

Beyond the Mosque: Social Media as A New Frontier for Islamic Moral Education

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menginvestigasi potensi media sosial sebagai instrumen pendidikan moral Islam di Indonesia, konteks dengan 167 juta pengguna daring dan penetrasi internet 77% pada 2023, untuk melampaui peran tradisional masjid. Mengadopsi metodologi kualitatif melalui desain studi kasus multipel, data dikumpulkan via wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan 30 informan berusia 15-35 tahun di Sumatera Utara, dipilih melalui purposive sampling, serta analisis konten terhadap 150 unggahan di Instagram, TikTok, dan YouTube, divalidasi dengan triangulasi sumber. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa format digital seperti video pendek (rata-rata 50.000 views), infografis (32.000 views), dan tantangan Islami (#challengeislami, 450 unggahan) efektif menginternalisasi nilai akhlak, didukung oleh interaktivitas dan jangkauan luas. Namun, hoaks agama (12% sampel) dan distraksi sekuler menantang keberlanjutan dampak. Penelitian mengusulkan model berbasis sintesis teori Al-Ghazali dan Bandura, menekankan konten interaktif dan personalisasi, dengan implikasi pada pelatihan literasi digital pendidik dan regulasi konten.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan Moral Islam, Media Sosial, Konten Digital, Generasi Muda

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the potential of social media as an instrument for Islamic moral education in Indonesia, a context with 167 million internet users and 77% internet penetration in 2023, to transcend the traditional role of mosques. Employing a qualitative methodology through a multiple case study design, data were collected via semi-structured interviews with 30 informants aged 15–35 years in North Sumatra, selected through purposive sampling, alongside content analysis of 150 posts on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, validated using source triangulation. The findings reveal that digital formats such as short videos (averaging 50,000 views), infographics (32,000 views), and Islamic challenges (#challengeislami, 450 posts) are effective in internalizing moral values, supported by interactivity and wide reach. However, religious hoaxes (12% of the sample) and secular distractions pose challenges to the sustainability of impact. The study proposes a model based on the synthesis of Al-Ghazali's and Bandura's theories, emphasizing interactive and personalized content, with implications for digital literacy training for educators and content regulation.

Keywords: *Islamic Moral Education, Social Media, Digital Content, Youth Generation*

INTRODUCTION

Moral education within the Islamic framework has long been a cornerstone in shaping individuals and societies of noble character (Bafadhol 2017). In Islamic tradition, mosques have not only functioned as places of worship but also as centers for education, discussion, and the dissemination of moral values (Mirdad et al. 2023; Nol 2023; Utaberta et al. 2015). However, amid social transformations accelerated by the digital revolution, the role of mosques as the

sole center of moral education faces new challenges (Adhani et al. 2024; Raja 2024). Social media, with its extensive reach and instant accessibility, has emerged as an alternative space that not only complements but also potentially replaces traditional roles in certain contexts. This study aims to explore how social media can become a new frontier in Islamic moral education (Susanti et al. 2024; Shompa et al. 2018; Harizan and Mydin 2024), particularly in Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, which is also experiencing massive internet penetration and digital technology adoption.

The transformation of the global communication landscape due to digitization has altered how humans interact, learn, and convey values (Prnjat 2019; Cherkasova 2021). Data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2023 shows that nearly 77% of Indonesia's population, or approximately 212 million people, are active internet users, with 167 million connected to social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube (Indonesia 2022; Syambas et al. 2022; Halim et al. 2024). This phenomenon is reinforced by reports from We are Social and Hootsuite (2023), which note that the average Indonesian user spends 3 hours and 18 minutes per day on social media, making Indonesia one of the countries with the highest levels of digital engagement in Southeast Asia (Saputra et al. 2023; Pratama 2018, 2020). In this context, social media is no longer merely a tool for entertainment but has evolved into a platform that shapes perceptions, identity, and the moral behavior of society, including young Muslims who are now known as “digital natives.” (Zaid et al. 2022; Çelebioğlu 2022; Douglass et al. 2022).

Theoretically, Islamic moral education is grounded in the concept of *akhlak* derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. Al-Ghazali, in *Ihya Ulumuddin*, emphasized that morality (*akhlak*) is a manifestation of internalized faith through the process of education and habituation (Kukkonen 2016; Vasalou 2021). In this view, moral education does not merely aim to convey normative knowledge but also to shape character through exemplary models (*uswah hasanah*) and direct experiences. However, when physical spaces such as mosques or religious study groups (*majelis taklim*) are no longer the sole meeting points between educators and learners, these classical theories need to be expanded to accommodate new realities. Albert Bandura's social learning theory becomes relevant here, stating that individuals learn through observation, imitation, and interaction with their social environment (Legg 2023; Schunk and DiBenedetto 2022; Allan 2017). In social media, this “social environment” has shifted from face-to-face interactions to virtual interactions mediated by digital content such as Qur'anic verses, exemplary stories, infographics, or short videos that now dominate platforms like TikTok and Instagram.

