

WHEN MORALITY MEETS ALGORITHM: ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SHAPING STUDENTS' DIGITAL ETHICS MADRASAH TSANAWIYAH IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The rapid digitalization of communication and information access has created new ethical challenges for students, particularly in navigating social media, misinformation, and online behavior. Islamic Religious Education holds strategic potential to address these challenges by grounding digital conduct in moral values. This qualitative case study examines how Islamic Religious Education shapes students' digital ethics at MTs As-Salam Samboja, Indonesia, focusing on institutional efforts, application of Islamic moral values, and emerging challenges. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the principal, PAI teachers, guidance counselors, informatics teachers, and students, complemented by observation and documentation. Thematic analysis reveals that digital ethics formation is achieved through an integrated approach: centralized gadget regulation during school hours, direct integration of Islamic values into PAI instruction—linking hifzhul lisan (speech protection) to social media comments and tabayyun (verification) to hoax prevention—teacher modeling of ethical digital communication, and persuasive psychological counseling for misconduct cases. Students demonstrated internalized self-filtering mechanisms, such as thinking before commenting and verifying information before sharing. However, the dichotomy between limited school supervision and insufficient parental oversight at home remains a significant challenge. This study contributes empirical evidence for integrating traditional Islamic ethics into contemporary digital literacy frameworks and offers practical recommendations for Islamic schools, teachers, and parents in fostering responsible digital citizenship among adolescents.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education; Digital Ethics; Akhlak; Social Media; Character Education; Madrasah*

ABSTRAK

Perkembangan digitalisasi komunikasi dan akses informasi yang pesat telah menciptakan berbagai tantangan etis baru bagi peserta didik, khususnya dalam menggunakan media sosial, menghadapi misinformasi, dan berperilaku di ruang digital. Pendidikan Agama Islam memiliki potensi strategis dalam menghadapi tantangan tersebut dengan menanamkan perilaku digital berdasarkan nilai-nilai moral Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif untuk mengkaji bagaimana Pendidikan Agama Islam membentuk etika digital peserta didik di MTs As-Salam Samboja, Indonesia, dengan berfokus pada upaya kelembagaan, penerapan nilai-nilai moral Islam, dan tantangan yang dihadapi. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan kepala madrasah, guru PAI, guru

bimbingan dan konseling, guru informatika, serta peserta didik, yang dilengkapi dengan observasi dan dokumentasi. Analisis tematik menunjukkan bahwa pembentukan etika digital dilakukan melalui pendekatan yang terintegrasi, yaitu pengaturan penggunaan gawai secara terpusat selama jam sekolah, integrasi langsung nilai-nilai Islam dalam pembelajaran PAI dengan mengaitkan konsep *hifzhul lisan* (menjaga lisan) dengan etika berkomentar di media sosial dan *tabayyun* (verifikasi atau klarifikasi informasi) dengan pencegahan hoaks, keteladanan guru dalam berkomunikasi secara etis di ruang digital, serta konseling psikologis secara persuasif terhadap kasus pelanggaran. Peserta didik menunjukkan adanya mekanisme penyaringan diri yang telah terinternalisasi, seperti berpikir sebelum memberikan komentar dan memverifikasi informasi sebelum membagikannya. Namun demikian, kesenjangan antara keterbatasan pengawasan di sekolah dan kurang optimalnya pengawasan orang tua di rumah masih menjadi tantangan yang signifikan. Penelitian ini memberikan bukti empiris mengenai pentingnya mengintegrasikan etika Islam tradisional ke dalam kerangka literasi digital kontemporer serta menawarkan rekomendasi praktis bagi madrasah, guru, dan orang tua dalam menumbuhkan perilaku kewargaan digital yang bertanggung jawab di kalangan remaja.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Agama Islam; Etika Digital; Akhlak; Media Sosial; Pendidikan Karakter; Madrasah.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed how young people access information, communicate, and construct their social identities. For adolescents in Indonesia, where internet penetration reached 78.19 percent of the population by 2024, digital platforms have become integral to daily life, offering unprecedented opportunities for learning, social connection, and self-expression (APJII, 2024; Kominfo, 2024). However, this digital transformation has simultaneously introduced significant challenges to moral formation, as students increasingly encounter content and interactions that conflict with religious values, social norms, and developmental needs. Research indicates that Indonesian adolescents spend an average of 6.2 hours daily on social media, with platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp dominating their digital engagement (We Are Social, 2024). This extensive exposure creates a pressing need for educational interventions that equip students with ethical frameworks for navigating digital spaces responsibly.

