



Utilization of Digital Media in Building the Morals of High School Students of 11 Medan State High School

Nurmala Br Saragih^{1*}, Ihsan Satrya Azhar²

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

²Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

¹nurmala6429@gmail.com, ²Ihsansatrya@uinsu.ac.id

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*Correspondence Address:

nurmala6429@gmail.com

Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the use of digital media in fostering students' moral character at SMA Negeri 11 Medan and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore how digital media is integrated into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and how teachers and students experience its role in moral development. The participants consisted of four informants two PAI teachers and two students, selected purposively based on their direct involvement in digital-media-based learning. Data were collected through observations of PAI learning activities in Grades XI and XII, structured interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed using an interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that digital media is used through educational videos, PowerPoint presentations, internet-based learning resources, and students' digital devices to convey religious and moral content and connect learning with students' daily experiences. The implementation is supported by the availability of technological facilities, school support, and teachers' active guidance and supervision. However, inadequate student focus, gadget use, peer influence, and inappropriate use of digital media remain challenges. The study contributes to understanding how digital media can support moral character development when integrated with teacher guidance, habituation, and supervision. The findings are context-specific and indicate that digital media functions as a supporting pedagogical tool rather than, by itself, demonstrating effectiveness in improving students' moral character.

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Introduction

Education is not only concerned with developing students' intellectual abilities but also with shaping their character and moral behavior. In Islamic education, morality is a central educational outcome because it reflects students' ability to translate religious values into responsible behavior toward Allah, other people, themselves, and the environment (Nadila Juanda et al., 2025). Therefore, moral education should move beyond cognitive understanding toward the habituation and practice of values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, tolerance, and appropriate social behavior. This need has become increasingly important in the digital era, as technology has transformed how students learn, communicate, access information, and interact with others. Digital platforms such as YouTube, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and other online resources are now integrated into students' everyday lives. UNESCO emphasizes that technology can expand access to information and interaction, but its educational use should remain aligned with learning objectives, student needs, ethical considerations, and human interaction (Hennelly & Ctori, 2022). In Islamic Religious Education (PAI), this means that digital media should not be limited to delivering instructional content but should also support the development of students' moral understanding and behavior.

Digital media provides opportunities to present moral values through educational videos, Islamic content, digital stories, interactive presentations, and online learning activities. Such media can make abstract moral concepts more concrete and contextual and can stimulate students' attention and participation (Najwa Ammara Jauza & Meyniar Albina, 2025). However, digital environments also expose students to content and behaviors that may conflict with Islamic values, including impolite communication, misinformation, cyberbullying, excessive trend-following, and inappropriate use of digital devices. Thus, the educational value of digital media depends not simply on its availability but on how teachers select content, guide its use, and connect digital experiences with moral learning. Social media allows students to communicate quickly and widely, but at the same time it can give rise to behaviors such as the use of less polite language, the spread of incorrect information, bullying in the digital space, the tendency to follow trends without consideration of values, and the excessive use of digital devices. UNESCO also emphasized that digital literacy is not only related to the ability to use devices, but includes ethical behavior in communicating and using digital spaces (Hennelly & Ctori, 2022).

This condition shows that moral development in the digital era is not enough to be done through the delivery of material conventionally. Teachers need to integrate moral values with a digital environment that is close to students' lives. In this context, Islamic Religious Education teachers have a strategic position because they not only play a role as a conveyor of religious material, but also as a guide, role model, director, and supervisor of student behavior. Moral development through digital media needs to be carried out by directing students to be able to use technology to obtain useful knowledge, communicate politely, choose content that is in accordance with Islamic values, and have responsibility for activities carried out in the digital space. The relationship between digital media and moral development can be explained through Bandura's Social Learning Theory. The theory proposes that individuals learn behavior through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. In digital environments, students are continuously exposed to behavioral models through teachers, peers, influencers, public figures, videos, and social media content (Rumjaun & Narod, 2025). Digital media therefore functions as a social learning environment in which students may observe and reproduce both positive and negative behaviors. When teachers intentionally select digital content that demonstrates honesty, responsibility, respect, discipline, and other prosocial behaviors, students can observe these models and discuss their moral meaning.