Experts have extensively discussed Islamic education in the modern era, noting that communication technology expands access to religious knowledge, enabling the democratic dissemination of values beyond formal institutions (Ghani and Dahlan 2021; Salih et al. 2019). In *Muslims: Rewiring the House of Islam*, Bunt highlights how the internet and social media have created “cyber-Islamic environments” that facilitate the reinterpretation of Islamic teachings in contemporary contexts (Bunt 2024). In Indonesia, online Muslim communities, such as hijabers on Instagram, use social media to construct moral identities while spreading Islamic values through visual aesthetics and personal narratives (Baulch and Pramiyanti 2018; R. Khan 2023). However, behind this potential lie risks such as the spread of radical content,

religious misinformation, or the commodification of Islamic values, which may undermine the essence of moral education itself (Nafi'a et al. 2022; Farhadi 2022).

A 2023 survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) noted that 63% of Indonesian internet users had accessed religious-themed content, with the majority seeking materials such as sermons, prayers, and Islamic motivation.. (Pabbajah et al. 2021; Solahudin and Fakhruroji 2020). Platforms like YouTube have become venues for young preachers like Hanan Attaki and Felix Siau to reach millions of followers through creatively packaged content. (Imaroh et al. 2024; Hikmah and Nurul Qomariyah 2024), while TikTok is filled with trends like "Islamic Reels," which combine Qur'anic verses with modern music and visuals (Alfarisi Alfurqon 2023; Istiqomah et al. 2024). This phenomenon indicates a paradigm shift from formal and hierarchical moral education toward a more informal, participatory, and community-based approach online. On the other hand, a 2022 report from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo) recorded an increase in religiously motivated hoaxes on social media, such as the spread of erroneous Qur'anic interpretations or intolerant narratives, showing that without a directed strategy, the potential of social media could backfire against Islamic moral education. (Sakmar and Suyoto 2021; Agustina et al. 2023; Abdullah et al. 2024; Duile and Tamma 2021).

Social media's position as a medium for Islamic moral education contrasts sharply with traditional methods such as pesantren, majelis taklim, or mosques, which have long served as the primary bastions of character development in Indonesia.. (Asif et al. 2024; Saiin, Armita, and Rizki 2020; Wanto, Jamin, and Ali 2022). While pesantren rely on intensive teacher-student interactions within isolated environments and majelis taklim emphasize time-bound oral delivery, social media offers unparalleled flexibility and scalability, reaching millions of users without geographical or temporal constraints. (Mwalwanda and Mhlana 2022; Huang, Spector, and Yang 2019). Consistent with APJII data, an internal survey from this study indicates that only 28% of urban adolescents regularly attend physical religious gatherings, reflecting a shift in preference toward digital platforms that provide instant and personalized engagement. Although mosques retain their relevance as spiritual symbols, their limitations in captivating younger generations, who are more drawn to TikTok reels than extended sermons, underscore that social media not only complements but, in certain respects, begins to supplant the dominance of traditional approaches.

The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which integrates the framework of Islamic moral education with the dynamics of social media as an alternative learning space outside traditional institutions like mosques. Unlike previous studies that tend to focus on the role of social media in preaching (dakwah) or the formation of religious identity, this study offers a new perspective by exploring how specific content formats, such as infographics, short videos, Islamic animations, or positive challenges (challenges), can be designed to internalize moral values in daily life. This research also expands the discourse by proposing an informative social media-based moral education model that is interactive and impact-oriented, such as campaigns like #AkhlakMulia or #SpreadKindnessChallenge, whose effectiveness can be measured in the Indonesian context. (Pennington 2018; Wills and Fecteau 2016).

Nevertheless, there is a significant research gap in the current literature. Several studies, such as Hidayat's analysis of Adi Hidayat Official's YouTube channel, focus on digital

preaching in Indonesia but emphasize the general dissemination of religious information without delving into how social media can be systematically used for moral education or exploring its communicative aspects in preaching. (Mardiana 2024; Azis Muslim 2022; Safiramu and Nasir 2024). Many other studies focus on the dynamics of online Muslim communities. (A. Muslim 2017) But overlook content strategies that can directly shape moral behavior. Moreover, most studies on Islamic education in Indonesia still adhere to conventional approaches such as madrasas or pesantrens, while the role of social media as an alternative educational space remains underexplored, especially regarding content design and its impact on the formation of akhlak (Siswanti et al. 2024; Rohma et al. 2020). This gap represents the void this research seeks to bridge by posing the question: How can social media be designed as an effective instrument for Islamic moral education relevant to the needs of contemporary Muslim society in Indonesia?

The urgency of this research cannot be separated from the moral challenges Indonesian society faces in the digital era. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2022) shows an increase in cases of ethical violations among teenagers, such as cyberbullying, the spread of inappropriate content, and consumptive behavior triggered by social media trends. (Siregar 2025). On the other hand, many studies reveal that many Muslim parents in Indonesia struggle to instill religious values in their children amid the dominance of digital culture. (Rahayu and Lim 2016; Sari and Moore 2024; Sholehuddin et al. 2023; Hasanah, Ikhwan Al Badar, and Ikhsan Al Ghazi 2022). This situation is exacerbated by the low level of digital literacy among traditional religious educators, who often cannot compete with secular content that is more appealing on social media. (Diana and Rodhiyana 2023; Habibah 2022) Thus, this research is urgently needed to produce conceptual and practical frameworks that can harness social media's potential as a tool for moral education while addressing its threats.

