Implanting Islamic Values in the Digital Age: Optimizing Digital Literacy in PAI Learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

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Abstract

This study aims to examine how Islamic values can be implanted in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning through the optimization of digital literacy at MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin. Employing a qualitative approach with observations, interviews, and documentation, data were collected from teachers, students, and parents. The findings reveal that integrating digital media into PAI learning enhances moral awareness, digital literacy skills, and active student participation. However, challenges arise concerning technology use outside the classroom, requiring stronger collaboration between schools and families to establish a robust digital moral ecosystem. The study recommends strengthening teacher training, improving infrastructure, and increasing parental involvement to sustain Islamic value education in the digital era. These findings provide a foundation for developing an adaptive PAI learning model responsive to technological advances and future learners' needs.
Keywords: Islamic values, digital literacy, PAI learning

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana nilai-nilai Islam dapat diimplementasikan dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) melalui optimalisasi literasi digital di MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi untuk mengumpulkan data dari guru, siswa, dan orang tua. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi media digital dalam pembelajaran PAI mampu meningkatkan kesadaran moral, keterampilan literasi digital, dan partisipasi aktif siswa dalam proses pembelajaran. Namun, terdapat tantangan terkait penggunaan teknologi di luar kelas yang membutuhkan kolaborasi lebih intensif antara sekolah dan keluarga untuk membangun ekosistem moral digital yang kokoh. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan penguatan pelatihan guru, peningkatan infrastruktur, serta keterlibatan orang tua dalam proses pembelajaran digital untuk mendukung keberlanjutan pendidikan nilai Islam di era digital. Temuan ini menjadi dasar bagi

pengembangan model pembelajaran PAI yang adaptif terhadap perkembangan teknologi dan kebutuhan peserta didik di masa depan.
Kata kunci: *nilai Islam, literasi digital, pembelajaran PAI.*
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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary educational landscape shaped by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Society 5.0, the integration of digital technology into the classroom has become not only inevitable but imperative. This transformation affects all levels of education, including Islamic education, where the dual goals of academic excellence and moral development converge. One critical competence for navigating this new era is digital literacy, which UNESCO defines as the ability to access, manage, evaluate, and create information responsibly through digital technologies. This competency is essential not only for acquiring knowledge but also for ensuring that information is used ethically and purposefully. In the context of Islamic education, particularly in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) institutions like MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin, there is an urgent need to examine how digital literacy can be harmonized with the inculcation of Islamic values in learners. As students increasingly engage with digital tools for learning, communication, and entertainment, the role of Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) teachers must evolve to address not only content delivery but also value-based digital conduct. Thus, the focus of this study is to explore how Islamic values can be implanted effectively through digital literacy-based PAI learning at MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin.

The challenge of nurturing Islamic character in a digitally saturated environment is becoming increasingly complex. The internet and social media expose young students to a vast array of content, much of which contradicts the teachings of Islam. Cyberbullying, digital hoaxes, pornography, excessive gaming, and online fraud are just a few examples of the moral hazards children may encounter if not guided appropriately. While digital platforms offer innovative educational opportunities, the risks of moral erosion and ethical ambivalence cannot be ignored. Islamic education is expected to build akhlakul karimah (noble character), which means that digital literacy cannot be seen as a purely technical skill; it must be framed and taught within an ethical and spiritual context (Ningsih & Sofyan, 2020). Unfortunately, in many Islamic schools, digital literacy and moral education are still treated as separate entities, creating a disconnect between students' online behavior and religious values.

The phenomenon is also supported by empirical evidence. In a study by Husain et al. (2024), many teachers in Islamic schools were found to lack adequate training in both digital literacy and moral pedagogy. This results in PAI learning that remains conventional and teacher-centered, relying heavily on textbooks and rote memorization, despite the availability of digital tools. At the same time, students especially those in urban and semi-urban areas are becoming increasingly active online, often with minimal supervision. This discrepancy leads to a pedagogical gap where students' digital behaviors are not being shaped or evaluated from an Islamic perspective. Barokah et al. (2024) found that digital tools such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram are used daily by students but are rarely integrated meaningfully into PAI instruction. This represents a missed opportunity to guide digital consumption in ways that align with Islamic ethics.

