



From Religious Compliance to Digital Moral Action: Islamic Religious Education in Two Indonesian Secondary Schools

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Abstract:

The expansion of smartphone and social-media use has complicated the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in translating religious knowledge into consistent moral action. This study examined how IRE contributed to students' religiosity, discipline, responsibility, moral conduct, and digital ethics at two secondary schools in Bandung, Indonesia. Using a qualitative multi-site case study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis involving 12 purposively selected participants and were analyzed through within-site and cross-site procedures. The findings show that character-oriented IRE operated through three main pathways: classroom instruction, religious habituation, and teacher role modelling. Religiosity and general moral conduct were relatively well developed, while discipline and digital ethics remained less consistent. A recurring gap emerged between moral knowledge, externally regulated compliance, and autonomous moral action, particularly in students' digital behavior. Smartphones and social media functioned both as learning resources and as sources of distraction, emotional communication, cyberbullying, and weakened self-regulation. The study's main contribution is a structure-reflection balance that combines rules and habituation with ethical dialogue, digital role modelling, reflective learning, and school-family collaboration to support more autonomous moral action.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Education develops not only intellectual competence but also the values, dispositions, and practical judgment required for responsible participation in society. In Islamic education, knowledge is inseparable from faith, worship, moral conduct, and responsibility toward others. Character formation therefore requires schools to connect students' understanding of moral values with emotional commitment and consistent action in both physical and digital environments (Halstead, 2004; Lickona, 1991; Sanzi et al., 2025).

This responsibility has become more complex as smartphones and social media increasingly shape adolescents' learning, communication, identity construction, and peer relationships. Digital technology can provide educational resources, religious content, social connection, and opportunities for creative participation. However, problematic or poorly supervised use may also expose adolescents to distraction, hostile communication, cyberbullying, misinformation, and difficulties in self-regulation. Research cautions against assuming uniform effects because digital experiences differ according to content, context, personal vulnerability, and patterns of use, but it consistently emphasizes the need for contextual and ethically oriented guidance (Bautista et al., 2022; Odgers & Jensen, 2020; Valkenburg et al., 2022).

Indonesia's policy framework assigns schools a formal responsibility for developing students' faith, noble character, and social responsibility. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System identifies belief in God and noble character as central educational outcomes, while Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 requires character strengthening to be integrated into classroom instruction, school culture, family involvement, and community participation. Government Regulation Number 17 of 2025 further establishes responsibilities for protecting children in electronic-system environments. These policies indicate that character education in contemporary schools must encompass conduct in both offline and online settings (Republic of Indonesia, 2003, 2017, 2025).

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) has a strategic role within this framework because it connects religious knowledge with worship, moral conduct, and everyday decision-making. Al-Ghazali's educational thought emphasizes *ta'dib*, disciplined habituation, and *uswatun hasanah*, or exemplary conduct, as processes through which knowledge becomes character. Lickona conceptualizes a comparable progression through moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, while Sanusi's six value systems – theological, ethical, aesthetic, logical, physiological, and teleological – provide a broader framework for examining how students reason, act, regulate themselves, and orient their lives toward meaningful purposes (Al-Ghazali, 2015; Lickona, 1991; Sanusi, 2017).

The role of IRE teachers consequently extends beyond explaining religious doctrines. Teachers must design learning experiences, model responsible conduct, establish religious habits, guide reflection, evaluate character development, and help students apply Islamic ethics to digital communication. Social learning theory suggests that students learn values partly by observing credible adults, whereas digital-citizenship research emphasizes the importance of explicitly teaching respectful communication, information verification, privacy, security, and accountability. IRE teachers therefore need to become both moral exemplars and digital role models whose online and offline behavior is consistent with the values they teach (Almethen & Alomair, 2024; Bandura, 1986; Quayyum et al., 2021).