The capacity to use technology effectively is no longer sufficient; students require the moral discernment to determine how technology should be used appropriately and accountably. This capability, increasingly conceptualized as digital ethics, encompasses responsible communication, information verification, respect for others, and accountability for actions undertaken through digital media (Bawden & Robinson, 2020; Livingstone & Third, 2017). Digital ethics extends beyond technical proficiency to include critical evaluation of information, awareness of digital footprints, and commitment to ethical conduct online. For Muslim students, this ethical framework is inherently connected to the broader Islamic moral

tradition of *akhlak*, which provides comprehensive guidance on human conduct grounded in Qur'anic principles and Prophetic exemplar (Al-Attas, 2015; Peters, 2018).

Islamic Religious Education holds strategic potential to address these challenges by grounding digital conduct in established moral frameworks. As Muhaimin (2012) emphasizes, Islamic education serves not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to develop students' character, faith, and ethical disposition through the internalization of Islamic values. In the contemporary context, PAI must extend its traditional focus on ritual practice and textual study to address the lived realities of students in an increasingly digital world (Zuhdi, 2021). This requires teachers to connect classical moral concepts—such as honesty (*ash-shidq*), speech protection (*hifzhul lisan*), information verification (*tabayyun*), and tolerance (*tasamuh*)—to the concrete challenges students face in digital spaces (Fakhrurozi & Kurniawan, 2022; Safitri & Hidayat, 2024).

Despite growing scholarly attention to digital literacy and character education, research specifically examining the integration of Islamic moral values into digital ethics formation remains limited. Existing studies have addressed digital literacy in educational contexts (Buckingham, 2020; Jenkins, 2019) and character education in Islamic schools (Mansur, 2021; Rahman & Farida, 2023), yet few have explored how PAI teachers concretely translate classical Islamic moral teachings into practical guidance for digital behavior. Hasanah and Wibowo (2023) identified challenges faced by PAI teachers in shaping adolescent morality in the social media era, while Syamsuddin and Ulfah (2023) examined gadget regulation policies in Islamic educational institutions. However, a gap remains in understanding the integrated approach—combining curriculum integration, institutional policy, teacher modeling, and counseling support—that Islamic schools employ to address digital ethics comprehensively.

This study addresses this gap by examining how Islamic Religious Education shapes students' digital ethics at MTs As-Salam Samboja, Indonesia. Specifically, the research investigates the institutional efforts, application of Islamic moral values in digital behavior, and challenges encountered in this process. Employing a qualitative case study design, the research draws on interviews with the principal, PAI teachers, guidance counselors, informatics teachers, and students, complemented by observation and documentation. The novelty of this study resides in its empirical examination of how traditional Islamic ethics are translated into contemporary digital contexts within a specific madrasah setting. The findings contribute to both theoretical understanding of Islamic digital ethics and practical recommendations for Islamic schools, educators, and parents in fostering responsible digital citizenship among adolescents. The study is limited to MTs As-Salam Samboja and does not claim

generalizability to other contexts, yet it offers insights applicable to similar Islamic educational institutions navigating the intersection of tradition and technology.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical research design. The qualitative approach was selected because the research seeks to understand phenomena in depth based on the experiences, perspectives, and actions of informants regarding the formation of students' digital ethics (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Sugiyono, 2022). This approach is particularly appropriate for examining how Islamic Religious Education integrates moral values into students' digital behavior, as it allows the researcher to capture nuanced meanings and contextual factors that quantitative methods might overlook. The descriptive-analytical design enables comprehensive exploration of the efforts, applications, and challenges involved in shaping digital ethics at MTs As-Salam Samboja.

The research was conducted at MTs As-Salam Samboja, an Islamic junior high school located in Samboja, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. This site was purposively selected because of its distinctive approach to integrating Islamic values with digital ethics formation, including a centralized gadget regulation policy and the integration of moral teachings into PAI instruction. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they possessed relevant knowledge and direct involvement in the digital ethics formation process (Patton, 2015). The informants consisted of the school principal (as policy maker), two PAI teachers (as primary implementers of moral value internalization), one guidance counseling teacher (as provider of psychological support), one informatics teacher (as facilitator of digital literacy), and three students representing different grade levels (as subjects of digital ethics formation). This diverse range of informants enabled comprehensive triangulation of perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation.

