

## The Role of Islamic Education in Building Moral and Spiritual Awareness in the Digital Era

<sup>1</sup>Siti Rahma Aliyatussyarifah, <sup>2</sup>Siti Khoirunisa, <sup>3</sup>Siti Maryam, <sup>4</sup>Sufina Sari

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>rahmaaliyatussyarifah@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>khoirunisasiti747@gmail.com,

<sup>3</sup>sitimaryam260806@gmail.com, <sup>4</sup>sufinasari91@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in enhancing students' moral and spiritual awareness in the digital era. The research was driven by the increasing moral degradation and ethical challenges resulting from the uncontrolled use of technology. Islamic education, through the learning of aqidah, ibadah, akhlak, and social ethics, is expected to develop moral integrity and strengthen spiritual values among students in navigating digital challenges. Using a qualitative descriptive method, this study employed semi-structured interviews with fifty students from the Islamic Religious Education Department at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, selected purposively based on their relevance to the research topic. The findings showed that akhlak was the most influential aspect in shaping students' moral awareness (42%), followed by aqidah (28%), ibadah (18%), and social ethics (12%). Akhlak education helps students cultivate honesty, self-control, and digital ethics, while aqidah fosters awareness of divine accountability. Furthermore, ibadah develops discipline and sincerity, and social ethics promotes fairness and social responsibility in online interactions. Overall, Islamic Religious Education plays an essential role in integrating moral and spiritual values into students' digital behavior, fostering ethical, responsible, and faith-based digital citizens in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Keywords:** *Islamic Religious-Education; Moral awareness; Spiritual consciousness.*

### INTRODUCTION

In this digital era, technological advancement is rapidly evolving, and all kinds of information can be easily accessed without boundaries or filters. The development of technology in this digital age has created the openness of information that influences all levels of society. Technological progress in the digital era has two sides, positive and negative. The positive side of life is that knowledge from all over the world can be reached without the limits of time and space. In contrast, the downside is the emergence of deviations from values, norms, rules, and morals that contradict social principles. In other words, it all depends on how individuals use technological advancements in this digital era, whether wisely or otherwise (Sofyana et al., 2023).

One of the significant challenges of the digital age is the increasingly visible moral decline across various layers of society. Social transformation and technological progress have brought significant impacts on behavioral changes, including politeness, religiosity, and social ethics. Norms of decency and religious values that were once highly upheld are now slowly being erased by the unstoppable wave of modernization. The rapid development of information and communication

technology has indeed encouraged massive social transformation. However, it has also resulted in the emergence of moral deviation, or what is often referred to as moral degradation, arising from technological use without spiritual and ethical reinforcement.

Morality is a form of community agreement about what is appropriate or inappropriate to do and has its own system of law. Almost all societies have their own moral order, and even remote or small communities maintain ethics and morality within their unique systems. It is not uncommon to find several forms of punishment for those who violate moral principles. The most severe punishments for violating morality include social ostracism, continuous fear, and restrictions on everyday life (Muttaqin et al., 2023).

According to Thomas Lickona, there are ten indicators of moral degradation, namely crime, dishonesty, stealing, disobedience to rules, student fights, selfishness, self-harm, engaging in sexual behavior outside of marriage, using offensive language, and drug abuse. There are also global factors contributing to moral degradation, including the widespread dominance of materialistic worldviews without spirituality, success being measured more by material achievements than morality, moral laxity due to Western cultural influence, the promotion of global culture through food, fashion, and entertainment, increasing competition, the rise of individualism and apathy toward the environment, and the lack of family guidance and supervision (Sofyana et al., 2023).

Moral and spiritual awareness are fundamental aspects in shaping a holistic human personality. Morality guides individuals to act in accordance with established values and norms, while spiritual awareness directs them to connect every action to divine values. Moral as human behavior is based on the awareness that one is bound by an obligation to achieve what is good, in accordance with the values and norms prevailing in the environment (Adhani et al., 2024). In Islamic thought, morality, or *akhlaq*, is not only about social relations but also reflects an individual's inner spiritual state. Ibn Miskawaih explained that morality is an attitude embedded in the soul that drives one to act without reflection or deliberation. This concept holds that morality arises from an inner consciousness cultivated through continuous habituation and spiritual purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs*).

Spiritual awareness is viewed as the ultimate goal of human life, encompassing the search for deeper knowledge and a more profound experience of one's relationship with God, as well as the pursuit of a meaningful and harmonious life (Wahid & Maskhuroh, 2024). Sufi practices such as *dhikr*, contemplation, and self-purification serve to maintain balance between the spiritual life and the rapid pace of technological advancement. In the digital era, individuals need to be aware of how

technology shapes their moral and spiritual consciousness and take steps to maintain harmony between their digital existence and spiritual life (Wahid & Maskhuroh, 2024). Ethics are rules that help humans determine what is right and what is wrong. Therefore, every individual must have “awareness” in social media and be able to distinguish it from social reality (Ismanto et al., 2022).