Character development is also influenced by the interaction of school practices, family supervision, peer culture, and digital environments. Studies indicate that problematic internet use is associated with parenting practices and that parental mediation becomes more constructive when it combines communication, guidance, supervision, and consistent boundaries. School-family cooperation is therefore particularly important because adolescents' smartphone use occurs largely outside formal lessons, where direct teacher supervision is limited (Lukavská et al., 2022; Mekonen et al., 2024; Munastiwi, 2021).

A preliminary study conducted in April 2026 involved brief interviews with two IRE teachers and observations of 20 Grade XI students at each of SMA Ma'arif Bandung and SMK Medina Bandung. Approximately 70% of the observed and interviewed students reported using smartphones for more than five hours per day, predominantly for entertainment, while approximately 60% acknowledged having engaged in communication they considered

inappropriate or disrespectful on social media. The teachers also reported problems involving declining discipline, emotional online comments, distraction, and inconsistency in worship. These descriptive preliminary findings are not intended to represent all students, but they identify a local discrepancy between students' knowledge of religious values and their application in digitally mediated behavior.

The two schools provide relevant comparative settings because they implement structured religious programs while differing in institutional characteristics and program intensity. SMA Ma'arif Bandung combines IRE lessons with *Asmaul Husna* recitation, prayers, Qur'an reading, classical Islamic-text study, and congregational *Zuhr* prayer. SMK Medina Bandung implements a more intensive program involving scheduled Qur'an recitation, *istighosah*, *Duha* and *hajat* prayers, congregational *Zuhr* prayer, and a certified Qur'an-memorization target. Despite these programs, both schools continue to face difficulties related to discipline, self-control, and digital ethics, suggesting that structured religious activities do not automatically ensure the internalization of values or their transfer to online conduct (Bautista et al., 2022; Sanzi et al., 2025; Sobri, 2021).

Previous studies have examined adolescent social-media experiences, problematic internet use, digital citizenship, Islamic moral education, and teacher strategies. Nevertheless, these areas have frequently been studied separately. Research remains limited on how IRE is implemented simultaneously through classroom learning, religious habituation, teacher modelling, and digital-ethics instruction, and how these processes shape the movement from moral knowledge to internalized commitment and moral action. Comparative qualitative evidence from senior secondary and vocational schools with different religious-program structures is also limited (Almethen & Alomair, 2024; Munastiwi, 2021; Odgers & Jensen, 2020).

This study addresses these gaps through a multi-site qualitative case study at SMA Ma'arif Bandung and SMK Medina Bandung. Its novelty lies in conceptualizing digital ethics as a character dimension alongside religiosity, discipline, responsibility, and general moral conduct; integrating Lickona's character components, Al-Ghazali's concepts of habituation and exemplary conduct, and Sanusi's six value systems; and examining smartphones and social media as contextual forces that may enable or constrain value internalization rather than as statistically tested moderating variables. The study aims to analyze the implementation of IRE through instruction, habituation, and teacher modelling; identify the character dimensions manifested by students; examine the dual contribution of smartphones and social media; and determine the supporting and constraining factors. The findings are expected to offer a theoretically grounded and context-sensitive framework for strengthening IRE, digital ethics, teacher development, and school-family collaboration in secondary education.



Method (منهج)

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a multi-site case study design. The design was selected to obtain a holistic and context-sensitive understanding of how Islamic Religious Education (IRE) was implemented to develop students' character in digitally mediated school environments. The multi-site approach enabled an in-depth examination of each school and a cross-site comparison of implementation patterns, student-character manifestations, digital-technology use, and contextual conditions at institutions with different educational orientations and religious programs (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Khan, 2022; Yin, 2018).