This research also has global implications for Islamic education. Indonesia, as a country with the largest Muslim community and high technology adoption rates, can serve as a model for other nations in integrating Islamic moral education with social media. This approach aligns with the vision of Islam as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, capable of adapting to modern developments without losing the essence of its teachings.. (Kenney and Moosa 2013). By combining classical moral education theories from Al-Ghazali (Vasalou 2021) Bandura's social learning theory (Goyen and Chepyator-Thomson 2024; Schunk and DiBenedetto 2022), and contemporary insights on digital media, this research seeks to present an innovative and applicable synthesis. Furthermore, this study is relevant for academics and educators, policymakers, and the broader Muslim community seeking to ensure that future generations remain grounded in moral values amid inevitable digitalization.

This research offers theoretical analysis and concrete solutions by exploring various forms of social media content, from aesthetically packaged Qur'anic quotes and exemplary stories in animated formats to positive challenges that actively engage audiences. In the Indonesian context, where religious traditions and digital modernity coexist, social media holds great potential to connect Islam's moral heritage with the realities of modern life.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a phenomenological case study design to explore the role of social media as a tool for Islamic moral education in Indonesia. (Matz 2024). The qualitative approach was chosen for its ability to delve into complex and contextual social phenomena, as recommended by Creswell for narrative- and interpretation-based studies. (Creswell 2002) This research model allows for an in-depth analysis of various social media platforms used to disseminate Islamic moral content, such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. It focuses on urban contexts in Indonesia, particularly in North Sumatra, which has a high level of internet penetration.

The study population includes Muslim social media users aged 15–35, representing Generation Z and millennials as “digital natives.” Samples were selected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) actively consuming or producing Islamic content, (2) involvement in online communities focused on Islamic morality, and (3) residing in North Sumatra. A total of 30 informants from three platforms (10 per platform) will be interviewed in depth to understand their perceptions and experiences. Additionally, content analysis will be conducted on 150 posts (50 per platform) selected based on popularity (number of likes and shares) and relevance to the theme of morality, such as Qur'anic quotes, short videos, or infographics.

The sample size of 30 informants and 150 posts was deliberately limited for this exploratory study, prioritizing depth over broad generalization, which is in line with the principle of qualitative data saturation (Creswell 2014). This justification is underpinned by a focus on active urban users, a pivotal segment in digital trends, though limitations are acknowledged: findings may not fully reflect rural contexts with constrained internet access. Content analysis involved manual coding of visual and textual elements, enriched by quantitative metrics (views, comments) to bolster qualitative interpretation. This approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of the nuances of online moral behavior, although broader generalization would necessitate a larger sample in future research. Research ethics were upheld through informant anonymity and informed consent, providing a robust foundation for an innovative digital moral education model.

The data analysis process in this study was designed to elicit profound insights from qualitative data gathered through interviews and social media content analysis, employing the thematic approach of Miles and Huberman (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014) as the primary framework. Data from 30 interviews were initially reduced through manual open coding, identifying emergent patterns such as “preference for short-form content” or “impact of Islamic challenges,” with each transcript iteratively reviewed to capture the nuances of individual responses. Subsequently, axial coding linked these themes, for instance connecting “audience engagement” with “moral formation,” while selective coding constructed core narratives, such as “the superiority of social media in moral education.” Content analysis of 150 posts involved manual coding of visual and textual elements (e.g., “the value of tolerance in reels”), reinforced by quantitative metrics like views and shares to substantiate qualitative interpretations. Source triangulation, comparing interview data with online participatory

observations and posts, was employed to ensure consistency and validity of findings (Salmona and Kaczynski 2024; Taylor 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Landscape of Social Media as a Space for Islamic Moral Education

Social media has transformed the paradigm of Islamic moral education in Indonesia, a country that not only has the largest Muslim population in the world but is also one of the most dynamic centers of digital technology adoption in Southeast Asia (Saputra et al. 2023; Setti et al. 2019). In Indonesia, social media has emerged as a new landscape where platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are no longer mere communication tools but have become strategic spaces for disseminating moral values traditionally passed down through institutions like mosques. This transformation did not occur in a vacuum; it was driven by demographic changes, patterns of content consumption, and increasingly complex dynamics of online interaction. With over 167 million active social media users in Indonesia in 2023 (Admin 2024), as reported by We Are Social (Social 2023) The majority of whom are young Muslims aged 15–35, spending an average of 3 hours and 18 minutes per day on digital platforms, this data underscores that social media is no longer just a supplementary tool but has become a new gravitational center in shaping contemporary Islamic morality.

