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## The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Shaping the Character of Elementary School Students in the Digital Era: A Case Study at SDN 010 Bontang Utara

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### Abstract

The rapid advancement of digital technology has the potential to erode the character and morality of elementary school students through exposure to negative content on social media, particularly when not counterbalanced by a strong foundation of Islamic Religious Education (IRE). This study aims to analyze the role of IRE in shaping students' character, to identify shifts in student character in the digital era, and to explore students' experiences in participating in IRE learning at SDN 010 Bontang Utara. This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with the principal, IRE teachers, homeroom teachers, students, parents, education staff, and the school committee, and documentation study. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with trustworthiness established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The results indicate that IRE at SDN 010 Bontang Utara has contributed meaningfully to instilling values of honesty, responsibility, patience, empathy, and humility through methods adapted to grade levels, ranging from habituation and modelling in lower grades to reflective-dialogical approaches in upper grades. However, its effectiveness is still constrained by intense exposure to negative digital content, which triggers character shifts such as the use of coarse language, declining manners, and digital bullying, particularly among upper-grade students. Students' learning experiences of IRE are generally positive, yet a gap remains between instructional content and the digital realities students face daily. This study recommends strengthening a more contextual, adaptive, and digitally literate approach to IRE grounded in Islamic values, alongside closer synergy among teachers, parents, and the school ecosystem as a moral safeguard for the digital generation.

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### Keywords

Islamic Religious Education; Character Formation; Digital Era; Elementary School; Case Study



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## INTRODUCTION

The era of fast-paced globalization has changed various aspects of human life, including the world of education. Digital technology that is increasingly advanced and accessible affects the way of teaching and learning, the interaction patterns between teachers and students, and the development of the students' own character (Bates, 2020; Suharto, 2023). Behind the convenience offered by the digital era, there are great challenges in shaping the moral character of the younger generation, especially for students at the elementary education level who are in a critical phase of mental and emotional development (Syafi'i, 2022; Rachmawati, 2021). Students who grow up in the digital age are not only exposed to positive information, but are also vulnerable to negative content that has the potential to affect their moral development.

In this context, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a strategic role because it not only teaches religious teachings, but also forms individuals with noble character and strong character in facing the current development of the times (Abdulrahman, 2023). Faith and character are the basic provisions of a person's faith which is the basis of all his behavior, as affirmed in QS. Luqman/31: 17-18 which commands the enforcement of prayer, the invitation to do good, the prohibition of doing wrong, patience, and the prohibition of being arrogant (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). Tafsir al-Misbah explained that this verse is a loving advice that leads children to worship perfectly while calling for goodness and preventing evil (Shihab, 2002). The value of exemplary is also affirmed through QS. al-Ahzab/33:21 who made the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him) the main role model, as well as QS. al-Furqan/25:63 which teaches humility and patience in the face of hate speech two attitudes that are very relevant in the midst of the distortion of social interaction in the age of social media. Tafsir Ibn Kathir emphasizes that the Prophet (saw) is a perfect example in spiritual, social, and moral aspects (Ibn Kathir, 2020), while the mufasir in the study of Surah al-Furqan emphasize the importance of self-control in interacting with others (al-Qurthubi, 2021).

Regulatively, Law Number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education emphasizes that education aims to develop Indonesian people with integrity, professionalism, and noble personality (Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2012), while Law Number 19 of 2016 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions contains provisions for the protection of children and adolescents from the negative influence of cyberspace (ITE Law, 2016). These two regulations reinforce the urgency of strengthening character education based on religious values in response to the challenges of digitalization.

Previous studies have shown a relatively consistent pattern of findings regarding the positive contribution of PAI to student character. Lutfiyah (2021) found that morality-based Islamic religious teaching in elementary schools has a positive effect on students' attitudes and behaviors, both in social and academic aspects. Nurjanah (2020) also reported that students who received intensive PAI tended to have better character in dealing with problems in their

environment. In line with that, Aisyah and Meiviani (2024) emphasized the role of Islamic education in shaping students' character in the digital era 4.0, while Al-Akhyar (2024) highlighted character strengthening through PAI in response to increasingly complex digital challenges. Khopipatu Salisah et al. (2024) through a literature review emphasized that PAI plays an important role in shaping students' character in the digital era, but its implementation often does not reach the affective dimension in depth. Dwikirani (2024) added that the role of PAI teachers in shaping morals in the digital era requires a more reflective and experience-based approach. The study of Nurazizah et al. (2024) on the strategy of instilling PAI values in shaping religious character in the era of globalization, and Rifai et al. (2024) on the internalization of national and religious character values, both emphasized that the success of religion-based character education is highly dependent on the consistency of methods and synergy of the educational ecosystem. Rifqi and Supriyadi (2024) strengthen these findings through a study of strategies for internalizing religious character values and the integrity of elementary school students, while Karma Yuhana (2022) emphasized the urgency of the role of the family in shaping children's religious character in the Society 5.0 era.