Research Sites and Participants

The study was conducted at SMA Ma'arif Bandung and SMK Medina Bandung in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. The sites were purposively selected because both implemented IRE as a compulsory subject, maintained structured religious-habitation programs, enrolled students who actively used smartphones and social media, and agreed to participate in the research. SMA Ma'arif Bandung enrolled 86 students and employed 10 teachers, with religious activities reflecting the school's Nahdlatul Ulama orientation. SMK Medina Bandung enrolled 297 students and employed 23 teachers, with more intensive Qur'an-recitation, prayer, *istighosah*, and memorization programs. The 12 core informants comprised one IRE teacher, four Grade XI students, and one principal or vice principal for student affairs from each school. Participants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in IRE and character-development programs. Snowball sampling was subsequently used when additional information was required until data saturation was reached (Patton, 2015).

Data Collection

Data were collected from April to May 2026 through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. The interviews examined IRE planning and implementation, religious habituation, teacher role modelling, students' religious character, discipline, responsibility, general moral conduct, digital ethics, smartphone and social-media use, and supporting and constraining factors. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant permission and transcribed verbatim. Observations were conducted two to three times per week and covered IRE lessons, religious routines, student conduct, teacher modelling, disciplinary practices, and smartphone use. Documentary evidence included lesson plans and teaching modules, religious-program schedules, school regulations, character-development records, assessment reports, and activity photographs. The use of multiple sources enabled the researchers to compare participants' accounts with observed practices and institutional records (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed iteratively using the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were first organized by school and participant category. The data were then coded according to IRE instruction, religious habituation, teacher role modelling, five character dimensions, digital-technology contributions, and supporting or constraining conditions. Lickona's moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action; Al-Ghazali's concepts of *ta'dib* and *uswatun hasanah*; and Sanusi's six value systems were used as interpretive categories, while additional themes were allowed to emerge inductively. Within-site analysis was conducted before cross-site matrices were developed to identify recurring patterns, contrasts, and contextual explanations across the two schools (Miles et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017).

Trustworthiness and Research Ethics

Trustworthiness was established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was strengthened through prolonged observation, source triangulation involving teachers, students, and school leaders, technique triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents, and member checking. Transferability was supported through detailed descriptions of the institutional and digital contexts of both schools. Dependability was maintained through an audit trail documenting data collection, coding, and analytical decisions, while confirmability was supported through a reflexive journal and the examination of evidence that did not fit the dominant patterns (Alexander, 2019; Nowell et al., 2017; Shenton, 2004). Formal institutional permission and informed consent were obtained before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and student participation required parental or guardian consent and student assent. Names were replaced with participant codes, identifying

information was excluded from the report, and research activities were arranged to avoid disrupting teaching and school programs.

Result (نتائج)

Classroom Implementation of Islamic Religious Education

Both schools incorporated character-development objectives into IRE instruction, but their planning, learning materials, technology use, and assessment practices differed. SMA Ma'arif Bandung integrated character values across its lesson plans and digital assignments, whereas SMK Medina Bandung provided more explicit learning material on social-media ethics.

At SMA Ma'arif Bandung, the lesson plans included religious values, discipline, responsibility, and moral behavior. The teacher assigned students to produce presentations, posters, and videos using Canva and other digital applications. A Smart TV and the Kelas Mat application were used to display learning resources, communicate tasks, and document student progress.

Classroom instruction at SMA Ma'arif combined lectures, question-and-answer sessions, religious advice, and digital assignments. Students were asked to relate Islamic teachings to everyday behavior, although classroom interaction remained largely teacher-directed. Character development was evaluated through observations, assignments, report cards, and the school's smart-class reporting system.

At SMK Medina Bandung, the Grade XI teaching module contained a specific section on social-media etiquette. The material addressed information verification, the prohibition of spreading false information, respectful commenting, and personal responsibility for online communication. The teacher used Qur'anic guidance, contextual examples, Kahoot, discussions, and activities described by the school as mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning.

Cross-site analysis showed that SMA Ma'arif Bandung used technology more frequently as a medium for producing and submitting learning tasks, while SMK Medina Bandung more explicitly treated digital ethics as learning content. Neither approach alone was sufficient to ensure responsible online behavior. Digital assignments required explicit ethical reflection, while ethical instruction required opportunities for students to apply and evaluate its principles.