Teacher guidance and reinforcement are important because they help students distinguish desirable behavior from inappropriate behavior and encourage the reproduction of positive models. In addition to social learning theory, this research is also relevant to learning media theory which views media as an intermediary in conveying learning messages (Hapudin, 2021). The right media can help teachers present material in a more concrete, interesting, and easy-to-understand way for students (Apriyanur Rohim & Indah Setyo Wardhani, 2024). In moral learning, this principle can be applied by transforming abstract values into more concrete learning experiences through videos, illustrations, digital stories, case studies, interactive quizzes, and audiovisual content. Thus, digital media does not replace the role of teachers in moral development, but becomes an instrument that supports the educational process and strengthens values. The foundation of moral education in Islam also places example as one of the important principles in the formation of behavior. Allah SWT says in QS. Al-Ahzab verse 21. Meaning: *"Indeed, the Messenger of Allah has been a good example for you, for those who hope for Allah and the Day of Resurrection and who remember Allah a lot."* (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2011).

This principle remains relevant in digital settings because moral behavior is expressed not only in face-to-face interaction but also in how students communicate, comment, share information, and respond to others online. The Prophet's mission to perfect noble character further reinforces the central position of morality in Islamic education (Abdul Hadi, 2018). Consequently, digital literacy in PAI should include not only technical competence but also ethical and responsible digital behavior. Research (Nasrul HS et al., 2026) regarding the use of Islamic digital animation media in the subject of Aqidah Akhlak shows that digital media can be used in the process of forming students' character and being part of moral learning innovations. The research places digital animation media as a means to present learning that is more in accordance with the characteristics of students. Research (Maya & Qomariyah, 2024) It shows that teachers have an important role in directing, guiding, and controlling the impact of social media use on student behavior. The research shows that moral issues in the digital era cannot be separated from the role of teachers as mentors and role models. Furthermore, research on the influence of social media on the formation of adolescent morals in the perspective of Islamic education shows that social media has the potential to have a positive and negative impact on the formation of behavior (Rahimah, 2026).

Social media can be a means of gaining knowledge and positive values, but it can also influence adolescent behavior when used without control and the ability to critically choose content. Research (Yuli Yani et al., 2025) regarding Islamic social media in madrasah students also shows that the use of social media directed at Islamic content has the potential to support aspects of religiosity, discipline, responsibility, and honesty of students. Research (Kuntari, 2023) regarding the use of digital media in PAI learning, it also shows that digital media can be used to increase student involvement through the presentation of more interactive materials, including through multimedia, learning videos, *E-learning*, and digital platforms. These findings strengthen the view that digital media has great potential in Islamic Religious Education learning, but its use needs to be adjusted to learning objectives and characteristics of students. However, the previous studies still focused a lot on the influence of social media on morals, the use of digital media as a certain learning medium, or the study of the impact of technology on students' character. Although these studies demonstrate the potential and risks of digital media, a research gap remains.

Existing research tends to examine the effects of social media on morality, the use of particular digital media as instructional tools, or the general influence of technology on character development. Less attention has been given to how PAI teachers intentionally utilize digital media as part of a moral-development process, particularly how teachers select and present

digital content, provide behavioral guidance, connect media experiences with Islamic values, supervise students' digital practices, and respond to contextual supporting and inhibiting factors at the school level. Therefore, the present study shifts the focus from asking whether digital media affects students' morality to examining how digital media is pedagogically used by PAI teachers to foster moral development. This research focuses on SMA Negeri 11 Medan, where digital technology has become part of students' learning and everyday activities. Initial observations indicated that teachers use digital resources such as Google Classroom, YouTube, and other internet-based materials in PAI learning, while students commonly use smartphones and the internet to obtain information and communicate.

These conditions create opportunities for integrating digital media into moral education. At the same time, observations identified challenges, including students' use of digital devices for non-learning activities and limited attention to ethical communication in digital spaces. The situation indicates that technological availability does not automatically produce responsible digital behavior and that teacher guidance, habituation, exemplary behavior, and supervision remain necessary. The novelty of this study lies in examining digital media as a pedagogically directed social-learning environment for moral development, rather than merely as an instructional delivery tool or an external factor influencing student behavior. The study specifically analyzes how PAI teachers at SMA Negeri 11 Medan utilize digital media to convey moral values, model and reinforce desirable behavior, guide students' digital practices, and address the supporting and inhibiting conditions surrounding its use. By connecting digital media practices with Bandura's Social Learning Theory and the principles of Islamic moral education, the study provides a contextual explanation of how digital experiences can be transformed into opportunities for moral learning. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the use of digital media in fostering students' moral character at SMA Negeri 11 Medan. Specifically, it examines the forms of digital media used, the pedagogical strategies employed by PAI teachers, the role of digital media in supporting students' moral development, and the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing its implementation. The study is expected to contribute to PAI scholarship by clarifying the relationship between digital media, social learning, and moral development, while also providing practical insights for teachers and schools seeking to integrate digital technology with Islamic character education.



Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to examine how digital media is used in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning to foster students' moral character at SMA Negeri 11 Medan. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on understanding practices, experiences, interactions, and contextual factors rather than measuring relationships between variables or testing hypotheses (Waruwu, 2023). The study specifically examined the forms of digital media used in PAI learning, teachers' strategies in directing its use, students' responses, and the supporting and inhibiting factors associated with moral development. The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 11 Medan. The site was purposively selected because the school integrates digital technology into PAI learning and has supporting facilities, including laptops, projectors, internet access, Smart TVs, computers, and digital devices used by students. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in digital-media-based PAI learning and their ability to provide relevant information about students' moral development. Four informants participated in the study: two PAI teachers and two Grade XI–XII students. The PAI teachers were selected because they were directly responsible for planning and implementing PAI instruction and for providing guidance and supervision regarding students' use of digital media (Tisdell et al., 2025).

The students were selected because they had direct experience participating in PAI learning activities involving digital media and could provide first-hand accounts of their experiences, perceptions, and responses. For reporting purposes, the student participants are identified by pseudonyms (Student 1 and Student 2) rather than their real names to protect their privacy. Participant selection was based on the following criteria: (1) PAI teachers who actively used digital media in their teaching; and (2) students who regularly participated in PAI learning involving digital media and were willing to share their experiences. Data were collected through observation, individual interviews, and documentation (Creswell & Poth, 2024).. These techniques were used in combination to obtain complementary evidence and support data triangulation. Observation. Observations were conducted during PAI learning activities in Grades XI and XII. The observations examined teachers' preparation and selection of digital media, the types of media used, the integration of digital content with moral values, students' participation and attention, student-teacher interaction, and teachers' guidance and supervision of digital device use. Particular attention was given to moral-related behaviors, including discipline, responsibility, respectful communication, participation in learning, compliance with teacher instructions, and students' use of digital devices for learning purposes. The researcher also observed how teachers connected digital materials with values such as honesty, responsibility, good manners, respect, and appropriate use of social media. Observations were documented through systematic field notes.

Interviews. Individual structured interviews were conducted with the two PAI teachers and two student participants using interview guides aligned with the research objectives. Each interview lasted approximately fifteen minutes. Interviews with PAI teachers addressed the types and purposes of digital media used in PAI learning, strategies for integrating moral values into digital content, teachers' guidance and supervision, students' responses, and supporting and inhibiting factors. Interviews with students focused on their experiences with digital-media-based learning, preferred media and content, understanding of moral messages, perceived benefits, teacher guidance, and challenges associated with digital device use. Interview findings were compared with observation data to examine consistency between reported practices and observed classroom activities. Documentation. Documentation was used as supplementary evidence and included photographs of PAI learning activities, digital-media-based learning sessions, interviews, the school environment, and relevant school documents concerning learning activities and digital facilities. The documentation was analyzed to corroborate information obtained through observation and interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of (Miles et al., 2024) consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During data reduction, information from interviews, observations, and documentation was organized into five analytical categories: (1) forms and uses of digital media, (2) teacher strategies, (3) student responses, (4) moral-development practices, and (5) supporting and inhibiting factors. Information unrelated to the research objectives was excluded from the main analysis. The reduced data were then organized into thematic narrative displays to identify patterns across teachers, students, and observation records. Conclusions were drawn after recurring patterns and relationships had been identified and compared across data sources. The interpretations were continuously checked against the original interview, observation, and documentation data throughout the analysis process. The credibility of the findings was established through source and technique triangulation (Flick, 2022) Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the two PAI teachers and two students. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing interview findings with observation records and documentation. This procedure was used to determine whether participants' accounts were consistent with observed practices and available documentary evidence.

Ethical considerations were applied because the study involved student participants. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed about the research purpose, procedures, and their right to decline participation or withdraw without academic consequences. Participant confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms and by reporting only information relevant to the research objectives. This methodological procedure enabled the study to obtain a contextual and triangulated description of how digital media is used in PAI learning to support students' moral development at SMA Negeri 11 Medan.

Results

Utilization of Digital Media in Student Moral Development

The findings regarding the use of digital media in fostering students' moral character at SMA Negeri 11 Medan are organized into four aspects: (1) types of digital media used in PAI learning, (2) teachers' strategies in utilizing digital media, (3) students' moral responses and development, and (4) supporting and inhibiting factors. Data from classroom observations and interviews with two PAI teachers and two students indicate that digital media functions not only as a tool for delivering PAI content but also as a medium through which teachers communicate, model, and reinforce moral values.

