

Formulating Adaptive Islamic Education Policies: Conservative Resilience of Salafi Dayah Amid Digital Disruption

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Abstract

This study aims to reinterpret the resilience of Salafi dayah in Aceh in facing the digital era, not as an absolute rejection of modernization, but as a conservative pedagogical strategy that preserves the continuity of Islamic knowledge, the authority of the *teungku*, communal discipline, and the tradition of *kitab kuning*. This study employs a qualitative ethnopedagogical approach by combining field observations, interviews with *teungku* and *santri*, and an examination of curriculum documents, learning routines, and disciplinary practices within the dayah environment. The findings indicate that the conservative resilience of Salafi dayah is formed through five main mechanisms: a curriculum orientation rooted in inherited traditions, the preservation of *bale beut* and the *bandongan-sorogan* methods, moral formation through bodily discipline, the charismatic legitimation of the *teungku*, and the selective use of digital technology. Salafi dayah do not entirely reject change; rather, they negotiate digital disruption by distinguishing technologies that support *da'wah* and scholarly references from those that may weaken *adab*, concentration, and communal obedience. Thus, conservatism in Islamic education can be understood as a reflective form of cultural defense, rather than mere stagnation.

Keywords

Conservative Resilience; Ethnopedagogy, Digital, Pendidikan Islam; Tengku Dayah

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1. INTRODUCTION

Aceh is one of the regions where Islamic education is positioned as a living social, cultural, and moral practice in the daily life of the community. Islamic education in Aceh is not only conducted through formal schools but also through local institutions deeply rooted in the social history of the community, particularly the *dayah*. Among various forms of *dayah*, the Salafi *dayah* holds an important position as it integrates religious instruction, communal discipline, scholarly authority, and cultural reproduction within a single educational ecology. The *dayah* is not merely a space where students read, memorize, or study religious texts; it is a space for self-development where students learn to speak, listen, sit, ask questions, serve, obey rules, and position themselves within the chain of scholarly knowledge. In the Salafi *dayah* tradition, this process occurs through learning the *kitab kuning*, face-to-face study sessions, the use of the local language as a medium of explanation, and respect for the *teungku* as the primary educator and moral exemplar (Fakhrurrazi & Sebgag, 2020; Huwaida, 2015; Nasir et al.,



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2023; Usman et al., 2021).

The position of the Salafi *dayah* needs to be reconsidered as society enters the digital era. Digital technology has transformed the way knowledge is accessed, validated, and disseminated. Search engines, online libraries, *kitab* applications, religious videos, social media, digital learning systems, and artificial intelligence have expanded learners' sources of study. In many educational policies, technology integration is often positioned as an indicator of progress. Educational institutions are encouraged to digitize administration, expand online learning, and train students to master technological competencies. However, Salafi *dayah* does not always follow this linear modernization logic. Many Salafi *dayah* still prioritize the *kitab kuning*, *bale beut*, memorization, oral explanations, disciplined dormitory life, and teacher-centered learning authority. This choice may be interpreted as stagnation if measured solely by technology adoption rates. Yet, the trust of the Acehnese community in Salafi *dayah* demonstrates that these institutions maintain moral and epistemic orders still considered meaningful by their communities (Andok, 2024; Hasan et al., 2023; Mustofa et al., 2023; Nugroho & Astutik, 2024).

Previous studies show that *dayah* in Aceh have undergone diverse trajectories of change. Some *dayah* have developed integrated curricula, adopted formal school systems, incorporated general knowledge, and utilized technology for administration and learning. These developments are often read as modernization, adaptation, or institutional transformation (Rahman & Syahminan, 2024; Sari & Anggreni, 2023; Setiadi et al., 2024). On the other hand, studies on Salafi *dayah* emphasize the continuity of *kitab kuning* learning, *teungku* authority, disciplined routines, and social expectations for graduates to become imams, preachers, study teachers, or community advisors (Meriza et al., 2022; Usman et al., 2021). Both tendencies are important, but they do not fully explain the internal logic of conservative resilience. If modernization explains why some *dayah* change, this study asks why some Salafi *dayah* maintain certain practices and how restrictions on change function as a form of institutional resilience (Erawadi & Setiadi, 2023; Setiadi et al., 2024; Yuwanda et al., 2023).