Table 1. Cross-Site Comparison of Classroom IRE Implementation

Dimension	SMA Ma'arif Bandung	SMK Medina Bandung
Character integration	Integrated across lesson plans	Integrated into teaching modules
Digital-ethics content	Embedded indirectly in assignments and advice	Specific Grade XI section on social-media etiquette
Learning methods	Lecture, questions, advice, and digital assignments	Lecture, discussion, contextual examples, and Kahoot
Technology use	Canva, videos, Smart TV, and Kelas Mat	Kahoot and selected digital resources
Student products	Presentations, posters, and videos	Responses, discussions, and digital quizzes
Character assessment	Observation, assignments, report cards, and smart-class records	Observation during learning and school activities
Main limitation	Learning remained relatively teacher-directed	Character results were not formally reported to parents in detail

Religious Habituation and Teacher Role Modelling

Religious habituation and teacher modelling constituted the second pathway through

which the two schools implemented IRE. Both schools organized repeated religious activities, but SMK Medina Bandung implemented a more intensive and highly structured routine. The schools also differed in how explicitly teachers modelled appropriate digital behavior.

At SMA Ma'arif Bandung, the religious-habitation program included *Asmaul Husna* recitation, blessings upon the Prophet, Qur'an reading, *Duha* prayer, congregational *Zuhr* prayer, and classical Islamic-text study. Students were encouraged to participate through reminders and personal invitations. The routines were intended to develop religious awareness without relying primarily on punitive measures.

The IRE teacher at SMA Ma'arif modelled religious conduct by participating in worship, inviting students to the mosque, dressing according to the school's Islamic norms, and communicating respectfully. Students generally perceived the teacher's conduct as consistent with the religious values taught in class. However, explicit modelling of ethical smartphone and social-media use had not yet become a distinct component of the program.

SMK Medina Bandung implemented scheduled recitation of *Juz 30* every morning, Friday *istighosah*, *Duha* and *hajat* prayers, congregational *Zuhr* prayer, and a target of memorizing *Juz 30* before graduation. Educational consequences, such as writing short Qur'anic chapters, were applied when students violated selected rules. Teachers demonstrated worship practices and school discipline, although digital role modelling remained implicit rather than systematically discussed.

The comparison indicates that intensive routines strengthened the visibility and regularity of religious behavior but did not automatically demonstrate that students had internalized the underlying values. SMA Ma'arif showed a less intensive structure but provided greater space for voluntary participation among some students. SMK Medina created stronger behavioral structure, although several students continued to depend on supervision and rules.

Table 2. Cross-Site Comparison of Habituation and Teacher Modelling

Dimension	SMA Ma'arif Bandung	SMK Medina Bandung
Qur'an activities	Tadarus and classical Islamic-text study	Scheduled daily recitation and <i>Juz 30</i> memorization
Prayer routines	<i>Duha</i> and congregational <i>Zuhr</i> prayer	<i>Duha</i> , <i>hajat</i> , and congregational <i>Zuhr</i> prayer
Additional programs	<i>Asmaul Husna</i> and blessings upon the Prophet	Friday <i>istighosah</i> and memorization certification
Behavioral regulation	Advice, reminders, and invitations	Rules, supervision, and educational consequences
Physical modelling	Consistently demonstrated	Consistently demonstrated
Digital modelling	Not explicitly structured	Not explicitly structured
Dominant pattern	Greater voluntary awareness among some students	Stronger structure and external compliance

Manifestations of Student Character

Five character dimensions were examined: religiosity, discipline, responsibility, general moral conduct, and digital ethics. Students at both schools displayed positive development in several dimensions, but the strength and basis of the behaviors differed. Religious participation and general interpersonal conduct appeared stronger than discipline and digital ethics.

At SMA Ma'arif Bandung, religious character was generally visible through voluntary participation in prayer and religious routines. School reports estimated that approximately 70% of students demonstrated adequate discipline, while the remaining students required further guidance. A similar proportion submitted assignments on time. General moral conduct was regarded as positive, although cases of cyberbullying, extended smartphone use, and neglected prayer were identified.

