



Islamic Religious Education as an Effort to Strengthen Adolescent Morality in Facing the Challenges of Social Media: A Literature Review

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Abstract

The rapid development of social media has significantly influenced adolescents' lives, including their character and moral development. While social media provides opportunities to broaden knowledge and social connections, excessive use may contribute to declining communication ethics, reduced discipline in worship and learning, deviant behavior, and consumerist lifestyles. This study aims to examine the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in strengthening adolescent morality amid the challenges of social media. Using a qualitative approach and literature review method, this study analyzes relevant scholarly sources. The findings indicate that IRE plays an important role in strengthening adolescents' moral values through Islamic digital literacy, innovative learning methods, collaboration between families and schools, and creative use of technology, including Islamic applications, gamification, and virtual mentoring. These strategies can enhance the adaptability of IRE to technological developments while supporting the formation of adolescents with strong moral character.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education, social media, adolescent morality, moral development.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information technology has significantly influenced patterns of behavior and social life, particularly among younger generations. One concrete manifestation of this development is social media, which has become one of the most dominant technological products today. Most adolescents use social media as a primary means of interaction, communication, and entertainment in their daily lives. Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) show that internet penetration in Indonesia has reached more than 79 percent of the total population, with a large proportion of users belonging to the adolescent age group. In addition, the Digital Report 2025 records that Indonesians spend an average of more than three hours per day using social media (Olla, 2024). This condition demonstrates that social

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media holds a strategic and significant position in influencing the character and behavior of adolescents in the digital era.

This phenomenon has generated both positive and negative impacts. On the one hand, social media provides young people with broad opportunities to access information, expand knowledge, and build social networks beyond geographical boundaries. On the other hand, social media also presents serious challenges to moral development. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), in its annual report, reported an increase in cases of cyberbullying, exposure to pornographic content, and various forms of deviant behavior involving adolescents. Previous studies have also indicated changes in moral values, such as declining politeness in communication, weakening discipline, and reduced empathy as a result of uncontrolled digital interactions. These conditions demonstrate that social media functions not merely as a communication platform but also as an external factor that strongly influences the character formation of the younger generation.

Various previous studies have examined the relationship between social media and adolescent behavior; however, most have addressed the issue only partially. Zakaria (2025) highlights the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in developing adolescents' digital ethics but does not provide applicable strategies for moral development. Meanwhile, Pebriani et al. (2025) examine the internalization of ethical values in social media use through IRE learning but do not comprehensively address the influence of social media on adolescent morality. Desiska and Daheri (2024) focus more specifically on the use of social media to promote religious moderation through IRE. Mabruri et al. (2024), meanwhile, emphasize digital literacy and social media ethics, whereas Zamdanu et al. (2026) discuss social media and adolescent character formation from an Islamic education perspective. Therefore, there remains a research gap concerning the development of more comprehensive and applicable IRE strategies for strengthening adolescent morality amid the influence of social media.

Based on the aforementioned background, this article offers a new perspective through a more comprehensive literature review. The novelty of this study lies in its effort to integrate the phenomenon of social media use among adolescents with the dynamics of moral change, while positioning Islamic Religious Education as a solution-oriented value filter. By combining empirical data with the synthesis of various relevant studies, this review not only describes the existing problems but also formulates strategies covering curricular, pedagogical, and collaborative aspects for implementation in religious education practices. This approach is expected to enrich the body of knowledge while providing practical recommendations for teachers, schools, and policymakers in addressing the challenges associated with social media use in the digital era.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method. This method was selected because the study focuses on reviewing and analyzing various literature sources rather than collecting data directly from the field. The data sources

include scientific books, national and international journal articles, and academic documents relevant to the influence of social media on adolescent morality and the role of Islamic Religious Education.

