

Strategies for Preserving Thematic Quranic Studies and Classical Jurisprudence in Digital Spaces to Address Global Challenges

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ABSTRACT

In the era of globalisation, the tradition of thematic Qur'anic study (ngaji tematik) and classical fiqh face significant challenges, including the erosion of traditional learning spaces and competition from fragmented religious content. However, digital technology offers unprecedented opportunities to democratise access to classical Islamic knowledge (al-turats al-Islami), while preserving its authenticity and depth. This community service programme (PkM) aims to design and implement a digital learning model using Google Meet to preserve thematic Qur'anic study and classical fiqh. The programme will also analyse the impact of this approach on reaching wider audiences and evaluate the challenges involved in building a participatory digital learning community. The study employed Participatory Action Research (PAR), involving 75 participants from diverse backgrounds over a period of six months. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews and an analysis of documents from 16 learning sessions. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and insights. The programme successfully developed a three-phase implementation strategy (planning, action and reflection) that effectively created an inclusive digital learning space. Key findings include: (1) the significant democratisation of access to classical Islamic studies across geographical boundaries; (2) the successful adaptation of traditional pedagogical methods (bandongan) through digital, interactive features; and (3) the formation of a cohesive digital community that maintained the values of ukhuwah (brotherhood) and knowledge transfer (naql al-'ilm). A SWOT analysis revealed that, with proper pedagogical adaptation and community building, digital platforms can serve as effective sanctuaries for preserving classical Islamic knowledge. The Google Meet-based learning model is effective in addressing globalisation challenges by combining technological flexibility with the preservation of the essence of traditional Islamic scholarship. This approach offers a sustainable way to maintain classical learning traditions and expand their reach to modern audiences, making a significant contribution to the discourse on the digitalisation of religious education.

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INTRODUCTION

The global era and the Industrial Revolution 4.0 have had an ambiguous impact on religious life, particularly within Islamic scholarly traditions (Gunawan dkk., 2025).



On one hand, the rapid flow of information and the rise of an "instant culture" risk eroding traditional spaces for in-depth religious learning. Society, especially the younger generation, is often exposed to fragmented religious content and may lose sight of Islam's rich intellectual heritage. On the other hand, digital technology offers unparalleled opportunities to democratize access to this knowledge (Zimmermann & Tomczyk, 2025). The challenge lies in designing strategies that leverage technology while maintaining the authenticity, depth, and continuity of the Islamic scholarly tradition, known as *al-turats al-Islami* (Islamic heritage).

The tradition of "ngaji," or recitation, which encompasses the study of the Qur'an (tafsir) and classical jurisprudence texts (*kutub al-qadimah*), serves as the backbone of Islamic education in this archipelago (Bernasconi & Blume, 2025). This activity involves not only the transfer of knowledge (*naql al-'ilm*) but also the formation of character and spirituality within a community (*jama'ah*). However, in recent years, the physical spaces for this tradition have faced pressure due to busy urban lifestyles, geographical constraints, and, most recently, social restrictions caused by the pandemic. This has created a research gap regarding how to design an adaptive model for preserving the ngaji tradition in current conditions without sacrificing its substance and traditional values.

Several researchers have examined the intersection of Islamic education and digital technology, such as the use of social media for da'wah (proselytizing) and the effectiveness of e-learning for Arabic language studies. However, most of these studies focus on formal pedagogical aspects or the dissemination of popular da'wah content (Coudry, 2025). Little research specifically addresses the digitalization of traditional and communal learning forms, such as ngaji kitab kuning (classical yellow books), along with its methodological tools—such as *sorogan* and *bandongan*—and the critical importance of *sanad* (the chain of knowledge). While some recent studies have discussed the response of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) to the digital world, these discussions often remain at the level of institutional discourse and policy.