At SMK Medina Bandung, religious practices were visible and regularly performed within the school's structured program. However, teachers reported that several students participated mainly because of school rules and supervision. Discipline remained a concern, as indicated by lateness, smoking incidents, and damage to school facilities. Students generally communicated respectfully with teachers, but harsh language occasionally occurred in peer interactions.

The comparison revealed different relationships between structure and personal awareness. Some SMA Ma'arif students participated less consistently but displayed voluntary religious awareness when they did participate. SMK Medina students demonstrated more regular observable religious behavior, although internal motivation was less evident among some participants. These patterns indicate that behavioral frequency and value internalization should be assessed as related but distinct dimensions.

Digital ethics remained the weakest character dimension at both sites. Students understood the need to verify information, avoid false content, communicate respectfully, and manage time responsibly. Nevertheless, emotional comments, cyberbullying, excessive entertainment use, and neglect of worship showed that knowledge was not consistently translated into online conduct.

Table 3. Cross-Site Comparison of Student-Character Manifestations

Character dimension	SMA Ma'arif Bandung	SMK Medina Bandung
Religiosity	Voluntary awareness visible among many students	Regular practice supported by structured rules
Discipline	Approximately 70% met expected standards	Lateness and other disciplinary incidents remained evident
Responsibility	Approximately 70% submitted tasks on time	Evident in structured tasks but dependent on supervision
General moral conduct	Generally positive; concerns addressed through advice and <i>istighfar</i>	Generally positive; occasional harsh peer communication
Digital ethics	Weak; cyberbullying and extended use were identified	Developing; verification taught, but emotional commenting persisted
Internal motivation	More visible among some students	Less evident among students dependent on rules
Central concern	Consistency of habituation and digital conduct	Transition from external compliance to internal commitment

Dual Contribution of Smartphones and Social Media

Smartphones and social media had both constructive and disruptive roles in students' character development. Their effects depended on the content accessed, the purpose of use, students' self-control, teacher guidance, and family supervision. Participants did not perceive digital technology as entirely beneficial or harmful.

The constructive contributions included access to Islamic lectures, Qur'an-learning materials, educational videos, independent learning resources, and information needed for assignments. Students could produce creative digital work and communicate efficiently with teachers and classmates. Some students also reported receiving motivation from religious speakers and other positive public figures online.

The disruptive effects included prolonged entertainment use, distraction from study, cyberbullying, emotional commenting, exposure to inappropriate language, and loss of time awareness. Teachers identified cases in which students delayed or neglected prayer because they were using smartphones. Notifications and social-media interaction also interrupted concentration and increased students' difficulty in regulating their behavior.

A recurrent pattern was the gap between knowing and doing. Students could explain appropriate digital behavior and identify the risks of false information, disrespectful comments, and excessive use. However, this knowledge did not consistently influence their actions when they experienced boredom, peer pressure, emotional reactions, or unrestricted access to digital entertainment.

Both schools responded by limiting smartphone use during learning and collecting devices when necessary. These measures improved classroom control but could not regulate students' activities outside school hours. Participants therefore emphasized that device restrictions needed to be combined with digital-literacy education, self-reflection, teacher modelling, and communication with parents.

Table 4. Constructive and Disruptive Contributions of Digital Technology

Aspect	Constructive contribution	Disruptive contribution
Religious learning	Access to lectures, Qur'an materials, and religious content	Superficial or fragmented consumption of religious content
Academic learning	Information access, independent study, and digital assignments	Distraction, reduced concentration, and delayed task completion
Communication	Faster interaction with teachers and peers	Emotional comments, harsh language, and cyberbullying
Creativity	Posters, presentations, videos, and quizzes	Entertainment use dominating productive activities
Social relationships	Wider networks and access to positive role models	Peer pressure and unreflective imitation
Time management	Easier access to schedules and learning information	Prolonged use and neglect of worship or study
Character process	Supports moral knowledge	May obstruct consistent moral action

Supporting Conditions, Constraints, and Strategic Responses

The implementation of character-oriented IRE was influenced by institutional collaboration, leadership support, facilities, teacher capacity, parent involvement, and students' self-regulation. These conditions interacted rather than operating separately. Strong religious programs remained vulnerable when digital guidance, staffing, or family supervision was insufficient.