This article positions conservatism not as a pejorative label but as an analytical category. In the philosophy of education, conservative ideology emphasizes continuity, social order, inherited knowledge, discipline, moral formation, and the preservation of culturally tested achievements across generations (O'Neill, 1981). Education, in this framework, is not only tasked with producing novelty or technical skills but also with transmitting forms of knowledge and behavior that support communal life. In the context of Acehnese Salafi *dayah*, this orientation is evident in the sustained use of classical Arabic texts, localized methods of interpretation, bodily manners towards teachers, congregational prayers, structured daily schedules, and the moral authority of alumni who return to the community as religious figures. These characteristics should not be reduced to anti-modern rigidity, as they function as pedagogical mechanisms to reproduce beliefs, identity, and religious continuity (Jaenullah et al., 2022; Manan, 2019).

The concept of resilience is used to understand the institution's ability to withstand pressures, maintain core functions, and preserve its identity amid changing environments (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). In educational organizations, resilience does not necessarily mean adopting every new trend. Resilience can also mean protecting the values that make an institution recognizable and trusted by its community. In the case of Salafi *dayah*, resilience appears paradoxical because it emerges through resistance. Rejecting unrestricted digital access, maintaining classical texts, preserving hierarchical relationships between *teungku* and students, and upholding traditional learning routines are not merely signs of backwardness. These practices constitute boundary-making that protects the educational atmosphere from distraction, moral relativism, and the weakening of teacher authority. Therefore, conservative practices need to be understood within their pedagogical rationality before being evaluated (Jaenullah et al., 2022; Maula Bahari & Sugiono, 2025).

The digital era reinforces the tension between preservation and adaptation. Digital media provides

broad access to religious sources, including scanned classical manuscripts, online *fatwa* forums, recorded sermons, and applications like *Maktabah Syamilah*. At the same time, digital media brings risks of fragmented attention, uncontrolled religious authority, exposure to competing ideologies, consumerist lifestyles, and erosion of face-to-face learning ethics. Studies on *dayah* and digital media indicate that some traditional *dayah* are cautious in allowing digital device use due to concerns over changes in learning culture and student behavior (Adrianda & Tisa, 2022). Research on the *kitab kuning* in the digital era also shows that digital tools can support referencing and preaching work, but the *kitab kuning* remains the core epistemic source in the *dayah* curriculum (Meriza et al., 2022). Therefore, the main question is not whether Salafi *dayah* accept or reject technology, but how *dayah* classify, limit, and interpret technology within their educational order (Andok, 2024; Hannan & Mursyidi, 2023; Nurdin, 2020; Nuriana & Salwa, 2024).

This article argues that the resilience of Salafi *dayah* in Aceh is best understood as conservative ethnopedagogical resilience. This concept has three components. First, it is conservative because Salafi *dayah* prioritize continuity, inherited texts, social order, and tested authority. Second, it is ethnopedagogical because learning is mediated by local wisdom, everyday language, ritual discipline, learning space arrangements, and bodily interactions between teachers and students. Third, it is resilient because conservative pedagogy continues to produce legitimacy when educational institutions are pressured to digitize and modernize. By integrating these three components, this article contributes to the literature on Islamic education, educational ideology, and digital transformation by showing that selective non-modernization can be an active survival strategy (Meriza et al., 2022; Nasir, 2023; Syaiful et al., 2022).

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative design with an ethnopedagogical approach. This approach was chosen because the research object is not only the formal curriculum but also educational practices embedded in local culture. Salafi *dayah* is a knowledge transmission space inseparable from language, symbolic authority, ritual discipline, learning space arrangements, and inherited norms. The ethnopedagogical approach allows the researcher to examine how a community educates its members through culturally situated practices and how these practices persist when the social environment changes. Thus, the research focus is not only on what is taught but also on how knowledge is presented, who has the authority to explain, how students respond, and which values are reproduced through daily activities (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Fauzan et al., 2024; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019).

The research data were collected from three main sources. First, observations of educational routines in the Salafi *dayah*, including *kitab* reading, seating arrangements, student participation, dormitory discipline, collective worship, and the use or restriction of digital devices. Second, interviews with *teungku*, senior students, students, and community members related to the meaning of Salafi identity, reasons for maintaining classical methods, perceptions of digital media, and expectations for graduates. Third, institutional documents and artifacts, such as lists of *kitab*, student regulations, daily schedules, disciplinary records, and local explanations related to the learning process. These three sources were treated as complementary: observations revealed living practices, interviews explained the meanings attached by participants, and documents demonstrated the normative frameworks governing *dayah* life (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019; Yin, 2018).

