
Reconstructing the Moral Role of the Mamak in Minangkabau Islamic Education in the Digital Era: The Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy Model

Rekonstruksi Peran Moral Mamak dalam Pendidikan Islam Minangkabau di Era Digital: Model Hybrid Pedagogi Kekerabatan

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ABSTRACT: The digital era has profoundly transformed patterns of religious socialization within Muslim families. Through social media, online platforms, and internet-based communication, the moral authority once anchored in family and customary figures has shifted toward digital spaces that are increasingly individualistic and algorithmic. This transformation has directly weakened the moral role of the mamak (maternal uncle) in the religious upbringing of his kemenakan in Minangkabau society, without implying that all mamak uniformly fulfil this role; the study focuses specifically on the moral dimension of the mamak's role at the personal and kinship levels. The study aims to reconstruct the moral role of the mamak in Minangkabau Islamic education in the digital era, grounded in Sunnah values and local wisdom. A qualitative library research design with field confirmation was employed, with scholarly literature and classical hadith collections as the primary data sources, supported by a purposively selected set of contextual interviews with Minangkabau adat practitioners. Data were analysed using descriptive-analytical, socio-pedagogical, and thematic-contextual hadith (*mawḍūʿī*) approaches, and interpreted through attachment, ecological systems, and social identity perspectives. The findings show that digitalisation has progressively marginalised the mamak's involvement in shaping the religious identity of the kemenakan, while Sunnah values concerning the moral responsibility of adult male kin remain normatively relevant. The study proposes the Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy model, positioning the mamak as a moral mentor, cultural mediator, and digital literacy companion.

Keywords: Mamak; Minangkabau; Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy.

ABSTRAK: Era digital telah secara mendalam mengubah pola sosialisasi keagamaan dalam keluarga Muslim. Melalui media sosial, platform daring, dan komunikasi berbasis internet, otoritas moral yang semula berpusat pada keluarga dan figur adat bergeser ke ruang digital yang semakin individualistik dan algoritmik. Transformasi ini secara langsung melemahkan peran moral mamak (saudara laki-laki ibu) dalam pembinaan keagamaan kemenakannya di masyarakat Minangkabau, tanpa mengasumsikan bahwa seluruh mamak secara seragam menjalankan peran ini; fokus penelitian ini adalah dimensi moralnya di tingkat personal dan kekerabatan. Penelitian ini bertujuan merekonstruksi peran moral mamak dalam pendidikan Islam Minangkabau di era digital, berlandaskan nilai-nilai Sunnah dan kearifan lokal. Digunakan desain penelitian kepustakaan dengan konfirmasi lapangan, dengan literatur ilmiah dan koleksi hadis klasik sebagai data primer, didukung sejumlah wawancara kontekstual yang dipilih secara purposif terhadap praktisi adat Minangkabau yang aktif dalam kehidupan kekerabatan. Data dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis, sosio-pedagogis, dan tematik-kontekstual hadis (*mawḍūʿī*), serta diinterpretasikan melalui perspektif

kelekatan, sistem ekologi, dan identitas sosial. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa digitalisasi secara progresif meminggirkan keterlibatan *mamak* dalam membentuk identitas keagamaan kemenakan, sementara nilai-nilai *Sunnah* mengenai tanggung jawab moral kerabat laki-laki dewasa, yaitu waliy, kafil, dan tarbiyah, tetap relevan secara normatif. Penelitian ini mengusulkan model *Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy*, yang memosisikan *mamak* sebagai mentor moral, mediator budaya, dan pendamping literasi digital, sebagai strategi memperkuat ketahanan identitas keagamaan generasi muda Minangkabau.

Kata Kunci: Mamak; Minangkabau; Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy.

A. INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has fundamentally transformed the ways in which religious authority is constructed, transmitted, and contested across the world. Studies of *digital religion* demonstrate that computer-mediated communication does not merely add new channels for religious life; rather, it actively reshapes who is recognised as a legitimate source of religious guidance, as offline authority structures increasingly compete with algorithmically curated online spaces.¹ In Indonesia, this global pattern has unfolded with particular intensity: the use of digital devices has expanded rapidly and has even been institutionally promoted for integration into formal education,² while the proliferation of Islamic websites illustrates how Islamic learning has become digitalised, making religious knowledge that was once accessible only through face-to-face interaction now available online and detached from established religious authorities.³ Consequently, although the religious identity of adolescents continues to be shaped by family and customary communities, it is increasingly negotiated within a broader digital environment that introduces new sources of religious information, interpretation, and influence alongside established offline structures.⁴

This wave of digitalisation has directly weakened the moral authority of traditional institutions in religious education, a challenge that is particularly relevant to Minangkabau society with its matrilineal sociocultural system and distinctive leadership structure. Minangkabau is characterized by the collective leadership system of *Tungku Tigo Sajarangan*, which consists of *ninik mamak* (customary leaders), *alim ulama*

¹ See: Heidi Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media* (London: Routledge, 2010), 21, 33–34, 39; Heidi A. Campbell, *Digital Creatives and the Rethinking of Religious Authority* (London: Routledge, 2020), 12–13, 30, 40–42.

² Alfurqan, "Evolution and Modernization of Islamic Education in Minangkabau," *Jurnal Afkaruna* 16, no. 1 (2020): 94.

³ Dadi Solahudin dan Moch Fakhruroji, "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia: Social Media, Religious Populism, and Religious Authority," *Religions* 11, no. 1 (2020), 19.

⁴ Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media*, 32–33, 39.

(religious scholars), and *cadiak pandai* (intellectuals).⁵ Within this system, three concepts are frequently conflated despite requiring clear analytical distinction: *ninik mamak*, referring to collective customary leadership at the *kaum* and *nagari* levels; *mamak kaum* or *penghulu*, the clan head; and *mamak kandung*, which in this study is specifically defined as the biological brother of the mother who maintains a personal and direct relationship with his *kemenakan*.⁶ This study is deliberately situated at this most intimate level, conceptualising the *mamak kandung* as an informal moral mentor rather than *ninik mamak* as a customary office. Historically, the *surau* institution⁷ occupied a central role in shaping the character, morality, and religious identity of Minangkabau society through the *halaqah* tradition,⁸ in which the *mamak kandung* ensured that the *kemenakan* received religious education, moral guidance, and preparation for social life.⁹

The theoretical significance of this figure extends well beyond a merely cultural description. Attachment theory posits that emotional bonds with caregivers who function as a *secure base* shape children's socioemotional development.¹⁰ Within the extended matrilineal family, attachment figures are not limited to biological parents but also include the *mamak*, and attachment to the father, the mother, and the *mamak* has been associated

⁵ Tungku Tigo Sajarangan, also referred to as Tali Tigo Sapilin (TTS-TTS), is a consolidative institutional system and customary leadership code of Minangkabau that operates implementatively in overseeing the inheritance and implementation of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*. Naturally, this system represents the principle of balance: just as a traditional Minangkabau cooking hearth always consists of three stones supporting the cooking pot, not four, customary leadership is likewise supported by three elements that balance one another. In its current institutional practice, these three elements are integrated within the Kerapatan Adat Nagari (KAN): the *ninik mamak* element is led by the *penghulu* or *datuk*, the *ulama* element is led by the Majelis Ulama Nagari or *tuanku*, and the *cadiak pandai* element is led by the *cerdik cendekia* or *piawai*. Yulizal Yunus, *Minangkabau Social Movement* (Padang: Imam Bonjol Press, 2015), 13, 305. See also: Welhendri Azwar et al., "Nagari Minangkabau: The Study of Indigenous Institutions in West Sumatra, Indonesia," *Jurnal Bina Praja* 10, no. 2 (2018): 235; Niko Andeska, Dharsono, dan Martion, "Tungku Tigo Sajarangan pada Era Globalisasi dan Visualisasi dalam Kriya Seni," *Gorga: Jurnal Seni Rupa* 4, no. 2 (2017), 173.

⁶ M. C. Umar dan Y. Riza, "Peran Ninik Mamak, Mamak dan Kamanakan di Minangkabau," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa* 5, no. 3 (2022), 177.

