

Digital Crisis, Interpretive Change: The Transformation of Tafsir Tarbawi and the Search for Ethical Pedagogy in Indonesia's Islamic Digital Sphere

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Abstract. The accelerating digitalization of Islamic discourse in Indonesia has profoundly transformed the ways in which authority, pedagogy, and ethical reasoning are articulated and negotiated within Qur'anic interpretation. This study explores how online Muslim communities reinterpret *tafsir tarbawi* (educational exegesis) and reassess the moral foundations of *fiqh*-based authority within the dynamics of digital modernity. Focusing on the #BoikotTrans7 controversy, the research employs a qualitative digital ethnographic approach that analyzes approximately 1,078 YouTube comments and discussions collected from five major channels associated with the event. The data were examined using Creswell's model of thematic analysis to identify recurring moral narratives and patterns of ethical engagement. The findings reveal that initial expressions of moral outrage gradually evolved into participatory acts of ethical reflection, transforming digital platforms into spaces for collective pedagogy and communal moral reasoning. Participants frequently referred to central Islamic virtues such as humility (*tawādu'*), justice (*'adl*), and forgiveness (*maghfirah*), forming what this study conceptualizes as a "digital fiqh of pedagogy." Although traditional *kyai-santri* hierarchies remain symbolically influential, moral legitimacy now circulates through affective, dialogical, and network-based interactions. The study concludes that Indonesia's digital Islamic public sphere functions as a contemporary *majlis al-fiqh*, serving as a participatory environment where education, law, and ethics converge. By integrating *tafsir tarbawi* with Islamic legal ethics, this research offers fresh insight into the evolving relationship between faith, justice, and moral education in the age of digital mediation.

Keywords: Digital fiqh pedagogy, Tafsir tarbawi, Islamic authority in digital media, Socio-legal ethnography of Islam, Ethical interpretation and moral justice

1. Introduction

The rapid proliferation of digital technology has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of Islamic education and religious communication in Indonesia (Kornbluh & Goodman, 2020). Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) have emerged as vital spaces where Muslims engage in learning, dialogue, and

reinterpretation of Qur'anic teachings beyond the confines of formal institutions (Mustain et al., 2025). This transformation reflects a wider sociocultural shift in which authority (Khanin, 2025), once centered in pesantren and among religious scholars, now diffuses across digital participants who articulate Islamic ethics and law through interactive and participatory discourse (Hady et al., 2025; Blanch & Blanch, 2023). The growing prominence of these online spaces not only redefines how Islamic values are conveyed and contested but also disrupts traditional pedagogical structures founded on hierarchy, discipline, and deference (Blomberg & Schünemann, 2024). As a result, the digital realm has evolved into a significant pedagogical domain, mediating the intersection of faith, education, and moral consciousness in ways that are both innovative and unprecedented within Indonesia's religious and intellectual history.

Existing scholarship on Islamic authority, pedagogy, and digital religion offers a robust theoretical framework for examining this ongoing transformation (Hady et al., 2025; Ledvinka & Donovan, 2023). Foundational sociological perspectives, such as Max Weber's (2009) analysis of charismatic and traditional authority, alongside Talal Asad's (2009) reconceptualization of Islam as a "discursive tradition," highlight the continuous and context-bound negotiation of moral reasoning within Muslim societies (Urinboyev, 2023). Building upon these foundations, contemporary scholars such as Gary Bunt (2009), and Birgit Meyer (2009) have demonstrated how digital media decentralize religious authority and give rise to new modalities of mediated piety. Yet, much of this scholarship tends to emphasize processes of fragmentation and individualization, frequently framing digital religion as a domain of moral ambiguity rather than as a site for ethical reconstruction (Hady et al., 2025). What remains insufficiently explored is how digital Muslim publics, particularly in Indonesia, transform online platforms into collective spaces of moral instruction and ethical deliberation (Shewly et al., 2020), where Qur'anic interpretation functions simultaneously as a pedagogical practice and an ethical undertaking (Blomberg & Schünemann, 2024). This study addresses this lacuna by positioning *tafsir tarbawi* (educational exegesis) within the shifting landscape of digital discourse and Islamic legal thought, thereby reexamining how education and law converge in shaping contemporary Islamic moral reasoning (Hegstad, 2021; Blanch & Blanch, 2023).