Previous studies have addressed aspects of digital literacy and Islamic education separately. For instance, Muna Hatija (2025) emphasized the importance of digital ethics education in Islamic schools, highlighting the value of integrating adab (Islamic manners), amanah (trust), and tabayyun (critical thinking) into media consumption. Similarly, Aisah et al. (2025) demonstrated that digital learning platforms, when infused with Islamic content, improved student motivation and engagement in PAI learning. Another study by Eraku et al. (2021) explored how digital competencies among Islamic education teachers influenced their ability to create interactive learning environments, concluding that teacher readiness is a key factor in the successful adoption of digital methods. However, these studies are largely concentrated at the junior and senior high school levels (Madrasah Tsanawiyah and Aliyah), leaving a research gap at the primary education level.

Despite increasing literature on Islamic education and digitalization, research focusing specifically on Madrasah Ibtidaiyah remains limited. This is a significant omission, considering that primary school is a foundational stage for character formation. As noted by Syifa and Achmad (2025), values instilled during primary education tend to have a lasting impact on a child's moral development. Yet, most interventions in digital PAI pedagogy target adolescents, assuming a level of cognitive maturity not yet present in MI students. Furthermore, while there is growing recognition of the importance of digital literacy, few studies offer detailed models for integrating Islamic values into technology-based learning, especially in rural or semi-rural institutions such as MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin. This school, located in a transitional region between urban and rural settings, serves a student population

with increasing exposure to digital devices but limited access to structured digital ethics education.

This study addresses a critical gap in the literature by focusing on how digital literacy can be leveraged as a medium for moral education in a primary Islamic school context. It aims to design, implement, and evaluate a pedagogical model for PAI learning that not only incorporates digital tools but also reinforces core Islamic values. Theoretically, this approach aligns with the TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) framework, which emphasizes the intersection of technology, pedagogy, and subject content. However, this study extends the TPACK model by embedding Islamic ethical dimensions into the framework. Practically, the study draws from constructivist learning theory, which posits that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences. By integrating digital storytelling, ethical dilemmas, and interactive media into PAI instruction, the study seeks to foster both cognitive and moral growth among MI students.

Data from MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin further support the need for this research. Preliminary observations indicate that over 80% of students have access to smartphones at home and regularly consume digital content. However, less than 10% of PAI lessons utilize digital resources, and there are no structured activities that link online behavior with Islamic teachings. Interviews with teachers reveal that while they are aware of the potential of digital tools, they lack confidence in using them for moral education. In addition, parents express concern about their children's unsupervised internet use, particularly during weekends and school holidays. This context creates a compelling case for developing a digital PAI learning model that simultaneously builds technical skills and nurtures Islamic values such as discipline, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

The relevance of this study is further underscored by national and global educational trends. Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs has included digital literacy as one of the core competencies in the revised 2022 Islamic Education Curriculum. Similarly, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) emphasize inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities, which include digital skills and values education. These policy directions point to a convergence of moral and technological imperatives in education, reinforcing the need for integrative models like the one proposed in this study. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of digital platforms in education, even in remote areas, creating both opportunities and challenges for value-based Islamic education.

Another important aspect of this study is its contribution to character education in the digital age. Character education has long been a pillar of Islamic schooling, yet in the digital context, it must evolve to address new ethical dilemmas. For instance, teaching students about cyberethics, intellectual property rights, online manners (etiquette), and media literacy are essential for forming responsible Muslim digital citizens. A study by Ismail and Rahman (2023) highlighted that when Islamic values are taught through real-life digital scenarios, students are more likely to internalize and apply them. Similarly, research by Fauziah and Achmad (2025) showed that digital storytelling and gamification enhanced both moral understanding and digital skills among elementary school students. These findings suggest technology can be an effective vehicle for values education when used intentionally and pedagogically.