⁷ *Surau*, structurally, is a form of building smaller than a mosque, yet it performs an institutional function of equal importance for the Minangkabau community. Long before Islam entered Minangkabau, the *surau* had functioned as a place of gathering, deliberation, and lodging for boys who had reached puberty as well as elderly men, in accordance with the customary provision that did not provide rooms for boys in their own parents' *rumah gadang*. With the arrival of Islam, the *surau* underwent a process of Islamization: its lodging function for unmarried boys was maintained, but expanded to become a place for prayer (*mushalla*) as well as for teaching Qur'anic recitation and Islamic teachings. In its development, the functions of the mosque and *surau* became increasingly differentiated: the mosque focused on formal congregational worship, while the *surau* developed more broadly as a dormitory for young people, a place for Qur'anic study, a place for *suluk*, a place for deliberation, and a lodging place for travelers. Azyumardi Azra, *Surau: Pendidikan Islam Tradisional dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi* (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2003): 7-8.

⁸ *Halaqah* is a teaching method commonly practiced in *surau*, in which students sit on the floor in a circle around a shaykh or teacher who delivers instruction on a particular subject. In this way, the *surau* provided the physical and institutional space, the *halaqah* the pedagogical method, and the *mamak* frequently the informal instructor or facilitator within it. Azyumardi Azra, *Surau*, 98-99; Alfurqan, "Evolution and Modernization," op. cit.; A. Alfurqan et al., "Harmony and Divergence: Unraveling the Influence of Surau in Minangkabau Religious Landscape," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 12, no. 1 (2025), 2510057; M. Haviz, "Designing and Developing a New Model of Education Surau and Madrasah Minangkabau Indonesia," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 1 (2017), 92.

⁹ Umar dan Riza, "Peran Ninik Mamak," loc. cit.; R. H. Hayati, S. Chotidjah, dan Y. Shantini, "The Role of Mamak as Adult Educator in Family Strengthening in Modernization Era," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 548 (2021).

¹⁰ Mary D. S. Ainsworth et al., *Patterns of Attachment: A Psychological Study of the Strange Situation* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1978); John Bowlby, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), xii, 22.

with lower levels of adolescents' verbal aggression on social media in West Sumatra.¹¹ This finding, however, is correlational rather than explanatory: it shows that attachment to the *mamak* matters, but leaves unanswered how such attachment is formed, sustained, or eroded under conditions of geographical distance and digital mediation. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory situates the *mamak* within the microsystem and mesosystem that encompass relationships among parents, *mamak*, *Bundo Kandang*, *surau*, and *kaum*, through which proximal socialization processes take place.¹² However, Bronfenbrenner's original model predates the widespread emergence of digital environments and offers no clear place for algorithmically mediated spaces that increasingly compete with these proximal systems. Social identity theory helps explain how kinship and religious communities sustain in-group identities amid increasingly algorithmically curated digital spaces,¹³ while social learning theory positions the *mamak* as a moral role model whose influence is transmitted through example rather than formal instruction.¹⁴

These perspectives are further situated within a *maqasid*-based understanding of family and kinship, particularly the protection of religion (*hifz al-din*) and lineage (*hifz al-nasl*).¹⁵ Two pedagogical concepts further complement the framework: *pedagogy as gift*, which emphasises knowledge transmission through relational participation,¹⁶ and *hybrid pedagogy*, which integrates face-to-face and digitally mediated learning.¹⁷ Taken individually, however, none of these perspectives was formulated to explain informal and non-institutional kinship figures such as the *mamak kandung*. Their application to this context has therefore been largely assumed rather than critically examined. This study addresses this gap by integrating these perspectives into a Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy model.

¹¹ B. A. Rickey dan Z. Fikry, "Pengaruh Kelekatan Ayah, Ibu, dan Mamak terhadap Agresi Verbal Remaja di Media Sosial di Sumatera Barat," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Konseling* 5, no. 2 (2023), 2179.

¹² Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 5-8.

¹³ Henri Tajfel dan John C. Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," dalam *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. W. G. Austin dan S. Worchel (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1979), 33-47.

¹⁴ Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 22-24.

¹⁵ M. Mohadi, "Normative Islamic Conceptualizations of Families and Kinship through Maqasid Perspectives," *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law* 11, no. 2 (2023), 291.

¹⁶ Allan Luke, "Pedagogy as Gift," dalam *Pierre Bourdieu and Literacy Education*, ed. J. Albright dan A. Luke (New York: Routledge, 2008), 67-91.

¹⁷ M. Mushtaq dan Z. Iqbal, "Hybrid Pedagogies: Assessing the Effectiveness of Blended and Flipped Learning in Digital Learning Environments," *International Journal of Emerging Knowledge Studies* 3, no. 9 (2024), 667.

However, modernisation, urbanisation, and the deeply rooted tradition of *merantau*¹⁸ have significantly narrowed the role of the *mamak*, increasingly confining it to matters of inheritance and clan interests rather than to the education and moral development of the *kemenakan*.¹⁹ This weakening of moral authority has been exacerbated, rather than merely accompanied, by digitalisation. Minangkabau children and adolescents increasingly acquire religious knowledge from the internet and social media rather than from their family and customary environments, resulting in what may be described as a dual crisis: on the one hand, the weakening of the *mamak*'s moral authority, and on the other, the growing influence of uncontrolled digital media.

Amid this evident urgency, a significant scholarly gap remains. Most studies on Islamic education in Minangkabau focus on formal institutions, such as *pesantren* and Islamic schools, or on the customary system at the macro-institutional level.²⁰ Studies that specifically examine the reconstruction of the moral role of the *mamak kandung* at the personal and kinship levels in the digital era, and interpret this role through the psychological lenses of attachment and identity rather than merely providing a description of customary practices, remain very limited.²¹ This gap is particularly important because Sunnah values concerning the moral responsibility of adult male relatives, namely the concepts of *waliy*, *kafil*, and the principle of *tarbiyah*, offer a normative foundation that has not yet been systematically connected to this specific figure and the particular crisis surrounding it.

The literature is not entirely devoid of institutional responses to this erosion. Efforts to restore the socio-religious function of the *surau* have been documented, including its elaboration into *Madrasah Diniyah Awaliyah* as a means of reclaiming Minangkabau identity,²² as well as broader analyses of how the *surau* continues to negotiate harmony

¹⁸ The term *merantau* means "to leave one's home village or home country. Tsuyoshi Kato, *Matriliney and Migration: Evolving Minangkabau Traditions in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 29.

¹⁹ Umar dan Riza, "Peran Ninik Mamak," op. cit.; Wulandari dan Y. Kadarisman, "Peran Mamak terhadap Kemenakan dalam Masyarakat Minangkabau," *Nusantara: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial* 12, no. 6 (2025): 2372–2373; M. Zihad Islami et.al., "Pengembalian Fungsi Surau sebagai Identitas Minangkabau melalui Elaborasi Madrasah Diniyah Awaliyah," *Jurnal Lafinus* 1, no. 1 (2024), 71.

²⁰ M. Amin, N. Fitri, dan A. Aziz, "Konsep Pemikiran Ninik Mamak untuk Keberlangsungan Pendidikan Cucu Kemenakan," *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (2022): 2354–2362; M. Ilham dan K. Syauqi, "The History of Islamic Education in Minangkabau," *Tafkir* 6, no. 3 (2025): 637–652; Niko Andeska, Dharsono, dan Martion, "Tungku Tigo Sajaringan," loc. cit.

²¹ M. Anjela dan Razif, "Pergeseran Peran Mamak terhadap Kemenakan dalam Adat Minangkabau di Kanagarian Simalanggang," *Jom FISIP* 1, no. 2 (2014): 1–15; F. Az-zahroh dan M. R. Fitri, "Peran Mamak Kandung dalam Struktur Keluarga Minang di Perantauan," *Multikultural: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial* 1, no. 1 (2023): 47–58; Hafizah, "Pergeseran Fungsi Mamak Kandung dalam Pelaksanaan Adat Minangkabau," *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya* 16, no. 1 (2019): 29–40.

