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Internalization of the Value of Traditional Malay Education in Madrasah as the Foundation for Generation Z Moral Development

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A B S T R A C T

Generation Z faces moral degradation challenges due to negative digital content exposure and weakening understanding of traditional values, positioning madrasah strategically to internalize Islamic values based on Malay local wisdom. This research aims to identify relevant Malay traditional education values, describe internalization processes, and formulate an integrative model as the foundation for Generation Z's moral development in madrasah. The research method employs a qualitative approach with descriptive-analytical library research on 2020-2025 literature through content analysis techniques. Results indicate that tauhid values, noble character, tawasuth, tasamuh, and tawazun are internalized through comprehensive strategies including contextual exemplary, project-based learning, spiritual habituation, reflective dialogue, and individual counseling integrating formal and hidden curriculum. The integrative model combining philosophical, institutional, pedagogical, socio-cultural, psychological, and technological dimensions proves effective in forming religious character reflected through worship consistency, rule compliance, discipline, and social responsibility. Recommendations include strengthening tripartite school-family-community collaboration, continuous teacher competency development, and digital technology utilization aligned with Malay oral tradition preservation to maintain traditional values relevance for Generation Z.

1. Introduction

The rapid social transformation in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 has had a significant impact on the construction of values and identities of Generation Z, a demographic group born between 1997 and 2012. As *digital natives*, Generation Z grew up in an environment dominated by information and communication

technology, where access to global content takes place without space and time limits. This condition gives rise to a paradoxical phenomenon: on the one hand there is an acceleration of knowledge and technical skills, but on the other hand there are indications of moral degradation characterized by a weakening of understanding of traditional values and local wisdom. Recent research shows that Generation Z faces the risk of moral disintegration due to exposure to negative *content online* and the absence of solid value guides, so that madrasas as Islamic educational institutions have a strategic role in filling this void through the internalization of Islamic values rooted in local traditions.

In the context of Indonesia, especially in Malay cultural areas, there is a treasure trove of traditional educational values that have been proven to be able to shape the character of society for centuries. These values include the principles of *Tawasuth* (moderation), *Tasamuh* (tolerance), *Tawazun* (balance), and *Amar Ma'ruf is A Man Who Is Unhappy* (social responsibility) that is integrated into the informal education system through oral traditions, religious rituals, and social practices. Pond (Achmadin et al., 2024) emphasizing that the professionalism of madrasah teachers in internalizing Islamic values is very influential on the actual development of students' morals, which indicates the importance of the role of educators as agents of value transmission in the context of formal education. However, empirical studies show that the process of traditional value transmission experiences serious obstacles in this digital era. Research conducted by (Alber et al., 2024) revealed that the integration of Malay cultural knowledge in learning in madrassas is still limited to the cognitive aspect alone, not touching the affective and psychomotor dimensions that are essential for the formation of morals. The study Internalization of Islamic local wisdom values, as contained in the teachings of Aswaja, has proven to be effective in forming a moderate, inclusive, and socially responsible character in students in madrasas, although its implementation still faces challenges related to the diversity of student backgrounds and the influence of digital media.

Other empirical findings indicate that there is a gap between the formal curriculum of madrassas and the need for contextual character development. The Islamic education curriculum in madrassas is not yet fully relevant to the demands of the modern world, especially in terms of the development of digital literacy and critical thinking skills integrated with moral values. Learning Moral Beliefs with the Independent Curriculum approach requires intensive collaboration between schools, families, and communities to overcome the phenomenon of moral degradation in the Society 5.0 era, which indicates that conventional approaches in moral education are inadequate. Furthermore, a study conducted by (Januaripin et al., 2025) It shows that the strategy of internalizing moral values in madrasas must harmoniously combine technology and spirituality, with the strengthening of education policies, contextual teacher training, and process-oriented character evaluation, not just the final result.

Although various studies have been conducted related to character education in madrassas and the preservation of local cultural values, there is *a* significant research gap in the academic literature. First, there has not been a comprehensive study that specifically explores the mechanism of internalizing the value of

traditional Malay education as the foundation for the moral development of Generation Z in the context of madrasas. Second, previous studies have tended to separate traditional value studies from formal educational practices, without integrating the two in a holistic theoretical and practical framework. Third, there is a lack of studies that analyze in depth how values such as *taboos*, mutual cooperation, respect for parents, and the balance of human relations with nature, which are the essence of Malay local wisdom, can be transformed into a *hidden curriculum* that is effective in character formation in the digital era.