This study seeks to explore how the digital transformation of *tafsir tarbawi* reflects broader shifts in Islamic pedagogy and legal-ethical reasoning. It focuses on the ways in which online Muslim communities reinterpret Qur'anic teachings to respond to contemporary moral challenges and renegotiate the contours of *fiqh*-based authority. The research addresses two primary questions: first, in what ways do forms of moral reasoning and ethical deliberation emerge through digital practices of Qur'anic interpretation; and second, how does the pedagogical essence of *tafsir tarbawi* evolve within the digital public sphere to generate new frameworks of legitimacy and justice? By examining these questions, the study aims to enrich current scholarship on digital Islam, arguing that online engagement constitutes not only a space of ideological tension but also a dynamic arena for participatory moral education and collective ethical reflection.

Methodologically, this research adopts a qualitative digital ethnographic approach that synthesizes perspectives from Islamic legal studies, the sociology of religion, and educational theory (Sunier, 2021). The primary dataset comprises

approximately 1,078 comments and user interactions gathered from five prominent YouTube channels directly associated with the #BoikotTrans7 controversy. Data collection and analysis followed Creswell's model (2018) of thematic coding, enabling the systematic identification of recurring moral narratives and patterns of ethical reasoning. This methodological framework allows the study to extend beyond conventional textual interpretation, examining instead how Muslims engage in *tafsir* as an interactive and ethical practice within digital environments (Ekman, 2022). By bridging *tafsir tarbawi* with *fiqh*-based inquiry, this approach uncovers the dynamic intersections between pedagogical and legal discourses (Elgabsi, 2024), highlighting how online communities collectively construct moral understanding and interpretive authority in the digital age (Blomberg & Schünemann, 2024).

This study argues that the digitalization of Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia marks the emergence of a new interpretive paradigm, conceptualized here as a "digital *fiqh* of pedagogy." Within this framework, *tafsir tarbawi* moves beyond its conventional role as a didactic tool confined to classrooms or *pesantren*, becoming an interactive and participatory form of ethical engagement accessible to the broader public (Caine et al., 2022). The digital mediation of Qur'anic exegesis redefines the essential relationships among teacher and learner, authority and community, and law and emotion, producing new modes of interpretation and moral exchange (Khanin, 2025). Although the symbolic authority of the *kyai* and *santri* hierarchy remains significant (Urinboyev, 2023), the legitimacy of moral discourse increasingly depends on dialogical communication, affective sincerity, and collective ethical reasoning (Arevuo, 2023). This transformation represents both a pedagogical renewal and an ethical realignment, reflecting an adaptive evolution that situates Islamic education within the participatory and morally dynamic context of digital modernity (Elgabsi, 2024). As Mitzen (2024) argues, pedagogy is never a neutral act of knowledge transmission but an ontological praxis that shapes how students perceive justice, order, and authority (Ledvinka & Donovan, 2023). In a similar way, digital *tafsir* pedagogy reconfigures moral formation through participatory and dialogical encounters.

2. Method

This research employs a qualitative field methodology grounded in an empirical *tafsir* approach and implemented through digital ethnography (Shewly et al., 2020; Ledvinka & Donovan, 2023). Conducted over a three-month period, from August to October 2025, the study investigates the dynamics of Qur'anic interpretation and ethical discourse as they unfold across diverse online platforms. The primary data were obtained from five YouTube channels that were closely connected to the #BoikotTrans7 controversy, namely TVNU Televisi Nahdlatul Ulama (Ulama, 2025), Liputan Jatim (Jatim, 2025), Al-Bahjah TV (TV, 2025), Laskar Dadas (Laskardadas, 2025), and Trans7 Official. In total, 1,078 comments and user interactions were collected, forming the main body of analysis and representing a wide range of perspectives on *tafsir tarbawi*, Islamic ethics, and digital authority (Rousell, 2024).

The secondary data comprise a range of scholarly sources, including books, journal articles, and academic studies focused on Islamic education, digital religion, and the socio-legal dimensions of Islam (Blanch & Blanch, 2023). The theoretical foundation of this research draws on Talal Asad's (2009) notion of Islam as a discursive

tradition, Pierre Bourdieu's theory (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986) of the religious field, and contemporary analyses of digital Islam by Gary Bunt (2009). Together, these frameworks provide the conceptual grounding for examining the moral and interpretive transformations within *fiqh al-tarbiyah* in digital contexts (Sunier, 2021).

Data collection was carried out through non-participatory digital observation, emphasizing the analysis of comment sections, discussion threads, and public exchanges on the identified YouTube channels. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure that the selected online spaces directly addressed themes related to *fiqh*, *adab*, and Islamic pedagogy (Shewly et al., 2020; Caine et al., 2022). All data were systematically documented, archived, and thematically organized to maintain contextual integrity and analytical precision, allowing the research to trace how Islamic interpretive and ethical discourses are performed and negotiated within digital environments.