Data were collected through three complementary techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all informants to explore their perspectives, experiences, and practices regarding digital ethics formation. Interview guides were developed based on the research questions and theoretical framework, with questions tailored to each informant category. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was conducted in a private setting within the school environment. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Observations were conducted to examine daily interactions, the atmosphere of PAI and informatics learning sessions, and student discipline regarding gadget

collection. Observations focused on how teachers modeled ethical digital behavior and how students responded to school policies. Documentation included school regulations, PAI curriculum materials, records of student violations or guidance, and photographs of relevant activities.

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising three concurrent activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming raw data from interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents. Thematic coding was employed to identify patterns and categories relevant to the research questions. Data display involved organizing reduced data into narrative summaries and thematic matrices to facilitate interpretation. Conclusion drawing involved identifying patterns, explanations, and propositions from the analyzed data, with verification through cross-checking among data sources.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed source triangulation and technique triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Source triangulation involved comparing information from different informants—the principal, teachers, and students—to verify consistency of perspectives. Technique triangulation involved comparing data obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation to confirm findings across multiple methods. Additionally, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with key informants to verify accuracy and allow corrections.

RESULTS

This section presents the empirical findings derived from the qualitative analysis of data collected through interviews, observation, and documentation at MTs As-Salam Samboja. The results are organized thematically to address the three research questions guiding this study: (1) the efforts of Islamic Religious Education in shaping students' digital ethics, (2) the application of Islamic moral values in students' use of digital media, and (3) the challenges encountered in this process. Each theme is substantiated with representative participant quotations and observational evidence, maintaining a clear distinction between descriptive reporting and interpretive analysis. Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the six key findings, which are elaborated in detail throughout this section.

Table 1: Summary of Key Findings

Aspect	Finding	Data Source
Gadget Regulation Policy	Centralized gadget collection system; phone prohibition except emergencies or Informatics instruction; collection after class	Principal interview, Informatics Teacher interview, Observation
PAI Value Integration	Direct connection between moral lessons (<i>hifzhul lisan, tabayyun</i>) and digital behavior; social media case studies in learning	PAI Teacher interview, Classroom Observation
Teacher Modeling	Polite communication in school messaging groups; use of respectful Indonesian and religious language	Principal interview, Observation of Teacher-Student Interactions
Student Value Internalization	Self-filtering mechanism; thinking before commenting; verifying information before sharing	Student interview
Counseling Approach	Persuasive-psychological approach; heart-to-heart dialogue; root cause investigation	Principal interview, BK Teacher interview
Primary Challenge	School-home supervision dichotomy (7-8 hours vs. home); parents' economic constraints; need for school-family synergy	Principal interview, BK Teacher interview

Caption: Table 1 summarizes the six key findings regarding efforts to shape students' digital ethics at MTs As-Salam Samboja, encompassing institutional policies, PAI value integration, teacher modeling, student value internalization, counseling approaches, and challenges faced.

Institutional Policies and Gadget Regulation

The findings reveal that MTs As-Salam Samboja has established an educational-protective gadget regulation policy that reflects a balanced approach toward technology integration. Rather than completely prohibiting technology, the school implements a structured control system to ensure that gadget use during school hours does not disrupt the learning process or compromise students' ethical development. Students are prohibited from bringing

mobile phones to school except under two specific conditions: emergency family communication needs or direct instruction from the Informatics teacher for practical digital literacy sessions. This policy was articulated by the school principal:

"We do not prohibit children from knowing technology, but the school must have firm rules. Students are prohibited from bringing phones unless there is a family emergency—and even then, they must be deposited with the duty teacher—or when there is instruction from the Informatics teacher. After the Informatics lesson ends, phones must be collected again in the duty teacher's room until dismissal. We want to train their self-control." (Principal, interview, 2024)

This policy was confirmed by the Informatics teacher, who emphasized that gadget use is strictly limited to academic purposes:

"Phone use in Informatics class is only for practical material on cyber literacy and digital literacy. Once the material is complete, phones are immediately taken back and handed over to the duty teacher. We want to instill in students that gadgets are learning tools, not unlimited entertainment devices during school hours." (Informatics Teacher, interview, 2024)

The centralized gadget collection system reflects the school's commitment to cultivating self-discipline among students. Observations during school hours confirmed that students consistently deposited their phones at the designated location upon arrival, with only a few exceptions for legitimate academic purposes. This policy aligns with the school's broader educational philosophy of developing students' self-control as a foundational character trait (Syamsuddin & Ulfah, 2023).