The research stages consist of problem identification, searching for credible and up-to-date literature sources, selecting relevant sources, and classifying data based on the research themes. Data analysis was conducted through in-depth reading, recording essential information, and comparing various perspectives from scholars to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the issues under investigation (Abubakar, 2021). Through this approach, the researcher formulates descriptive and systematic conclusions that are consistent with the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research findings

Social Media Use among Adolescents and Its Impact on Moral Development

The use of social media among adolescents has become an inseparable part of daily life, serving as a means of communication, entertainment, and self-identity formation. The high intensity of social media use makes adolescents increasingly vulnerable to various influences, both positive and negative, particularly those related to moral development. As stated by Lavinda (2023), the digital environment has become a primary space for adolescents to interact and obtain information, making their values and behaviors relatively susceptible to being influenced by the various content they consume.

In addition, family and social environments are important factors that can either strengthen or weaken adolescents' moral resilience in facing the development of the digital world. This condition demonstrates that social media functions not merely as a means of communication but also as a space with the potential to influence or even alter values and behaviors when not accompanied by appropriate guidance. Therefore, effective guidance is needed, particularly through Islamic Religious Education, as a value filter to help adolescents maintain good moral character amid the rapid flow of information disseminated through social media.

The Impact of Social Media on Changes in Adolescent Morality

The development of social media in the digital era has had a considerable impact on adolescents' lives, particularly in terms of moral development. Social media, which was initially developed as a means of communication and information dissemination, is now often misused, resulting in changes in behavior. Lubis (2020) found that the use of social media among students has negative effects on morality, including declining politeness, weakening discipline, and the emergence of various habits that are inconsistent with moral values and religious teachings. These findings reinforce the view that social media plays a significant role in influencing changes in adolescent morality.

Several forms of changes in adolescent morality resulting from the influence of social media can be described as follows:

1. Decline in Politeness and Communication Ethics

Adolescents are increasingly accustomed to using impolite language, posting negative comments, and even engaging in *cyberbullying*. Social media, which initially functioned primarily as a means of entertainment, has now developed into an essential part of daily life; however, not all users are able to use it wisely. The influence of globalization, which emphasizes freedom of expression, has also encouraged some adolescents to imitate negative behaviors they encounter on social media. This condition is reflected in the use of harsh or *toxic* language, cyberbullying, and individualistic behavior, which may reduce empathy and social concern for the surrounding environment (Aprilistya Alma, 2023).

2. Neglect of Religious Obligations and the Learning Process

Excessive use of social media, particularly platforms such as TikTok, may lead some adolescents to postpone or even neglect school assignments and religious obligations. A lack of self-control can lead adolescents toward various behaviors that may negatively affect themselves and their future. This condition can be further exacerbated by inadequate parental supervision, causing adolescents to pay less attention to their religious and academic responsibilities. Zuri (2026) found that high-intensity TikTok use is associated with a tendency to imitate various negative trends and a decline in students' *akhlakul karimah*. This finding is supported by the high intensity of social media use among adolescents (Akip, 2026) and KPAI reports concerning increased exposure to inappropriate content for children. The consistency of these findings indicates that TikTok use without adequate supervision and self-control can influence adolescents' behavior and moral values.

3. Emergence of Various Forms of Deviant Behavior

Deviant behavior refers to actions that contradict the social norms prevailing in society. Among adolescents, such behavior may manifest in forms such as truancy, brawling, drug abuse, and various other criminal acts. Such behavior may occur due to a discrepancy between socially expected goals and the means used to achieve them. Factors influencing these behaviors include family conditions, peer influence, and the school environment (Zein & Siregar, 2024).

4. The Development of Hedonistic Culture and Show-Off Practices on Social Media

The hedonistic culture developing on social media, particularly Instagram, can be observed in adolescents' tendency to prioritize appearance and self-image over moral development. The desire to imitate influencers' lifestyles makes adolescents more vulnerable to consumerist behavior and excessive self-presentation. Several studies have shown that the intensity of social media use encourages adolescents to seek validation through posts and responses from other users, thereby increasing the

tendency to show off. This condition occurs because social media is used not only as a means of exchanging information but also as a space for constructing self-identity, which ultimately contributes to the development of a hedonistic lifestyle among adolescents.