The data analysis for this study was guided by Creswell's qualitative framework (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018), which comprises three interrelated phases. The first phase, data reduction, involved systematically organizing, coding, and thematically categorizing the digital comments to identify recurring moral and pedagogical themes. Particular attention was given to expressions that reflected central Islamic virtues, including humility (*tawādu'*), justice (*'adl*), and forgiveness (*maghfirah*). The second phase, data presentation, focused on transforming the coded material into coherent descriptive and interpretive narratives, supported by carefully selected excerpts from the digital corpus. This process enabled the ethical, educational, and affective dimensions of the discourse to become more visible and analytically accessible (Ekman, 2022). The final phase, conclusion and verification, integrated the empirical findings with the study's theoretical foundations to interpret how *tafsir tarbawi* functions as a dialogical and participatory mode of digital pedagogy (Elgabsi, 2024).

By employing this approach, the study constructs a critical bridge between the interpretive tradition of *tafsir tarbawi* and the normative principles of Islamic legal ethics. It demonstrates that digital platforms are not merely instruments of communication but evolving intellectual spaces where ethical reasoning and pedagogical creativity are collaboratively enacted. In doing so, the research reveals how online environments have become vital sites for the rearticulation of Islamic knowledge, fostering new modalities of moral discourse and transforming the very fabric of contemporary Islamic intellectual life (Urinboyev, 2023).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Digital Pedagogy and the Reconfiguration of *Tafsir Tarbawi*

The digital ethnographic data collected from various YouTube platforms, including Laskar Dadas (469 comments)(Laskardadas, 2025), Liputan Jatim (165 comments)(Jatim, 2025), Al-Bahjah TV (138 comments) (TV, 2025), Trans7 Official (221 comments), Pondok Lirboyo TV (85 comments) , and TV Nahdlatul Ulama(Ulama, 2025), demonstrate a profound shift in how *tafsir tarbawi*—the educational interpretation of the Qur'an—is articulated, mediated, and negotiated within digital

environments. The comment sections revealed that participants were not only expressing emotional reactions but were also engaging in *ta'lim*-like exchanges, actively teaching, advising, and reflecting on Qur'anic ethics and *adab* (Shewly et al., 2020).

From this dataset, three prominent empirical patterns emerged. First, approximately 58 percent of the comments emphasized *adab al-ta'allum* and *adab al-ta'lim*, the ethics of learning and teaching. Users frequently referenced traditional *pesantren* values such as humility (*tawāḍu'*), patience (*ṣabr*), and reverence toward the *kyai* as fundamental components of moral pedagogy. Comments like "*Santri harus menjaga adab kepada guru, jangan sampai media menistakan itu*" ("Students must uphold proper etiquette toward their teachers; the media must not degrade it") and "*Inilah pendidikan pesantren sejati – taat dan tawadhu*" ("This is true *pesantren* education – obedience and humility") illustrate that digital audiences perceived the controversy not merely as a cultural insult but as a violation of moral and educational values.

Second, about 30 percent of users employed the platform as a space for moral reflection and instruction, quoting Qur'anic verses, ethical proverbs, and classical wisdom from the *ulama*. Comments such as "*Allahu Akbar, semoga menjadi pelajaran bagi media agar lebih beradab*" ("May this serve as a lesson for the media to act more respectfully") and "*Ilmu tanpa adab ibarat api tanpa cahaya*" ("Knowledge without manners is like fire without light") transformed the comment threads into interactive micro-classrooms. These discursive exchanges reveal that *tafsir tarbawi* is being collectively enacted in digital spaces, evolving into a participatory form of Qur'anic pedagogy shaped by communal dialogue and moral reasoning. As Caine et al. (2022) argues, sustainable pedagogical transformation requires a progressive relational pedagogy that foregrounds belonging, voice, and cultural wealth. This resonates with the digital *fiqh* of pedagogy, which similarly frames moral learning as a relational act grounded in communal ethics and dialogical recognition.

Third, a smaller yet influential segment of the comments, approximately 12 percent, reflected signs of pedagogical innovation by reframing the controversy as a digital moment of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (moral purification). Several users explicitly interpreted the incident as an opportunity for shared learning and self-reflection. Comments such as "*Kritik boleh, tapi harus dengan ilmu dan hati yang tenang*" ("Criticism is acceptable, but it must be guided by knowledge and a calm heart") and "*Ini pelajaran untuk semua, termasuk kita yang sering bicara tanpa riset dan adab*" ("This is a lesson for all of us, especially those who speak without research or proper etiquette") positioned the digital discourse as a form of moral training—a re-enactment of *fiqh al-tarbiyah*, or the jurisprudence of education (Sunier, 2021).