²² Zihad Islami et.al., "Pengembalian Fungsi Surau," op. cit.

and divergence within the contemporary Minangkabau religious landscape.²³ Technology itself has also been employed constructively. Technology-based media have been used to introduce customary norms such as *Sumbang Duo Baleh*²⁴ to children, demonstrating that digital technology is not inherently opposed to customary moral education but rather constitutes a space that can be actively negotiated.²⁵ These initiatives are instructive; however, they remain predominantly institutional and programmatic in orientation, focusing on revitalising the *surau* as an educational infrastructure or on producing discrete digital content, rather than on the personal and relational role of the *mamak kandung* as an everyday moral mentor within the *kemenakan*'s kinship ecosystem. Consequently, a gap persists between the institutional revitalisation efforts documented in the literature and a conceptual model that explains the *mamak*'s moral pedagogy as enacted through personal relationships. It is precisely this gap that the present study seeks to address.

Building upon this gap, the present study proposes the Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy model as a conceptual framework that integrates three mutually reinforcing pillars: Sunnah values, particularly *waliy*, *kafil*, and *tarbiyah*, as the normative foundation; the Minangkabau kinship tradition as the cultural framework; and digital literacy as the adaptive instrument. The originality of this model lies in its reconstruction of the *mamak kandung*, who is specifically and analytically distinguished from the *mamak kaum* and *ninik mamak*, as a figure whose moral relevance is simultaneously grounded in Islam, rooted in culture, and psychologically justifiable. Such a synthesis has not yet been developed in the existing literature.

It is important to clarify from the outset what this study does not claim. The *mamak* is not positioned here as a formal office, nor as a figure possessing superior authority or absolute rights over the *kemenakan*. Its moral relevance is entirely embedded in, and inseparable from, the cultural life of Minangkabau society. This role operates through informal influence constrained by interpersonal relationships rather than institutional

²³ Alfurqan et.al., "Harmony and Divergence," op. cit.

²⁴ "*Sumbang Duobaleh*" represents the most codified layer in this protective structure, as it is applied to twelve domains of social behavior. This system distinguishes between two fundamental concepts: *sumbang*, namely what lies at the threshold of propriety and opens the way toward what is *haram*, and *salah*, namely an act that is prohibited and results in sanctions. In the language of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*): *sumbang* is *zarī'ah* (a path/means) that has the potential to lead toward what is *haram*, whereas *salah* is an act that should be prevented through the closing of that *zarī'ah* (*sadd al-zarī'ah*). Muhammad Ratmil, *Sumbang Duobaleh* (Padang: Visigraf, 2023), 5.

²⁵ S. Hartati, Zulminiati, dan D. Roza, "Technology-Based Media in Introducing Minangkabau Culture 'Sumbang Duo Baleh' to Children during Covid Pandemic," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* (2022), 220.

authority, and is exercised within real limitations, namely those of presence, capacity, and reach, which this study does not seek to minimise. Accordingly, the Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy model is not an argument for institutionalising or elevating the status of the *mamak*. Rather, it is a conceptual instrument for understanding, and potentially strengthening, a moral function that has always been informal and inherently limited. The *mamak* as a moral holder constitutes the primary object of this study, whereas Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy serves as the analytical lens through which this figure is examined, rather than the ultimate subject under investigation.

Accordingly, this study aims to reconstruct the moral role of the *mamak kandung* in the Islamic education of Minangkabau society in the digital era by addressing three research questions: (1) how has the moral role of the *mamak* shifted within digitally mediated contemporary Minangkabau society; (2) what internal and external factors underlie the weakening of this role; and (3) how can the moral role of the *mamak* be reconstructed through a model that is grounded in Islam, rooted in culture, and psychologically justifiable?

This study carries both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it offers a psychological interpretation of the Minangkabau kinship system as a protective ecosystem for adolescent identity resilience. Practically, its significance is underscored by documented concerns regarding adolescents' increasing dependence on digital media and its association with deviant behaviour within the broader Indonesian context,²⁶ a pattern indicating a correlation between the weakening of the moral authority of kinship figures, including the *mamak*, and adolescents' vulnerability in digital spaces. In this light, reconstructing the moral role of the *mamak* is not merely an agenda for cultural preservation but a strategic necessity for strengthening the religious identity resilience of younger Minangkabau generations. Beyond its specific cultural context, the case of the *mamak* also raises a question of broader relevance to global educational discourse amid digital disruption and the erosion of face-to-face moral mentorship: whether an informal kinship-based moral figure, distinct from formal educators and independent of institutional authority, may constitute a transferable resource for responding to similar crises in children's education elsewhere. This study does not empirically examine such

²⁶ Ahmadi dan Fitri, "Sociolinguistics in the Digital Era," op. cit.; Rickey dan Fikry, "Pengaruh Kelekatan," op. cit.

transferability; rather, it positions the reconstruction of the *mamak*'s moral role as a point of departure for future comparative reflection and research.

B. METHODS

This study employed a library research design with field confirmation, positioning documentary and textual corpora as the primary evidentiary base, while a purposively selected set of field interviews served a confirmatory rather than an equivalent role. Methodologically, the field confirmation is subordinate to, and organised around, the documentary corpus. Its purpose is to verify whether the concepts, typologies, and normative claims identified in the literature remain recognisable in contemporary customary practice, while also providing concrete expressions of Minangkabau customary wisdom (*pepatah-petitih*)²⁷ that enrich the cultural texture and interpretive validity of the literature-based analysis.²⁸ This design is appropriate for a study whose primary objective is conceptual and theoretical reconstruction, particularly the formulation of the Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy model, rather than the production of a comprehensive ethnographic account of a culture-sharing group.²⁹

The primary data comprised three categories of textual sources: (1) peer-reviewed scholarly literature on the Minangkabau kinship system, the socio-religious functions of the *mamak*, and digital transformation in Islamic education; (2) classical hadith collections (*Kutub al-Sittah*) relevant to the moral responsibilities of adult male relatives, accessed and authenticated through *takhrij* procedures; and (3) Minangkabau customary textual sources, including documented *mamangan* (customary aphorisms) and customary philosophical formulations such as *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK). Sources were selected based on topical relevance, scholarly credibility, and recency, with priority given to primary and peer-reviewed materials. Sources containing unverifiable or inconsistent bibliographic information were excluded from the corpus.

To confirm and contextualize the documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two Minangkabau customary practitioners who were purposively

²⁷ In its basic meaning, *pepatah* is a sentence containing the philosophical foundations of Minangkabau customary law, derived from the natural world. *Petitih* is simpler than *pepatah* and more closely related to it; the relationship that unites the two in Minangkabau oral literature is referred to as *mamang*. A.A. Navis, *Alam Terkembang Jadi Guru: Adat dan Kebudayaan Minangkabau* (Jakarta: Grafiti Pers, 1984), 256-257.

²⁸ Norman K. Denzin, *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978); Nancy Carter et.al., "The Use of Triangulation in Qualitative Research," *Oncology Nursing Forum* 41, no. 5 (2014): 545-547.

²⁹ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2023), 104, 113, 257.

selected according to the following criteria: (a) formal recognition within customary or religious leadership structures; (b) direct and sustained experience in performing or observing the role of the *mamak* within kinship life; and (c) willingness to reflect upon the tensions between customary norms and the digital-era context that constitutes the focus of this study. Purposive, rather than random, sampling was considered appropriate because the objective was not statistical representativeness but informational confirmation. The informants were selected for their capacity to authoritatively assess whether the typologies derived from the literature remain recognisable and applicable in living customary practice.

Documentary data were collected through systematic literature searches in scholarly databases, supplemented by manual searches of journal focusing on Minangkabau studies and Islamic education journals that are not indexed in major databases. Field confirmation data were collected through semi-structured interviews guided by an interview protocol derived directly from the themes and typologies previously identified in the documentary analysis. Accordingly, the interviews served a diagnostic function by examining the extent to which claims found in the literature corresponded to practitioners' knowledge, rather than functioning as an independent and open-ended field investigation. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, audio-recorded with the participants' consent, transcribed, and translated into English where required for analytical integration.

Documentary data were analysed using a descriptive-analytical method combined with a socio-pedagogical approach. Hadith sources were analysed using the thematic-contextual (*mawḍūʿī*) method, whereby hadith reports relating to moral responsibility, *adab*, and child upbringing were examined thematically rather than individually, and supported by *takhrij* procedures (hadith authentication) to establish the level of authenticity, chains of transmission (*sanad*), and canonical sources of each cited hadith. The resulting themes were then interpreted through the four theoretical-psychological perspectives outlined in the Introduction, namely attachment theory, ecological systems theory, social identity theory, and social learning theory, following a qualitative analytic process of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.³⁰

³⁰ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 31–32, 277–78.