Strategies of Islamic Religious Education in Addressing the Negative Impacts of Social Media Use

Research presented by Rahayu (2024) shows that the development of information technology has had a considerable impact on the field of education. The presence of the internet provides easy access to various sources of knowledge, ranging from scientific journals, articles, and news to educational videos. Nevertheless, such accessibility may also generate various negative impacts, particularly among students who frequently use social media in ways that do not correspond to its primary functions and purposes.

Furthermore, Rahayu (2024) reported findings from a UNICEF study conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and Harvard University, which showed that approximately 98% of Indonesian children and adolescents aged 10–19 had knowledge of and used the internet, while 79.5% were recorded as active users. These data reinforce the potential of social media to significantly influence the behavior and morality of the younger generation.

In this context, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers have a highly strategic position in guiding students to use technology wisely and positively. Based on statutory provisions, teachers are professional educators responsible for educating, teaching, guiding, training, assessing, and evaluating students. This role makes IRE teachers not only sources of knowledge but also role models who contribute to instilling and internalizing Islamic values in students' daily lives.

Rahayu (2024) further emphasizes that IRE teachers are expected to provide concrete examples because students tend to imitate behavior more easily than merely receive verbal advice. Therefore, consistency between words and actions is an important factor in the process of character development. In addition, teachers serve as facilitators, motivators, communicators, and evaluators who support students in developing their potential while preventing inappropriate use of technology.

Various efforts can be undertaken by IRE teachers to address the negative impacts of social media through preventive and curative strategies. Preventive strategies may include providing direct guidance, encouraging the use of social media for more positive activities, and instilling moral values in students. Meanwhile, curative strategies are aimed at reducing negative impacts that have already occurred, although their implementation remains challenging because teachers cannot fully monitor students' behavior outside the school environment.

Furthermore, the optimization of technology use can be achieved through the integration of information technology-based IRE learning as an innovation that responds to contemporary developments. Through this approach, social media and the

internet are no longer viewed solely as threats but can also be utilized as educational media that support the learning process. Nevertheless, the role of IRE teachers needs to be strengthened through collaboration with school administrators, other teachers, and parents, who have more frequent interactions with children at home. Such collaboration is necessary to strengthen the development of Islamic character so that students are less susceptible to the negative impacts of social media.

The practical implementation of IRE teachers' roles can include mentoring students, guiding them to understand the values underlying responsible internet use, maintaining communication and cooperation with parents in the monitoring process, continuously instilling moral values, and providing exemplary attitudes and behavior in everyday life. With strong personal competence, IRE teachers can become more effective in guiding and monitoring students' behavior both inside and outside the school environment, including directing them toward wise and responsible use of social media.

Efforts of Islamic Religious Education in Developing Adolescent Morality in the Digital Era

The rapid development of digital media requires Islamic Religious Education (IRE) to move beyond merely delivering normative content and to develop into an adaptive form of guidance that can assist adolescents in managing their digital activities. Based on the literature review, four main strategies are considered relevant: curriculum strengthening, pedagogical innovation, role-based collaboration, and the implementation of creative and integrative approaches.

1. Integrating Islamic Values into Digital Literacy through a Curricular Approach

The IRE curriculum needs to be developed by integrating digital literacy elements grounded in Islamic values, such as *tabayyun* (clarification and verification of information) and *amanah* (responsibility in disseminating content). This approach enables religious education not only to focus on theoretical understanding but also to be directly applied to social media activities. Fikri's research indicates that integrating religious values with digital literacy can encourage students to be more selective and critical when responding to various types of information on social media. One concrete implementation is through exercises in analyzing viral news by applying the principle of *tabayyun* (Lathifah, 2026).