Taken together, these patterns suggest that digital platforms have emerged as *adab publics*: affective and dialogical spaces in which users collectively negotiate pedagogical ethics and interpretive authority through moral and emotional engagement (Hegstad, 2021). The findings illustrate that the digitalization of Qur'anic education in Indonesia has fundamentally redefined *tafsir tarbawi*, shifting it from a hierarchical, face-to-face model of instruction to a distributed and participatory form of digital pedagogy (Khanin, 2025). Authority that was once situated within *pesantren* classrooms—anchored in the embodied presence of the *kyai*—has now migrated into

interconnected online arenas where lay Muslims perform *ta'lim* through discourse, empathy, and affective reasoning (Sunier, 2021).

This transformation reflects the conception of *ta'dīb* as the essence of education, understood as an integrated process that unites knowledge, discipline, and ethical refinement. (Syarif, 2023; Pahlawati, 2025). However, unlike the classical model in which *adab* was cultivated through direct proximity to a teacher, the digital environment disperses *adab* across interconnected networks of users who collectively sustain and regulate moral discourse. This dynamic also resonates with Paulo Freire's (2004) notion of dialogical pedagogy, where learning becomes a participatory and reflective process rather than one determined by institutional hierarchy. Within these online exchanges, the boundaries between “student” and “teacher” blur; moral authority is not inherited or bestowed but achieved through sincerity, intellectual clarity, and ethical compassion (Ogunfowora & Varty, 2023).

From the standpoint of Islamic legal thought, this shift exemplifies Wael Hallaq's (2013) argument regarding the reintegration of law and ethics within premodern Islamic intellectual traditions. In classical *fiqh*, legal instruction was inseparable from moral cultivation—its purpose was as much to shape character as to regulate behavior. The comment sections analyzed in this study perform a similar pedagogical-legal role: users collectively articulate principles of *fiqh al-akhlāq* (the ethics of conduct) and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the higher objectives of law), particularly *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (the preservation of faith) and *ḥifẓ al-'ird* (the protection of dignity) (Auda, 2008). When participants assert that “criticism must be delivered with *adab*” or “honor your teacher’s dignity,” they are not simply voicing emotional reactions but engaging in acts of legal-ethical reasoning that translate *fiqh* into lived pedagogy (Shewly et al., 2020).

At the same time, the digital sphere introduces new epistemic challenges. The immediacy and performative nature of online communication often conflict with the contemplative and disciplined ethos central to *tafsir tarbawi*. While many users exemplified humility and patience, others displayed performative piety or moral posturing, reflecting what Bourdieu (1986) terms struggles over symbolic capital within the “digital religious field.” In this context, authority becomes increasingly tied to visibility and affective credibility—those who most persuasively embody *adab* in digital interactions gain not only social validation but also symbolic power within the evolving moral economy of Islamic digital discourse. Similar to Ledvinka & Donovan's (2023) ethnographic insight that law in Afghanistan operates through multiple micro-level authorities rather than a singular hierarchy, digital *tafsir* communities, manifest a comparable moral pluralism in which interpretive authority circulates among participants through affective and dialogical engagement.

However, this increasing digital visibility also gives rise to what can be described as *pedagogical pluralism*, in which multiple models of Qur'anic learning coexist, interact, and occasionally compete (Ledvinka & Donovan, 2023). Within these online exchanges, some users prioritize emotional sincerity, others stress intellectual rigor, while still others appeal to ideals of social harmony (*iṣlāḥ*). This diversity reflects Talal Asad (2009) conception of Islam as a *discursive tradition*—a continuously evolving moral framework in which ethical reasoning is debated, adapted, and reaffirmed through time. In this sense, *digital tafsir tarbawi* represents a new stage in that tradition,

functioning as both a pedagogical and hermeneutical process deeply rooted in the language, tempo, and affective sensibilities of digital culture.

A paradox nonetheless emerges from this trend: while digital spaces democratize access to Qur'anic knowledge and interpretation, they also risk diminishing its ethical profundity. Yet, the data suggest that many users actively resist this potential shallowness by reasserting classical *adab* values, thereby cultivating what can be termed "digital *adab*." This practice functions as a form of moral self-regulation that mirrors the principles of *fiqh al-tarbiyah*, wherein the very act of learning is simultaneously ethical and juridical (Ledvinka & Donovan, 2023). Viewed in this light, the digital sphere does not threaten Islamic pedagogy but instead provides a renewed moral and educational arena for its continued evolution.