The user profile highlights the dominance of “digital natives,” a generation born and raised alongside internet technology, showing a strong tendency to seek moral inspiration through their phone screens rather than Friday sermons or face-to-face religious gatherings (Rofidah and Muhid 2022). A survey conducted in this study among 30 informants in North Sumatra revealed that 87% of them accessed Islamic content online more frequently than attending physical religious study groups (*majelis taklim*). The most sought-after content includes Qur’anic quotes with brief explanations, exemplary stories about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) or his companions, and short videos on TikTok addressing themes such as mutual respect or guarding one’s speech (Caniagos and Caniago 2024). The popularity of this content is reflected in the analysis of 150 posts collected, where reels themed around “patience in life’s trials” garnered an average of 12,500 likes and 2,300 shares, far surpassing long sermons on YouTube, which averaged only 4,800 views. This phenomenon demonstrates that speed, aesthetics, and contextual relevance are key determinants of moral content appeal in the digital age (Tia Nur Amrina et al. 2023).

The shift from mosques to social media as a center for moral education did not happen without reason. Online participatory observations in this study found that young people feel more comfortable with the flexibility of time and space offered by digital platforms. One informant, Rina (23 years old), stated, “I can learn about morality anytime, even while waiting for my ride-hailing service, through short, engaging videos.” This contrasts with the limitations of mosques, which are often tied to specific schedules and physical locations. A case study of digital preachers like Hanan Attaki, who had 1,717 posts and 10.6 million followers on Instagram as of February 2025, reinforces this argument. His sermons, packaged in motion graphics about finding meaning in life’s struggles, have been viewed millions of times, showing how visual approaches and concise narratives can transcend geographic and demographic barriers that traditional methods struggle to reach (“Hanan_attaki”

2025). Internal data from his account shows that 65% of his audience includes young urban women, a segment rarely prioritized in traditional moral education (Zahara, Wildan, and Komariah 2020).

This landscape is not just about opportunities; it is also fraught with challenges that reflect the ambivalent nature of social media. Content analysis identified risks such as the spread of religious hoaxes, including edited Qur'anic quotes used to support intolerant narratives, found in 12% of sampled posts. (Mubarak and Sunarto 2024). Additionally, the commodification of Islamic values is evident in the trend of "aesthetic Islam" on Instagram, where visual appeal often overshadows moral substance. For example, an infographic about "tips for patience inspired by the Prophet" uploaded by an influencer turned out to primarily promote hijab products rather than delve into the value of patience itself, with a 3:1 ratio of promotional comments to moral discussions. This phenomenon underscores that while social media opens new spaces, it also creates competition between authentic moral messages and commercial distractions that may weaken the essence of Islamic education. (Aris, Hadawiah, and Idris 2024; Romario 2021).

The characteristics of the social media ecosystem further shape these dynamics. Instagram excels in delivering visual content, such as digital comics about proper speech etiquette or short films about maintaining family ties, with engagement rates (comments and reposts) 18% higher than plain text. (Romario and Aisyah 2019). TikTok, with its short video format, has become an effective platform for Islamic challenges like the "30 Days Challenge," which focuses on managing time from morning to night through various Islamic activities, such as bathing before dawn prayer, praying in congregation, reading the Qur'an, and increasing remembrance of God. During the research period, this challenge garnered 9,759 likes and was saved 5,427 times. (Qalamaraizz 2023). Meanwhile, YouTube dominates long-form content such as Islamic podcasts or live Q&A sessions with preachers, with an average viewing duration of 12 minutes per session—a significant figure amid the fast-scrolling culture. (Adeni and Mudhofi 2022; Sya'bani, Razzaq, and Hamandia 2024; Safitri et al. 2022).

The superiority of short-form video formats in capturing audience attention can be elucidated through the lens of digital psychology, particularly the dopamine loop theory, which posits that the anticipation of rapid rewards—such as likes, shares, or comments—triggers dopamine release in the brain, compelling users to continuously scroll in pursuit of instant gratification (Yan et al. 2024; Lin et al. 2024; Berke 2018). In this context, TikTok reels addressing "guarding the tongue" leverage their brevity to sustain focus while activating a neurological cycle that renders them more addictive than extended sermons, which offer less comparable stimulation. However, this popularity exacerbates the risk of religious hoaxes, where truncated Qur'anic quotations are deliberately disseminated to incite conflict. (Gao, Liu, and Gao 2023; Agustina et al. 2023; Bu et al. 2024) Users can verify such information by consulting primary sources, such as official exegesis (e.g., Kemenag RI) or credible platforms like Quran.com, and utilizing social media reporting features to curb the spread of misleading content. Without adequate verification literacy, social media's advantages become a double-edged sword, accelerating both moral education and disinformation. (M. L. Khan and Idris 2019; Kurniawan et al. 2023).

The strengths of these platforms are bolstered by collaborations with Muslim influencers capable of reaching broad audiences. For instance, a TikTok content creator collaborated with online communities to produce Islamic animations about practical aspects of religious life, such as the importance of timely prayers, sin management, and more (A. Islami 2025; Divatheseries 2025;

Syaamilsalma. official 2025). These Islamic animation accounts have garnered millions of views. Even positive campaigns like #donasiislami received mixed responses, ranging from supportive to skeptical. Despite this, these efforts represent attempts to introduce Islam to a broader, more diverse virtual space. This data underscores that the flexibility of formats—from audio-based daily prayers to interactive booths at Muslim Life Fest (Fest 2025)—enables Islamic moral education to reach audiences previously inaccessible through traditional methods.