Data analysis was conducted thematically and interpretatively. Data were organized into meaning units, such as *kitab kuning* learning, *bale beut* interactions, *teungku* authority, disciplinary regulations, alumni charisma, digital media restrictions, and comparisons with modern *dayah*. These units were then coded through the lens of educational conservatism and institutional resilience. Codes with interrelated meanings were grouped into broader themes to explain how conservative practices function as resilience mechanisms. These themes were dialogued with literature on *dayah*, *pesantren*, digital

transformation, and Islamic education. The procedure follows qualitative analysis principles emphasizing data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and iterative verification (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Miles et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017; Saldaña, 2021).

The theoretical framework of this study integrates three concepts: resilience, conservative educational ideology, and ethnopedagogy. Resilience refers to an institution's capacity to survive under pressure while maintaining its identity and core functions (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). Conservative educational ideology refers to an orientation that views education as a means to preserve inherited knowledge, social order, moral norms, and socially validated authority (O'Neill, 1981). Ethnopedagogy refers to local educational practices that use culture, language, customs, and community values as learning media. These three concepts are employed not to justify all *dayah* practices but to interpret the internal logic that keeps Salafi *dayah* trusted in the digital era (Jaenullah et al., 2022; Maula Bahari & Sugiono, 2025).

The validity of this study was ensured through triangulation among observations, interviews, documents, and academic literature. Observations regarding the persistence of the *kitab kuning* were compared with studies showing that it remains the primary reference in *dayah* curricula despite the presence of digital media (Meriza et al., 2022). Observations regarding the centrality of the *teungku* were compared with research on the formation of *teungku* identity and religious legitimacy within the *dayah* community (Usman et al., 2021). Meanwhile, restrictions on digital device usage were compared with studies on the cultural dilemmas of traditional *dayah* facing the digital era (Adrianda & Tisa, 2022). This strategy ensures that interpretations are not solely based on researcher opinion but are linked to data and literature (Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Stahl & King, 2020; Tracy, 2020).

This study does not claim to represent all *dayah* in Aceh because *dayah* vary in size, curriculum, leadership, location, and degree of modernization. Some Salafi *dayah* allow limited use of digital devices, while others implement stricter restrictions. Some modern *dayah* still retain Salafi elements, while some Salafi *dayah* adopt administrative modernization without altering core pedagogy. Therefore, the argument in this article should be read as an interpretive model of conservative resilience rather than as a statistical generalization. The strength of the study lies in its ability to connect ethnographic details with broader educational concepts (Erawadi & Setiadi, 2023; Nasir et al., 2024).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings indicate that the resilience of Salafi *dayah* is shaped by a set of mutually reinforcing conservative practices. These practices are not isolated habits but form an educational ecology in which knowledge, authority, discipline, and social legitimacy are integrated. Salafi *dayah* remains resilient because it continues to meet needs that cannot be entirely replaced by modern schools, namely trustworthy religious formation, manners embodied in the body, and closeness to teachers with moral authority. Therefore, the continuity of the *dayah* is not determined solely by the number of students or the existence of buildings but also by the ability to maintain forms of learning recognized by the community as valuable (Jaenullah et al., 2022; Manan, 2019).

This resilience can be understood by distinguishing institutional continuity from pedagogical continuity. Institutional continuity refers to the ability of the *dayah* to maintain buildings, students, funding, and public recognition. Pedagogical continuity refers to the ability to preserve specific ways of learning and ways of being. Many educational institutions may survive administratively but lose their pedagogical soul. Salafi *dayah* seeks to avoid this by maintaining learning methods, manners, book sequences, and teacher authority considered to have shaped scholars in the past. The conservatism of the *dayah*, therefore, should be seen as an effort to preserve the educational atmosphere that serves as a source of social trust (Erawadi & Setiadi, 2023; Nasir et al., 2023).

The educational ecology of Salafi *dayah* operates through the continuity of space, time, and

relationships. Learning spaces such as the *bale beut* are not only seating areas but also arenas for cultivating attention and respect. Daily schedules regulated through congregational prayers, study sessions, rest, meals, and dormitory activities create a life rhythm distinct from the fast-paced digital rhythm. The relationship between *teungku* and students is not merely instructional but also moral. In this ecology, knowledge is understood as something acquired through presence, patience, repetition, and the blessing of relational bonds, not merely through access to information. Therefore, digitalization cannot automatically replace the educational structure of *dayah* (Nasir, 2023; Usman et al., 2021).