At SMA Ma'arif Bandung, supporting factors included cooperation among teachers, the principal's support, available worship facilities, digital-learning resources, and formal character reporting. The school's relatively small number of students enabled closer interaction. However, the variation of student-centered learning methods and explicit digital-ethics instruction remained limited.

At SMK Medina Bandung, supporting factors included strong foundation and school-leadership support, representative worship facilities, a structured religious schedule, the Qur'an-memorization certification program, and parent involvement in joint *istighosah*. Teachers from different subjects participated in student guidance because the school employed only one IRE teacher for 12 classes.

The main constraints across the sites were excessive smartphone use, social-media

influence, limited student self-control, unequal teacher digital literacy, limited projectors and network access, and incomplete monitoring outside school. At SMK Medina Bandung, the limited number of IRE teachers created an additional workload problem. Disciplinary incidents further demonstrated that program intensity did not eliminate behavioral challenges.

The strategic responses identified by participants included strengthening digital-literacy instruction, producing engaging Islamic digital content, formalizing digital role modelling, developing character-assessment rubrics, communicating regularly with parents, and limiting device use during learning. Additional priorities included increasing the number of IRE teachers at SMK Medina, improving digital infrastructure, and balancing structured habituation with reflective activities that develop personal awareness.

Table 5. Supporting Conditions, Constraints, and Strategic Responses

Dimension	Supporting conditions	Constraints	Strategic responses
Teacher collaboration	Cross-subject involvement in character guidance	Responsibility may be unevenly distributed	Establish coordinated teacher roles
Leadership	Principal and foundation support	Program continuity depends on leadership	Formalize programs and monitoring
Facilities	Worship spaces and selected digital resources	Limited projectors and network access	Improve and actively use digital infrastructure
Teacher capacity	Committed IRE teachers	Unequal digital literacy and teacher shortages	Training and additional IRE staffing
Parent involvement	Meetings and joint religious activities	Limited supervision outside school	Regular school-family communication
Student factors	Interest in technology and religious content	Weak self-control and excessive use	Reflection, time-management, and digital-well-being guidance
School rules	Smartphone restrictions during learning	Control ends outside school	Combine rules with ethical understanding
Character evaluation	Observation and selected reporting systems	Inconsistent rubrics and parent reporting	Develop structured assessment and feedback



Discussion (مناقشة)

The findings indicate that character-oriented IRE operated through three interconnected pathways: classroom instruction, religious habituation, and teacher modelling. These pathways supported students' moral knowledge, emotional orientation, and behavioral practice, but their integration differed across the two schools. The results support Lickona's proposition that knowing moral principles does not automatically produce moral action and Al-Ghazali's emphasis on repeated practice and exemplary conduct in the formation of *akhlaq*. Sanusi's value framework further explains why character development involves theological orientation, ethical conduct, logical judgment, physiological self-regulation, and purposeful action rather than religious knowledge alone (Al-Ghazali, 2015; Lickona, 1991; Sanusi, 2017).

The contrast between the schools reveals that structured habituation can produce regular observable behavior without necessarily demonstrating internalized commitment. SMK Medina Bandung established intensive routines and clear behavioral expectations, while SMA Ma'arif Bandung provided more space for voluntary participation among some students. Neither model was fully sufficient on its own. Structure can establish behavioral consistency, but reflection is necessary for students to understand and personally accept the values underlying those routines.