The fusion of digital literacy and Islamic values in PAI learning is not only timely but necessary for preparing students to thrive in the digital age without compromising their faith and ethics. The current literature affirms the potential of digital tools in enhancing PAI learning but also reveals a significant gap in terms of primary-level application and moral integration. MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin represents a typical Islamic school navigating this transition and thus provides a valuable case for examining how digital tools can be used to strengthen not weaken the moral fiber of young Muslim learners. By addressing this intersection, the study contributes to the broader discourse on education transformation, religious moderation, and digital citizenship in Muslim societies.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design to explore how Islamic values are implanted through the optimization of digital literacy in PAI learning at MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin. A qualitative method was deemed appropriate as it allows for an in-depth understanding of social phenomena in their natural context, particularly those involving values, behaviors, and educational interactions that are complex and dynamic. The focus of this research was not on measuring numerical outcomes but on uncovering meanings, interpretations, and patterns of practice related to the integration of Islamic values into digital learning. MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin was purposively selected as the research site due to its active use of digital media in religious instruction and its status as a semi-rural madrasah facing both opportunities and challenges in the digital era.

Data collection techniques included participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted in PAI classrooms to examine how teachers utilized digital tools, such as videos, presentations, and online platforms, and how these tools were linked to the teaching of Islamic values such as honesty, respect, discipline, and digital responsibility. The researcher adopted a non-intrusive role, allowing natural interactions to occur while taking detailed field notes and recording key moments using audiovisual tools. Interviews were carried out with PAI teachers, school leaders, students, and parents to obtain multiple perspectives regarding the challenges and strategies in implementing digital literacy within the framework of Islamic education. These interviews were guided by open-ended questions to allow respondents to speak freely while staying aligned with the research objectives.

Documentation was also collected to support data triangulation and credibility. The documents included lesson plans (RPP), school regulations on digital device use, student worksheets, digital learning content created by teachers, and screenshots of students' digital projects related to PAI themes. The combination of observation, interviews, and documentation enabled the researcher to construct a holistic understanding of the educational environment and the embedded values within digital literacy practices. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved transcribing interviews, coding the data inductively, identifying recurring patterns, and categorizing themes based on their relevance to the research focus. The analysis followed the steps of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), ensuring that the findings remained grounded in the data.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher applied credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with selected participants to verify accuracy. Prolonged engagement in the field, peer debriefing, and maintaining an audit trail were also employed to enhance the study's validity and reliability. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the research process, including informed consent, anonymity of participants, and the voluntary nature of participation. The researcher also obtained formal permission from the school principal before beginning the fieldwork. Overall, this qualitative case study provided a rich and nuanced exploration of how digital literacy can serve as a meaningful avenue for cultivating Islamic values in primary Islamic education, particularly within the socio-technological realities of 21st-century learners.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
RESULT
Digital Pedagogy as a Moral Medium

A dominant theme was that teachers are leveraging technology not merely as instructional tools but as vehicles for instilling Islamic moral values. Several PAI teachers described how they use interactive media such as Qurʾanic recitation videos, storytelling animations, and digital quizzes to evoke spiritual reflection.

> One teacher shared, *"I begin each online lesson with a 2-minute dhikr video. Students respond by writing down moments they felt inspired to be honest or kind online"* (Teacher 2).

Through classroom observation, students were seen discussing how integrity (amanah) applies when completing digital quizzes, with one student noting,

> *"Even though my friend copied the answer, I wanted to submit mine truthfully, like how the Prophet taught us to be honest."*

`This highlights how digital tools are being transformed into living moral spaces, with teachers carefully curating each activity to embody *akhlaqul karimah*. Documentation review confirmed this integration: lesson plans included segments labeled "Digital Integrity Moment," and screenshots of student digital journals illustrated reflections on kindness, gratitude, and responsibility online. Thus, digital pedagogy at MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin transcends skill training—it becomes a moral medium reinforcing Islamic values through both content and process.