1. Types of Digital Media Used in PAI Learning

The observations showed that several forms of digital media were integrated into PAI learning, including smartphones, educational videos, Smart TVs, projectors, PowerPoint presentations, and social media or internet-based resources. These media were used to present learning materials, provide examples of moral behavior, support assignments, and connect religious concepts with situations encountered by students in everyday life. Before the lesson began, students participated in a joint prayer in the classroom. The teacher then greeted the students and checked attendance. These activities created a transition from religious habituation to the formal learning process. During the lesson, teachers used smartphones and visual media to present materials and examples related to Islamic moral values. The researcher observed that students generally responded more actively when the material was presented through audiovisual and digital resources.



Figure 1. Processed research sources

The use of smartphones was particularly prominent because students already use these devices in their daily lives. One PAI teacher explained *"Cellphones or Android are the media that is closest to students because they are used each day."* (IF-GR2). This statement corresponds with the observation that smartphones were readily available to students and could therefore be integrated into learning without requiring students to adapt to unfamiliar technology. The teacher's statement also indicates that the selection of digital media was influenced by students' familiarity with the technology.

Students similarly reported that audiovisual media made moral material easier to understand. One student stated *"If you use learning videos, it is clearer and not boring."* (IF-S2). The interview evidence is consistent with the classroom observations, in which students appeared more engaged when teachers used videos and other visual digital resources. Thus, digital media was used primarily as a means of making moral concepts more concrete, contextual, and accessible to students.

2. Teachers' Strategies in Utilizing Digital Media for Moral Education

The findings show that teachers did not provide unrestricted access to digital media during PAI learning. Instead, digital media use was accompanied by direction, explanation, monitoring, and supervision. Before students used smartphones or other digital devices, teachers explained the learning objective and instructed students to access materials relevant to the lesson. Teachers also reminded students not to open inappropriate or unrelated content. One teacher explicitly described both the opportunities and risks associated with digital media *"Mobile phone digital media can help improve students' morals if used for good things, but can also be misused if not directed right."* (IF-GR1).

This statement illustrates that teachers viewed digital media as a pedagogical resource whose value depended on how it was used. The observation data support this interpretation. Teachers monitored students' use of smartphones during learning and redirected students when their attention moved away from the learning task. Therefore, teacher supervision functioned as an important mechanism for ensuring that digital media remained connected to instructional and moral objectives. Teachers also used digital content to connect moral concepts with students' everyday experiences. During learning, moral values such as respect, responsibility, good manners, and appropriate social behavior were explained using examples that students could encounter in their daily lives. Rather than presenting morality only as theoretical religious knowledge, teachers used digital resources as stimuli for discussion and explanation. The teachers' strategy can therefore be characterized by three complementary practices: selecting relevant digital content, contextualizing moral values through digital examples, and supervising students' digital behavior. These practices demonstrate that digital media was not treated as an autonomous educational agent. The teacher remained responsible for selecting the content, directing the learning process, and reinforcing appropriate behavior.



Figure 2. Processed research sources

3. Students' Moral Responses and Development

The observations indicate that the use of digital media was accompanied by several observable behaviors related to students' moral development. During PAI learning, students were observed participating in discussions, responding to teachers' questions, completing assigned tasks, and following instructions regarding the use of digital devices. Several students demonstrated discipline and responsibility by using their devices for learning purposes and completing assignments in an orderly manner. The researcher also observed that some students became more active when learning materials were presented through videos and other digital

media. They responded to questions, discussed the content, and related moral messages to situations from their daily lives. One student explained *"If you use learning videos, it is clearer and not boring."* (IF-S2). Students also identified moral content connected with relationships with parents, teachers, and friends as particularly relevant to their experiences. This indicates that the use of familiar digital formats helped teachers present moral issues in contexts that students could recognize.

The observation further showed that students participated in classroom activities in an orderly manner after receiving digital learning materials and teacher instructions. They completed assignments, remained involved in discussions, and demonstrated cooperation during learning activities. These behaviors were interpreted as manifestations of discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and respect within the observed learning context. However, the findings do not indicate that digital media automatically produced moral improvement. The observation also identified students who were less focused during digital-media-based learning. Some students required teacher reminders to remain engaged with the learning task. This contrast is important because it demonstrates that the observed moral behaviors were associated with a broader instructional process involving teacher guidance and supervision rather than with digital media alone. From the students' perspective, digital media was useful when the content was connected to practical moral situations. Videos, exemplary stories, religious advice, and examples related to daily behavior were described as interesting and easier to understand. Thus, digital media appears to support students' understanding and engagement with moral content, while the actual development of moral behavior remains closely connected to teacher guidance, habituation, and classroom interaction.

4. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The findings identified several factors that supported the use of digital media in moral development. The first was the availability of technological facilities. Observations confirmed the presence of smartphones, laptops, projectors, Smart TVs, internet access, and other digital devices that enabled teachers to incorporate technology into PAI learning. The availability of these facilities reduced technical barriers to the use of digital resources. The second supporting factor was teacher involvement. Teachers actively selected learning materials, explained the purpose of digital media, connected digital content with Islamic moral values, and monitored students' behavior. The interview statement that digital media needs to be "directed" indicates that teacher intervention was regarded as an essential condition for its productive use. The third supporting factor was the proximity of digital media to students' everyday lives. The PAI teacher stated *"Cellphones or Android are the media that is closest to students because they are used each day."* (IF-GR2).



Figure 2. Processed research sources

This familiarity made smartphones and digital audiovisual content relatively easy to integrate into classroom learning. Student responses further indicated that videos and other digital materials were more engaging than conventional forms of material delivery. Nevertheless, the study also identified important inhibiting factors. Classroom observations showed that not

all students maintained the same level of attention during digital-media-based learning. Some students required reminders from teachers to remain focused on the learning task. This finding is consistent with the teacher's concern that smartphones can be misused when their use is not properly directed. Another challenge was the possibility of accessing content unrelated to the learning objectives. The teacher therefore needed to provide clear instructions and continuous supervision. This indicates that digital media creates both pedagogical opportunities and management demands. Its use requires teachers to establish boundaries concerning which content students may access and how digital devices should be used.

Taken together, the findings show that digital media at SMA Negeri 11 Medan is integrated into PAI learning through smartphones, educational videos, Smart TVs, projectors, PowerPoint presentations, and online or social-media-based resources. Teachers use these media to make moral concepts more contextual and engaging, while simultaneously providing direction and supervision to limit inappropriate use. Observations and student interviews indicate that digital media can support students' engagement, understanding, discipline, responsibility, and participation when embedded within purposeful instruction. However, the findings also show that digital media should not be interpreted as independently producing changes in students' moral character. The observed outcomes were closely associated with teachers' strategies of content selection, contextualization, guidance, habituation, and supervision. The availability of technological facilities and students' familiarity with digital devices supported implementation, whereas lack of focus and the possibility of inappropriate device use created challenges. Thus, within the specific context of SMA Negeri 11 Medan, digital media functions most appropriately as a supporting pedagogical tool for moral education. Its contribution depends on the teacher's ability to transform digital content into meaningful moral learning experiences and to accompany students' use of technology with consistent guidance, supervision, and reinforcement.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Digital Media Utilization

The findings indicate that the utilization of digital media in PAI learning at SMA Negeri 11 Medan is shaped by both supporting and inhibiting factors. The supporting factors include the availability of digital facilities, students' familiarity with smartphones, school support, and teacher involvement in directing digital-media use. The inhibiting factors include students' use of digital devices for entertainment, reduced concentration, dependence on instant information, and the possibility of accessing digital content unrelated to learning. These factors influenced how effectively digital media could be integrated into PAI learning and moral development.

1. Supporting Factors

The first supporting factor was the availability of digital facilities. Classroom observations showed that the school provides technological resources such as smartphones, Smart TVs, projectors, internet access, laptops, and computers. These facilities enabled teachers to present educational videos, digital presentations, internet-based learning resources, and other digital materials during PAI lessons. The availability of these facilities created the technical conditions necessary for integrating digital media into regular classroom activities. A second supporting factor was students' familiarity with smartphones. The PAI teacher explained *"Cellphones or Android are the media that is closest to students because they are used each day."* (IF-GR1)

The interview statement was consistent with the researcher's observations, which showed that smartphones were already part of students' everyday activities and could therefore be readily incorporated into classroom learning. Students did not need substantial technical adaptation to operate the devices. This familiarity enabled teachers to direct an existing student habit toward educational purposes, including accessing learning materials, watching instructional videos, and finding information relevant to PAI topics. The third supporting factor was teacher involvement and school support. Observations showed that teachers actively organized the use of digital devices rather than leaving students to use them independently. Teachers explained the purpose of using digital media, directed students toward relevant

learning resources, and monitored students' activities during the lesson. This indicates that the availability of technology was accompanied by pedagogical guidance.