Teacher modelling is also crucial because students evaluate the credibility of moral instruction through the consistency between teachers' messages and daily conduct (Bandura, 1986; Halstead, 2004; Lickona, 1991).

Digital technology complicated the transition from moral knowledge to moral action. Students understood information verification, respectful communication, and time management but did not apply them consistently when facing emotional reactions, peer pressure, or continuous entertainment access. This finding is consistent with research showing that social-media effects are heterogeneous and depend on individual, relational, and contextual conditions. It also supports intervention research indicating that cyberbullying prevention requires moral reasoning and collective participation rather than information delivery alone (Bautista et al., 2022; Odgers & Jensen, 2020; Valkenburg et al., 2022).

The findings extend the concept of teacher role modelling into digital conduct. Teachers at both schools provided visible examples of worship, dress, discipline, and respectful interaction, but neither school had formalized teachers' roles as digital moral exemplars. Explicit digital modelling could include demonstrating source verification, respectful commenting, privacy protection, purposeful device use, and self-regulation. This requires the integration of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge so that digital tools support Islamic learning without separating technical competence from ethical responsibility (Almethen & Alomair, 2024; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Quayyum et al., 2021).

The supporting and constraining conditions demonstrate that digital character education cannot be assigned exclusively to IRE teachers. Teacher shortages, limited infrastructure, varying digital competence, and the difficulty of monitoring students outside school require cooperation among school leaders, subject teachers, parents, and students. Parental mediation is particularly important because adolescent smartphone use continues beyond the reach of classroom rules. Communication, negotiated boundaries, and adult modelling are more likely to support self-regulation than restriction without explanation (Lukavská et al., 2022; Mekonen et al., 2024; Munastiwi, 2021).

The academic contribution of this study is threefold. Theoretically, it integrates Lickona's moral knowing-feeling-action sequence, Al-Ghazali's habituation and exemplary-conduct concepts, and Sanusi's six value systems into a framework for character-oriented IRE in digital environments. Empirically, it identifies a recurring gap between visible religious compliance and internal value commitment across two differently structured secondary schools. Conceptually, it positions smartphones and social media as contextual forces that can enable or constrain internalization rather than as statistically demonstrated moderating variables. The study consequently proposes a structure-reflection balance: school rules, habituation, and supervision should provide behavioral structure, while dialogue, digital role modelling, ethical problem-solving, and personal reflection should develop autonomous moral judgment.



Conclusion (خاتمة)

This study concludes that IRE developed student character through the interaction of classroom instruction, religious habituation, and teacher role modelling. SMA Ma'arif Bandung provided greater use of digital assignments and formal character reporting, whereas SMK Medina Bandung implemented more intensive religious routines and explicit instruction on social-media ethics. Across the two sites, religiosity and general moral conduct were more visible than discipline and digital ethics. The central finding is a gap between moral knowledge, externally regulated compliance, and autonomous moral action. Structured routines strengthened observable religious behavior, but they did not automatically produce internal

commitment. Smartphones and social media also had a dual contribution: they supported religious learning, creativity, and communication while simultaneously increasing distraction, emotional commenting, cyberbullying, and the risk of neglecting worship. Effective digital-era character education therefore requires a balance between behavioral structure and reflective processes that develop self-awareness and ethical judgment.

The study is limited to two schools in one city, 12 core participants, and a relatively short data-collection period, so its findings cannot be generalized statistically or interpreted as evidence of causal relationships. The character percentages reported by the schools were descriptive and were not obtained through standardized measurement. Future studies should involve more diverse schools, employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs, and develop validated instruments for assessing digital ethics and value internalization. Schools are recommended to integrate digital ethics explicitly into IRE modules, develop structured character-assessment rubrics, strengthen teachers' digital-pedagogical competence, and establish teachers as visible digital role models. SMK Medina Bandung should increase its number of IRE teachers, while both schools should improve digital infrastructure, involve parents in monitoring students' device use, and combine smartphone restrictions with dialogue, reflection, ethical problem-solving, and digital-well-being education

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