Integration of Islamic Values in PAI Learning

The formation of digital ethics at MTs As-Salam Samboja is firmly grounded in the values of Islamic Religious Education. PAI materials are not presented merely as textual religious memorization but are transformed into practical guidance for daily digital behavior. The habituation of *akhlakul karimah* in the physical world is directly connected to activities in the digital realm. The PAI teacher emphasized that technological proficiency without a moral foundation is ultimately detrimental:

"PAI lessons in our class are directly linked to students' social media lives. When we discuss the chapter on 'guarding the tongue,' I emphasize to the children that the tongue in this era is not only what the mouth says but also what fingers type in comment sections. When we discuss 'tabayyun,' we connect it to the prohibition against casually sharing news or hoaxes on WhatsApp and TikTok." (PAI Teacher, interview, 2024)

This pedagogical approach was observed during a PAI classroom session where the teacher facilitated a discussion on ethical digital behavior. Students were asked to reflect on recent social media interactions and evaluate them against Islamic principles. The teacher guided students to consider questions such as: "Is this comment respectful?", "Have I verified this information?", and "Would I say this to someone's face?" This method of connecting abstract moral principles to concrete digital experiences appeared to enhance students' understanding and internalization of ethical values.

The integration of *tabayyun* (verification) and *hifzhul lisan* (speech protection) into PAI instruction is consistent with research emphasizing the importance of critical information literacy in Islamic education (Fakhrurozi & Kurniawan, 2022; Safitri & Hidayat, 2024). By linking traditional Islamic concepts to contemporary digital challenges, the teacher successfully made abstract moral teachings relevant to students' lived experiences. This approach reflects the broader principle that Islamic education must address the practical realities of students' lives to be effective (Muhaimin, 2012; Zuhdi, 2021).

Teacher Modeling and Exemplary Behavior

Beyond knowledge transfer, the exemplary behavior (*uswah hasanah*) of educators emerged as a critical factor in shaping students' digital ethics. PAI teachers and homeroom teachers provided concrete examples of ethical digital communication in school messaging groups, using polite Indonesian language and religiously informed language that offered students positive models of digital behavior. The principal emphasized the importance of teacher modeling:

"Teachers must set an example. If we want students to be polite in digital communication, we must demonstrate it ourselves. In our school WhatsApp groups, we always use respectful language and avoid gossip or negative comments. Students see this and gradually adopt similar habits." (Principal, interview, 2024)

Observations of teacher-student interactions, both in person and through digital platforms, confirmed that educators consistently modeled respectful communication. Teachers addressed students with appropriate titles and used language that reflected Islamic values of courtesy and respect. This consistent modeling appeared to influence students' behavior, as they often mirrored the respectful communication patterns observed in their teachers.

The role of teacher modeling in character formation is well-documented in Islamic educational literature (Mansur, 2021; Rahman & Farida, 2023). The findings of this study support the assertion that teacher behavior serves as a powerful influence on student character development, particularly in digital contexts where students may lack other positive examples

(Hasanah & Wibowo, 2023). By demonstrating ethical digital behavior, teachers provide students with concrete models that reinforce the moral lessons taught in PAI classes. Table 2 categorizes the contributions of each informant to the formation of digital ethics.

Table 2: Categorization of Findings by Informant

Informant	Role	Contribution to Findings
Principal	Policy Maker	Centralized gadget regulation; persuasive BK approach; parental supervision challenge
PAI Teacher	Primary Moral	Integration of <i>akhlak</i> into digital behavior
	Value Implementer	(<i>hifzhul lisan, tabayyun</i>); social media case studies
BK Teacher	Psychological Supporter	Persuasive approach; moral dialogue; handling digital ethics violations
Informatics Teacher	Digital Literacy Facilitator	Limited gadget use for practice; collection after class
Students	Subjects	Self-filtering mechanism; digital ethics awareness; social media experience

Caption: Table 2 categorizes findings based on each informant's role, showing the unique contribution of each party to the formation of students' digital ethics at MTs As-Salam Samboja.