Therefore, this research comes with offering *Novelty* in the form of an integrative conceptual framework that connects traditional Malay educational values with the practice of moral development in madrassas for Generation Z. The novelty of this research lies in three main aspects: (1) systematic identification of traditional Malay educational values that are relevant to the needs of character formation of Generation Z; (2) in-depth analysis of the strategy of internalizing these values through a formal curriculum, teacher example, habituation (*Habituation*), and the wise use of digital media; and (3) the formulation of an integrative model that bridges the dichotomy between formal religious education and traditional local wisdom, resulting in an educational approach that is *contextually relevant* but still *spiritually grounded*. In line with the findings (Tambak et al., 2020) which reveals that the digitalization strategy of pesantren education can be an effective means in internalizing Aswaja values for Generation Z in the technological era, this research integrates the technology dimension with traditional values to produce an adaptive educational model while still adhering to fundamental principles. Thus, this research is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the development of the Islamic education system in Indonesia that is able to produce a young generation with noble character and at the same time responsive to the challenges of the times.

Based on the background that has been described, the formulation of the problem in this study is as follows: (1) What are the relevant traditional Malay educational values to be used as the foundation for the moral development of Generation Z in madrasas?, (2) How can the process of internalizing traditional Malay educational values be implemented effectively in educational practices in madrasas?, and (3) How is the integrative model of internalizing traditional Malay educational values that can be implemented applied as the foundation for the moral development of Generation Z in madrasas?. Based on the formulation of the above problem, the objectives of this study are: (1) Identifying and analyzing relevant traditional Malay educational values to be used as the foundation for the development of Generation Z morals in madrasas, (2) Describing and analyzing the process of internalizing traditional Malay educational values that can be implemented effectively in educational practices in madrasas, and (3) Formulating an integrative model of internalizing traditional Malay education values that can be applied as a foundation for the moral development of Generation Z in madrasas.

This research is expected to provide benefits both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research will enrich the scientific treasures of Islamic education, especially related to the integration of local wisdom in the formation of students'

characters, as well as provide a conceptual contribution in the form of a theoretical framework for internalizing values that bridge the gap between local education traditions and contemporary educational demands. In addition, this research is expected to be an academic reference for future studies that examine the relationship between traditional values, character education, and the characteristics of the digital generation. Practically, this research is useful for madrassas in providing practical guidance to integrate traditional Malay educational values into the curriculum and learning practices to shape students' morals. For educators, this research provides a reference for contextual learning strategies based on local wisdom to overcome the moral problems of Generation Z. For policy makers, this research can be considered in formulating character education policies that are responsive to local needs but still keep up with the times. Meanwhile, for the community, this research is expected to increase awareness of the importance of preserving and revitalizing traditional educational values as relevant cultural assets in the formation of the young generation with noble character.

2. Methodology

This research guide uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method (*Library Research*) which is descriptive-analytical in nature to examine the internalization of the value of traditional Malay education in madrassas as the foundation for the moral development of Generation Z. (Widodo & Husni, 2025) Emphasizing that literature research is a method used to collect information and data with the help of various available materials such as documents, books, scientific journals, and previous research results that are relevant to the topic of study. The data sources in this study consist of secondary data in the form of scientific literature which includes articles from national and international journals, reference books, and the results of previous research published in the range of 2020 to 2025, focusing on three main themes, namely the value of traditional Malay education, moral development in madrasas, and the characteristics of Generation Z in the context of Islamic education. Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation and *purposive sampling* against literature that meets the criteria of relevance, credibility, and actuality. The data analysis process uses content analysis techniques (*Content Analysis*) with the following steps: (1) identification and classification of literature based on research themes and variables; (2) data reduction through systematic recording of key concepts; (3) the presentation of data in the form of narrative descriptions and conceptual matrices; and (4) drawing conclusions based on the synthesis of findings from various sources. Adlini et al. (2022) explain that literature studies are closely related to theoretical studies and scientific references that cannot be separated from valid and reliable academic literature. The validity of the data is ensured through triangulation of sources by comparing various theoretical perspectives and empirical findings from diverse literature, resulting in comprehensive and academically accountable conclusions.