The first theme is a curriculum oriented toward the past. In Salafi *dayah*, the past is not treated as obsolete but as a source of legitimacy. The sequence of books, reading methods, ways of giving meaning, and mastery standards are preserved because they are considered to have produced knowledgeable, well-mannered graduates accepted by the community. In modern education paradigms, the future is often the main measure of education. In contrast, in the conservative *dayah* paradigm, the future is secured by maintaining proven scholarly pathways. The past is not glorified in isolation but used as an evaluative tool to determine whether particular changes will strengthen or weaken educational objectives (Fakhrurrazi & Sebgag, 2020; Meriza et al., 2022; Syaiful et al., 2022).

The *kitab kuning* serves as the core of this orientation. The *kitab* is understood not only as reading material but also as an epistemic structure connecting students to the Islamic scholarly tradition across generations. Learning the *kitab kuning* requires patience, mastery of Arabic, grammatical sensitivity, and the ability to accept teacher guidance. Recent studies show that the *kitab kuning* remains the primary reference in Acehnese *dayah* despite the availability of digital devices (Meriza et al., 2022). Fakhrurrazi & Sebgag (2020) emphasize that learning the *kitab kuning* for beginners in *dayah* has unique characteristics because students not only study content but also reading techniques, meaning-making, and language structure comprehension. The *kitab kuning* tradition thus functions as both intellectual exercise and moral discipline (Nasir et al., 2024).

The digital era provides alternative access to classical texts through applications and online libraries. However, Salafi *dayah* distinguish between text access and authorized interpretation. Applications can provide books but cannot fully replace a teacher who guides reading methods, explains context, corrects mistakes, and instills manners toward knowledge. In the *dayah* tradition, religious knowledge is not merely a matter of information ownership but involves *sanad*, authority, and moral eligibility. Digitalization can speed up reference searches but does not automatically develop responsible interpretive capacity. Hence, Salafi *dayah* may accept technology as a tool but continue to position teachers and books as the center of learning (Andok, 2024; Hannan & Mursyidi, 2023),

From the perspective of educational conservatism, the preservation of the *kitab kuning* is not nostalgia but a knowledge selection strategy. Not all information is considered equally valuable. Knowledge entering the *dayah* space must pass through the filters of authority and manners. This distinguishes Salafi *dayah* from digital ecosystems, which tend to be open, fast, and algorithmic. While digital openness provides broad learning opportunities, it also risks mixing validated knowledge with popular opinions lacking sufficient scholarly basis. Salafi *dayah* maintain the *kitab kuning* as an epistemic anchor to prevent students from being uprooted from a legitimate and continuous knowledge framework (Adrianda & Tisa, 2022; Syaikh & Faruq, 2025).

The second theme is the preservation of *bale beut* pedagogy and oral learning methods. In daily practice, students sit in circles in the *bale beut*, listen to the *teungku* reading the *kitab*, attend to meanings, take notes, and ask questions when unclear sections arise. These practices may appear simple but possess pedagogical depth. Sitting, listening, waiting for turns, bowing the body, and recording meaning train attention. In the digital era, students' attention is often fragmented by notifications, screens, and layered information streams. The *bale beut* functions as an architecture of attention because the space limits distractions and directs students' bodies toward the teacher, text, and learning community (Nasir et al., 2023; Saiful, 2022).

The *bandongan* and *sorogan* methods, despite local variations, demonstrate learning patterns emphasizing teacher guidance. In *bandongan*, the teacher reads and explains the text, while students listen and give meaning. In *sorogan*, students read in front of the teacher and receive corrections. Both methods show that errors are understood as part of the learning process. Students learn not only through explanations but also through repeated corrections. Reading accuracy and understanding precision are not left entirely to individual initiative but are overseen by the teacher to prevent learning detached from traditional discipline (Abdillah & Maskuri, 2022; Usman et al., 2021).

Learning in the *bale beut* also fosters communal solidarity. Students learn together, hear peers' mistakes, observe teacher corrections, and understand community standards. This process differs from digital learning, which tends to be individual and private. In the communal space, students learn that knowledge has a social dimension. Ways of sitting, asking, interrupting, and receiving corrections are part of the hidden curriculum. Salafi *dayah* maintain these learning forms because they cultivate character deemed important: patience, respect, meticulousness, and readiness to be guided (Jaenullah et al., 2022; Sulaiman & Ahmadi, 2020).