Internalization of Islamic Values in Student Digital Behavior

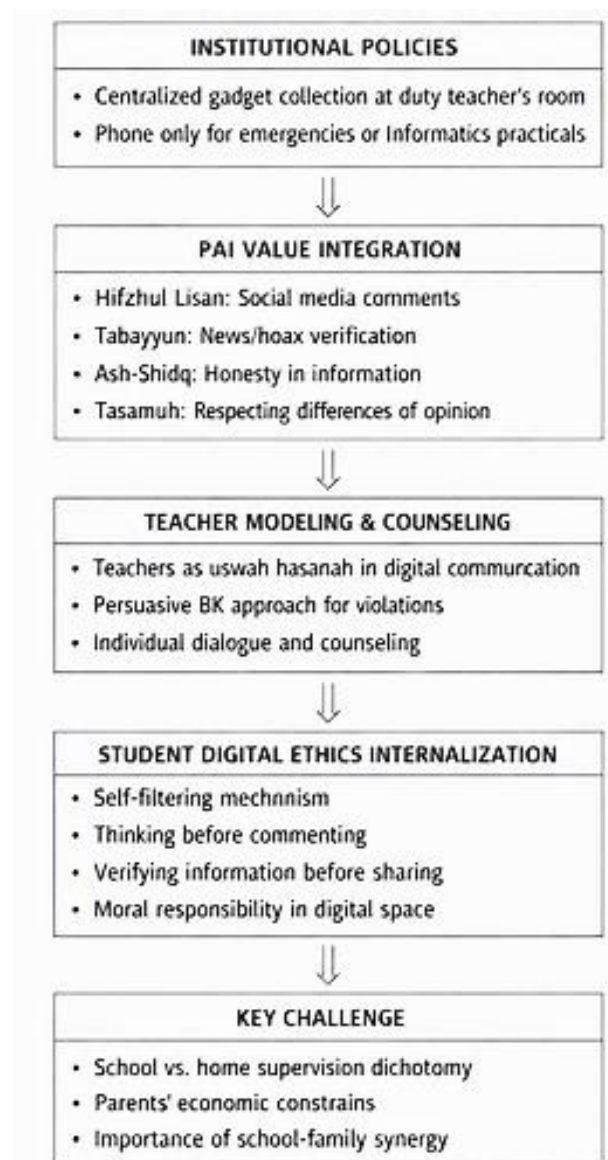
The internalization of Islamic moral values through PAI learning and teacher modeling was reflected in students' self-reported awareness and behavior on social media. Core values such as honesty (*ash-shidq*), speech protection (*hifzhul lisan*), information verification (*tabayyun*), and mutual respect (*tasamuh*) began to shape students' digital ethics. A student representative articulated this transformation:

"Previously, if there was a viral post on social media, I often joined in commenting with jokes that were somewhat harsh. But after being taught by the PAI teacher about guarding the tongue and the sin of bad speech, I became afraid. Now, before typing a comment on Instagram or WhatsApp, I think first about whether it is polite. If there is strange news in a group, I check its truth and do not immediately share it." (Student, interview, 2024)

This statement demonstrates that Islamic moral values were successfully converted by students into a self-filtering mechanism when interacting with social media algorithms.

Students developed the capacity to critically evaluate their own digital behavior against Islamic ethical standards, reflecting a mature understanding of moral responsibility in digital spaces.

Observations of student interactions during school hours revealed that students generally demonstrated respectful communication with peers and teachers. While occasional instances of inappropriate language were noted, students appeared receptive to correction and guidance from teachers. The integration of Islamic values into digital behavior was further evidenced by students' willingness to discuss their social media experiences in PAI classes and seek guidance on ethical dilemmas they encountered online.



The formation of this internalized ethical awareness aligns with research on the effectiveness of character education approaches that emphasize both cognitive understanding and practical application (Zuhdi, 2021). By providing students with both moral knowledge and opportunities to apply it, PAI instruction at MTs As-Salam Samboja appears to have facilitated

genuine behavioral change. Figure 1 illustrates the comprehensive model of digital ethics formation at the school.