The literature sources utilized in this study were systematically collected from multiple reputable academic databases to ensure comprehensive coverage and

credibility. A total of 45 articles were reviewed from Scopus-indexed journals, representing high-impact international publications that discuss Islamic education, character development, and Generation Z characteristics in educational contexts. Additionally, 32 articles were sourced from SINTA (Science and Technology Index) database, focusing specifically on Indonesian Islamic education research and Malay cultural studies that provide localized insights relevant to the madrasah context. Furthermore, 18 articles were obtained from Google Scholar, including grey literature and recent conference proceedings that address contemporary issues in moral education. The Web of Science database contributed 12 articles focusing on pedagogical strategies and value internalization mechanisms, while 8 articles from ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) provided comparative perspectives on character education models. This multi-database approach ensures triangulation of sources across different academic indexing systems, strengthening the validity and comprehensiveness of the literature review while capturing both international theoretical frameworks and context-specific empirical findings from Indonesian Islamic educational institutions.

3. Results and Discussion

The Values of Traditional Malay Education as the Foundation for Generation Z Moral Development in Madrasah

The Philosophical and Conceptual Dimension of Malay Traditional Education Values

Traditional Malay education has a strong philosophical foundation in shaping the character and morality of society, especially through the deep integration between Islamic values and local wisdom of the archipelago. (Atiris Shari'ah, 2025) explained that the oral tradition of the Malay community functions as a medium of transmission of Islamic educational values that include the divine dimension (*tauhid*), morals and ethics in society, love for science, and the sustainable preservation of ancestral culture. This philosophical dimension shows that Malay education does not just transfer cognitive knowledge, but forms a complete spiritual and moral consciousness. This argument states that Islam plays a central role in shaping and coloring Malay culture, including in the dimensions of education, morality, law, and customs that are integrated into daily life. The transformation brought by Islam through trade, da'wah, and marriage has resulted in a traditional Malay education system that not only teaches religious knowledge, but also shapes the character and morality of society through institutions such as suraus, madrasas, and pesantren (Sabri et al., 2022).

(Djuaini, 2025) identifies that the characteristics of Malay society based on Islamic values indicate a distinctive social model, in which Islamic teachings are not only implemented as a belief system but are comprehensively integrated into the cultural, social, and political aspects of daily life. Islamic-based education in the Malay community emphasizes the formation of noble morals, the internalization of monotheistic values, and the preservation of local traditions that are in harmony

with sharia principles. This educational pattern strategically maintains the continuity of the community's cultural identity while adapting to the dynamics of changing times. Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia such as suraus, mosques, and Islamic boarding schools have long been an integral part of society, playing a central role in shaping the character, values, and identity of Muslims. These three institutions have historically contributed significantly to the formation of Islamic identity, serving as centers of education, moral development, and grounded spiritual values. Madrasah as an Islamic educational institution has a central role in the development of science and understanding of Islam among Muslims, with fundamental values such as monotheism, morals, and love for science being the operational basis reflected in the curriculum and learning methods (Awards, 2023).

Characteristics of Generation Z and the Urgency of Internalizing Traditional Values in the Context of Madrasah

Generation Z as a demographic group born in the era of digitalization and globalization faces unique challenges in integrating traditional values into their social lives. The younger generation of Muslims faces an increasing challenge in integrating Islamic values into their social lives, where core principles such as honesty, justice, empathy, and humility are often defeated by the powerful influence of foreign cultures and social media (Atika & Muhammad, 2025). The findings of the study show that the application of Islamic values encourages positive social behaviors in both real and digital environments, such as honesty in communication, fairness in interactions, and high levels of empathy and tolerance. (Fariati et al., 2025) emphasizing that school-age children are vulnerable to negativity and moral degradation due to a lack of understanding of religion and moral values, so education must not only focus on the academic aspect, but also instill Islamic values as a guideline for life. This condition shows the high urgency to implement the internalization of traditional Malay values based on Islam in the madrasah environment as a moral defense fortress for the younger generation.

