotional closeness achieved through face-to-face communication is still difficult to replace by digital communication. This highlights the importance of direct interaction in building closer and meaningful relationships.

Changes in traditional values among students show a significant shift influenced by technological advances and the use of social media. Social media has become a key tool in students' social interactions, replacing more traditional and closely monitored forms of face-to-face communication. With social media, students can communicate more freely and widely, get to know more people outside the pesantren environment, and express themselves more openly and creatively. However, this convenience also brings its own challenges, such as the potential conflict between the traditional values of pesantren and modern lifestyles displayed on social media. Although social media facilitates communication and expands social networks, relationships built through digital platforms are often less profound than in-person interactions, suggesting that true emotional closeness and intimacy are still easier to achieve through face-to-face communication. Where related to this transformation can be explained through the following Table 2.

Table 2. Changes in Traditional Values among Students

Traditional Values	Value in the Digital Age
Live interaction	Interaction through social media
Conservative norms	More open self-expression
Real emotional closeness	Emotional closeness through text/images
Close supervision	Freedom of interaction
Focus on religious teachings	Influenced by modern lifestyle

The results of this study reveal a significant transformation in the traditional values of courtship among students at Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in the digital era, especially through the use of social media, which facilitates communication and expands social networks. These findings are in line with research by Mustofa, (2011) which found that social media plays an important role in shaping social interactions among Muslim adolescents, allowing them to communicate more freely and openly. Students stated that

social media helped them get to know more people outside the pesantren, which is difficult to do if they only rely on in-person meetings. However, these results contradict Diana & Zaini, (2023) study, which suggests that religious communities tend to maintain traditional values despite modernization pressures. Meanwhile, Dewi et al., (2020) research supports our findings by stating that digitalization affects social norms and adolescent behavior, giving them greater space for freedom in expressing themselves. The conflict between traditional pesantren values and modern lifestyles displayed on social media shows that although social media expands networks and ease of communication, the depth of emotional connection achieved through face-to-face interaction is still difficult to replace by digital platforms. This study emphasizes the need for a balance between technological adaptation and the maintenance of traditional values in the context of education in Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School.

This research makes an important contribution in understanding the dynamics of social change among students at Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in the digital era. By revealing how social media affects the way students interact and go about dating, this study helps clarify the conflict between traditional values of pesantren and the influence of modernization. These findings not only add to the academic literature on the influence of digitalization on religious communities, but also provide practical insights for pesantren managers in designing policies that balance between technological adaptation and the maintenance of traditional values. In addition, this study can be a reference for future research that wants to explore the impact of social media on other aspects of the lives of Islamic students and educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

This research revealed that the transformation of traditional values in dating among Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School students in the digital era is strongly influenced by the use of social media. Social media has become the primary means for students to communicate and build social networks, replacing more traditional in-person interactions. Santri feel freer and more creative in expressing themselves through digital platforms, although this also presents challenges in maintaining the moral and ethical values taught in pesantren. The conflict between traditional values and the modernizing influence brought by social media shows that although social media expands communication and social networks, the depth of emotional connection is still better achieved through face-to-face interaction.

For future research, it is recommended to explore more deeply about the long-term impact of social media use on student behavior and values, as well as how pesantren can balance between technological adaptation and preservation of traditional values. Further research can also focus on developing effective educational strategies to help students manage the influence of social media, as well as understanding the role of educators and caregivers in supporting students to face the challenges of the digital era. In addition, comparative studies

between pesantren in different regions with different levels of digitalization can provide more comprehensive insight into the dynamics of changing traditional values among students.

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