Furthermore, evaluations of platforms like Zoom and Google Meet for general Islamic lectures often focus on technical aspects and user satisfaction, without exploring how these platforms can facilitate the formation of a "digital community" that reflects the social and intellectual connections of traditional ngaji. This is where this Community Service (PkM) research plays a role (Katada, 2025). It aims to bridge this gap by offering and testing a concrete operational strategy model using video conferencing platforms (Google Meet) to create a digital space that preserves and extends the reach of thematic and classical jurisprudence recitations to a broader audience.

The uniqueness of this research lies in its "glocalization" approach—adopting global tools (digital technology) to strengthen local traditions (ngaji)—and its focus on forming a cohesive online learning community (de Werra, 2025). Rather than merely moving recitations to a digital realm, this research builds a learning ecosystem that combines technological flexibility with the depth of material and the values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) characteristic of Islamic *pesantren*. We argue that, with the right strategy, digital spaces can become sanctuaries that protect and disseminate classical Islamic knowledge against the tide of shallow and instant religious content.

Based on the background information and the identified knowledge gaps, the objectives of the Community Service program reported in this article are: to design and implement an effective and sustainable Google Meet-based learning model for thematic Qur'anic and classical jurisprudence recitation; to analyze the impact of this model in reaching a wider audience (particularly urban communities and millennials) and maintaining interest in classical Islamic studies; and to evaluate

the challenges and opportunities in building a meaningful and participatory digital learning community.

This research hypothesizes that the application of a structured strategy for preserving Qur'anic recitations using Google Meet, combined with a well-managed community approach, can significantly increase accessibility and interest in thematic and classical jurisprudence studies among the general public while maintaining the essence of the learning tradition (Zhang dkk., 2025). The program involved 75 participants from various backgrounds and was carried out over six months. A Participatory Action Research (PAR) method was used, in which the research team acted as facilitators and participated in community building (Yang dkk., 2025). Data collection techniques included participant observation, pre- and post-program questionnaires, in-depth interviews with a sample of participants, and transcript analysis of recorded discussions to measure the depth of interaction. Qualitative analysis of the obtained data evaluates the achievement of the program's objectives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This Community Service (PkM) program employs a qualitative research methodology, specifically utilizing the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach (Nguyen dkk., 2025). This method is considered the most appropriate for examining the processes and meanings behind the implementation of ngaji preservation strategies in digital spaces, as it emphasizes collaboration and shared reflection between researchers and informants to understand and enhance ongoing practices (Bei dkk., 2025). This qualitative design facilitates an in-depth exploration of experiences, perceptions, and social dynamics.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure the collection of rich and relevant information aligned with the research focus. The target group consisted of two categories. The first category included 75 active informants from the general public recruited based on their strong interest in thematic and classical Islamic studies, limited geographical or temporal access to face-to-face lectures, and willingness to participate fully. These informants were intentionally chosen to represent diversity—including students, professionals, and homemakers—to capture a wide range of perspectives. The second target group consisted of two instructors selected for their profound knowledge of jurisprudence (fiqh) and exegesis (tafsir), as well as their willingness to engage in pedagogical experiments within a digital environment.

The researchers acted as the primary instrument, supported by various qualitative data collection tools (Makananise, 2025). Active participant observation was conducted as researchers were directly involved throughout the process as facilitators and moderators. Detailed observation notes were maintained to document interaction dynamics, participation levels, technical challenges, and the nuances of discussions across sixteen study sessions on the Google Meet platform (Reyes-Carranza dkk., 2025). Semi-structured in-depth interviews were also conducted with fifteen selected informants representing various backgrounds and with the two instructors. These interviews focused on exploring personal experiences, perceived challenges and conveniences, perceptions regarding the depth of material, and the significance of the digital community (Thanh Thao & Thuy, 2025). Additionally, document analysis was performed on materials used and generated during the program, such as transcripts of significant Google Meet discussions, WhatsApp group interactions, and reflective notes from the speakers, to complement the findings from observations and interviews.