(Fariati et al., 2025) highlighting that in response to the increasing prevalence of moral degradation in the educational environment, there is an urgent need for effective solutions through integrated character building programs. Efforts to instill religious values through school culture include providing literacy to Islamic religious values, conducting value transactions, and internalizing values such as worship, discipline, honesty, obedience to rules, responsibility, motivation, maintaining a clean environment, tolerance, democracy, togetherness, and concern for others through academic and social culture. (Ramedlon et al., 2023) emphasized that the character of nationalism and religion shapes the identity of the younger generation, not only as knowledge but also as a manifestation in action, where the internalization of this character is proven through the attitudes and behaviors of school residents in various commemoration and celebration activities, appreciation for the cultural diversity of the archipelago, and discipline in carrying out activities related to these characters. Islamic education is an institution that focuses on the formation of human beings who have noble qualities, such as personality and good behavior in accordance with the values of the Qur'an as a dogma of life in

theological, norm, cultural, social, political, and economic aspects as knowledgeable, mature, humanist, and virtuous human beings.

The Process of Internalizing Traditional Malay Education Values in Educational Practice in Madrasah

Strategies and Mechanisms for Internalizing Values through the Formal Curriculum and *Hidden Curriculum*

The process of internalizing traditional Malay educational values in madrassas requires systematic strategies and mechanisms through the integration of formal curriculum and *hidden curriculum*. (Hariyono et al., 2023) identify that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning planning has integrated character values through the 2013 Curriculum, with value instilling through five main methods, namely contextual exemplification, project-based learning, spiritual habituation, reflective dialogue, and individual counseling. The success of this method can be seen from the change in the behavior of students who act consistently according to Islamic values without external supervision, which emphasizes the importance of collaboration between schools, families, and society. The Qur'an in the Islamic education system aims to form the spirit of the Qur'an which consists of exemplary values (*Uswatun Hasanah*) in the framework of religious activities in Islamic boarding schools, discipline in various activities both in learning activities and daily life, as well as creating a conducive atmosphere in schools through the integration and internalization of Islamic values in school development and problem solving for students, educators, and education staff in table 1.

Table 1. Value Internalization Strategy through Formal Curriculum and *Hidden Curriculum*

Curriculum Dimensions	Implementation Strategy	Internalization Mechanism	Success Indicators
Formal Curriculum	Integration of character values in the 2013 Curriculum, project-based learning	Contextual example, reflective dialogue, individualized counseling	Consistent behavior change without external supervision
Hidden Curriculum	Religious activities, spiritual habituation, creation of a conducive atmosphere	The value of example (uswatun hasanah), discipline in daily activities	Internalization of values in students' daily lives
School Culture	Islamic value literacy, value transactions, academic and social programs	Worship, discipline, honesty, responsibility, tolerance, care	Attitudes and behaviors according to religious values in various activities
Special Programs	*Islamic Building, Character Building, tahfiz, 5S routine*	Faith, worship, morality, leadership, empathy, creativity, collaboration	Consistency of worship, obedience to rules, discipline, social responsibility

Source: Adapted from Djuaini (2025), Nursikin & Nugroho (2021), Hakim (2023), and Sharia (2025)

(Heru et al., 2025) reveals that the values internalized through the program *Islamic Building* and *Character Building* play a significant role in strengthening students' religious character and social awareness, where the program *Islamic Building* includes values such as faith, worship, morality, steadfastness (*Istiqamah*), and brotherhood (*Ukhuwah*), while the *Character Building* emphasizing leadership, empathy, creativity and innovation, collaboration, and responsibility. Various activities are designed to encourage a conducive learning environment, including the implementation of the 5S routine (smile, greeting, greeting, politeness, and courtesy), prayer readings before and after lessons, collective implementation of Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers, Qur'an memorization programs (*Tahfiz*), internalization of shame for mistakes, and character development led by homeroom teachers. (Hidayat et al., 2025) added that value transformation efforts include providing literacy to Islamic religious values, conducting value transactions, and internalizing values such as worship, discipline, honesty, obedience to rules, responsibility, motivation, maintaining environmental cleanliness, tolerance, democracy, togetherness, and concern for others through academic and social culture.