Although the above literature consistently affirms the positive role of PAI on student character, most of these studies are still normative-conceptual or use a literature review approach, with limitations on exploring students' micro-experiences contextually in the field. Ali and Anton (2016) in the study of the implementation of PAI on the development of students' character has shown the importance of field observation, but has not specifically touched on the dynamics of digital influence which has been much more intensive in the last decade. This gap underlies the urgency of this research, namely that there have not been many empirical studies based on case studies that simultaneously reveal three dimensions at once: the role of PAI in character formation, the shift in students' character due to digital influences, and students' subjective experiences in interpreting PAI learning itself, especially at the elementary school level in urban areas of East Kalimantan.

Initial observations at SDN 010 Bontang Utara on students in grades I to VI show that even though digital technology has been used in the learning process, the negative influence of the use of gadgets and social media is still felt by some students. Around 35% of students are indicated to be affected by negative content in cyberspace, shown through increased bullying behavior, use of profane language, and decreased discipline and responsibility, while around 65% of other students continue to show good behavior. This condition emphasizes that strengthening PAI is very necessary as a systematic effort to form a strong value filter so that students are not easily affected by the negative impact of digital development. The reality on the ground shows that the implementation of PAI is not fully optimal: learning still tends to be conventional and does not provide adequate digital literacy to fortify students from the negative impacts of technology, so there is a gap between ideal expectations and reality on the ground.

Based on this background, this research was formulated to answer three research questions: (1) how is the role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping the character of

students at SDN 010 Bontang Utara in the digital era; (2) how the character of SDN 010 North Bontang students in the digital era; and (3) how the students' experience in participating in Islamic Religious Education at SDN 010 Bontang Utara is related to the formation of their character. The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of PAI in the formation of student character, identify student character in the digital era, and explore students' experiences in participating in PAI related to the formation of their character. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of the study of Islamic values-based character education in the digital era, as well as a practical contribution for PAI teachers, homeroom teachers, school principals, parents, and education policy makers in designing strategies to strengthen students' character that is more contextual and adaptive to the challenges of digitalization.

The novelty of this research lies in the use of a single case study design that combines medium-term participatory observation with in-depth interviews across roles principals, PAI teachers, homeroom teachers, students, parents, education staff, and school committees so as to be able to capture the dynamics of character formation in a multi-perspective and longitudinal manner in the same unit of analysis. In contrast to literature review studies that are conceptual synthesis (Khopipatu Salisah et al., 2024) or large-scale survey studies that tend to lose depth in the local context, this study specifically explores how the dissonance between moral knowledge and the actualization of student behavior is formed gradually throughout grades I to VI, as well as identifying the most strategic intervention points in the primary education cycle. Thus, this research not only enriches the treasure of PAI studies in the digital era descriptively, but also offers a map of character development levels that can be an empirical reference for designing a PAI curriculum that is more adaptive to the challenges of digitalization at the elementary school level.

## **METHODS**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to gain a deep understanding of a complex and contextual socio-religious phenomenon, not just describing the surface of symptoms in a large sample (Patilima, 2021). Qualitative research emphasizes first-hand understanding through direct involvement of researchers with the subject and research background, resulting in authentic and meaningful data (Bungin, 2018). The qualitative method is considered relevant because the object of the study, namely the role of PAI in the formation of student character, is dynamic, developing, and full of values (Sugiyono, 2021).

The research was carried out at SDN 010 North Bontang, a public elementary school in Gunung Elai Village, North Bontang District, Bontang City, East Kalimantan Province, with a total of 519 students spread from grade I to grade VI. The selection of the location was based on the consideration that this school represents the typical dynamics of urban elementary schools that face the challenges of digitalization intensively, as well as having organized PAI

learning on a regular basis so that it is relevant to examine the interaction between religious learning and the influence of digital on students' character (Darmadi, 2020).