The teacher's explanation reinforces this point *"Cellphones or Android are the media that is closest to students because they are used each day."* (IF-GR1). The importance of teacher involvement was also apparent because students' engagement was greater when digital content was directly connected to the learning material. Thus, the supporting conditions were not limited to technological infrastructure; they also involved students' familiarity with technology and the teacher's ability to integrate it into meaningful learning activities.

2. Inhibiting Factors

Despite these supporting conditions, the findings indicate several challenges. The first was the tendency of some students to use digital devices for entertainment rather than learning. Classroom observations showed that students did not always maintain the same level of concentration during digital-media-based activities. Some students required reminders to remain focused on the learning task and to use their devices in accordance with the teacher's instructions. This condition demonstrates that familiarity with smartphones can function as both an advantage and a challenge. The same device that provides immediate access to learning resources can also provide access to entertainment and unrelated content. Therefore, students' existing familiarity with digital technology does not automatically guarantee responsible educational use.

A second inhibiting factor was dependence on instant information, particularly through search engines and artificial intelligence tools. One PAI teacher explained *"The convenience of technology makes students more often look for instant answers such as Google or AI so that they don't read in depth."* (IF-GR2). This statement indicates a concern that easy access to information may encourage students to prioritize obtaining immediate answers over engaging in deeper reading and independent understanding. The issue is therefore not the technology itself, but the way students use it during the learning process. In the context of moral education, excessive dependence on instant answers may limit opportunities for students to reflect on the meaning of moral values and relate them to their own experiences.

A third inhibiting factor was the need for continuous supervision of smartphone use. To address the potential disruption caused by mobile phones, the school implemented a classroom management policy in which phones were collected before learning and returned when needed for instructional purposes. The teacher stated *"Cellphones are collected in boxes before learning and are only used when needed in learning."* (IF-GR1). The observation findings are consistent with this statement, showing that students' access to smartphones was controlled during learning activities. Phones were made available when they were needed for the lesson, while unnecessary use was restricted. This policy demonstrates that digital integration at the school was accompanied by institutional and teacher-level regulation rather than unrestricted device access.

3. Relationship between Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The findings show that the same characteristics of digital technology can simultaneously support and constrain its educational use. Students' familiarity with smartphones makes them convenient learning tools, but that familiarity also increases the possibility of distraction and entertainment-oriented use. Similarly, unrestricted access to online information can broaden learning resources while potentially encouraging dependence on instant answers. Consequently, the effectiveness of digital media as a pedagogical support cannot be attributed solely to the availability of technological facilities. The observations and teacher interviews indicate that teacher guidance, classroom regulation, and students' ability to use digital devices responsibly are important conditions for maintaining the educational function of technology. From the perspective of the present study, these findings are consistent with the idea that digital media functions within a broader social and pedagogical environment. Teachers determine how digital content is selected, how it is connected to PAI materials, and how students are guided in interpreting and using it.

Therefore, digital media contributes to moral learning most meaningfully when students are not only provided with technological access but are also given clear behavioral expectations, supervision, and opportunities to reflect on the appropriate use of technology. Overall, the findings suggest that the utilization of digital media at SMA Negeri 11 Medan is supported by technological availability, students' familiarity with digital devices, and active teacher guidance, while its implementation is constrained by distraction, entertainment-oriented use, dependence on instant answers, and the need for continuous supervision. These findings reinforce the broader result of the study that digital media should be positioned as a supporting pedagogical tool rather than an independent mechanism for moral development. Its contribution depends on how teachers and schools organize, guide, and regulate its use within the PAI learning environment.

Teachers' Strategies in Building Morals Through Digital Media

Teachers' strategies in fostering students' morals through digital media are carried out with a contextual approach, namely relating learning materials to real phenomena that occur in the environment and social media. The teacher explained that in learning, he often uses viral cases as examples so that students can more easily understand moral values. The teacher stated that, *"I often associate the material with events that are going viral so that students understand faster."* (IF-GR1). The statement shows that teachers try to connect moral material with phenomena that are close to students' lives. The incident that is currently viral is not only used to attract students' attention, but also used as an example so that students can understand how moral values are related to the behavior they encounter in daily life. In addition, teachers also use a simple analogy to explain the impact of using digital media. The teacher said that *"Digital media is like a kitchen knife, it can be useful but it can also be harmful depending on how it is used."* (IF-GR2). The analogy is used to provide students with an understanding that digital media can basically provide benefits if used properly, but can also have a negative impact if used without control. In this way, teachers not only convey theories about the use of digital media, but also invite students to understand the responsibility in using technology. The results of the students' interviews showed that they preferred learning using digital media such as videos because they were more engaging and easy to understand. One of the students said, *"learning with videos is more fun and not boring."* (IF-S1). Another student also stated *"that digital-based learning helps them understand moral material because it is accompanied by real examples in daily life."* (IF-S2).