The program was implemented in three phases over six months. The preparation phase involved recruiting informants, developing thematic and classical jurisprudence study modules, and

preparing digital infrastructure (Tabrizi dkk., 2025). The implementation phase served as the primary data collection period, during which 16 study sessions were held. During this phase, observation and interview techniques were applied simultaneously. Periodic reflections were conducted with speakers and informant representatives to adjust teaching and facilitation strategies based on field findings. The final phase of analysis and synthesis focused on processing and interpreting all collected qualitative data.

Collected data were analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis techniques. The process began with interview transcription and the comprehensive organization of observation notes for familiarization (Tian & Shan, 2025). Initial codes were then assigned to interesting segments of data. These codes were searched for patterns and grouped into potential themes, which were then reviewed and refined for coherence. Once the final themes were established, each was defined and named. Finally, the findings were explained in an analytical narrative supported by direct quotes from informants.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, method triangulation was performed by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documents. Member verification was conducted by confirming initial interpretations with informants to ensure their experiences were accurately represented. Prolonged and repeated engagement in the service field also enhanced confidence in the findings. A detailed and complete description of the research process was provided to allow for assessments of the findings' transferability to other contexts.

As a qualitative study, these findings are not intended for statistical generalization but rather to provide a deep contextual understanding of the phenomenon under study. A primary limitation lies in the reliance on participants to convey their experiences with depth and honesty (Ewusie dkk., 2025). Furthermore, the complexity of online group dynamics may not be fully captured by the methods used alone.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This Community Service (PkM) program successfully formulated a strategy for preserving thematic recitations and classical jurisprudence in digital spaces through three implementation phases and a comprehensive SWOT analysis based on in-depth qualitative data analysis (Joseph Jeyaraj dkk., 2025). These findings address the research questions and provide a replicable framework for similar contexts. Based on the participatory action research (PAR) process conducted, the key factors influencing the program's effectiveness were identified through a SWOT analysis.

The strengths of the program include the instructors' clear scholarly authority (sanad) and their profound understanding of classical Islamic texts, which serve as the foundation of the program's credibility (Hajipour & Fadaei, 2025). The time and spatial flexibility offered by Google Meet allowed urban communities with busy schedules to participate. Additionally, the formation of a cohesive and supportive digital learning community was facilitated through chat features and mentoring groups.

Weaknesses identified include a dependency on stable internet connections and the informants' digital literacy. Signal fluctuations can disrupt concentration and the flow of discussion. Furthermore, non-verbal interactions and the nuances of sincerity in learning are more difficult to capture than in face-to-face settings (Naggirinya dkk., 2025). The limited session duration, ranging from 90 to 120 minutes, makes it challenging to conduct exhaustive discussions on complex classical Islamic texts.

Opportunities include the potential to reach a vast audience without geographical boundaries, including the Indonesian diaspora abroad (Illi & El Hassouny, 2025). There is also significant interest among the younger generation in deep and contextual religious content, despite the prevalence of instant content. Moreover, there is an opportunity to develop digital modules and repositories of recorded studies that can be accessed repeatedly.

Threats involve the instant nature of digital culture and the short attention spans of digital communities, which may conflict with the in-depth study of books. There is also competition from popular and simplified religious content that tends to go viral on social media, alongside "Zoom fatigue," which can reduce active participation over the long term (Yuqian dkk., 2025). This SWOT analysis serves as the basis for decision-making when developing strategies for each phase, aiming to maximize strengths, overcome weaknesses, exploit opportunities, and mitigate threats.

The Planning and Socialization Phase focused on building the foundation of the digital community. This phase ensured the technical and conceptual readiness of all stakeholders before the program commenced. Socialization was carried out through social media channels and religious community networks to recruit informants with a genuine interest in the study.