The source of research data consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with school principals, elementary and upper-middle-class PAI teachers, homeroom teachers of grades II, III, IV, V, and VI, students in grades IV-VI, parents, education staff, and school committee chairs, who were purposively selected because they were considered to have direct knowledge and experience related to the research focus (Arikunto, 2023). Secondary data were obtained from school documents, institutional profiles, and relevant supporting literature. The research instrument is the researcher himself (human instrument) assisted by interview guidelines and observation guidelines, in line with the view that in naturalistic research, humans are the main instruments that are most responsive to the complexity of social reality (Sugiyono, 2020).

Data collection was carried out through three complementary techniques, namely participatory observation of the PAI learning process and student interaction in the school environment, semi-structured interviews with all informants, and documentation studies of institutional data and recordings of learning activities. Observations were carried out in stages from January to February 2025 covering PAI learning in the lower, middle, and upper grades, student interaction during break hours, and the use of digital technology in religious learning, in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of field dynamics from various angles at the grade level.

Data analysis follows an interactive model that includes three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. Data reduction was carried out by sorting and focusing the data from interviews and observations on three research focuses; The presentation of data is carried out in the form of a thematic narrative that groups the views of informants based on class level and role; while drawing conclusions is carried out inductively by continuing to verify findings through triangulation of sources and methods (Sugiyono, 2023). The validity of the data was tested through four criteria of trustworthiness, namely credibility through triangulation of sources and member checks, transferability through detailed descriptions of the research context (thick description), dependability through audit trails of the research process, and confirmability through consistency between field data and researcher interpretation.

The analytical framework of this research is prepared based on three interrelated focuses, namely (1) the institutional and pedagogical role of PAI in instilling character values, (2) the actual condition of students' character as the impact of the interaction between religious learning and digital exposure, and (3) the subjective experience of students as direct recipients of the educational process. These three focuses were analyzed in stages based on the low-class (I-II), middle-class (III-IV), and upper-class (V-VI) groups, assuming that the characteristics of cognitive and social-emotional development at each level influence the internalization patterns of values differently (Majid & Andayani, 2021). This tiered approach allows researchers to map

patterns of character change longitudinally-contextually, rather than limiting the analysis to a single point in time or a single age group.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Shaping Students' Character**

The results of observations in the lower, middle, and upper grades show that the role of PAI in the formation of moral character takes place gradually but has not fully touched the affective dimension of students in depth. In the observation of learning in grade 5, for example, the researcher found that the delivery of commendable moral material was still dominated by the one-way lecture method, with student responses tending to be less enthusiastic. These findings indicate that the delivery of moral values is still informative-cognitive and has not been followed by a systematic character evaluation mechanism to measure the extent to which these values are internalized in students' behavior outside the classroom.

Low-grade PAI teachers emphasized that religious education at the age of 6-8 years is fundamental because children are in the golden phase of personality formation, so learning is not limited to memorizing prayers and short surahs, but also moral habits such as saying greetings, telling the truth, and respecting teachers, which have been proven to shape students to be more polite and easy to direct. Meanwhile, middle grade PAI teachers apply a more contextual approach by associating the values of the Qur'an to students' daily situations, such as honesty during exams and empathy for friends who are struggling, so that PAI is positioned not just as a subject but as a life guide that must be embedded in real behavior. The homeroom teacher also emphasized that students who actively participate in religious learning tend to be more orderly and not easily in dispute with their peers, and show the importance of coordination between PAI teachers and homeroom teachers so that the values taught in religious classes are consistently strengthened in general classes.

In terms of methods, the findings show a diversity of approaches adapted to the age group: habituation and example in the lower classes, group discussions and role playing in the middle class, and reflective and dialogical approaches in the upper classes that encourage students to think critically about everyday moral dilemmas and relate them to Islamic values. The common thread of the diversity of these methods is the consistency between what is taught in the PAI class and what is practiced in the daily classroom, which can only be realized through close synergy between PAI teachers and homeroom teachers. These findings reinforce the results of studies by Khopipatu Salisah et al. (2024) and Dwikirani (2024) that the effectiveness of PAI in the digital era is highly dependent on a variety of methods that are responsive to the stage of student development, rather than on a single uniform approach.