2. Enhancing Teachers' Competence in Utilizing Social Media (Pedagogical Strategy)

IRE teachers are not only expected to serve as moral supervisors but also to become role models in the responsible use of social media. Juliani's research demonstrates that teachers who actively produce Islamic content through digital platforms are more effective in attracting students' attention than conventional lecture-based methods (Juliani, 2023). In line with this, Chanra emphasizes that social media can serve as a strategic space for creative *da'wah* when teachers are able to adapt their language,

content format, and communication patterns to adolescents' characteristics. Thus, teachers can function as *moral influencers* who provide positive alternatives amid the rapid flow of information in the digital environment (Shafiqo & Gofur, 2025).

3. Educational Collaboration among Schools, Families, and Communities (Collaborative Strategy)

Moral development in the digital environment cannot be optimized if it relies solely on the role of schools. Synergy among teachers, parents, and the community is needed so that Islamic values can be consistently implemented in everyday life. This strategy can be implemented through Islamic digital literacy workshops for parents and reflective activities at school concerning responsible social media use. Zahraini emphasizes that family involvement in educational programs can significantly reduce deviant behavior among adolescents. Thus, IRE can serve as a bridge between formal education in schools and the patterns of moral development implemented within the family environment (Yusuf, 2025).

4. Creative and Integrative Approaches to Technology-Based Learning

Creative and integrative technology-based approaches are relevant strategies for addressing the characteristics of the digital generation. Based on various studies, social media can be utilized as an educational and moral development medium when used appropriately and purposefully. The use of creative content in the learning process has been shown to increase students' interest while supporting the internalization of religious values (Juliani, 2023). This finding is further supported by research indicating that social media can serve as an effective medium for *da'wah* when adapted to adolescents' characteristics and communication styles (Rumanda, 2025).

Based on these conditions, IRE can develop several innovative strategies, such as producing educational Islamic content, utilizing digital-based worship reminders, and using interactive features that align with adolescents' daily activities. In addition, gamification through daily moral missions is consistent with the characteristics of students who tend to prefer visual and interactive approaches. Virtual mentoring through digital platforms familiar to adolescents can also strengthen the process of internalizing religious values in everyday life. This approach is considered effective because it brings IRE values into the digital environment, which has become an important part of adolescents' lives.

The effectiveness of IRE in developing adolescent morality in the digital era can only be achieved when these strategies are implemented in an integrated manner. The integration of Islamic values into digital literacy serves as the primary foundation, although its implementation is often still limited to the conceptual level. The teacher's role as a role model in the digital environment is considered more applicable because teachers can directly engage in adolescents' spaces of interaction, although challenges remain in terms of technological competence. Collaboration with families and communities is also important, but its implementation often faces obstacles due to

limited parental involvement. Meanwhile, creative technology-based approaches, such as the use of Islamic applications, gamification, and virtual mentoring, are considered highly compatible with the characteristics of the digital generation, although they require adequate facilities and supportive policies. By integrating all of these strategies, IRE has significant potential to become an adaptive and relevant instrument for moral development in addressing the various challenges of adolescents' digital lives.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that social media has a dualistic role in adolescents' lives. On the one hand, social media provides opportunities for adolescents to broaden their knowledge and build social networks. On the other hand, its use also contributes to changes in adolescent morality, characterized by declining communication ethics, low awareness of learning and religious obligations, and increasing tendencies toward deviant behavior and consumerist lifestyles. Under these conditions, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) holds a strategic position as a means of internalizing moral values while equipping adolescents with the ability to manage their digital activities wisely.

These efforts can be implemented through strengthening the curriculum by integrating digital literacy with Islamic values, developing innovative learning methods that align with the characteristics of digital culture, and strengthening collaboration among schools, families, and communities. In addition, technology-based innovations are needed to connect the learning process with the realities of adolescents' lives. Through the implementation of an integrated approach, IRE can function not only as a religious subject but also as an adaptive and relevant instrument for moral development in responding to various challenges in the digital era.

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