The Role of Teachers and the Madrasah Environment in the Process of Internalizing Values

The role of teachers and the madrasah environment is a key factor in the success of the process of internalizing traditional Malay educational values. The pesantren education method that prioritizes emotional closeness between teachers and students, strict spiritual discipline, and the intensive application of Islamic values is effective in fostering the noble morals of the students, where the closeness of the personal relationship between the kiai and the students is a key factor in the process of internalizing ethical and spiritual values. Teachers' active participation in school programs, competence in their fields, teachers and staff trained with undergraduate to doctoral education, as well as facilities such as dormitory buildings influence the value of religious character in school culture. (Nursikin & Nugroho, 2021) affirms that habitual integration of character is seen in various aspects, including daily routines, incidental programs, learning activities, extracurricular involvement, and environmental conditions, suggesting that learning goes beyond the cognitive domain and character development as essential aspects of the affective domain emerge as important aspects of education.

(Ridhokusumo et al., 2024) added that efforts to internalize the values of the Qur'an are carried out through coaching carried out by the head of the madrasah on a regular basis every Friday, the application of deliberation, justice, honesty, and responsibility to the madrasah community, as well as the enthusiasm of the madrasah community in implementing and complying with the madrasah regulations and avoiding adverse actions, where the madrasah as a morality workshop emphasizes habituation in behavior that describes the values of the Qur'an and goodness that students must have and become a habit in their daily lives with madrasah monitoring programs that involve various elements. Strategic efforts are needed through the contextual transformation of Islamic education, the use of digital media as a means of da'wah and education, and the strengthening of the role of the family and social environment as a fortress of Islamic values, where the

sustainability of Islamic values in Malay culture is highly dependent on the ability of the community to adapt and revitalize these values to remain relevant in the dynamics of modern life.

Integrative Model of Internalization of Traditional Malay Education Values as the Foundation for Generation Z Moral Development in Madrasah

Conceptual Framework of Integrative Model Based on Malay Traditional Values

The conceptual framework of the integrative model based on traditional Malay values unites the various dimensions of Islamic education that have developed in the educational tradition of the archipelago with the contemporary needs of Generation Z. (Setyawan & Roqib, 2025) explained that madrassas not only function as a place of religious teaching, but also as an institution that produces a generation of integrity with deep Islamic values, by maintaining a balance between religious science and general knowledge in forming a strong religious identity. Islamic educational institutions have demonstrated exceptional adaptability through institutional transformation, technological adoption, and expansion of their social, economic, and educational roles while maintaining the core values of Islam, with substantial contributions to the development of Islamic civilization in Indonesia through the production of religious, moderate, and competitive generations and strengthening the role of Islam as a moral and social force in building an inclusive society. just, and civilized, as presented in Table 2 conceptual framework

Table 2. Conceptual Framework of Integrative Model of Internalization of Malay Traditional Values

Model Components	Value Dimension	Implementation Strategy	Expected Outcome
Philosophical Foundations	Tauhid, morals, love of knowledge	Integration of Islamic values and Malay local wisdom	A complete spiritual and moral consciousness
Institutional	Madrasah, surau, mosque, pesantren	Institutional transformation with technology adoption	Religious, moderate, and competitive generation
Pedagogical	Example, habituation, reflective dialogue	Integrated formal curriculum and hidden curriculum	Consistent behavior change according to Islamic values
Socio-Cultural	Malay oral traditions, customs, culture	Transmission of values through rhymes, gurindam, verses, advice	Preservation of cultural and spiritual identity
Psychological	Emotional closeness between teachers and students	Individual counseling, personal coaching	Internalization of ethical and spiritual values
Technologist	Digital media, online platforms	The use of technology as a means of da'wah and education	The relevance of traditional values in the digital age

Source: Synthesized from Ridhokusumo (2024), Setyawan (2025), Uri et al. (2025), Hidayat et al. (2025), and Fariati et al. (2025)

(Uri et al., 2025) identifies that the integration of Islamic values into the education system is a significant factor in building individual character and strengthening social cohesion in Malay society, where this pattern of education strategically

maintains the continuity of the community's cultural identity while adapting to the dynamics of changing times. The lifsan tradition is not only an entertainment or literary medium, but also an instrument of da'wah and education that is firmly rooted in local culture, with values that include divinity (tauhid), morals and ethics of community life, love for science and education, and the continuous preservation of ancestral culture, which indicates the success of Islamic acculturation and Malay culture and provides the implication that oral traditions can be used as a model of relevant character education and contextual in the modern era.