Field confirmation data were analysed separately and subsequently integrated as a confirmatory layer. Each documentary theme was examined against the interview data to determine whether it was corroborated, clarified, or contradicted, with any discrepancies reported explicitly rather than being implicitly resolved in favour of either source.

The trustworthiness of the study was established primarily through the internal consistency and cross-referencing of the documentary corpus, in accordance with the standard qualitative research criteria of credibility, dependability, and confirmability.³¹ The field confirmation interviews functioned as a form of data triangulation,³² namely, a secondary examination of whether literature-derived themes remained recognisable in living customary practice, rather than serving as an independent validity test characteristic of full methodological triangulation.

Three limitations frame this study. First, as a library research design with field confirmation, its primary evidentiary weight rests upon documentary and textual sources. The interview materials are confirmatory and contextual in nature and should not be interpreted as an independent field study capable of ethnographic generalisation. Second, the study focuses on the moral dimension of the *mamak kandung* at the personal and kinship levels and does not extend to the institutional functions of the *ninik mamak*. Third, the study does not claim that all *mamak* uniformly possess the capacity to perform, or have actually performed, the roles described herein. The proposed **Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy** model is normative and adaptive in nature rather than a description of universal practice.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. *The Mamak as a Moral Holder: Definition, Role, and Its Distinction from Ninik Mamak*

The point of departure of this study is neither a model nor a theory, but rather a figure, namely the *mamak*, the mother's biological brother in Minangkabau society, together with the specific moral function he assumes toward the children of his sisters, known as *kemenakan*. As Navis explains, the *mamak* is "more than merely a relative; he bears a profound educational responsibility for the children of his sisters."³³ Within

³¹ Creswell dan Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, loc. cit.

³² Denzin, *The Research Act*, op. cit.

³³ Navis, *Alam Terkembang Jadi Guru: Adat dan Kebudayaan Minangkabau* (Jakarta: PT Temprint), 77, 260.

the Minangkabau matrilineal system, a child belongs to the mother's *kaum* rather than the father's, it is the *mamak*, as the senior male of the maternal lineage, who exercises customary guardianship over the *kemenakan*, guiding them in matters of customary norms, moral conduct, and social standing.³⁴

Two Minangkabau customary proverbs succinctly encapsulate this distribution of responsibility: *kamanakan barajo ka mamak* ("the *kemenakan* looks to and follows the *mamak*") and *anak dipangku, kamanakan dibimbiang* ("one's own child is nurtured in one's embrace, while the *kemenakan* is guided by the hand").³⁵ The first proverb establishes the *mamak* as the primary customary reference for the *kemenakan*; the second reveals a carefully structured division of educational responsibilities between the biological father, who provides direct care and material support within the nuclear family, and the *mamak*, who guides the *kemenakan* along the path of values and customary norms. This arrangement is not a deficiency of the system but rather a deliberate design that positions education as a collective rather than an individual responsibility.³⁶

It is equally important to state clearly what the *mamak* is not. He is not a figure of formal authority; he does not hold an institutional mandate over the *kemenakan*; nor does his relationship with the *kemenakan* possess legal coercive force. Rather, he is a figure whose moral authority derives entirely from his position within a living kinship culture, from shared lineage, shared *kaum*, and shared honour sustained by the matrilineal system. Consequently, his role as a moral holder is inseparable from the cultural ecosystem that gives it meaning. Outside that ecosystem, the *mamak* is simply an ordinary man; within it, he serves as the moral compass for his *kemenakan*.

Table 1. Distinction among the Three Concepts of Male Kinship Leadership in the Minangkabau System

³⁴ Yahya Samin et.al., *Peranan Mamak terhadap Kemenakan dalam Kebudayaan Minangkabau Masa Kini*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1996), 39

³⁵ Ibid.; Navis, loc. Cit, 136

³⁶ Navis, loc. cit.

CONCEPT	SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY	NATURE OF THE POSITION	RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KEMENAKAN	FOCUS OF THIS STUDY
NINIK MAMAK	Collective, at the <i>kaum</i> and <i>nagari</i> levels	Customary institution, bearing the title of <i>Datuk</i>	Indirect, community leadership	Not the primary focus
MAMAK KAUM / PENGHULU	Kinship group (<i>kaum</i>) within a single blood lineage	Semi-institutional, selected from among the <i>Mamak Rumah</i>	Indirect, overseeing the interests of the <i>kaum</i>	Not the primary focus
MAMAK KANDUNG (MAMAK RUMAH)	Personal, directly related to the <i>kemenakan</i> of one's biological sister	Informal, without a customary title or institutional mandate	Direct, everyday, and relational	Primary focus of the study

Source: Compiled by the authors, adapted from Samin et al. (1996) and Umar & Riza (2022)

2. The Typology of the Mamak: Structural Differentiation and Hierarchical Responsibilities

The internal differentiation of the *mamak*'s role is authoritatively articulated by Samin et al., who identify three hierarchical levels according to the scope of responsibility within the matrilineal system.³⁷ The first, and most intimate, level is the *Mamak Rumah*, namely the mother's biological brother, or another male member of the maternal lineage who resides in the *rumah gadang* itself and is selected to serve as the guide and educator of the immediate family members. His primary responsibility is to nurture and educate the children of his sisters while supervising their lives, both physically and spiritually.³⁸ The second level, the *Mamak Kaum*, is selected from among the *Mamak Rumah* who share the same blood lineage within a single kinship group (*kaum*). In addition to performing the same familial functions as the *Mamak Rumah*, he is also entrusted with safeguarding the interests of the broader kinship group.³⁹ The third level, the *Mamak Suku*, exercises leadership at the clan (*suku*) level, a level that emerges when a particular lineage group (*paruik*) expands and develops into several autonomous branches.⁴⁰

³⁷ Samin et.al., *Peranan Mamak*, 41.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

The typology proposed by Samin et al. is adopted as the primary reference in this study because of its earlier and more authoritative position within Minangkabau customary scholarship. This typology is consistent with, and reinforced by, the more contemporary interpretation offered by Umar and Riza:⁴¹ Within the framework proposed by Samin et al., the *Mamak Suku* is essentially equivalent to what is now referred to as the *ninik mamak*, since it is at this level that the *mamak* functions as a customary leader at the *suku* level rather than merely as a personal and kinship figure. This conceptual equivalence demonstrates the structural continuity between the classical and contemporary typologies, thereby validating the complementary use of both sources. More importantly, it clarifies why this study deliberately confines its analysis to the level of the *Mamak Rumah*, namely the *mamak kandung*, rather than extending it to the institutional functions of the *ninik mamak*.

What is particularly important to emphasise is that this typology represents a hierarchical moral architecture, rather than merely a structural classification. Responsibility radiates outward from the most intimate kinship relationship toward the broader customary community, yet the moral weight attached to each level is directly proportional to relational proximity rather than institutional rank. Indeed, it is the *Mamak Rumah*, the figure with the least formal status yet the closest personal relationship, who bears the greatest pedagogical responsibility for the *kemenakan* as individuals. Accordingly, this study is situated precisely at this most intimate level, examining the *mamak* within a direct, personal, and non-institutionalised relationship with the *kemenakan* in the context of everyday kinship life.

3. The Developmental Trajectory of the *Mamak*: From *Kemenakan* to *Penghulu*

A dimension of the *mamak*'s role that has received relatively little scholarly attention is its temporal and developmental nature. The *mamak* is not a static status but rather a stage in the moral trajectory of every Minangkabau man. As documented by Ernatip and Devi, "these roles do not operate in parallel; rather, they complement one another and are embodied within the same individual, who simultaneously bears two responsibilities without either negating the other."⁴² Within his own *kaum*, a

⁴¹ Umar dan Riza, "Peran Ninik Mamak," op. cit.

⁴² Ernatip dan Silvia Devi, *Kedudukan dan Peran Bundo Kandung dalam Sistem Kekerabatan Matrilineal di Minangkabau* (Padang: BPNB, 2014), 32.