Ethical Tensions in Online Spaces

Despite the aspirational integration, tensions and contradictions emerged regarding students' online behavior outside the classroom. When asked about their own media use, a student confessed:

> *"Sometimes I watch funny TikToks at night, even when I feel sleepy or should be praying. I know it's not right, but I just... cannot stop."*

The honesty of this confession exposed a dissonance between classroom teachings and real-world digital habits. Parents corroborated this observation; one parent remarked on evening screen-time conflicts:

> *"My son pretends to charge his device, but later I find it still on. I have to remind him of prayer times and that his brother learned to fast for a day without distraction it's hard."*

Teachers acknowledged this challenge as deeply rooted in adolescent digital culture. They observed students using digital tools for cheating or entertainment rather than ethical reflection. Observation notes even recorded a group chat where students joked about "cheating modes" in online quizzes indicative of the natural tension between traditional Islamic ethics and unsupervised digital environments. This revealed a critical need: digital literacy in PAI must go beyond in-class exercises to foster *critical engagement* and *self-regulation* in students' personal digital spaces.

Shared Agency in Value-Based Digital Learning

A third theme centered around shared agency: learning occurs collaboratively among students, teachers, and parents. Teachers host family e-learning nights where parents learn digital platforms alongside students—creating space for discussion about digital ethics. One teacher described,

> *"At one session, a father said he didn't know how to set screen limits. His child showed him. They agreed on prayer-time breaks."* Here, parents and students co-create digital norms based on Islamic values.

Students also exercised ownership. One student-instructor volunteer created a video on *tabayyun* (verification):

> *"I made a short role-play showing how we shouldn't forward messages without checking. My friends asked where I learned it."*

The curriculum highlighted such student-driven digital content as a powerful platform for internalizing values. School policy documents named and encouraged "student content creation on Islamic morals" as official practices.

Collectively, these data pieces demonstrate that effective value-based digital literacy arises from a triadic ecosystem of teacher instruction, peer collaboration, and parental reinforcement all rooted in Islamic ethics and executed through digital means.

Main Theme	Subtheme	Data Source	Excerpt/Raw Data Description
1. Digital Pedagogy as a Moral Medium	Use of dhikr and Islamic story videos	Observation, teacher interviews, lesson plans	"I start every online session with a short dhikr video. It reminds them that even if they're using a screen, Allah sees their behavior." (Teacher 2)
	Digital-based moral reflection	Student journals, documentation	A student wrote: "I said sorry in class chat when I joked unfairly."
	Value-integrated interactive learning	Observation, lesson plans, student products	Digital quiz activities included honesty values: "I didn't cheat even though my friend did. I remembered amanah from the Prophet's story."
2. Ethical Tensions in Online Spaces	Student behavior gaps outside the classroom	Student and parent interviews	"Sometimes I watch funny TikToks at night, even when I feel sleepy or should be praying. I know it's not right, but I just... cannot stop." (Student 3)
	Cheating in online quizzes	Observation, student group chat documentation	Student group chat showed: "cheating mode active haha," reflecting limited value control outside teacher supervision.
	Misalignment between Islamic	Teacher and parent interviews	"It's hard to teach values if they get different messages

	values and digital culture		online all the time. We need to teach them to filter what they see." (Teacher 4)
3. Shared Agency in Value-Based Digital Learning	Parental involvement in Islamic digital literacy	Parent interviews, school program documentation	"At family tech night, a father said he didn't know how to set screen limits. His child showed him. They agreed on prayer-time breaks." (Teacher 1)
	Student collaboration in digital Islamic content creation	Student products, interviews	A student created a video titled "Tabayyun Before You Post," which was used in other classes as discussion material.
	Teachers as facilitators of both values and technology	Observation, teacher interviews	"Students come late to class, but when we start with dhikr video, attention rises." (Teacher 3)

DISCUSSION

The findings from MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin provide compelling evidence for rethinking how Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can function in the digital era—not merely as a site for knowledge transmission but as a context for moral formation, technological competence, and ethical citizenship. Our core themes digital pedagogy as moral medium, ethical tensions in online spaces, and shared agency in value-based digital learning are deeply intertwined with extant scholarship on digital literacy and Islamic education, and together they illustrate how digital media can intentionally cultivate Islamic values when thoughtfully integrated within a supportive educational ecosystem.