When situated within the broader literature on digital Islam, such as Ferre (2003) analysis of "piety pop culture" and Gary R. Bunt (2009) exploration of "distributed authority," the findings of this study both affirm and extend existing theoretical understandings. While earlier research often highlighted the fragmentation of religious authority and the rise of individualized religiosity, the present data reveal a contrasting development: the formation of a collective moral pedagogy. Acts of outrage, reflection, and forgiveness become interwoven into a shared educational practice through which the *ummah* collectively reclaims and revitalizes the ethical heart of Qur'anic learning in the digital age (Sunier, 2021).

Contextually, this transformation carries significant implications for the future of Islamic education in Indonesia. It marks a pedagogical shift from an authority-centered model of knowledge transmission to one grounded in participatory moral formation (Arevuo, 2023). The role of the *kyai* is no longer confined to unilateral instruction but is becoming increasingly dialogical, engaging with digitally literate students who actively contribute to meaning-making processes (Mitzen, 2024). This evolution mirrors the broader sociological transformation of *fiqh* into what Ewick & Silbey (1991) describe as the democratization of legal reasoning—a shift in which interpretive authority becomes shared and collectively enacted. In the digital sphere, the Qur'an functions simultaneously as a source of divine guidance and as a discursive space for negotiation, where meaning is continually shaped through communal interpretation and ethical deliberation (Burri & Chander, 2023).

Looking ahead, the findings indicate that *tafsir tarbawi* in the digital era is evolving into a networked pedagogy of ethics—one in which Qur'anic interpretation is inseparable from collective emotion, affective literacy, and shared moral responsibility. This development does not represent the decline of tradition but rather its creative renewal, as Islamic pedagogy adapts from embodied hierarchies to more distributed, sincerity-based forms of authority.

More broadly, the results of this research underscore several key implications for the advancement of Islamic pedagogy and legal thought within digital modernity. First, the evolution of *tafsir tarbawi* demonstrates a pedagogical reorientation, as Qur'anic learning increasingly embraces dialogical, participatory, and reflexive methods that align with the communicative ethos of digital societies. Second, the emergence of *digital adab* signifies a vital ethical rebalancing within online religious

discourse, serving as a counterforce to the algorithmic immediacy and emotional volatility of digital interaction. Through this moral calibration, the ethical gravity of *tafsir* is sustained even amid the accelerated rhythms of virtual engagement. Third, the conceptual articulation of *fiqh al-tarbiyah* offers a unifying framework that bridges the ethical foundations of education with the interpretive and juridical reasoning of Islamic law, highlighting the convergence of knowledge, morality, and legality within digital contexts. Finally, future research should further investigate how *digital adab* becomes institutionalized within online learning platforms and how it influences the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual formation of the emerging generation of *santri digital*—students shaped by both classical tradition and digital participation (Elgabsi, 2024).

The digital transformation of *tafsir tarbawi* represents a pivotal pedagogical development in the landscape of contemporary Islamic education (Caine et al., 2022). The moral discourses examined across YouTube platforms reveal that Indonesian Muslims are not forsaking *adab*, *fiqh*, or the traditional ethics of learning; instead, they are rearticulating these principles through the interactive language of digital participation (Kornbluh & Goodman, 2020). What emerges is a new pedagogy of presence without physical proximity—a form of *ta'lim* grounded in sincerity, emotional discernment, and collective moral responsibility. In this light, *tafsir tarbawi* has not only adapted to the realities of digital modernity but has also evolved into one of its most meaningful experiments in ethical and educational renewal. Echoing Blanch & Blanch's (2023) ethnographic account of *taqlid* as a moral and epistemic act of deference, digital commentaries reveal similar affective hierarchies in which authority circulates through sincerity, empathy, and recognition rather than institutional decree.

3.2. Ethical Authority, Communal Justice, and the Digital Crisis of Interpretation

The digital corpus collected from YouTube comment sections—spanning Laskar Dadas (469 comments), Liputan Jatim (165 comments), Al-Bahjah TV (138 comments), Trans7 Official (221 comments), and Pondok Lirboyo (85 comments)—illustrates a remarkable evolution in public discourse surrounding the #BoikotTrans7 controversy. What began as a wave of ethical outrage gradually transformed into a collective deliberation on justice, legitimacy, and forgiveness, particularly following Chairul Tanjung's public apology and his conciliatory visit to Pondok Pesantren Lirboyo.

Empirical analysis reveals three salient patterns. First, the majority of users (approximately 60%) interpreted Chairul Tanjung's apology as an act of moral restoration. Comments such as "*Alhamdulillah, beliau tulus dan tanggung jawab, harus kita maafkan*" and "*Pak CT orang bijak, rendah hati, dan bertanggung jawab*" convey a perception of the apology as more than a mere public gesture—it was understood as an embodiment of *'adl* (justice) and *tawāḍu'* (humility). The moral validity of this act was rooted in *fiqh al-akhlāq*, where justice is inseparable from sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*) and repentance (*taubah*).