The contextual approach based on digital media is also in accordance with the characteristics of today's students who are more responsive to technology and visual learning. Thus, teachers' strategies not only focus on delivering material, but also on forming students' moral awareness to be able to use digital media wisely and responsibly in accordance with Islamic moral values. Teachers' strategies in fostering students' morals through digital media are carried out with a contextual approach, namely relating learning materials to real phenomena that occur in the environment and social media. The teacher explained that in learning, he often uses viral cases as examples so that students can more easily understand moral values. The teacher stated that, *"I often associate the material with events that are going viral so that students understand faster."* (IF-GR1). The way teachers relate the material to the event. In addition, teachers also use a simple analogy to explain the impact of using digital media. The teacher said that *"digital media is like a kitchen knife, it can be useful but it can also be dangerous depending on how it is used."* (IF-GR2). The statement shows that teachers try to connect moral material with phenomena that are close to students' lives. The incident that is going viral is not only used to attract attention, but is used as an example so that students can understand how moral values are related to the behavior they encounter in daily life. This is reinforced by the results of the researcher's observations during the learning process. When the material is associated with examples that students are already familiar with, the discussion becomes easier to follow and students can give responses to the material presented. The results of the learning evaluation also show that the use of examples that are close to the students' experience helps them understand the material more concretely.

Thus, the use of the phenomenon that is currently viral is one of the ways teachers bridge theoretical moral material with the reality of students' lives. The results of the students' interviews showed that they preferred learning using digital media such as videos because they were more engaging and easy to understand. One of the students said, "*learning with videos is more fun and not boring.*" (IF-S1). Another student also stated "*that digital-based learning helps them understand moral material because it is accompanied by real examples in daily life.*" (IF-S2). Thus, teachers' strategies not only focus on delivering material, but also on forming students' moral awareness to be able to use digital media wisely and responsibly in accordance with Islamic moral values. In addition to providing ease of learning, digital media also needs to be balanced with good supervision and habituation. Students need to be given an understanding of ethics in using technology so as not to be affected by the negative impact of digital media. Therefore, cooperation between teachers, schools, and parents is indispensable in guiding students. With good management, digital media can be an effective medium in supporting the formation of students' morals. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the use of digital media in fostering student morals at SMA Negeri 11 Medan is quite effective. This is supported by religious habits such as prayer before learning, the use of digital media in learning, and teacher strategies that are contextual and based on real phenomena. However, there are still challenges in the form of misuse of digital media, students' dependence on technology, and lack of control in its use. Therefore, synergy is needed between teachers, students, and parents so that digital media can be optimally utilized in the formation of students' morals.



Discussion

Utilization of Digital Media in Building the Morals of High School Students of 11 Medan State High School

The results of the study show that the use of digital media in fostering student morals at SMA Negeri 11 Medan has been integrated with the learning process of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and the habituation of religious values in the school environment. This use is not only seen in the use of devices such as smartphones, Smart TVs, infokus, PowerPoint, learning videos, and social media as a tool for delivering material, but also in teachers' efforts to direct the use of technology to be in accordance with Islamic moral values. These findings show that digital media in the context of research is not just a learning instrument, but is part of the educational environment that can be used to instill, strengthen, and habituate students' positive behaviors. The habit of praying before learning, giving greetings, checking attendance, and carrying out tasks in an orderly manner shows that moral development is carried out through a combination of direct habituation and the use of digital media. Thus, technology does not replace moral development carried out directly by teachers, but becomes a supporting instrument in the process. This finding is important because moral development is basically not enough to be done through the imparting of knowledge about good behavior, but requires a process of habituation, example, direction, and supervision on an ongoing basis. The findings are in line with research (Nadila et al., 2025) regarding the use of digital media in PAI learning which shows that the integration of educational videos, online platforms, and interactive presentations can improve students' understanding, motivation, and engagement in PAI learning.