Minangkabau man passes through three successive stages. During childhood, he is a *kemenakan* who receives guidance and education from his *mamak*. Upon reaching adulthood, he becomes a *mamak* who assumes responsibility for shaping the character of his sisters' children. At the culmination of this trajectory, he may become a *penghulu* bearing the title of *Datuk*, a position that combines social authority with moral responsibility at the community level.⁴³

This gradual expansion of collective responsibility is encapsulated in the following customary formulation:

Tagak Badunsanak Mamaga Dunsanak
Tagak Basuku Mamaga Suku
Tagak Bakampuang Mamaga Kampuang
Tagak Banagari Mamaga Nagari

(To stand as a sibling is to protect one's siblings; to stand as a member of a suku is to protect the suku; to stand as a member of the kampuang is to protect the kampuang; to stand as a member of the nagari is to protect the nagari.)

This formulation reveals what tends to remain concealed behind a static typology: the role of the *mamak* is not something external to the man who performs it but rather the outcome of the formative experiences that he himself underwent as a *kemenakan*. The *mamak* teaches what was once taught to him; he guides as he himself was once guided. This intergenerational continuity means that the quality of the moral guidance received directly by the *kemenakan* is conditioned by the quality of the moral guidance that the *mamak* himself received in the past. This finding carries direct implications for the reproductive logic of the Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy model proposed in the following section.

It should be noted that this developmental trajectory explains only the role of a man within his own *kaum*. Outside his own *kaum*, a married man assumes a different role, namely that of an *urang sumando* within his wife's *kaum*, a role that has previously been explained through the typology of *sumando niniak mamak* and three negative variants.⁴⁴ These two roles, as a *mamak* within his own *kaum* and as an *urang sumando* within his wife's *kaum*, coexist within the same individual. This once again confirms that the *mamak* is not a singular figure endowed with absolute authority but

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ratmil, Interview, 24 Januari 2026.

rather a figure who continually operates within an interconnected system of dual responsibilities that mutually define and constrain one another.

4. Shame and the Architecture of Honor-Based Motivation

What makes the *mamak*'s pedagogical responsibility particularly significant, and what cannot be fully captured by the formal language of customary obligation alone, is its deep entanglement with *malu* (a sense of shame and collective honour). The educational responsibility of the *mamak* "is not confined to material aspects alone but extends to the formation of moral character and the supervision of behaviour over many years."⁴⁵ The weight of this responsibility becomes most evident precisely in moments of failure. When a *kemenakan* commits a moral or social transgression, it is the *mamak*, rather than the biological father, who bears the shame before the *kaum*.⁴⁶

This mechanism gives rise to an honour-based system of internal motivation. The *mamak* is motivated to educate not by external legal sanctions, since Minangkabau customary law imposes no formal penalties for pedagogical negligence, but by the prospect of collective shame, the burden of which falls first and most heavily upon him. From the perspective of ecological systems theory, this constitutes a mesosystem mechanism that distributes moral accountability across the entire kinship network rather than concentrating it in a single actor.⁴⁷ In the language of social learning theory, it represents a powerful system of vicarious reinforcement, in which the *mamak* perceives the behaviour of the *kemenakan* as a direct reflection of his own example and instruction.⁴⁸

Historically, the educational responsibility of the *mamak* also extended to direct instruction in its broadest sense and was not limited to moral supervision alone. It was the *mamak* who taught religion, customary norms, and practical knowledge of life to the *kemenakan*, typically during evening gatherings in the *rumah gadang*, away from the demands of daytime activities. Some *kaum* even maintained their own *surau*, as documented in Nagari Pariangan, where children spent the night learning to recite the Qur'an, studying religious knowledge, customary *adab*, and *silat* within a single living

⁴⁵ Ernati dan Devi, *Kedudukan dan Peran Bundo Kanduang*, 89.

⁴⁶ Ratmil, Interview, 24 Januari 2026.

⁴⁷ Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development*, op. cit.

⁴⁸ Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*, op. cit.

environment that did not separate learning from everyday life.⁴⁹ This system underwent a fundamental transformation in the modern period, when the administration of religious education shifted to state-supervised formal institutions, such as *Madrasah Diniyah Awaliyah* (MDA). Although these institutions perform educational functions comparable to those of the traditional *surau*, they do not reproduce the comprehensive formative environment and the intensity of nightly interaction that were distinctive characteristics of the *surau*.⁵⁰

The weakening of this architecture of *malu* in the digital era, together with the rise of individualism that has eroded the layered accountability of the *kaum* and *kampung*, represents not merely a loss of culture but the dismantling of a psychologically sophisticated motivational system that has sustained the *mamak's* educational commitment across generations.

5. The Islamic Foundation of the Mamak's Moral Role: Sunnah Values and Prophetic Traditions on Caregiving

Having situated the role of the *mamak* within its own cultural and anthropological foundations, this section demonstrates that the role is not merely a distinctive feature of Minangkabau customary tradition. Rather, it constitutes an expression, articulated through a particular cultural idiom, of the moral responsibility that the Prophetic Sunnah formulates as a universal obligation for every adult male relative entrusted with caregiving and protection. This normative foundation is not established by claiming that the Islamic texts refer directly to the institution of the *mamak*, because they do not. Instead, it is established by identifying the moral function performed by the *mamak* and demonstrating that this function corresponds precisely to the responsibility that the Sunnah assigns to every adult entrusted with the care and protection of others.

a. The Foundational Hadith: *Kullukum Rā'in, Takhrij*, and Analysis

The normative foundation of the *mamak's* moral role in this study rests upon a Prophetic hadith of the highest degree of authenticity, transmitted through

⁴⁹ Ernati dan Devi, *Kedudukan dan Peran Bundo Kanduang*, op. cit., 89.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

multiple chains of narration (*sanad*) and recorded in the most authoritative Sunni hadith collections. The hadith reads as follows:

كلكم راع وكلكم مسؤول عن رعيته

"Each of you is a shepherd, and every one of you is responsible for those under his care"

Takhrij (Authentication and Sources): This hadith is narrated on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (*raḍiyallāhu 'anhumā*) and is unanimously classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* by hadith scholars. It is recorded in the following canonical collections: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Kitāb al-Jumu'ah*, no. 893, as well as *Kitāb al-'Itq*, no. 2554, *Kitāb al-Waṣāyā*, no. 2751, *Kitāb al-Nikāḥ*, no. 5188, and *Kitāb al-Aḥkām*, no. 7138; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Kitāb al-Imārah*, no. 1829; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Kitāb al-Kharāj wa al-Imārah wa al-Fay'*, no. 2928; *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, no. 1705, which al-Tirmidhī classified as *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*; and *Musnad Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, nos. 4495 and 5753, among other narrations.⁵¹

The operative concept in this hadith is *rā'in*, namely a shepherd, guardian, trustee, and leader. The hadith does not confine caregiving responsibility solely to political leaders or household heads in the narrow sense. Rather, its complete text delineates successive circles of caregiving responsibility: the ruler is responsible for his people, the man is responsible for his family, the woman is responsible for her husband's household, and the servant is responsible for the property of his master.⁵² In every case, responsibility follows relational proximity, trust, and the capacity to protect and nurture. The position of the *mamak* in relation to the *kemenakan* fits this logic precisely. He is the closest adult male guardian within the maternal *kaum* who, by the explicit design of the Minangkabau kinship system, is entrusted with the moral and religious formation of the *kemenakan*.

When interpreted through the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, this hadith directly activates two of the five essential objectives of Islamic law: the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), whereby the *mamak* ensures that the *kemenakan* is nurtured

⁵¹ Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari, *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhari*, *Kitāb al-Jumu'ah*, no. 893, juga *Kitāb al-'Itq* no. 2554, *Kitāb al-Waṣaya* no. 2751, *Kitāb al-Nikah* no. 5188, dan *Kitāb al-Aḥkam* no. 7138; Muslim bin al-Hajjaj, *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, *Kitāb al-Imarah*, no. 1829; Abu Dawud Sulaiman al-Sijistani, *Sunan Abi Dawud*, *Kitāb al-Kharaj wa al-Fay wa al-Imarah*, no. 2928; Muhammad bin Isa al-Tirmidzi, *Jami al-Tirmidzi*, *Kitāb al-Jihad*, no. 1705; Ahmad bin Hanbal, *Musnad Ahmad*, no. 4495, 5753.

⁵² Ibid.

in Islamic values and religious practice; and the protection of lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), whereby the *mamak* safeguards the moral integrity of the matrilineal lineage represented by the *kemenakan*.⁵³ The Minangkabau customary system and the normative framework of Islam thus converge at a single point: both assign to the nearest adult male guardian a non-delegable moral responsibility for the formation of the child under his care. Two additional Prophetic teachings complement this foundational hadith.