Second, around 25% of users adopted a theological lens, interpreting the controversy as a divine trial or moral lesson (*'ibrah*). Expressions such as "*Inilah cara*

Allah mengangkat derajat pesantren” and “Semoga jadi hikmah bagi semua media” illustrate how digital participants reframed the incident as a form of spiritual pedagogy. In doing so, they reinterpreted the crisis through the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, viewing it as a moment to reaffirm *maṣlahah* (the common good) and *islāh* (moral and social reform).

Third, a smaller yet intellectually significant segment of users (approximately 15%) engaged in an explicit discourse on media ethics and the limits of freedom of expression. Comments such as “Kritik boleh, tapi harus dengan adab dan riset yang benar” and “Media seharusnya tidak menyinggung agama” reflect a deepening awareness of digital legal consciousness, as participants articulated shared norms for ethical communication rooted in Islamic moral jurisprudence. These voices reveal a growing capacity among digital publics to translate *fiqh al-akhlāq* into the language of media responsibility, emphasizing that critique, when expressed within the bounds of *adab* and informed reasoning, constitutes an act of moral care rather than hostility (Rousell, 2024).

Taken together, the data illustrate a participatory construction of moral justice: online users acted as a *digital ummah*, collectively performing acts of critique, forgiveness, and ethical regulation in a manner reminiscent of *hisbah* (moral oversight) and *fiqh al-mu'āmalah* (social ethics) (Sunier, 2021). The digital controversy surrounding #BoikotTrans7, therefore, evolved from a moment of communal outrage into a performative pedagogy of justice—an arena where ordinary Muslims, through comments, hashtags, and shared reflections, reconstructed ethical authority and reinstated a sense of moral equilibrium within the public sphere (Ekman, 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, this dynamic embodies what Talal Asad (2009) conceptualizes as Islam's *discursive tradition*—a living process in which moral reasoning is continually renegotiated within social and historical contexts. In digital spaces, this tradition takes on a new form that can be described as *affective fiqh*: a moral reasoning articulated through empathy, sincerity, and emotional engagement. Authority in this context is not vertically imposed but horizontally constituted through dialogical interaction and mutual recognition. This pattern aligns with Gary Bunt's (2009) conception of *distributed authority*, in which legitimacy within digital Islam is produced through affective resonance and collective participation rather than institutional decree.

Unexpectedly, the process of apology and reconciliation revealed that forgiveness and justice can coexist as complementary pedagogical practices (Ekman, 2022). Digital participants invoked Qur'anic principles such as *'adl* (justice), *rahmah* (compassion), and *maghfirah* (forgiveness) not as abstract theological notions but as lived, performative ethics. Through collective expressions of acceptance—such as “Semoga dimaafkan, Pak CT telah menunjukkan tanggung jawab”—users enacted a shared form of *fiqh al-ṣulḥ* (the jurisprudence of reconciliation). This participatory ethical engagement dissolves the conventional boundary between *tafsir* (interpretation) and *fiqh* (law), allowing both to merge into a form of digital pedagogy in which moral reasoning is not only discussed but also embodied and practiced within the online community. Echoing Mitzen's (2024) call for reflexive pedagogy, the digital *fiqh* of learning invites educators and learners alike to recognize how moral and epistemic

hierarchies are reproduced and to cultivate modes of interpretation that keep justice and order entangled rather than opposed.

The emerging trend does not signify the decline of religious authority but rather its moral recalibration. The traditional *kyai-santri* hierarchy persists symbolically yet evolves into a digitally mediated structure: while the *kyai* retain their moral stature, *santri digital* collectively assume interpretive responsibility (Ekman, 2022). Authority, in this context, becomes a co-constructed endeavor rooted in *ikhhlās* (sincerity), *mas'ūliyyah* (public accountability), and *amānah* (moral integrity). This shift resonates with Max Weber's (2009) theory of charismatic authority, reimagined within the framework of the *digital ummah*, where charisma is no longer tied to institutional power but emerges from ethical coherence and the transparent performance of virtue in the digital public sphere. Following Mitzen's (2024) proposition for reorienting pedagogical traditions, this study suggests that digital tafsir pedagogy represents not the erosion of religious authority but its moral reconfiguration toward participatory justice and ethical renewal.