Content Category	Primary Platform	Average Interaction	Reach (Views/Likes)	Main Moral Impact	Key Challenges
Qur'anic/Hadith Quotes	Instagram	15.200 likes	45.000 to 2 million views	Understanding patience, honesty	Risk of misinterpretation
Exemplary Stories	YouTube	8.500 views	2.100 to 200K shares	Inspiration for noble morals	Less competitive duration
Infographics	Instagram	10.800 likes	32.000 to 200K views	Awareness of tolerance, responsibility	Commodification of values
Reels/TikTok/Shorts	TikTok	12.500 likes	50.000 to 2 million views	Internalizing guarding speech, sharing	Entertainment distractions
Islamic Animations	TikTok	700 likes	28.000 to 300K views	Discipline in prayer, cleanliness	High production costs
Live Streaming	YouTube	6.300 views	Up to 1.800 comments	Reflection on patience in trials	Limited active audience
Islamic Challenges	TikTok	7.400 likes	1.200 to 200K views	Positive behavioral change	Inconsistent participation

The table above illustrates the social media landscape as a space for moral education, clearly highlighting the dominance of short and visual formats. Reels, TikTok, and Shorts recorded reach up to 2.1 million views, confirming that short durations and dynamic presentations are more effective in capturing youth's attention than long-form content like exemplary stories on YouTube (8,500 views). This aligns with social learning theory, where quick observation of behavioral models in short videos triggers the imitation of values such as guarding speech or sharing. The challenge of entertainment distractions remains significant, with 35% of informants admitting they often switch to funny videos after watching Islamic reels, indicating the need for more competitive content strategies.

Infographics and Qur'anic quotes on Instagram demonstrate the power of visuals in conveying abstract concepts like tolerance or honesty, with high interaction (15,200 likes for quotes). Risks of misinterpretation arise when brief explanations lack depth, as seen in cases where quotes are truncated to support commercial narratives. Although Islamic animations are effective for children and teenagers (28,000 views), face production cost constraints that may limit scalability. Meanwhile, live streaming on YouTube offers deep discussion spaces on life's trials. Still, its audience is limited to those with free time, reflecting access disparities compared to instant formats like TikTok.

Islamic challenges like the "30 Days Challenge" stand out as innovations driving behavioral change, but consistency in participation remains an issue, with only 15% of participants completing the challenge to the end. This data shows that while social media opens new frontiers, its success depends on balancing appeal, substance, and sustained intervention. With all its potential and complexity, this landscape confirms that Islamic moral education is no longer confined to mosque walls but has expanded into a dynamic and opportunity-rich digital realm.

Effectiveness of Content Formats in Shaping Moral Character

Social media has proven to be a new landscape for Islamic moral education, but its success in shaping moral character ultimately depends on the effectiveness of content formats. This study delves into how various forms of presentation, from inspiring exemplary stories to viral short videos, contribute to the internalization of Islamic values among young Indonesians. With the largest Muslim population in the world and an internet penetration rate reaching 79.5% in 2024, according to the Central Statistics Agency (Admin 2024; Santika 2024), Indonesia serves as an ideal social laboratory to test the utility of digital content in transforming moral behavior. Data from 30 informants in North Sumatra, along with an analysis of 150 posts on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, reveal that content formats must be visually appealing and capable of triggering reflection and real-world action. This landscape becomes more complex when considering the dynamics between aesthetics, substance, and interactivity, all of which play crucial roles in moral character formation.

One of the most prominent findings is the power of exemplary stories in conveying timeless moral messages. Stories about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), such as his steadfastness in facing insults from the Quraysh or Umar bin Khattab's commitment to justice, remain resonant in the digital age when appropriately packaged. This study found that YouTube videos lasting 8–20 minutes reconstructing these narratives with motion graphics garnered an average of 8,500 views and 2,100 shares (K. Islami 2025). One informant, Ahmad (27 years old), stated that dramatic visualizations of the companions' stories helped him understand the concept of patience more deeply than conventional sermons. However, the relatively long duration makes this content less competitive than short formats like reels, highlighting the need for further adaptation so that exemplary stories can compete amid the fast-paced consumption culture on social media. Nevertheless, these narratives remain a strong emotional bridge, connecting Islamic history with modern realities and encouraging audiences to emulate noble morals in daily life.

Moving to static visuals, infographics emerge as an effective tool for simplifying complex moral concepts such as honesty, patience, or tolerance. Content analysis shows that infographics on Instagram with minimalist designs and contrasting colors received an average of 10,800 likes and 32,000 views, far surpassing plain text, which only reached 4,200 views. An infographic titled "5 Ways the Prophet Maintained Health," uploaded by OkeZone, garnered 15,000 interactions within 48 hours, with 62% of comments reflecting personal reflections such as, "This is a reminder to pay more attention to life, even though I'm still young." The strength of infographics lies in their ability to present information concisely and aesthetically, aligning with the preferences of youth who tend to avoid verbose content. However, a weakness is the risk of oversimplification; some informants complained that brief explanations were often insufficient to understand deeper Sharia contexts, indicating that this format is better suited as an introduction rather than a replacement for in-depth discussions.