The integration of noble moral values honesty, patience, and humility into PAI learning is carried out organically through a narrative and inductive approach based on students' experiences, for example by relating the story of the example of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) to the real situation experienced by students, or inviting students to reflect on personal experiences before entering into certain moral materials. Homeroom teachers reinforce this

process through class rules that reflect moral values, verbal appreciation, and the habit of self-evaluation (muhasabah). This pattern describes a holistic integration model that places noble morals not as mere cognitive content, but as a habitus that is built gradually and continuously through the collaboration of all elements of educators in schools, in line with the findings of Rifaii et al. (2024) regarding the effective internalization of national and religious character values through cross-context habituation.

### **The Character of SDN 010 North Bontang Students in the Digital Era**

The findings of the study revealed a significant shift in student character along with the widespread use of gadgets among students. Observations during recess recorded a number of instances of students saying profanity commonly used in online games without guilt, indicating that digital negative language has become accustomed to their daily interactions. The education staff who has been on duty at the school for a long time also emphasized that students' social interaction is now more centered on gadgets than traditional games that used to dominate break time, accompanied by a decline in the habit of greeting and greeting teachers.

Homeroom teachers at various levels consistently reported similar shifts: decreased attention spans and patience, increased tendency to look for shortcuts/instant in completing assignments, weakened empathy and social solidarity, and stronger individualism compared to previous generations of students. Low-grade PAI teachers even noted that students who have just entered grade 1 have brought digital habits formed since the age of toddlers, so the challenge of character formation starts from a much more complex point than the previous generation. The school committee, as a representation of parents and the community, also voiced the same concerns about changes in children's attitudes after intensive use of gadgets, ranging from irritability when gadgets are taken to imitating negative behavior from online content.

Negative behaviors observed included imitation of the rude speech style of online game characters, imitation of inappropriate movements from social media, to an increase in cases of verbal and digital bullying, particularly in high grades, which was characterized by the use of derogatory terms and the dissemination of mocking content through conversation groups. These findings are consistent with the results of studies by Al-Akhyar (2024) and Aisyah and Meiviani (2024) which emphasized that exposure to digital content without religious value filters contributes to an increase in deviant behavior at elementary school age. The values that are most vulnerable to erosion honesty, tawadhu, qana'ah, istiqamah, and adab show interrelated patterns: honesty eroded by a culture of digital anonymity, tawadhu by a culture of self-presentation, qana'ah by social comparison, istiqamah by instant stimulation, and manners by digital figures that do not reflect politeness.

### **Students' Experience in Participating in PAI Related to Character Building**

Students' experiences in participating in PAI are generally positive. Observations showed that students were most enthusiastic when teachers conveyed the exemplary stories of the prophets through interactive sessions such as alternating storytelling and oral questions

and answers, but enthusiasm decreased significantly when learning shifted to monotonous memorization and practice of questions. PAI teachers reported that students generally liked the stories of the prophets and companions because they felt like adventure stories full of wisdom, and felt calmer when learning to recite compared to other subjects, although some students complained about learning too much memorization without explaining the meaning.

At the upper-class level, students show a more critical preference, which is to like discussion and Q&A sessions about contextual moral issues such as attitudes toward friends who cheat or how to behave when ridiculed on social media questions that are highly relevant to their daily digital experiences. Parents also witness the impact of PAI learning at home, for example, the habit of praying before eating without being reminded, kissing parents' hands before leaving for school, or reminding parents to carry out prayers, which shows that the values taught at school are beginning to be internalized in family habits.

Nonetheless, the findings also reveal a fairly striking gap between student behavior inside and outside the PAI classroom: only a small percentage of students consistently display behaviors that reflect PAI values such as helping friends, saying hello, and being patient when waiting in line for activities outside of the classroom. Some students who seem polite during learning actually participate in making fun of friends or speaking rudely during breaks, indicating that the internalization of values is not fully stable and consistent across contexts. On the other hand, there are also concrete testimonies of significant behavioral changes, such as students who were originally temperamental to become more able to control themselves after learning about patience, or students who voluntarily share food after a discussion of the hadith on the virtue of sharing. This pattern of findings is in line with Rifqi and Supriyadi (2024) who emphasized that the internalization of religious character values in elementary school students is gradual and is greatly influenced by the contextual relevance of learning materials to students' life experiences.

## **Discussion**

Character education in the digital age is one of the most crucial issues in the contemporary education landscape. If in the previous era schools were the dominant space for value formation, now the digital space has taken a much more massive role in shaping students' preferences, perceptions, and even moral identities. In this context, PAI is no longer faced with traditional challenges alone, but must compete with the flow of digital content that takes place almost without time and space, as highlighted by Nurazizah et al. (2024) in a study of PAI's value instilling strategies in the era of globalization.