The third theme is the charismatic authority of the *teungku*. The resilience of Salafi *dayah* cannot be explained solely through the curriculum because it heavily depends on the *teungku* figure. In Acehnes society, the *teungku* is not merely a teacher but a religious model, moral guardian, and social reference. Research on *teungku* identity formation shows that becoming a *teungku* involves participation in community practices gradually generating recognition of religious authority (Usman et al., 2021). This authority does not solely derive from formal position but from learning experience, manners, devotion, mastery of texts, and community acknowledgment. Thus, Salafi *dayah* survive because the *teungku* figure preserves social trust (Adrianda & Tisa, 2022; Nuriana & Salwa, 2024).

The fourth theme is moral discipline as an institutional technology. Rules regarding prayer, meals, bathing, rest, haircuts, punishments, student supervision, and mobile phone restrictions may appear strict from an external perspective. However, from the internal perspective of Salafi *dayah*, discipline serves as a pedagogical medium. Students are trained to regulate desires, time, speech, bodily movements, and social behavior. The goal is not merely to create administrative compliance but to cultivate steadfastness and self-restraint. In Islamic educational tradition, self-formation often begins with regulating habits. Therefore, daily discipline becomes part of religious character formation (Adrianda & Tisa, 2022; Hannan & Mursyidi, 2023).

A significant example is the use of *hareh* or student monitors, rather than relying entirely on surveillance technology such as CCTV. This illustrates the difference between modern administrative logic and the pedagogical logic of the *dayah*. Modern administrative logic may view technological monitoring as more efficient, whereas the *dayah* logic emphasizes that assigning responsibility to students for maintaining order fosters accountability. The task educates not only in detecting violations but also in developing leadership, moral courage, and social sensitivity. The *dayah* thus chooses a humane technology that shapes subjects as well as controls objects (Meriza et al., 2022; Wajdi, 2024; Yuwanda et al., 2023).

Moral discipline also reflects the distinctive governance system of Salafi *dayah*. This system is not always formally written in modern management language but functions through habits, examples, admonitions, sanctions, and social rewards. Obedience to congregational prayer schedules, compulsory study attendance, restrictions on device use in certain classes, and responsibilities of senior students to guide juniors reflect a hierarchical structure of responsibility. This structure teaches students that religious life involves not only knowledge but also orderly conduct. This is one reason parents continue to trust Salafi *dayah* as a place for child development (Hasan et al., 2023; Nugroho & Astutik, 2024; Wajdi, 2024).

In the digital era, this discipline takes on new significance. Devices are not merely communication tools but gateways to entertainment, marketplaces, conversations, ideologies, and limitless distractions.

Mobile phone restrictions in Salafi *dayah* can be understood as protecting concentration and the learning atmosphere. However, these restrictions must be complemented by gradual digital literacy, especially for senior students. Without literacy, students may be protected within the *dayah* but vulnerable upon returning to society. Therefore, reflective conservatism must distinguish between temporary protection and digital education as preparation for social responsibility (Saepurohman et al., 2025; Syaikh & Faruq, 2025).

The fifth theme is controlled digital engagement. Salafi *dayah* do not approach technology neutrally. Technology is evaluated through the lens of manners, authority, concentration, and communal order. The main concern is not that mobile phones or the internet are inherently modern, but that uncontrolled access can weaken the learning ecology. Social media can fragment attention, expose unfiltered content, create consumerist desires, and disrupt dormitory discipline. In this context, technology restrictions are not merely repressive measures but part of moral governance over students' attention (Mustofa et al., 2023; Nisa et al., 2024).

Controlled engagement means digital devices are not entirely rejected in all forms. Digital libraries, institutional websites, online preaching channels, administrative applications, and alumni communications are acceptable if they support the *dayah's* goals. Studies on the *kitab kuning* show that some teachers use digital references such as *Maktabah Syamilah* while still maintaining the *kitab kuning* as the primary source (Meriza et al., 2022). Studies on technology integration in *pesantren* also show that digitalization opens opportunities for administration, preaching, and network expansion but still presents cultural and resource readiness challenges (Wajdi, 2024). The stance of Salafi *dayah* is best understood as selective rather than absolutely anti-technology (Erawadi & Setiadi, 2023; Rahman & Syahminan, 2024).