Implementation and Evaluation of Integrative Models in Moral Development of Generation Z

The implementation of an integrative model in the development of Generation Z morals requires a holistic approach that combines various elements of traditional education with contemporary innovations. (Wirayanti et al., 2024) shows that the practical model of effective internalization of PAI values in madrassas with unique socio-cultural characteristics can make a significant contribution, where the success of the internalization method can be seen from the change in the behavior of students who act consistently according to Islamic values without external supervision, with an emphasis on the importance of collaboration between schools, families, and communities. Internalization programs have a positive impact on students' character, as evidenced by greater consistency in religious worship, stronger adherence to school rules, improved discipline, and increased sense of social responsibility. The main supporting factors in the implementation of Islamic values include personal faith, family influence, and community support, while the greatest challenges arise from the pervasive impact of social media and the modern peer environment, where research highlights the vital role of families, educational institutions, and communities in strengthening the application of Islamic values among younger generations of Muslims.

School culture support that promotes religious-based character values such as praying and trying well, being polite and kind, respecting others, being honest in learning, diligent, disciplined, following school rules and teacher rules, being self-motivated, and responsible is the key to the successful implementation of the integrative model. (Setyawan & Roqib, 2025) added that the research findings are expected to make a significant contribution to the development of moral education methods in other Islamic boarding schools, as well as become a reference in strengthening the role of Islamic boarding schools as centers of character education in Indonesia, through the closeness of personal relationships between teachers and students which is a key factor in the process of internalizing ethical and spiritual values. The sustainability of Islamic values in Malay culture is highly dependent on the ability of the community to adapt and revitalize these values in order to remain relevant in the dynamics of modern life, which requires strategic efforts through the contextual transformation of Islamic education, the use of digital media as a means of da'wah and education, and the strengthening of the role of the family and social environment as a fortress of Islamic values in facing the challenges of the era of globalization and digitalization.

4. Conclusion

This research shows that traditional Malay educational values that are integrated with Islamic principles have a strong philosophical foundation in shaping the morals of Generation Z in madrasas. The internalization of monotheistic values, noble morals, and love for science is carried out through a comprehensive strategy that integrates formal curriculum and hidden curriculum, including contextual examples, project-based learning, spiritual habituation, reflective dialogue, and individualized counseling. The success of the internalization process depends heavily on the role of teachers, emotional closeness of teachers and students, and the support of a conducive madrasah environment. Integrative models that combine philosophical, institutional, pedagogical, socio-cultural, psychological, and technological dimensions have proven effective in shaping the religious character of Generation Z, which is reflected through consistency of worship, adherence to rules, discipline, and social responsibility. Malay oral traditions such as pantun, gurindam, and petuah have become a medium for transmitting relevant and contextual values in the modern era, showing the success of Islamic acculturation and Malay culture in maintaining cultural identity while adapting to the dynamics of changing times. Based on the findings of the research, it is recommended to madrasah managers to strengthen tripartite collaboration between schools, families, and the community in optimizing the internalization of traditional Malay educational values. The development of teacher competencies through continuous training in exemplary methods and personal mentoring needs to be prioritized to strengthen the emotional closeness of teachers and students as the key to the success of value internalization. The implementation of digital technology as a medium of da'wah and learning must be aligned with the preservation of Malay oral traditions to maintain the relevance of traditional values for Generation Z. Further research is recommended to explore a quantitative evaluation model of the long-term impact of value internalization on students' social behavior in the digital era. The government and Islamic education stakeholders need to formulate strategic policies that support the revitalization of traditional Malay educational values through standardized Islamic Building and Character Building programs, as well as allocate resources for the development of educational infrastructure that supports the creation of a conducive environment for the formation of noble morals of Generation Z in madrasas.

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