Viewed through this lens, digital moral negotiation operates as a new form of *hisbah* pedagogy—a participatory model of ethical correction in which ordinary believers enact the prophetic mandate of *amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa nahy 'an al-munkar* (enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong) within the framework of digital communication. Unlike the classical *muhtasib*, who functioned under the authority of the state or judiciary, the digital *muhtasib* exerts moral influence through hashtags, commentaries, and affective reasoning. This study conceptualizes this phenomenon as the “Digital *Hisbah* of Learning,” wherein social media is transformed from a platform of passive consumption into a moral classroom that unites ethics, law, and pedagogy in a dynamic process of communal reflection and correction.

These findings expand upon Wael Hallaq's (2013) argument that the defining rupture of modernity lies in the disjunction between law and ethics. In contrast, the Indonesian Islamic digital sphere reveals a counter-movement toward their reintegration. The discursive exchanges surrounding #BoikotTrans7 suggest that justice is not conceived as institutional enforcement but as educational restoration—a process of learning achieved through ethical engagement and moral repair. In this sense, justice becomes a pedagogical act aimed at healing rather than punishment, reflecting the Qur'anic principle of *iṣlāḥ dhāt al-bayn* (reconciliation among people).

Positioned within the broader scholarship on digital Islam, this study both reinforces and challenges prevailing assumptions. While scholars such as Birgit Meyer, (2009) have highlighted how digital media fragment religious authority and promote individualized piety, the #BoikotTrans7 case demonstrates the emergence of a collective moral consciousness within digital religious life. Acts of outrage, apology, and forgiveness form a cyclical process of ethical participation, transforming digital networks into what Papacharissi (2002) terms *affective publics*. However, unlike secular affective publics, this digital moral community is grounded in *fiqhi* ethics, where emotional engagement is understood not as self-expression but as a manifestation of piety and communal responsibility.

Contextually, this participatory reconfiguration of justice and authority reflects the broader socio-religious ethos of Indonesia—one grounded in *wasatiyyah* (moderation), which strives to maintain balance between critique and reverence. The digital reconciliation that followed the Trans7 controversy embodies this spirit: moral outrage did not escalate into polarization but instead culminated in the reaffirmation of shared ethical values (Rousell, 2024). The prevailing moral narrative that emerged was restorative rather than punitive, rooted in empathy, humility, and sincerity as guiding virtues of communal harmony.

From a socio-legal standpoint, these dynamics point to the rise of what may be described as an *Islamic digital legal consciousness* (Urinboyev, 2023): a collective awareness that justice and moral responsibility are not merely institutional concerns but participatory acts sustained through ethical dialogue (Strauß & Bondü, 2022). Drawing upon Ewick & Silbey (1991) theoretical framework, this phenomenon can be understood as the democratization of *fiqh*—a process through which legal and moral reasoning are no longer confined to scholarly elites but are actively practiced by ordinary believers. Within this context, the Qur'an is not only interpreted intellectually but also *performed* emotionally and dialogically through the affective deliberations of the online *ummah*, turning digital spaces into living arenas of ethical enactment and communal accountability. Blanch & Blanch (2023) proposition that Islamic legal traditions embody alternative repertoires of justification rather than rule-based legality underscores the need to reconceptualize digital Islamic pedagogy as a form of participatory moral pluralism—one that redefines justice through relational ethics and dialogical practice.

The broader trajectory revealed by these findings points to a paradigmatic shift from vertical to horizontal forms of moral authority—signaling a transformation of Islamic justice from a domain governed by institutional jurisprudence to one shaped by participatory pedagogy (Rousell, 2024). In this emerging model, authority no longer rests exclusively with religious scholars but is increasingly co-constructed through the collective ethical reasoning and dialogical engagement of digital publics. Echoing Ledvinka & Donovan (2023) call to move beyond dichotomous models of legality, the digital *fiqh* of pedagogy exemplifies a participatory moral pluralism in which justice and authority emerge through relational engagement rather than institutional decree.

In contextual terms, this evolving digital moral pedagogy redefines the relationship between *tafsir*, *fiqh*, and *tarbiyah*: interpretation becomes an act of education, and education, in turn, assumes a jurisprudential function. The digital sphere thus takes shape as an open *majlis al-fiqh*—a deliberative space in which learning, moral judgment, and forgiveness unfold simultaneously within the rhythms of online interaction.

From a comparative perspective, while earlier scholarship often framed digital Islam as a site of fragmentation and individualization (Bunt, 2009), the present study highlights its capacity for moral integration. Rather than undermining religious authority, digital platforms redistribute it—anchoring legitimacy not in hierarchical institutions but in shared ethical commitments, dialogical sincerity, and collective moral participation.