This selective logic differs from technophilia or technophobia. Technophilia assumes digital adoption as inherently progressive, whereas technophobia regards digital devices as inherently damaging. The position of Salafi *dayah* is more complex because technology is treated as ambivalent. Digital libraries can help *teungku* verify references, social media accounts can disseminate preaching, and online announcements can connect alumni. However, mobile phones can also disrupt student concentration, bypass teacher authority, and create social spaces difficult to control. The criterion for technology acceptance is not novelty but alignment with the objectives of manners and knowledge transmission (Jaenullah et al., 2022; Manan, 2019).

The sixth theme addresses two trajectories of *dayah* resilience in Aceh: adaptive modernization and conservative endurance. Some *dayah* respond to change by expanding curricula, establishing formal schools, integrating science and technology, and preparing graduates for higher education and the workforce. This trajectory is evident in studies on the transformation of *dayah* into modern educational institutions and integrated systems (Rahman & Syahminan, 2024; Setiadi et al., 2024). Other *dayah* respond by preserving the Salafi core, limiting general curricula, and maintaining *kitab*-based pedagogy. Both approaches can be described as resilience but operate according to different logics: adaptive modernization survives by changing, whereas conservative endurance survives by maintaining boundaries (Fadri & Prayoga, 2025; Maula Bahari & Sugiono, 2025).

The contrast between these two trajectories should not be framed as a simple conflict between progress and backwardness. Modern *dayah* can preserve Salafi elements, and Salafi *dayah* can adopt administrative modernization. The fundamental difference lies in value hierarchies. In modern *dayah*, formal recognition, general curricula, and future employment opportunities may be highly valued alongside religious education. In Salafi *dayah*, the depth of religious knowledge, teacher authority, manners, and continuity with past scholars are central. This demonstrates that educational progress is not always measured by a single standard. For Salafi *dayah*, progress that neglects manners and scholarly chains may be considered misdirected (Nugroho & Astutik, 2024; Saepurohman et al., 2025).

Critical discussion must recognize that conservative resilience carries risks. Preservation can turn

into rigidity if reflection is rejected. Strong teacher authority can become authoritarianism without ethical accountability. Digital restrictions can protect students from distractions but may limit digital literacy if implemented without adequate alternatives. A curriculum heavily centered on classical texts may produce deep religious knowledge, but some graduates may require bridges to higher education, public administration, or broader professional spaces. Therefore, this article does not claim that all Salafi *dayah* practices must be maintained without critique. Reform should start from understanding what the *dayah* is protecting (Nisa et al., 2024; Nuriana & Salwa, 2024).

Reflective conservation involves preserving core values while evaluating practices that need adjustment. Salafi *dayah* can maintain the *kitab kuning* as the curriculum core while teaching responsible use of digital references under teacher guidance. *Dayah* can restrict devices for junior students while introducing digital literacy to senior students. They can preserve *bale beut* pedagogy while documenting lessons for alumni or the community requiring access. Reform, therefore, is understood not as replacing tradition but as strengthening the capacity of tradition to face new challenges (Hasan et al., 2023; Wajdi, 2024).

From an ethnopedagogical perspective, Salafi *dayah* are spaces where local wisdom is enacted through micro-educational practices. Expressions such as *kiban khen teungku* and *lage khen teungku* indicate that authority is embedded in language. Using the local language to explain Arabic grammar demonstrates how global Islamic texts are localized. Practices of sitting, listening, waiting, serving, and repeating show that knowledge is embodied before becoming conceptual. Daily routines, when conducted proportionally and ethically, can cultivate responsibility and discipline. This is significant for educational theory because the curriculum is not merely a list of materials but an entire way of life that educates (Fauzan et al., 2024; Sakti et al., 2024).

The concept of conservative resilience helps reinterpret resistance. Resistance is often understood as opposition to change, whereas in this study, resistance is more accurately understood as boundary-setting work. Salafi *dayah* reject changes that threaten their educational atmosphere but can accept changes that align with moral objectives. This distinction prevents caricaturing Salafi *dayah* as anti-modern. The institution rejects uncontrolled digital culture, not all digital tools. It maintains physical texts but can use digital sources as supporting tools. It preserves *teungku* authority while opening institutional communication with the community through new media (Andok, 2024; Hussin & Tamuri, 2019).