Research (Nur Asyifa Ananda & Santiani Santiani, 2025) regarding digital media in learning Akidah Akhlak also shows that the use of digital media can help create more interesting learning and increase student involvement. Thus, the results of research at SMA Negeri 11 Medan reinforce the previous finding that students' proximity to technology can be used as a pedagogical opportunity to present more contextual PAI learning. However, this study shows a broader dimension. Digital media is not only used to improve material understanding, but is directed to

support the formation of student behavior. When teachers use videos, social media phenomena, and examples of daily life to explain the values of honesty, responsibility, manners, and ethics, there is a process of linking moral knowledge with students' real experiences. Thus, moral learning does not stop at the cognitive aspect, but is directed at students' awareness of how these values are applied in daily life, including in the use of digital technology. The findings can be explained through Social Learning Theory developed (Rumjaun & Narod, 2025). This theory places the processes of observation, imitation, and modeling as important mechanisms in the formation of behavior. In the context of this research, digital media provides various behavioral models that students can observe. Learning videos, Islamic content, viral phenomena, and examples of behavior on social media can be a source of observation for students. Therefore, when teachers choose content that exhibits positive behavior and then discuss it with students, digital media can serve as a social learning environment.

This also explains why teachers have an important position in the use of digital media. Students are not allowed to receive all digital information freely, but are directed to identify behaviors that are appropriate and incompatible with Islamic values. In other words, teachers function as mediators between students and the digital environment. Teachers help students understand that technology is inherently neutral, while its impact on behavior depends on how it is used. The informant's statement that *"mobile digital media can help improve students' morals if used for good things, but can also be misused if not directed correctly"* shows that there is a teacher's awareness of the ambivalent nature of technology. From the perspective of Islamic education, this finding is in line with the principle of exemplary and habituation as a method of moral development. Moral values are not enough to be conveyed in the form of theory, but must be manifested in real behavior. In the digital context, this example can be expanded into an example in communicating, seeking information, using social media, and using digital devices responsibly. Thus, moral development in the digital era is not only related to student behavior when in the classroom, but also how students bring these values into the digital space.

The results of the study also show that students are more interested in the use of video and digital media because the material is considered clearer, more interesting, and less boring. When moral material is accompanied by concrete examples of manners to parents, teachers, and friends, students are more likely to relate the material to their experiences. These findings reinforce research showing that digital media can provide a more authentic and interactive learning experience and support character formation such as empathy, cooperation, discipline, and confidence. Thus, the use of digital media in moral learning at SMA Negeri 11 Medan can be understood as an effort to transform abstract moral material into a more concrete learning experience. Thus, the use of digital media in fostering student morals at SMA Negeri 11 Medan shows the integration between technology, pedagogy, and value education. Technology provides learning media and resources, teachers regulate the learning process and provide interpretation of content, while Islamic values are the basis for determining the behavior that needs to be instilled in students. These findings show that the success of the use of digital media is not determined by the sophistication of the devices used, but by the ability of teachers to integrate technology with the purpose of moral education.



Conclusion

This study concludes that digital media at SMA Negeri 11 Medan is integrated into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning through the use of smartphones, educational videos, Smart TVs, projectors, PowerPoint presentations, and online or social-media-based resources. These media are used to present religious and moral content, connect learning materials with students' daily experiences, and support classroom participation. The findings indicate that digital media

serves as a supporting pedagogical tool for moral education rather than functioning independently as a means of character formation. The study identified several teacher strategies in utilizing digital media for moral development, including selecting relevant digital content, connecting digital materials with Islamic moral values, providing examples of appropriate behavior, habituating students to positive conduct, and supervising the use of digital devices. These strategies were reflected in observed behaviors such as prayer before learning, respectful interaction with teachers, discipline, responsibility in completing assignments, participation in discussions, and cooperation. Student interviews also indicated that educational videos, exemplary stories, religious advice, and examples related to everyday life helped make moral content easier to understand.

The implementation was supported by the availability of technological facilities, students' familiarity with smartphones, internet access, and teachers' involvement in guiding digital-media use. However, the study also identified challenges, including students' use of devices for entertainment, reduced concentration, dependence on instant information from search engines or AI, and the need for continuous supervision. The school's policy of collecting smartphones before learning and allowing their use when required for instructional activities represents a practical response to these challenges. For PAI teachers, the findings imply that digital media should be accompanied by clear learning objectives, appropriate content selection, direct guidance, and classroom supervision. Teachers should also connect digital content with concrete moral situations and encourage students to use technology for learning rather than unrestricted entertainment or instant-answer seeking. This conclusion is limited to the context of SMA Negeri 11 Medan and the perspectives and observations included in this qualitative study. Because the research did not employ experimental or quantitative measures of moral change, it cannot establish that digital media is effective in improving students' moral character. Future studies should examine the implementation of similar strategies across broader school contexts and use longitudinal, mixed-method, or experimental designs to investigate changes in students' moral behavior over time.



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