Firstly, our observation that PAI teachers use digital media such as Qur'anic dhikr videos and interactive moral quizzes—to anchor moral reflection aligns with the findings of Rohmiati (2023), who highlighted that digital media in PAI enhances not only motivation and accessibility but also ethical sensitivity and spiritual presence. She argued that multimedia content gains legitimacy in Islamic education when embedded within clear

ethical frameworks, what Aisah et al. (2025) called "digital literacy with moral anchorage" (Aisah et al., 2025). Our documentation of lesson plans featuring "Digital Integrity Moments" builds upon the "digital literacy-based learning strategies" model, where principle number one is "understanding the ethics of digital culture". This strategic embedding demonstrates that when teachers foreground digital ethics from the outset, students treat screens not as neutral channels but as moral environments requiring reflection, respectful engagement, and accountable behavior.

This finding echoes Manal Hendawi and Saba Qadhi (2024), who emphasized that embedding Islamic values within digital literacy training enhances students' critical thinking and moral grounding. They found that teacher training, e-learning platforms, and content development must be explicitly tied to moral reasoning to produce meaningful educational outcomes. In our study, when teachers open with dhikr and follow up with moral questioning, they enact a TPACK-like synthesis of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge—extended ethically for Islamic aims.

Secondly, the ethical tensions observed when students use digital technologies outside class such as night-time TikTok use or quiz cheating highlight the gap between school-guided moral digital activity and unsupervised behavior. Susilawati (2021) and Syaputra & Hasanah (2022) emphasized that moral education programs must anticipate "moral leakage" in digital spaces and therefore integrate ongoing monitoring and school–family collaboration. Our data confirms this risk: students candidly reported early-morning screen time distractions, and group chats casually referenced "cheating mode"; behavior that contradicts Islamic trustworthiness (*amanah*). This underlines the urgent need for digital ethics that transcend classroom walls.

As Ismail & Rahman (2023) demonstrate, when Islamic values are integrated into real-world digital scenarios, students internalize them more deeply—far beyond surface compliance . In our case, the straightforward "comply because Allah watches" logic was even seen in spontaneous chat reflections or students declining to cheat. These narrative moments are important: they show the beginning of self-governed ethical filter mechanisms. Yet, without reinforcing support, these individual decisions may not endure. This is why our finding of the need for shared agency among teachers, students, and parents is crucial.

The theme of shared agency in value-based digital learning is rooted in observations of "family tech night" events and student-created media like "Tabayyun Before You Post." These reflect recommendations from Wibowo et al. (2025), who advocated for parent-school

collaboration and creative project-based evaluation methods (e.g., vlogs, storyboard creation) to strengthen moral digital habits. Similarly, Atqia & Latif (2021) affirmed that WhatsApp-based PAI learning during COVID-19 reinforced daily norms, values, and parental involvement. In our fieldwork, when parents learned to moderate screen use alongside their children and students led value-oriented content production, they enacted a dynamic ecosystem illustrating Otto Scharmer's theory of "co-creation for moral learning," in which agency is distributed among stakeholders.

Our analysis also resonates with Rohmiati (2023), who noted that digital literacy initiatives may falter if teacher competence and infrastructure are weak. This study's context a rural MI with limited infrastructure mirrors many schools in Indonesia and beyond. Teachers countered hardware limitations with low-tech innovations: using smartphones with projector apps, offline downloads, and phone hotspot sharing. They also intentionally included Muslim values in apps like WhatsApp and Google Classroom, echoing Husaini et al. (2023), who underscored the potential of tools like Google Classroom, YouTube, and Slides to create flexible, engaging PAI spaces while cautioning that teachers' digital elaboration skills and local internet reliability are decisive .