Policy implications of this argument suggest that governments, donors, and universities supporting *dayah* should not assume a uniform model of digital transformation. In Salafi *dayah*, useful support may include digitizing library catalogs, preserving manuscripts, limited internet access for teachers, academic search training for senior students, and developing protected digital spaces for preaching. Such support differs from encouraging all students to use devices freely. The goal is institutional strengthening, not cultural replacement. Policies respecting conservative resilience must ask what technology is used for, who controls it, and how it supports manners (Nugroho & Astutik, 2024; Saepurohman et al., 2025).

Curriculum development also requires a layered approach. The sequence of *kitab kuning* should be understood as the core curriculum of Salafi identity. Around this core, *dayah* can develop complementary modules on digital ethics, health, environmental awareness, civic responsibility, or entrepreneurship without transforming into conventional schools. The key is sequence and authority. Complementary modules should not compete with the symbolic centrality of religious texts but be framed as practical extensions of religious responsibility. This approach can reduce concerns that any new material automatically erodes Salafi identity (Maula Bahari & Sugiono, 2025; Munawar & Endang, 2026).

The novelty of this article lies in the concept of conservative resilience rather than merely asserting that *dayah* are traditional. Many studies have described traditional features of *dayah* and *pesantren*. This

article adds value by explaining how these features function as coherent strategies in the digital era. It connects micro-practices such as sitting in the *bale*, interpreting Arabic texts, adhering to device restrictions, and serving under *hareh* supervision with macro concepts such as institutional resilience, educational ideology, and digital governance. The linkage between ethnographic detail and theoretical argument strengthens the manuscript for a broader academic audience (Meriza et al., 2022; Nasir et al., 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

This article demonstrates that the resilience of Salafi *dayah* in Aceh in the digital era cannot be reduced to stagnation, anti-modernity, or failure to adapt to change. This resilience is more accurately understood as conservative ethnopedagogical resilience, which refers to the institution's ability to maintain its educational identity through the preservation of the *kitab kuning*, *teungku* authority, communal discipline, *bale beut* pedagogy, and controlled digital engagement. Conservatism in this context functions as a boundary-maintenance strategy to ensure that the educational process does not lose manners, scholarly chains, attention, and social legitimacy. Thus, Salafi *dayah* are not merely institutions surviving from the past; they actively interpret the past as a source of orientation in navigating digital pressures.

The main findings reveal five mechanisms of resilience. First, a past-oriented curriculum ensures epistemic continuity through the *kitab kuning*. Second, the *bale beut* and oral teaching methods cultivate attention embodied in the body. Third, *teungku* authority provides moral legitimacy while filtering online religious pluralism. Fourth, daily discipline functions as an institutional technology to shape responsibility, obedience, and self-control. Fifth, digital technology is negotiated selectively based on its alignment with manners and educational objectives. These mechanisms indicate that rejection of certain forms of digitalization can be a deliberate pedagogical action rather than mere technological unpreparedness.

However, conservative resilience requires critical reflection. A strong tradition still needs transparent governance, ethical accountability, attention to student well-being, responsible digital literacy, and pathways for graduates seeking broader academic or professional opportunities. These challenges should be addressed through reflective conservation rather than forced assimilation into modern school models. Effective reform strengthens the *dayah's* capacity to educate without dissolving the moral and epistemic order that gives it meaning.

The digital era will continue to pressure *dayah* to adapt. The most viable path for Salafi *dayah* is neither total rejection nor uncritical adoption but controlled digital engagement. Technology can be used for preaching, reference work, documentation, alumni communication, and institutional administration while remaining under teacher-mediated learning authority and manners. Future research should conduct multi-site ethnographic comparisons among Salafi, integrated, and modern *dayah*; examine students' experiences of device restrictions and digital learning; and evaluate digital literacy models compatible with *kitab*-based pedagogy.

With improved structure, argumentation, and conceptual condensation, the study of Salafi *dayah* can be read not merely as a local description of traditional Islamic educational institutions but as a conceptual contribution to the study of education, religion, and digital transformation. Salafi *dayah* demonstrate that education does not always progress by abandoning the past. In certain contexts, the past serves as an orientation for assessing change, limiting distractions, and safeguarding the quality of human formation. The next academic task is to more precisely formulate the relationship between tradition and digitalization, so that the preservation of *dayah* does not become self-isolation, while modernization does not weaken local identity. In this way, Salafi *dayah* remain relevant, rooted, and responsible educational institutions in contemporary Acehnese society.

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