Figure 1: Model of Digital Ethics Formation at MTs As-Salam Samboja

Counseling Approach for Digital Misconduct

In addressing digital ethics violations—such as student disputes on social media or gadget misuse—the school adopted a persuasive psychological approach through Guidance and Counseling (BK) rather than relying solely on punitive sanctions. The BK teacher conducted in-depth interviews to explore students' motivations without making them feel cornered. The principal elaborated on this approach:

"Our approach in BK is persuasive and psychological. If a student is suspected of insulting others on social media or accessing negative content, we call them personally. We dialogue with them heart-to-heart, seeking the root of the problem. Middle school students, if interrogated harshly, tend to rebel, but if we touch their moral consciousness, they become open and remorseful." (Principal, interview, 2024)

Observations of counseling sessions revealed that this approach was effective in facilitating student reflection and behavioral change. Students who had engaged in digital misconduct demonstrated genuine remorse and commitment to improvement after counseling sessions. The BK teacher reported that most students responded positively to the persuasive approach, with few repeat violations.

The use of psychological counseling for digital ethics violations reflects contemporary approaches to character education that emphasize restorative rather than punitive responses (Mansur, 2021). By addressing the underlying causes of misconduct and fostering moral awareness, the school's approach appears to have contributed to students' ethical development.

Challenges and the Need for Parental Synergy

Despite the school's comprehensive efforts, significant challenges persist in forming students' digital ethics. The primary challenge is the dichotomy of supervision time—the school controls approximately 7-8 hours of students' daily time, while the remaining hours are spent in family and community environments. At home, parental supervision of gadget use is often inadequate due to economic demands, such as farming or trading. The principal acknowledged this challenge:

"The biggest challenge is when children arrive home. Many parents are busy working in the fields or trading until evening, so phones are given without supervision. The moral fortress we build at madrasah can collapse if at home children are left without boundaries."

Therefore, the key lies in synergy and quality dialogue between parents and children at home." (Principal, interview, 2024)

This finding highlights the critical role of parental involvement in sustaining digital ethics formation beyond the school environment. Without consistent reinforcement at home, the values instilled through PAI learning and school policies may be undermined by unrestricted digital access (Pratama & Suryani, 2024; Syamsuddin & Ulfah, 2023). The principal emphasized that the school alone cannot accomplish the task of digital ethics formation; it requires a collaborative partnership with parents.

Observations and interviews with teachers confirmed that students who maintained strong digital ethics at school sometimes struggled with consistency at home. This discrepancy underscores the importance of the school-parent partnership and the need for parent education on digital supervision strategies.

DISCUSSION

This discussion interprets the empirical findings in relation to the theoretical framework, prior scholarship, and the research questions that guided this study. The objective is to move beyond descriptive reporting toward conceptual understanding, demonstrating how Islamic Religious Education contributes to shaping students' digital ethics and what these findings mean for Islamic educational practice and theory. The discussion is organized around four interpretative movements: first, interpretation of findings; second, theoretical implications; third, comparison with prior research; and fourth, practical implications and recommendations.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic and contextual role in shaping students' digital ethics at MTs As-Salam Samboja. The integrated approach—combining institutional policies, PAI value integration, teacher modeling, and persuasive counseling—demonstrates how Islamic educational institutions can effectively address contemporary digital challenges. This finding is consistent with the theoretical expectation that character formation requires a holistic approach involving multiple stakeholders and strategies (Muhaimin, 2012; Zuhdi, 2021; Lickona, 1991).

The centralized gadget regulation policy reflects the school's commitment to cultivating self-discipline as a foundational character trait. By limiting gadget use to academic purposes and requiring students to deposit phones at designated locations, the school creates an environment where students learn to exercise self-control and distinguish between productive and unproductive technology use. This finding aligns with research on the importance of

institutional policies in shaping student behavior (Syamsuddin & Ulfah, 2023; Pratama & Suryani, 2024). The policy's effectiveness appears to depend on its consistent implementation and the clear communication of its educational rationale to students.