Looking ahead, this participatory paradigm holds the potential to evolve into what may be termed a *Digital Fiqh of Justice*—a moral-legal consciousness that harmonizes compassion, humility, and accountability within the framework of contemporary Islamic ethics (Arevuo, 2023). If sustained, this transformation could significantly reshape both Islamic pedagogy and public moral discourse, affirming that the Qur'an's pedagogical vitality endures even amid the algorithmic and visual culture of the digital age (Urinboyev, 2023). As Blanch & Blanch's (2023) demonstrates, Islamic legal reasoning operates through participatory and embodied forms of justification. This study extends that insight into the digital sphere, showing that online tafsir practices constitute not a decline of authority but its ethical reconfiguration through relational pedagogy.

From a practical standpoint, the study advocates for the development of *digital adab* curricula within Islamic educational institutions. Such programs would integrate emotional intelligence, ethical dialogue, and fiqh-oriented digital literacy into the pedagogical practices of pesantren and universities. Institutionalizing these values could formalize the participatory ethics that have already begun to characterize Indonesia's digital religious sphere. Rousell and Tran's (2024) ethic of immanent care provides a compelling lens for rethinking digital Islamic authority as an emergent ecology of care, where moral reasoning and social responsibility arise within participatory and intersubjective relations.

For future scholarship, several important questions emerge. Researchers might examine how *digital hisbah*—the participatory practice of moral regulation—functions across diverse Islamic contexts such as Malaysia, Pakistan, or Muslim diaspora communities. Another promising avenue lies in investigating how the rise of digital tafsir movements influences the authority of institutional fiqh councils and contributes to broader transformations in Islamic educational reform.

The #BoikotTrans7 controversy demonstrates that what has often been described as a digital crisis of authority is, in fact, a moral reawakening rather than a collapse (Hady et al., 2025). Through acts of online protest, critique, forgiveness, and reconciliation, Indonesian Muslims have reimaged the digital sphere as a participatory space of ethical pedagogy (Blomberg & Schünemann, 2024; Khanin, 2025). Authority, once centralized within formal institutions, now flows through affective and dialogical networks that embody the principles of *fiqh al-tarbiyah* (the jurisprudence of education), *fiqh al-ṣulh* (the jurisprudence of reconciliation), and *fiqh al-akhlāq* (the jurisprudence of ethics). Following Rousell and Tran's (2024) invitation to “stay with the curve,” digital tafsir practices can be seen as curving back toward compassion and relational ethics, affirming that moral learning in Islam persists through care, dialogue, and shared affect.

Within this evolving moral ecosystem, the digital *ummah* enacts a renewed Qur'anic hermeneutics—one that interprets justice through the lens of compassion, performs law through dialogue, and cultivates ethics through collective participation. This transformation suggests that, even within an algorithm-driven world, Islamic moral authority endures as a profoundly human and dialogical enterprise. It remains pedagogical at its core, reminding us that the essence of Islamic learning lies not in

control or hierarchy but in the shared pursuit of moral understanding and spiritual refinement.

4. Conclusion

This study finds that the digitalization of *tafsir tarbawi* signifies not a weakening of Islamic authority but its transformation into a participatory, dialogical, and affective moral framework. Based on the analysis of 1,078 YouTube comments from five key channels, the research shows that Indonesian Muslims have reimagined Qur'anic pedagogy to align with the interactive rhythms of digital communication, establishing new spaces for collective reasoning, ethical dialogue, and spiritual formation. Moral authority, once anchored within the traditional hierarchy of *kyai* and *santri*, now circulates through affective and dialogical networks in which sincerity, empathy, and accountability form the essential criteria of legitimacy.

The study further demonstrates that the digital sphere now operates as a living *majlis al-fiqh*—a participatory arena where education, justice, and reconciliation intersect. Participants in the #BoikotTrans7 discourse did not merely discuss Islamic ethics; they actively embodied them, transforming moments of outrage into opportunities for reflection and acts of forgiveness into moral instruction. This evolution signals a shift from vertical structures of authority to horizontal modes of moral participation, and from institutional jurisprudence to a pedagogy of engagement. It underscores that the vitality of Islamic learning lies in its capacity to adapt creatively rather than resist the transformations of modernity.

The broader implications of this transformation are both educational and ethical. Digital platforms can serve as meaningful venues for *adab*-oriented learning, where emotional intelligence and ethical reasoning complement the foundational aims of Islamic education. Practically, this study calls for the integration of *digital adab* curricula within pesantren and higher education institutions to cultivate moral discernment and ethical responsibility in online settings. Future research should investigate how *digital hisbah* and participatory ethics take shape across different Muslim societies, exploring how technology continues to redefine the interpretive, legal, and pedagogical contours of Islam in the twenty-first century.

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