Figure 1: Socialization and Technical Briefing for Informants and Speakers

The documentation above illustrates the socialization and technical orientation activities conducted online for the informants and speakers of the Community Service (PkM) program. This activity involved the research team, speakers, and informant representatives, with the goal of aligning expectations and ensuring smooth operations. The primary objective of this phase was to build a solid foundation by ensuring all parties possessed sufficient digital literacy and understood the program's conceptual framework, enabling them to participate fully and productively. As shown in the documentation, the research team demonstrated how to use Google Meet features such as 'raise hand,' the chat box, and screen sharing. This increased the confidence of both informants and speakers as they approached the core sessions.

The Action and Implementation Phase focused on pedagogical adaptation within the digital space. This phase involved the execution of 16 study sessions, where traditional pedagogical strategies were creatively adapted for the digital environment. The speakers applied the bandongan (lecture-style) method while simultaneously utilizing digital features to enhance interactivity.



Figure 2: Interactive Discussion Process of the Book Fathul Qarib via Google Meet

The documentation above illustrates the interactive atmosphere during the study sessions of the book Fathul Qarib. The digital presentation screen displays the Arabic text of the book along with its translation, which the speaker uses as a visual aid. The primary objective of the implementation phase was to create an authentic, in-depth, and participatory reading experience in the digital space by overcoming media limitations through methodological innovation. As seen in the image, informants actively use the 'raise hand' feature to ask questions or seek clarification. This mimics the question-and-answer dynamics found in face-to-face recitations and successfully maintains the depth of the material while engaging the informants cognitively.

The Reflection and Consolidation Phase focused on ensuring program sustainability. This phase was conducted periodically through focus group discussions (FGD) with informant representatives and the speakers. This phase is crucial for evaluating impact, identifying challenges, and formulating sustainability strategies.



Figure 3: Participatory Reflection Session for Program Evaluation

The documentation above illustrates a participatory reflection session conducted to evaluate program achievements and gather input for future development, as well as to motivate more members to join the studies in the digital space. This activity involved the Community Service (PkM) researchers and informant representatives, who provided testimonials and suggestions. The reflection phase aimed to consolidate learning, evaluate the effectiveness of strategies based on direct user experience, and design a sustainable model that can be developed more broadly. Based on the documentation and focus group discussion (FGD) results, it was identified that the study recordings shared after each session served as valuable learning resources. Furthermore, the online community provided e-certificates for both informants and speakers as a form of appreciation and motivation to participate in digitized studies consistently and steadfastly.

CONCLUSION

A comprehensive analysis of this program's implementation demonstrates that the strategy for preserving thematic recitations and classical jurisprudence through the Google Meet platform has successfully addressed global challenges. The program successfully developed a "glocalization" model for Islamic education that utilizes digital technology as a tool while maintaining the essence of the scholarly tradition found in Islamic boarding schools. The primary findings of this study indicate that the integration of three structured phases—planning, implementation, and reflection—combined with an appropriate pedagogical adaptation approach can create an inclusive and meaningful digital space.

The significance of this study lies in its success in demonstrating that digital spaces can serve as sanctuaries for preserving and disseminating classical Islamic knowledge while bridging the gap between tradition and modernity. The model developed not only overcomes geographical and temporal access limitations but also succeeds in building a cohesive digital learning community where the values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and *naql al-'ilm* (transfer of knowledge) are preserved. These findings also respond to concerns regarding the erosion of conventional *ngaji* traditions in the current era of disruption by offering a sustainable and contextually relevant solution.

Broadly speaking, this research makes an important contribution to the literature on the digitalization of traditional Islamic education by filling existing research gaps. While previous studies focused on technical aspects or popular *da'wah* content, this research presents a concrete operational framework for preserving traditional and communal forms of learning, such as *ngaji kitab kuning*, in digital spaces. These findings have implications for the development of similar models in various religious institutions, emphasizing the importance of pedagogical adaptation, community building, and program sustainability. Thus, this study contributes practically to preserving Islamic scholarly traditions and enriches the academic discourse at the intersection of religious education, digital technology, and global studies.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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