Conceptually, PAI has a normative and pedagogical mandate to form people with noble character through the internalization of the values of honesty, tawadhu, qana'ah, istiqamah, empathy, and responsibility. The internalization of values in the perspective of Islamic education is not a mere process of cognitive transfer, but a process of habituation (ta'dib), exemplification (uswah), and the formation of a sustainable moral habitus (Majid & Andayani, 2021; Nata, 2019). When the digital space presents instant culture, anonymity, and popularity-based social validation, the process of internalizing those values faces structural resistance that

is not simple. The findings of this study show that normatively and structurally, PAI has been implemented in accordance with the applicable curriculum, but its effectiveness in shaping students' moral character in the digital era still faces serious challenges in the form of a gap between students' moral knowledge and the actualization of their behavior in real life.

Cross-grade analysis shows a typical pattern of development. In the lower grades, the influence of PAI on character formation is relatively strong because students are in the development phase of imitation and habituation, so intervention through example and routine has proven to be quite effective in forming polite, patient, and obedient behavior although teachers must make corrections to digital habits that have been formed from an early age. Entering the middle class, students begin to build their own preferences and opinions based on the consumption of digital content, so that the approach of discussion and inductive reflection shows the potential to be more effective than one-way lectures, although without structured character evaluation, the internalization of values tends to be situational. In the upper class, digital influence has developed into part of the construction of students' social identity, where the social hierarchy based on digital popularity and the ownership of gadgets becomes a new social status indicator that is contrary to the principles of *tawadhu* and *qana'ah* in Islamic teachings.

The phenomenon of moral dissonance became one of the most critical findings in the study: students knew that lying, mocking, and bullying were despicable acts, but still did so in social practice. This condition shows that the internalization of values has not yet reached the stage of integration into the system of personal moral consciousness moral knowledge stops at the cognitive level and has not yet transformed into a binding ethical commitment. The increase in verbal and digital bullying in high grades is a clear indicator of the erosion of the values of empathy and honesty, which shows that aggressive communication patterns from the digital world have been internalized as a new social norm in the school environment, in line with the concerns raised by Zalsabella (2023) regarding the challenges of instilling children's character and moral values during the technological transition.

From the perspective of developmental psychology, the impact of digital is also seen in the decrease in attention span, patience, and delayed gratification, because students are used to short-duration content and quick stimulation so that conventional learning feels less interesting. This condition has a direct impact on the effectiveness of PAI, especially when lecture and memorization methods still dominate the learning process. On the other hand, the use of digital technology in PAI learning such as prophet story videos, Islamic animations, and interactive quizzes has been shown to increase students' enthusiasm and emotional engagement, but this utilization has not been integrated into a systematic value-based digital literacy framework; technology still functions as a pedagogical tool, not yet fully a means of forming Islamic digital ethics.

The limited time of PAI learning in schools, which lasts only about three hours per week, is the most obvious structural obstacle compared to the intensity of exposure to negative digital content outside of school that far exceeds the duration of moral interventions in the

classroom. This inequality puts schools in a defensive, rather than preventive and proactive position, in shaping the character of students. The lack of synergy between schools and families strengthens this gap: the absence of a structured Islamic digital literacy-based parenting program causes the values instilled in schools to not receive consistent reinforcement at home, in line with the findings of Karma Yuhana (2022) about the urgency of the role of the family in shaping children's religious character in the Society 5.0 era.

However, this study also found a number of positive practices that showed potential for improvement, including weekly self-reflection sessions (*muhasabah*), digital literacy group guidance programs, and extracurricular innovations based on creative *da'wah* content. These findings confirm that the integration of Islamic values with digital media is not impossible, but requires a planned and consistent learning design. The most strategic intervention lies at the lower class level, because in this phase digital influence is still imitative and has not yet formed a permanent identity, so strong character habituation from an early age can be a long-term investment to minimize resistance to negative digital influences at the high class level.

Thus, the formation of students' moral character in the digital era at SDN 010 Bontang Utara cannot be understood solely as a pedagogical problem, but as a problem of a moral ecosystem that involves schools, families, and society simultaneously. PAI remains the main motor for the internalization of values, but its success depends heavily on the integration of contextual methods, morality-based digital literacy, school-family synergy, and preventive approaches from the elementary grade. Without this systemic transformation, PAI will continue to be in a reactive position in the face of increasingly strong digital currents; However, with collaborative and adaptive strategies, PAI has the potential to become a relevant and transformative moral fortress for today's digital generation, strengthening the theoretical argument built by Qomari (2020) regarding the principles and scope of moral faith education as a character foundation that is cross-eras.