First, *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, no. 1952, records the following narration:

ما نحل والد ولده من نحل أفضل من أدب حسن

"No gift that a parent gives to his child is better than good *adab*."⁵⁴

This hadith is classified by al-Tirmidhī himself as *mursal*, meaning that there is a discontinuity in its chain of transmission at the level of the Companion. Consequently, its degree of authenticity is lower than that of the *kullukum rā'in* hadith and it cannot be treated as an independent proof carrying equivalent evidentiary weight.⁵⁵ In this study, therefore, the hadith functions as a thematic reinforcement of the principle of *adab*, which is already established through stronger textual evidence, rather than as an independent basis for the argument. This methodological caution deserves to be stated explicitly in view of the weakness of its chain of transmission.

Second, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, no. 495, which was classified as *ḥasan* by al-Albānī, records the following Prophetic instruction:

مروا أولادكم بالصلاة وهم أبناء سبع سنين

"Command your children to perform prayer when they reach seven years of age."⁵⁶

The expression *awlādakum* ("your children") encompasses the broader circle of children under one's care. Within the Minangkabau context, its application to the *kemenakan* is both direct and entirely appropriate.

⁵³ Mohadi, "Normative Islamic Conceptualizations," op. cit.

⁵⁴ al-Tirmidzi, *Jami al-Tirmidzi*, op. cit., no. 1952.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Abu Dawud, *Sunan Abi Dawud*, op. cit., no. 495; Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani, *Sahih Sunan Abi Dawud* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif, 1998), 4: 553.

Table 2. *Takhrij of the Three Primary Hadith References*

HADITH TEXT (ABBREVIATED)	NARRATOR / CHAIN OF TRANSMISSION	COLLECTION AND REFERENCE NUMBER	AUTHENTICITY GRADE	FUNCTION IN THIS STUDY
"Each of you is a shepherd..." (kullukum rā'in)	Abdullah bin Umar	Bukhari no. 893 et al.; Muslim no. 1829; Abu Dawud no. 2928; Tirmidzi no. 1705; Ahmad no. 4495, 5753	Sahih (consensus)	Primary textual evidence and normative foundation of the proposed model
"No gift that a parent gives to a child is better than good adab"	Chain of transmission not fully reported	Tirmidzi no. 1952	Mursal (discontinuous chain of transmission)	Thematic reinforcement rather than an independent textual proof
"Command your children to perform prayer at the age of seven"	Classified by al- Albānī	Abu Dawud no. 495	Hasan (according to al-Albānī)	Reinforcement of the principle of habituation in religious practice

Source: Prepared by the author based on an independent *takhrij* conducted with reference to canonical hadith collections.

6. The Shifting Role of the Mamak: Between Structural Transformation and Cultural Erosion

Building upon the conceptual foundation established in the preceding section, the contemporary picture that emerges is one of a progressive transformation of the mamak's role. This section examines the multi-causal erosion of the mamak's moral role, not as a linear decline, but as a complex transformation driven by structural forces, cultural pressures, and digital dynamics that are deeply intertwined and mutually reinforcing.

a. Structural Role Conflict: The Nuclear Family versus the Kaum

The most immediate structural pressure on the role of the mamak arises from the tension between the two simultaneous identities that he embodies. Within his own household, he is an *urang sumando* (a husband who has married into his wife's kinship group) and the father of his biological children; within the genealogical record (*ranji*) of his *kaum*, he serves as the custodian of customary values and the

moral guardian of the entire kinship group. The customary typology explicitly articulates what is implicitly embedded within the Minangkabau social system, namely that these two roles "do not operate in parallel; rather, they complement one another and are embodied within the same individual, who simultaneously bears two responsibilities without either negating the other."⁵⁷

Minangkabau customary tradition addresses this tension through a normative typology of the *sumando*. The ideal figure is the *sumando niniak mamak*, namely a husband who voluntarily assumes responsibilities comparable to those of a *mamak* toward his wife's family, serving as a source of protection in both times of prosperity and adversity, while remaining steadfast in both physical presence and moral commitment.⁵⁸ In contrast to this ideal figure, customary tradition identifies three negative types: the *sumando langau hijau* ("green fly"), who moves from place to place without commitment; the *sumando lapiak buruak* ("worn mat"), who withdraws into the nuclear family and remains attached only to his wife while neglecting the wider kinship network; and the *sumando kacang miang* ("itching bean"), who provokes slander and thereby disrupts the harmony of the *nagari*.⁵⁹ The existence of this taxonomy demonstrates that the structural role conflict identified by contemporary scholars had long been recognised within Minangkabau customary thought. It had already been named, morally evaluated, and subjected to graduated social sanctions long before it became a sociological problem.⁶⁰

Under contemporary conditions, however, this normative framework has become less capable of regulating actual behaviour. The demands of the nuclear family impose immediate and continuous pressures, whereas the *mamak*'s obligations toward the *kemenakan* are dispersed, episodic, and lack formal mechanisms of enforcement. As consistently documented in the literature, the result has been a structural transformation in which the nuclear family has replaced the *kaum* as the primary locus of the *mamak*'s moral commitment.⁶¹ Today, when a *kemenakan* commits a moral transgression, it is no longer the reputation of the

⁵⁷ Ernati dan Devi, *Kedudukan dan Peran Bundo Kanduang*, op. cit., 32.

⁵⁸ Ratmil, Interview, 24 Januari 2026; Ratmil, Interview, 18 Juni 2026.

⁵⁹ Ratmil, Interview, 24 Januari 2026.

⁶⁰ Az-zahroh dan Fitri, "Peran Mamak Kanduang," op. cit.

⁶¹ Umar dan Riza, "Peran Ninik Mamak," loc. cit.; Wulandari dan Kadarisman, "Peran Mamak terhadap Kemenakan," op. cit.; Zihad Islami et.al., "Pengembalian Fungsi Surau," loc. cit.

mamak that is called into question but rather that of the biological parents. This constitutes a clear indicator of how profoundly the locus of moral accountability has shifted.⁶²

b. The *Merantau* Tradition and the Loss of Formative Practices

This structural role conflict is further intensified by the deeply rooted tradition of *merantau* (out-migration). *Merantau* increases the physical distance between the *mamak* and the *kemenakan*, thereby proportionally reducing the intensity of their relationship and the frequency of moral guidance.⁶³ The *mamak*, who once carried out moral education through daily interactions in the *rumah gadang* and evening gatherings in the *surau*, must now attempt to fulfil this role across geographical distance, mediated by technology and limited to infrequent home visits.

What has been lost through this transition is not merely the physical presence of the *mamak*, but the specific formative mode that was sustained by that presence. In the past, the *mamak* taught religion, customary norms, and practical knowledge of life to the *kemenakan* during evening gatherings in the *rumah gadang*, while some *kaum* even maintained their own *surau* as a comprehensive formative environment in which learning and everyday life were inseparable.⁶⁴ The practice of *lalok di surau* (spending the night and learning in the *surau*), identified by Ustaz Syukri Rahmat as a formative practice that has now disappeared, exemplifies this integration.⁶⁵ The disappearance of this practice is not merely a matter of nostalgia; rather, it represents the loss of the primary institutional setting in which the *mamak*'s pedagogical presence was once embedded, sustained, and endowed with meaning.

c. The Dual Crisis: Weakening Moral Authority and the Uncontrolled Influence of Digital Media

Beyond the structural and cultural factors, digitalisation functions as an accelerating force that intensifies and deepens the effects of every other source of pressure. The *kemenakan*'s access to religious knowledge, moral guidance, and social belonging has undergone a fundamental transformation. Rather than relying

⁶² Hafizah, "Pergeseran Fungsi Mamak Kandung," op. cit.

⁶³ Umar dan Riza, "Peran Ninik Mamak," loc. cit.

⁶⁴ Ernatip dan Devi, *Kedudukan dan Peran Bundo Kandung*, op. cit., hlm. 89.