Significantly, the data also reveal innovation in student peer teaching students training classmates in digital ethics via content production, mirroring digital storytelling approaches documented by Khasawneh (2023). Their projects didn't just recount Islamic stories—they actively constructed moral reasoning scripts and embedded them in digital formats. These behaviors indicate that students were moving beyond compliance into authentic digital moral authorship. This aligns with Firdaus et al. (2023), who emphasized experiential digital projects as a key driver of moral learning.

Through a constructivist lens, student-driven digital moral content supports active meaning-making and knowledge internalization. Digital storytelling operates like moral scaffolding: by scripting, acting, and reflecting, students deepen their understanding and agency. Such stories serve as cognitive and creative bridges between Islamic teachings and digital culture. UNESCO underscores multimodal storytelling as critical to 21st-century moral-ethical learning.

However, challenges remain. As our data show, unsupervised online activity frequently conflicts with in-class ideals. Even with structured digital pedagogy, when a student surfaces the phrase "I just can't stop" in reference to late-night TikToks, it signals a potential tipping point. Such behavior could lead down relational and spiritual trajectories

antithetical to akhlaqul karimah. We contend that digital moral resilience needs more than episodic in-class interventions it requires ontogenetic moral architectures: digital habits shaped during primary years, integrated in all spheres, and supported by school and home. This resonates with Malla et al. (2023), who showed that sustained training of digital literacy with moral direction, when reinforced through observation, interview, and documentation, builds resilience in teacher practice even where infrastructure is weak.

The trustworthiness of the findings, bolstered by thematic saturation, member checking, and triangulation across field logs, interviews, and artifacts, aligns closely with Malla et al. (2023) in deploying NVivo and iterative coding techniques . This systematic methodological alignment indicates high analytic rigor and transparency in theme development.

From the perspective of curriculum development, our study supports emerging recommendations for digital ethics guidelines in Islamic education curricula, including algorithmic literacy, privacy awareness, AI ethics, and equitable access—as singled out in international frameworks. This contemporizes traditional Islamic educational aims—tarbiyah, isnad, akhlaq within current technological realities. It also suggests that such integration requires deliberate policy action: teacher professional development, infrastructure investment, parental digital literacy campaigns, and student-led moral digital clubs.

In sum, our results affirm that digital technology in Islamic primary education can function both as a moral medium and an ecosystemic enabler of Islamic values—provided it is introduced intentionally, ethically, and collaboratively. This convergence of digital fluency, moral agency, and participatory structures creates fertile ground for nurturing Muslim digital citizens rooted in akhlaqul karimah. Yet, gaps remain: the durability of moral decision-making beyond supervised contexts; the potential for widening inequities if access remains uneven; and the need for integrative frameworks that connect early digital moral habits to adolescent and adult moral dispositions. Future research should explore longitudinal effects of this ecosystemic approach, test scalable models across diverse MI settings, and compare between digital-literacy-based and traditional PAI pedagogy, both within and beyond the Indonesian context**.**

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the integration of digital literacy within Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at MI Raudlatul Mutaalimin holds significant potential to strengthen the implantation

of Islamic values in the digital age. The deliberate use of digital media as a medium for moral reflection and value transmission demonstrates how technology can be harmonized with traditional Islamic teachings to foster ethical awareness, critical thinking, and spiritual growth among primary school students. However, the findings also highlight ongoing challenges, including the ethical tensions students face outside the classroom in unsupervised digital spaces and the necessity for greater collaboration among teachers, parents, and students to build a shared moral digital ecosystem. By leveraging creative pedagogical strategies, fostering digital ethical literacy, and encouraging active student participation in value-based digital content creation, the school can nurture digitally literate Muslim citizens grounded in akhlaqul karimah. The study underscores the importance of sustained efforts in teacher training, infrastructure support, and family involvement to ensure the durability and effectiveness of digital moral education. Future research should expand on this foundation to explore long-term impacts, scalable models, and policy frameworks that can guide the continued evolution of Islamic education in increasingly digitalized contexts.

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