### **Implications and Limitations of Research**

Theoretically, the findings of this study strengthen the argument that the internalization of values in Islamic education is a long-term habituation process that cannot be reduced to mere cognitive achievement, in line with the concepts of *ta'dib* and *uswah hasanah* which have long been the foundation of Islamic pedagogy (Nata, 2019; Daradjat, 2020). This research expands this understanding by showing that in the digital era, the habituation process takes place in direct competition with digital stimuli that are much more frequency-intensive and more algorithmically personalized, so that the conventional character education model needs to be revitalized by including the dimension of value-based digital literacy as an integral part of the PAI curriculum, not just additional content that is incidental.

Practically, the findings regarding differences in patterns of internalization of grades in lower, middle, and upper grades provide important implications for the design of developmentally staged character programs, rather than a uniform approach for all grade levels. Schools can prioritize intensive value habituation investment in the lower classes as the foundation of moral resilience, while developing more intensive digital dilemma discussion

modules in the upper classes to respond to the complexity of the influence of social media on the construction of students' social identities. Three-way synergy between PAI teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents also needs to be formalized through structured communication mechanisms, not just incidental interactions, so that consistency in strengthening values can be maintained across classrooms and homes.

This research has a number of limitations that need to be stated honestly. First, as a single case study in one public elementary school in Bontang City, the findings of this study are contextual and their transferability to other school settings needs to consider the suitability of similar socio-demographic characteristics (Patilima, 2021). Second, data on the percentage of students affected by negative content was obtained from the observation and estimation of informants, not from standard measurement instruments, so it is indicative and not a statistical generalization. Third, this study focuses on the perspective of teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents as observers, with a relatively limited portion of students' voices compared to the portion of adult voices, so further research is recommended to expand the method of collecting data directly from students, for example through reflective journals or student-specific focus group discussions, to enrich understanding of the child's own perspective.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes three main findings. First, Islamic Religious Education at SDN 010 Bontang Utara has made a real contribution to the formation of students' moral character through instilling the values of honesty, responsibility, patience, and humility, with methods adapted to each age level of students, ranging from habituation and example in the lower class to a reflective and dialogical approach in the upper class. However, its effectiveness still faces serious obstacles in the form of inequality between the limited time of PAI learning in schools and the massive exposure to negative digital content outside of school, which is exacerbated by the weak synergy between teachers, parents, and families in building an integrated and sustainable character education ecosystem.

Second, the character of SDN 010 North Bontang students in the digital era has undergone a significant shift due to the influence of digital content, as reflected in the weakening of the values of honesty, *tawadhu*, empathy, patience, and manners to adults, as well as the emergence of negative behaviors such as the use of abusive language, imitation of inappropriate content, and digital-based bullying which is increasingly worrying, especially in high grades. These impacts are systemic and cross-contextual, requiring an integrated response involving PAI teachers, counseling guidance teachers, homeroom teachers, parents, and the entire school ecosystem.

Third, students' experiences in participating in PAI related to the formation of their moral character in the digital era are generally positive, especially through exemplary story methods and moral discussions that have been proven to be able to internalize the values of honesty, empathy, and responsibility in students' daily behavior. However, there is still a gap

between PAI materials and students' digital reality, because learning has not explicitly discussed social media ethics and digital literacy based on Islamic values.

Based on these findings, this study recommends several strategic steps. PAI teachers need to transform from a cognitive-rote approach to contextual and interactive learning that integrates Islamic values-based digital literacy modules. Homeroom teachers need to strengthen synergy with PAI teachers through structured coordination so that moral values are consistently strengthened across subjects. School principals need to design comprehensive digital-based character education policies, including pedagogical training for PAI teachers and anti-bullying programs that are integrated with religious learning. Parents need to increase their children's digital consumption assistance guided by Islamic values and establish regular communication with the school, while school committees need to support Islamic values-based parenting programs in a sustainable manner. The next research is suggested to develop and test the effectiveness of the Islamic digital literacy-based PAI learning model in a more measurable manner, including through a quantitative approach or mixed-methods, in order to produce more operational recommendations for the development of character education in the digital era.

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