⁶⁵ Syukri Rahmat, Interview, 28 Juli 2026.

on the *mamak* and the kinship environment as the primary moral filters, *kemenakan* now inhabit digital spaces where algorithmically curated content, drawn from an almost unlimited range of sources, directly competes with the moral authority of the *mamak*.⁶⁶

The measurable consequences of this transformation are reflected in the testimony of the Chair of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI) of Sijunjung Regency, who affirmed that families, *niniak mamak*, and *bako* are no longer performing their educational functions optimally in guiding children and the younger generation.⁶⁷ This testimony is particularly significant because it comes from an official religious authority rather than solely from customary practitioners, thereby strengthening the argument that this weakening represents an observable reality recognised by multiple stakeholders rather than merely a personal impression.⁶⁸ A study of adolescents in West Sumatra likewise found a significant negative correlation between emotional attachment to the *mamak*, alongside attachment to the father and mother, and verbal aggression on social media,⁶⁹ thereby providing empirical support for the protective function that theory attributes to reliable kinship figures.⁷⁰

Ratmil identifies another consequential dimension of this crisis. Many *kemenakan* today experience difficulty in understanding *kieh* (figurative expressions) and *ereang jo gendeang* (the ability to interpret social situations and subtle forms of indirect communication), capacities that traditionally served as the principal means through which customary values were communicated.⁷¹ He attributes this erosion to excessive consumption of digital content, which he characterizes as "brain rot."⁷² This observation carries an important implication: the crisis surrounding the role of the *mamak* is not merely a crisis of the *mamak*'s presence or motivation, but also a crisis in the communicative capacity of the *kemenakan* themselves. Before the *mamak* can effectively transmit the substance of customary and Islamic teachings, he must first rebuild the *kemenakan*'s capacity for

⁶⁶ Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media*, op. cit.; Solahudin dan Fakhruroji, "Internet and Islamic Learning Practices," loc. cit.

⁶⁷ Syukri Rahmat, Interview, 28 Juli 2026.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Rickey dan Fikry, "Pengaruh Kelekatan," op. cit.

⁷⁰ Bowlby, *A Secure Base*, op. cit.

⁷¹ Ratmil, Interview, 12 Mei 2026.

⁷² Ibid.

understanding, thereby assuming an additional burden that further intensifies the already substantial structural pressures.⁷³

Taken together, these findings illustrate what this study conceptualises as a dual crisis. On the one hand, the moral authority of the *mamak* has weakened; on the other hand, the uncontrolled influence of digital media has become increasingly powerful. Together, these developments have created a moral vacuum in the Islamic formation of the *kemenakan*. It is this vacuum that gives urgency to the reconstruction proposed in the following section.

7. Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy: A Framework for Reconstructing the *Mamak's* Moral Role

The Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy model proposed in this study is best understood not as a programme to be implemented, but as a relational framework for understanding and enacting what has always constituted the essential nature and practice of the *mamak*, while simultaneously reconstructing this role under conditions that have changed substantially without eliminating the need for it. Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy serves as an analytical lens; the *mamak's* moral role is the object illuminated through that lens, not the other way around, as emphasised in the Introduction.

a. The Three Pillars and Their Underlying Logic

The proposed model rests upon three mutually reinforcing pillars. The first pillar consists of **Sunnah** values as the normative foundation, particularly the principle of *rāʿin* (caregiving and responsibility), which has been analysed through the *kullukum rāʿin* hadith, together with the cultivation of *adab* as the greatest gift that can be given to a child and the habituation of worship from an early age.⁷⁴ These Sunnah values do not function as an addition superimposed upon Minangkabau customary tradition; rather, they provide its Islamic validation. In other words, what Minangkabau custom establishes as the cultural obligation of the *mamak* is recognised by the Sunnah as the moral responsibility of every adult male relative entrusted with caregiving.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Hadis kullukum ra'in; Refer to the discussion of takhrij in the preceding subsection.

The second pillar is the Minangkabau kinship tradition, comprising the matrilineal system, the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK), and the four traditional educational patterns, namely instruction, teaching, moral formation, and aesthetics, as the cultural framework that provides social legitimacy, relational texture, and specific pedagogical methods for the role of the *mamak*.⁷⁵ The third pillar is digital literacy as the adaptive instrument, namely the recognition that the digital era is not a threat to be avoided but a reality to be navigated wisely, and that the role of the *mamak* must extend into the digital spaces where the *kemenakan* now spend much of their lives.

The theoretical logic of Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy is grounded in Luke's concept of pedagogy as gift, namely that within community life, knowledge is transmitted not through one-way delivery but through participation in meaningful traditions and kinship relationships.⁷⁶ The *mamak* does not educate through formal instruction but through personal example, shared participation in customary life, and sustained relational presence, conditions that enable the *kemenakan* to observe, internalize, and gradually enact the values embodied by the *mamak*. The practical integration of physical and digital environments is grounded in the logic of hybrid pedagogy, as formulated by Mushtaq and Iqbal, namely the integration of traditional face-to-face interaction with flexible digital communication in order to create pedagogical relationships that are adaptive and responsive to changing contexts.⁷⁷

b. The Three Roles of the *Mamak* within the Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy Framework

Within this framework, the *mamak kandung* performs three interrelated and inseparable roles that collectively constitute his reconstructed moral function in the digital era.

- 1) The *Mamak* as a Moral Mentor. As a moral mentor, the *mamak* actively guides the formation of the *kemenakan*'s character and religious identity, not through formal authority but through personal example, relational closeness, and consistency of values in everyday life. This role is grounded in the

⁷⁵Ratmil, Interview, 18 Juni 2026.

⁷⁶Luke, "Pedagogy as Gift," op. cit.

⁷⁷Mushtaq dan Iqbal, "Hybrid Pedagogies," op. cit.

principle of *tarbiyah* and operates psychologically through the process of modelling described by social learning theory,⁷⁸ as well as through the *secure base* function articulated by attachment theory.⁷⁹ The *mamak* as a moral mentor is not a substitute for the father; his function is categorically distinct from the father's responsibilities for caregiving and provision, as expressed in the Minangkabau customary proverb, *anak dipangku, kamanakan dibimbiang*.⁸⁰ The developmental pedagogy associated with this role is gradual and sensitive to the child's stages of growth, progressing from early childhood formation through personal example, habituation, and storytelling, to an emphasis during middle childhood on religious practice and the customary code of *Sumbang Duo Baleh*, and finally to dialogue, counsel, and progressively increasing social responsibility during adolescence.⁸¹

2) The *Mamak* as a Cultural Mediator. As a cultural mediator, the *mamak* serves as a living bridge between Minangkabau customary tradition and the contemporary lives of the *kemenakan*, preserving and transmitting local wisdom so that its continuity is not broken amid modernization, while simultaneously helping the *kemenakan* understand the continuing relevance of these values to their present lives. The philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) provides its integrative framework. The *mamak*'s cultural mediation is not a defence of tradition for its own sake, but an articulation of a living synthesis between Islamic values and Minangkabau customary tradition. A customary proverb cited by Ratmil captures its epistemological principle: *adat indak lakang dek paneh, indak lapuak dek hujan* ("custom does not fade under the heat of the sun, nor does it decay in the rain").⁸² This mediation strengthens the *kemenakan*'s salient in-group identity, in the language of social identity theory,⁸³ in the face of

⁷⁸Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*, loc. cit.

⁷⁹Bowlby, *A Secure Base*, loc. cit.

⁸⁰Navis, loc. cit.

⁸¹Ratmil, Interview, 18 Juni 2026.

⁸²Ratmil, Interview, 12 Mei 2026.

⁸³Tajfel dan Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," op. cit.

competing identity narratives from algorithmically curated digital public spaces.