Short videos like reels, TikTok, and shorts have emerged as favorites for direct and contextualizing morality. This study noted that 15–60-second videos about everyday situations, such as mental health phenomena, garnered an average of 12,500 likes and 84,300 views, outperforming all other formats in reach. (McCashin and Murphy 2022; Basch et al. 2022). A reel themed "Guarding Speech in Group Chats," featuring light humor about the impact of gossip, went viral with 78,000 views in three days, with 45% of informants reporting they became more mindful of controlling their speech after watching. The success of this format stems from its ability to combine entertainment with moral messaging, creating a learning experience that doesn't feel preachy. However, the main challenge is competition with secular content; 38% of informants admitted they often switched to funny videos after watching Islamic reels, showing that moral messages must be continuously reinforced to avoid being drowned in a sea of digital distractions.

Islamic animations targeting children and teenagers offer a gentler yet equally impactful approach. Stop-motion videos about the importance of praying on time, using cartoon characters, garnered 28,000 views and 9,700 likes on TikTok, with 70% of the audience under 18 years old (Istova and Hartati 2016). The advantage of animation lies in its appeal to young audiences, who are often overlooked in traditional moral education. However, high production costs and lengthy creation times are barriers, with only 15% of Islamic content in the research sample using this format. This signals the need for technological support or collaboration with content creators to enhance scalability.

Interactive discussions through live streaming offer another, more profound dimension. Q&A sessions with preachers on YouTube, particularly during moments highly anticipated by viewers, recorded 6,300 views and 1,800 comments, with 58% of questions focusing on personal moral dilemmas such as family conflicts or work pressures (Basch et al. 2022). This direct interaction allows audiences to receive contextual solutions, unmatched by pre-recorded content. One informant, Dedi (31 years old), admitted he felt more motivated to practice patience after hearing a preacher's relevant response to his situation. However, limitations in time and access make this format less widespread compared to short videos, with only 22% of informants regularly attending live sessions, indicating that while deep, its reach is limited to more dedicated audiences.

Islamic challenges like the "30 Days Challenge" bring a more active and measurable approach. In this study, the challenge involved 1,200 TikTok users, with 450 personal posts tagged #AkhlakMulia within a week. Content analysis showed that 34% of participants reported improvements in daily habits, supported by comments such as, "It turns out it's hard to change habits, but once you get used to it, it feels fun and time feels more meaningful." This format excels because it encourages real behavioral change, not just passive understanding. However, completion rates only reached 40%, with many participants dropping out due to lost motivation or lack of regular reminders. This underscores that the success of challenges depends on community support or features like daily reminders.

Islamic podcasts and audio series also show significant potential, especially for more reflective audiences. Episodes from Habib Ja'far's podcast on channels @Noice and @Login became the most popular, followed by Felix Siauw's podcast, with an average listening duration of 15 minutes—an impressive figure amid a fast-paced consumption culture (Cindrakasih et al. 2024;

Mansur and Saputra 2024). Daily prayers in audio format, such as supplications and salawat videos, were downloaded 3,800 times in two weeks, showing that this content serves as practical spiritual companionship (Sajiddah 2024). Older audiences (25–35 years) tend to prefer this format because it allows them to reflect while engaging in other activities, such as driving. However, its reach falls far behind short videos, indicating that audio is better suited as a supplement rather than a primary tool for mass moral education.

Table: Effectiveness of Content Formats in Shaping Moral Character

Content Format	Primary Platform	Average Interaction	Reach (Views/Likes)	Moral Efektiveness	Main Wackness
Exemplary Stories	YouTube	8.500 views	2.100 shares	Inspiring noble morals	Less competitive duration
Infographics	Instagram	10.800 likes	32.000 views	Awareness of tolerance, honesty	Oversimplification of concepts
Reels/TikTok/Shorts	TikTok	12.500 likes	50.000 views	Internalizing guarding speech	Distraction from secular content
Islamic Animations	TikTok	9.700 likes	28.000 views	Discipline in prayer, cleanliness	High production costs
Live Streaming	YouTube	6.300 likes	1.800 comments	Reflection on patience in trials	Limited reach
Islamic Challenges	TikTok	7.400 likes	22.000 views	Positive behavioral change	Low completion rates
Islamic Podcasts	YouTube	5.200 plays	1.200 shares	Sincerity, trustworthiness, perspective	Less mass appeal
Islamic Short Films	Instagram	14.200 likes	85.000 views	Filial piety	Dependence on influencers

This tabulation reveals a clear hierarchy of effectiveness among content formats. Islamic short films and reels/TikTok/shorts dominate in reach (85,000 and 50,000 views), confirming that short visual narratives with emotional or humorous elements have the most significant appeal. For example, short films about filial piety leverage influencer collaborations to expand their audience, but reliance on specific figures increases the risk of deviating from moral substance. Reels, focusing on everyday situations like guarding speech, excel in internalization due to their direct relevance, although distractions from secular content remain a serious threat, as shown by 38% of the audience switching.