The integration of Islamic values into PAI instruction represents the most significant contribution of this study to understanding digital ethics formation. By connecting classical moral teachings—such as *hifzhul lisan* (speech protection), *tabayyun* (verification), *ash-shidq* (honesty), and *tasamuh* (tolerance)—to concrete digital behaviors, PAI teachers effectively translated abstract moral principles into practical guidance for navigating social media and online communication. This pedagogical approach reflects the broader principle that Islamic education must address the practical realities of students' lives to be effective (Muhaimin, 2012; Fakhrurozi & Kurniawan, 2022; Safitri & Hidayat, 2024).

The finding that students developed internalized self-filtering mechanisms is particularly significant. Students reported thinking before commenting, verifying information before sharing, and considering the ethical implications of their digital behavior. This demonstrates that Islamic moral values were not merely memorized but genuinely internalized and applied in students' daily lives. This aligns with Lickona's (1991) framework of character education, which emphasizes the importance of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action as interconnected components of character development.

Implications

The findings of this study have several theoretical implications for understanding the role of Islamic education in digital ethics formation. First, the study extends the concept of *akhlak* (Islamic morality) to the digital domain, demonstrating that traditional Islamic moral categories remain relevant and applicable to contemporary challenges. The successful translation of *hifzhul lisan* into social media comment etiquette, *tabayyun* into information verification, and *ash-shidq* into online honesty suggests that Islamic ethical frameworks possess inherent flexibility and adaptability (Al-Attas, 2015; Peters, 2018).

Second, the study contributes to the growing literature on Islamic digital ethics by providing empirical evidence of how Islamic schools concretely address digital challenges. While theoretical discussions of Islamic digital ethics have proliferated (Zuhdi, 2021; Peters, 2018), empirical studies examining implementation in educational settings remain limited. The present study fills this gap by documenting the specific strategies, practices, and challenges involved in integrating Islamic values with digital literacy education.

Third, the study supports character education theories that emphasize the importance of integrated, multi-stakeholder approaches (Lickona, 1991; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). The MTs

As-Salam Samboja model—combining institutional policies, curriculum integration, teacher modeling, counseling support, and parental involvement—reflects the principle that effective character education requires coordinated efforts across multiple contexts. The school's recognition of the critical role of parental involvement aligns with research emphasizing the importance of school-family partnerships in character formation (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Pratama & Suryani, 2024).

Comparison with Prior Research

The findings of this study align with and extend prior research on Islamic education and digital ethics. Hasanah and Wibowo (2023) identified challenges faced by PAI teachers in shaping adolescent morality in the social media era, including students' addiction to gadgets, the influence of negative content, and the difficulty of translating traditional moral teachings to digital contexts. The present study confirms these challenges while demonstrating that they can be addressed through integrated institutional approaches that combine curriculum, policy, and counseling.

Syamsuddin and Ulfah (2023) examined gadget regulation policies in Islamic educational institutions, finding tension between moral protection and digital literacy development. The present study extends this finding by demonstrating that MTs As-Salam Samboja successfully balanced these competing priorities through a nuanced policy that allows gadget use for academic purposes while maintaining strict controls on non-academic use. This finding suggests that effective digital ethics formation requires not prohibition but guided and purposeful engagement with technology.

Rahman and Farida (2023) identified the role of Islamic education in addressing youth digital ethics challenges, emphasizing the importance of teacher modeling and contextualized instruction. The present study corroborates these findings, demonstrating that teacher modeling of ethical digital behavior and integration of moral values into PAI instruction are effective strategies for shaping students' digital ethics. The study also extends prior research by documenting students' self-reported behavioral changes and internalization of moral values.

The findings also resonate with broader character education literature. Lickona's (1991) framework of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action is reflected in the school's approach—students gain moral knowledge through PAI instruction, develop moral feelings through teacher modeling and peer discussion, and demonstrate moral action through self-filtering mechanisms in digital behavior. This alignment suggests that principles of effective character education identified in Western contexts may be transferable to Islamic educational settings with appropriate cultural adaptations.

The findings of this study have several practical implications for Islamic schools, educators, and policymakers seeking to enhance digital ethics formation. First, the study demonstrates the importance of an integrated approach that combines institutional policies, curriculum integration, teacher modeling, counseling support, and parental involvement. This integrated model provides a framework that Islamic schools can adapt to their specific contexts.