3) The *Mamak* as a Digital Literacy Companion. As a digital literacy companion, the *mamak* is present not to prohibit the *kemenakan* from using digital technology, but to accompany them in navigating digital spaces with strong moral and cultural filters. As articulated by Ratmil, the role of the *mamak* toward the *kemenakan*, which was once carried out through direct presence in the *rumah gadang*, is now also exercised through telephone calls, social media, and long-distance communication; the means have changed, but the purpose has not.⁸⁴ This role requires the *mamak* to engage with the same digital platforms inhabited by the *kemenakan*, offering moral guidance, modelling responsible digital behaviour, and sustaining relational bonds across geographical distance. Empirical support for the value of this role is provided by the findings of Rickey and Fikry, which demonstrate that the stronger the emotional bond between the *mamak* and the *kemenakan*, the lower the tendency toward verbal aggression on social media. This finding indicates that the *mamak*'s relational presence exerts a measurable protective effect precisely within the digital environments where such protection is most needed.⁸⁵

Table 3. The Three Pillars and Three Roles of the Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy Model

PILLAR	MORAL MENTOR	CULTURAL MEDIATOR	DIGITAL LITERACY COMPANION
Sunnah values (waliy, kafil, tarbiyah)	Role modelling grounded in tarbiyah; secure base function	The principle of <i>hifz al-dīn</i> in safeguarding religious identity	Digital <i>adab</i> as an extension of the <i>rā'in</i> responsibility
Minangkabau kinship tradition	The principle of <i>anak dipangku, kamanakan dibimbiang</i>	Transmission of <i>mamangan</i> and the philosophy of ABS-SBK	The customary principle <i>indak lakang dek paneh</i> as a foundation for adaptation

⁸⁴Ratmil, Interview, 12 Mei 2026.
⁸⁵Rickey dan Fikry, "Pengaruh Kelekatan," loc. cit.

Digital literacy (adaptive instrument)	Behavioural modelling through social media	Translation of customary values into digital formats	Active guidance in navigating digital spaces
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Compiled by the authors based on the Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy framework and interview data
(Ratmil, 2026; Rickey & Fikry, 2023)

c. The Kinship Ecosystem: Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy within a Collective Structure

A central implication of ecological systems theory is that the role of the *mamak* cannot be understood or reconstructed in isolation.⁸⁶ Rather, the *mamak* constitutes one node within a broader kinship ecosystem that includes biological parents, *Bundo Kanduang* (the senior woman of the maternal lineage, regarded as the first *madrasah*, the child's first school, and the moral centre of the household), *bako* (paternal relatives who complement the child's development through emotional and moral support), and the wider *nagari* community. As described by Ratmil, the education of the *kemenakan* in Minangkabau society is a collective responsibility, and the *mamak* represents an indispensable node within that system. He is not the sole educator but the figure entrusted with a specific and non-delegable responsibility for customary and moral guidance that no other figure within this kinship system assumes.⁸⁷ The Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy model is therefore not intended to replace this ecosystem, but rather to reactivate the *mamak*'s node within it.

d. The Normative-Adaptive Character and the Boundaries of the Model

It must be clearly emphasised that the Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy model is normative-adaptive rather than prescriptive-universal in nature. The model does not claim that all *mamak* uniformly possess the capacity to perform, or have actually performed, the three roles described herein. The lived reality of the *mamak* is that of a figure with limited formal authority, no institutional mandate, varying personal capacities, and, increasingly, significant geographical and relational distance from the *kemenakan*. The model offers an ideal framework grounded in Sunnah values, rooted in the Minangkabau kinship tradition, and psychologically justifiable

⁸⁶ Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development*, loc. cit.

⁸⁷ Ratmil, Interview, 18 Juni 2026.

through the four complementary theoretical perspectives discussed in this study. Its implementation should therefore be calibrated to the capacities, contexts, and relationships of each individual *mamak*.

The most appropriate analogy is not that of a programme to be implemented, but of a compass that provides direction. A Minangkabau customary proverb that concludes this analysis expresses this idea succinctly: *sakali aia gadang, sakali tapian barubah* ("each time a great flood comes, the riverbank changes accordingly").⁸⁸ Change is inevitable. The task of the *mamak* is not to bring the *kemenakan* back to the *rumah gadang* of the past, but to accompany them in navigating today's digital landscape, to accompany them as they navigate today's digital landscape with the moral compass jointly provided by Islamic values and Minangkabau wisdom. This is the essence of Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy: not a rejection of modernity, but an intelligent and deeply rooted negotiation between enduring values and an ever-changing reality.

D. CONCLUSION

This study addresses the fundamental question of how the moral role of the *mamak kandung* can be reconstructed within the Islamic education of Minangkabau children in the digital era by integrating Sunnah values and local wisdom as its normative and cultural foundations, while interpreting this role through the psychological perspectives of attachment theory, ecological systems theory, social identity theory, and social learning theory.

The findings demonstrate that the *mamak kandung*, namely the mother's biological brother, occupies a position that is analytically distinct from the *mamak kaum/penghulu* and the *ninik mamak*. This distinction is not merely technical or terminological; rather, it determines the appropriate level of analysis. Accordingly, this study is deliberately situated at the most intimate personal and kinship levels rather than at the institutional level of customary leadership. It is at this level that the *mamak* functions as a moral holder, a position derived entirely from the lived culture of kinship rather than from formal authority, institutional mandate, or absolute rights over the *kemenakan*. These limitations

⁸⁸ Ratmil, Interview, 12 Mei 2026.

should not be regarded as deficiencies to be overcome but rather as intrinsic characteristics of the role itself, as conceived within the Minangkabau matrilineal system.

Digitalisation has significantly reconfigured educational relationships within Minangkabau families, resulting in the increasing marginalization of the *mamak's* involvement in shaping the religious identity of the *kemenakan*. This marginalisation is produced by the interaction of internal factors, including occupational demands, *merantau* (out-migration), and limited knowledge of customary tradition and religion, together with external factors, namely modernisation, globalisation, and the powerful and largely uncontrolled influence of digital media. Consequently, Minangkabau *kemenakan* now derive much of their moral and religious guidance from digital spaces rather than from their kinship environment, accompanied by increasing vulnerability to deviant behaviour among the younger generation.

Nevertheless, this study argues that the present crisis does not mark the end of the *mamak's* relevance but rather constitutes a challenge that can be addressed through an intelligent and contextually grounded reconstruction. Sunnah values concerning the moral responsibility of adult male relatives, namely the principle of *rā'in* articulated in the foundational caregiving hadith, the cultivation of *adab* as the greatest gift that can be given to a child, and the habituation of worship from an early age, remain relevant as the normative foundation of the *mamak's* moral role. Although these texts do not refer directly to the institution of the *mamak*, they correspond directly to the moral function that the *mamak* performs. Likewise, the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) and the four traditional Minangkabau educational patterns remain relevant as the cultural framework that provides social legitimacy for this reconstruction.

On this basis, the study proposes the Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy model as a conceptual framework for reconstructing the *mamak's* moral role. The model rests upon three mutually reinforcing pillars: Sunnah values as the normative foundation, the Minangkabau kinship tradition as the cultural framework, and digital literacy as the adaptive instrument. Within this framework, the *mamak* performs three interconnected roles: as a moral mentor who guides the formation of the *kemenakan's* character through personal example; as a cultural mediator who bridges customary tradition and contemporary life; and as a digital literacy companion who assists the *kemenakan* in navigating digital spaces through strong moral filters. It should be emphasised that the

model is normative-adaptive rather than universally prescriptive. It does not assume that all *mamak* uniformly possess the capacity or obligation to perform these three roles in identical ways; instead, it offers an ideal framework whose implementation should be calibrated to the capacities, contexts, and relationships of each individual *mamak*.

Beyond its contribution to the understanding of Minangkabau culture, this study offers a psychological interpretation with broader relevance to Islamic psychology and the study of family and community resilience. It conceptualises the Minangkabau kinship system as a protective ecosystem for adolescent identity resilience and well-being, in which attachment to dependable kinship figures mitigates digital aggression, a dense microsystem supports healthy development, salient in-group identities provide a stable sense of belonging, and moral modelling shapes behaviour. In doing so, the study contributes to the growing discourse on kinship-based Islamic education, an area that has received comparatively limited scholarly attention, as previous studies have focused predominantly on formal institutions such as *pesantren* and Islamic schools or on the customary system at the macro-institutional level.

The principal limitation of this study lies in its qualitative design and the limited number of field-confirmation informants. Future research may examine the Hybrid Kinship Pedagogy model quantitatively using measurable indicators of adolescent well-being and identity resilience, while also evaluating kinship-based interventions across a broader range of *nagari*. As expressed in the Minangkabau customary proverb, *sakali aia gadang, sakali tapian barubah* ("each time a great flood comes, the riverbank changes accordingly"), the task is not to return the *kemenakan* to the past but to accompany them as they navigate their own era, guided by Islamic values and Minangkabau wisdom as enduring moral compasses. In this sense, reconstructing the *mamak*'s moral role is not merely an agenda of cultural preservation but a strategic necessity for strengthening the religious identity resilience of the younger Minangkabau generations.

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