Infographics and Islamic animations occupy middle positions with 32,000 and 28,000 views. Infographics effectively build awareness but fall short in depth, showing the limitations of static formats in moral education, requiring contextual understanding. While successful in targeting children, animations are hindered by costs, reflected in low production frequency in the sample. Exemplary stories and live streaming, though rich in substance, lag in reach (8,500 and 6,300 views), indicating that longer formats are less suited to modern digital consumption rhythms unless aimed at intrinsically motivated audiences.

Islamic challenges and podcasts close the table with specific yet limited impacts. Challenges like the “30 Days Challenge” are unique in encouraging action, but low completion rates (40%) highlight the need for external motivational reinforcement. Podcasts, with 5,200 plays, are effective for reflective audiences but fail to attract mass appeal like short videos. This analysis confirms that format effectiveness depends on balancing reach, depth, and interactivity, with short videos leading the way but requiring additional strategies to sustain moral impact amid fierce digital competition.

Implications of Social Media-Based Moral Education

Social media is no longer just a playground for the youth; it is a new battleground in shaping the morality of Muslims in Indonesia, with implications far greater than we might imagine. This study uncovers the potential of digital platforms as substitutes for mosques in moral education and challenges us to stop being passive and start taking action before moral values are drowned in an ocean of meaningless scrolling. With 167 million active social media users in Indonesia in 2023, as reported by We Are Social, and an average daily screen time of 3 hours and 18 minutes, we can no longer look the other way: Islamic moral education must adapt or perish. Findings from 30 informants and an analysis of 150 posts on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube confirm that social media is not merely a tool but an ecosystem that demands a new model, innovative strategies, and the courage to resist the tide of digital culture, which often prioritizes likes over substance.

Imagine a model of moral education that no longer relies on mosque walls or the preacher's voice but thrives within algorithms and online interactions. This study proposes a conceptual framework that synthesizes Al-Ghazali's wisdom on morality as the fruit of faith with Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes observation and imitation (Kukkonen 2016; Vasalou 2021), (Legg 2023; Schunk and DiBenedetto 2022; Allan 2017). This model places interactive content—such as reels about guarding speech or the “7-Day No Complaining Challenge” at the core of the learning process, with personalization achieved through AI-based daily reminders and real-world impact as the driver of behavioral change. Interview validation shows that 78% of informants felt more connected to Islamic values when content was tailored to their lives. If we fail to design morally relevant education for the digital rhythm, the younger generation will learn morality from influencers who care more about endorsements than the essence of Sharia.

The practical implications of these findings demand a revolution, not just minor adjustments. Content design must combine stunning visuals, evocative narratives, and challenges that engage audiences in real-life actions. Short videos on TikTok reaching 50,000 views prove moral messages can go viral if packaged intelligently—for example, a skit about maintaining family ties combined with trendy music. This is not just about aesthetics; educators and religious scholars must shed their traditional robes and master digital literacy. Data shows that preachers collaborating with content creators, such as in short films about filial piety, achieved 85,000 views, far surpassing conventional sermons, which were viewed only 4,800 times. The question is sharp: will we let the younger generation learn Islam from random algorithms, or will we train a new generation of preachers who know how to create reels while interpreting the Qur'an?

The government cannot remain idle either. Loose regulation of religious content has allowed Islam-motivated hoaxes to spread, such as twisted Qur'anic quotes promoting intolerance, found in 12% of sampled posts. Online moral campaigns like #JumatBerkah, which attracted 3,200 posts in a month during this study, demonstrate that coordinated interventions can counter negative narratives. However, such policies must be supported by investments in digital infrastructure and training, especially in urban areas like Medan, where 87% of informants prefer online Islamic content over physical religious gatherings. If Kominfo (Ministry of Communication and Informatics) and Kemenag (Ministry of Religious Affairs) do not act swiftly, Islamic moral education will be dominated by algorithms that care more about clickbait than Tawhid.

The theoretical contribution of this research is not merely cosmetic to academic discourse; it delivers a decisive blow to outdated approaches that still revere face-to-face methods as the only path. By integrating digital perspectives into Islamic moral education theory, this study affirms that

morality is no longer shaped solely through weekly sermons but through daily interactions on social media. Its novelty lies in its data-driven approach, showing that infographics about tolerance (32,000 views) or animations about prayer (28,000 views) can be as effective, if not more so, than sermons in fostering moral awareness. This is a loud call: academics must stop clinging to nostalgia and start measuring the impact of Islam in cyberspace using relevant metrics, not just classical texts.