Second, the study highlights the importance of contextualizing Islamic moral teachings to address contemporary digital challenges. PAI teachers should connect classical moral concepts—such as *hifzhul lisan*, *tabayyun*, *ash-shidq*, and *tasamuh*—to concrete digital behaviors that students encounter in their daily lives. This approach makes moral teachings relevant and applicable, increasing the likelihood of student internalization.

Third, the study underscores the critical role of teacher modeling in digital ethics formation. Teachers must demonstrate ethical digital behavior in their own communication and interactions, as students learn as much from observation as from formal instruction. Schools should provide professional development to help teachers develop digital literacy and model ethical behavior.

Fourth, the study emphasizes the importance of school-family partnerships in sustaining digital ethics formation. Schools should develop strategies to engage parents in reinforcing digital ethics at home, including parent education programs, communication guidelines, and collaborative planning. Without consistent reinforcement at home, school-based efforts may be undermined by unrestricted digital access.

Fifth, the study suggests that schools should adopt a balanced approach to technology that neither prohibits nor uncritically embraces digital tools. The MTs As-Salam Samboja model of allowing gadget use for academic purposes while maintaining strict controls on non-academic use provides a template for this balanced approach.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Several limitations of this study warrant acknowledgment. First, the study is limited to a single madrasah in East Kalimantan, which limits the generalizability of findings to other contexts. Second, the study relies on self-report data from participants, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Third, the cross-sectional design captures a snapshot of digital ethics formation at a single point in time, limiting understanding of developmental processes over time. Fourth, the study focuses primarily on institutional and pedagogical factors, without extensive exploration of students' home environments or peer influences. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into how Islamic schools can address contemporary digital challenges.

Future research should examine digital ethics formation across multiple Islamic schools to identify variations in approaches and outcomes. Comparative studies between madrasah and non-madrasah schools could illuminate the distinctive contributions of Islamic education to digital ethics. Longitudinal research tracking students' digital ethics development over time would provide insights into how moral values are internalized and maintained. Studies examining the effectiveness of specific pedagogical strategies—such as case study discussions, reflective writing, or project-based learning—could provide evidence-based guidance for teachers. Finally, research exploring the role of parental involvement in digital ethics formation would contribute to understanding how school-family partnerships can be strengthened.

This discussion has interpreted the empirical findings within the theoretical framework of Islamic ethics and character education. The findings confirm that Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in shaping students' digital ethics through an integrated approach combining institutional policies, PAI value integration, teacher modeling, and persuasive counseling. The study extends prior research by providing empirical evidence of how traditional Islamic moral teachings can be translated into practical guidance for digital behavior. Implications have been articulated across theoretical and practical dimensions, with recommendations for educators, schools, and policymakers. The limitations of the study have been acknowledged, and directions for future research have been identified. The central argument advanced is that Islamic schools can effectively address contemporary digital challenges by grounding digital ethics in traditional Islamic moral frameworks and implementing integrated, multi-stakeholder approaches.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative case study examined how Islamic Religious Education shapes students' digital ethics at MTs As-Salam Samboja, addressing the problem of students' extensive digital engagement without adequate ethical frameworks. The research investigated institutional efforts, application of Islamic moral values, and challenges encountered. Using interviews, observation, and documentation with multiple informants—including the principal, teachers, and students—the study revealed that digital ethics formation is achieved through an integrated approach combining centralized gadget regulation, contextualized PAI instruction linking classical moral teachings to digital behavior, teacher modeling of ethical communication, and persuasive counseling for misconduct. Students demonstrated internalized self-filtering mechanisms, such as thinking before commenting and verifying information before sharing, indicating successful translation of Islamic values—*hifzhul lisan, tabayyun, ash-shidq*,

and *tasamuh*—into practical digital ethics. The study contributes to the growing field of Islamic digital ethics by providing empirical evidence of how traditional moral frameworks can address contemporary challenges. Findings offer actionable guidance for Islamic schools, PAI teachers, and policymakers seeking to integrate digital ethics into religious education. However, the study's single-site scope limits generalizability, and reliance on self-report data may introduce social desirability bias. Future research should examine multiple schools, employ longitudinal designs, and explore parental involvement in sustaining digital ethics formation. The central conclusion is that Islamic education can effectively shape students' digital ethics when schools implement integrated, multi-stakeholder approaches that connect traditional moral values to students' lived digital experiences.

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