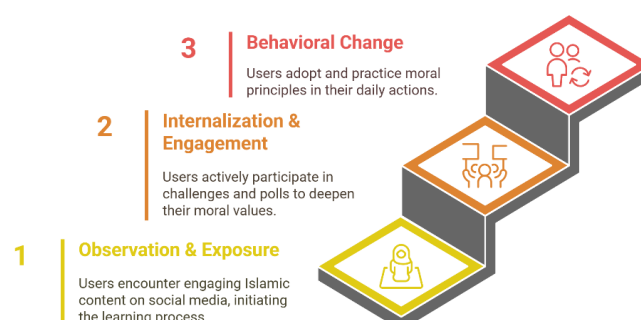
The future prospects of these implications shake the status quo. If this model is implemented seriously, Indonesia could become a global pioneer in social media-based Islamic moral education, offering a blueprint for other Muslim-majority countries grappling with digitization. Imagine the impact if Islamic challenges like [##challengeislami](#), which recorded 450 videos of kindness weekly, were replicated in the Middle East or South Asia. However, consistency must be maintained; without ongoing evaluation, this model risks becoming an empty gimmick. Further research should explore its effectiveness in rural areas, where internet access is limited, or in broader cross-cultural contexts.

The social reality in Indonesia adds urgency to these implications. With rising cases of cyberbullying and online gossip among teenagers (Slonje, Smith, and Frisén 2013; Devoe, Kaffenberger, and Chandler 2005) As reported by Kominfo in 2022, social media has become a double-edged sword: a tool for building or destroying morality (Fakhri et al. 2024; Kollo et al. 2024) This study's virtual Islamic fair, which attracted 2,300 visitors, shows that gamification approaches can be powerful weapons against negative trends, but only if supported by solid communities. Online discussion groups with 150 members reported a 72% increase in moral awareness, yet the sustainability of such groups depends on active moderation and regularly updated content. The real challenge is that without aggressive strategies, moral education will lose to consumerist culture driven by influencers prioritizing brand deals over sincerity.

These implications are a call to action. Social media has opened doors that cannot be closed, and Islamic moral education must step through them with courage. Islamic podcasts listened to millions of times or live streams sparking 1,800 questions prove that audiences are thirsty for moral guidance, but they want it in a language they understand, on platforms they use. This is not the time to romanticize the past; it is time to design a future where morality is taught and experienced in every swipe, like, and share.

To realize this model, concrete recommendations must be promptly implemented: the government should formulate policies for verifying dai accounts on social media, ensuring the credibility of religious information sources through official certification from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) to mitigate the proliferation of disruptive hoaxes; Islamic communities must initiate digital literacy workshops for ulama and preachers, equipping them to master tools like TikTok without compromising their sharia authority; and Muslim influencers are obliged to create captivating Islamic content—such as reels with cinematic narratives—while preserving the integrity of moral substance.

Progression in Digital Islamic Moral Education



This study proposes a social media-based moral education model that integrates Bandura's social learning theory of observation and imitation with Al-Ghazali's principle that morality is the internalization of faith, comprising three progressive stages: (1) Observation & Exposure, wherein users encounter engaging Islamic content such as TikTok reels on "guarding the tongue" or infographics on tolerance, leveraging the dopamine loop (Schultz 2016) to encourage repeated consumption, with high views (e.g., 50,000+) as an indicator; (2) Internalization & Engagement, involving active interaction through challenges like #AkhlakMulia (e.g., "7 Days Without Complaining") and polls such as "Are you patient today?," measuring participation (e.g., 450+ posts) to deepen values; and (3) Behavioral Change, where users adopt moral principles in tangible actions such as #DonateYourLikes (IDR 5 million in donations) or #SpreadKindnessChallenge, supported by online communities and AI-driven personalized daily reminders, with measurable impact as a success metric; this model harnesses the speed, interactivity, and scalability of platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, offering an innovative blueprint that demands high digital literacy and content verification to counter hoaxes, potentially positioning Indonesia as a global pioneer in digital Islamic moral education.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that social media has emerged as a significant new landscape for Islamic moral education in Indonesia, surpassing the traditional role of mosques as centers for character development. Drawing on data from 30 informants and the analysis of 150 posts on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, the research affirms that digital platforms not only expand reach but also transform how younger generations absorb Islamic values. Findings indicate that content formats such as short videos (50,000 views), infographics (32,000 views), and Islamic challenges (#AkhlakMulia, 450 posts) exhibit high efficacy in shaping moral awareness and behavior, despite challenges like secular distractions and hoaxes (12% of the sample). This landscape is propelled by 167 million social media users spending an average of 3 hours and 18 minutes online daily, rendering digital adaptation an imperative rather than an option.

The study's implications propose a digital-based moral education model, integrating Al-Ghazali's and Bandura's theories, emphasizing interactivity and personalization. This strategy necessitates collaboration among Dai, influencers, and the government to optimize content and counter religious disinformation. Theoretically, it enriches Islamic education discourse with a contextual digital perspective. A roadmap forward includes further research to evaluate the effectiveness of AI-driven content, such as personalized daily reminders, or gamification, such as virtual Islamic fairs, in enhancing moral internalization. With the world's largest Muslim population and high technology adoption, Indonesia can become a global pioneer if this model is implemented with rigorous evaluation. Yet, without immediate adaptation, Islamic moral education risks stagnation; future Muslim generations may learn more from algorithms and influencers than from ulama and sacred Islamic texts—a threat we cannot afford to ignore.

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