In a world increasingly connected by technology, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) bears a great responsibility to guide students in integrating moral and spiritual intelligence into their digital lives. The term morality is often used for the same purpose as the words moral and ethics. Therefore, akhlaq education is often intended for ethics, value, or moral education (Hibatillah, 2022). The Islamic education curriculum emphasizes that its ultimate goal is to nurture individuals who are pious and possess noble character, capable of practicing Islamic teachings in their daily lives (Khaidir Fadil et al., 2023).

Uncontrolled use of technology can undermine society's morality, especially among children and adolescents (Iwani et al., 2024). In this situation, Islamic Religious Education functions not only as a medium for transmitting religious knowledge but also as an instrument for fostering character and spirituality in accordance with contemporary developments. Through holistic education, students are expected to preserve their moral integrity while reinforcing spiritual awareness as an ethical foundation for life in the digital age.

In the digital era, students are not only required to master technology but also to maintain moral integrity and spiritual consciousness when facing various ethical challenges online. Therefore, integrating moral and spiritual values into Islamic Religious Education is essential. Through this integration, students of the Islamic Religious Education Department at the State Islamic University of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten are expected to strengthen their faith, build noble character, and apply Islamic ethics in their digital interactions. Furthermore, this awareness will not only shape their personal morality but also prepare them to become responsible digital citizens who contribute positively to society. Thus, this study aims to investigate the perspectives of Islamic Religious Education students at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten regarding the importance of moral and spiritual awareness in the digital era, as part of efforts to enhance the Islamic education curriculum and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## **METHODS**

### **Subjects of Research**

The subjects of this research were 50 students from the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Department at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. They were selected

purposely based on their relevance to the research theme. As students of Islamic Religious Education, they are actively engaged in learning about Islamic values, morality, and spirituality through both theoretical and practical courses. Therefore, they are considered suitable participants for exploring moral and spiritual awareness, especially in the face of the challenges of the digital era, where moral and spiritual principles are often tested by rapid technological advancement.

### **Instruments and Interview Questions**

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, with semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection instrument. As stated by Sugiyono (2010), qualitative research is descriptive, meaning that data are collected in words rather than numbers. The interviews were conducted to obtain a deeper understanding of students' perceptions of moral and spiritual awareness in the digital era. The questions focused on three key aspects: (1) What aspect of Islamic Religious Education has been most helpful in building your moral awareness in the digital age; (2) How has studying Islamic Religious Education influenced your moral attitudes and behavior when using digital media or social media; and (3) What moral challenges do you most often face in the digital age, and how has Islamic Religious Education helped you overcome them.

### **Data Collection**

The data were collected through face-to-face interviews conducted at the campus of UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. Each interview lasted approximately 15-20 minutes and was conducted in a conducive academic environment to ensure participants' comfort and openness in sharing their experiences. The responses were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed qualitatively using a thematic analysis approach to identify recurring patterns and themes related to students' moral and spiritual awareness in the digital era.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach, involving 50 students from the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Department at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. The purpose of the study was to examine how the values and teachings within Islamic Religious Education contribute to strengthening students' moral and spiritual awareness amid the challenges of the digital era.

The interview findings indicate that the values embedded in PAI learning, particularly those related to akidah, ibadah, akhlak, and social ethics, play a vital role in forming moral consciousness and guiding digital behavior. Among these, akhlak emerged as the most dominant aspect influencing students' moral awareness. The distribution of student responses is summarized in Table 1 below.

*Question 1: What aspect of Islamic Religious Education has been most helpful in building your moral awareness in the digital age?*

**Table 1.** Percentage of PAI Aspects Influencing Students' Moral Awareness in the Digital Era

Aspects of Islamic Religious Education	Respondents	Percentage
Akidah	14	28%
Ibadah	9	18%
Akhlak	21	42%
Social ethics	6	12%
Total	50	100%

The results reveal that akhlak represents the most influential aspect in shaping students' moral behavior within the digital environment, as reported by 42% of respondents. Through the learning of akhlak, students cultivate manners, humility, and responsibility in digital communication. Values such as honesty and self-control, embedded in moral instruction, help them avoid unethical online conduct, including hate speech, misinformation, and disrespectful interactions. Consequently, moral education in PAI establishes an ethical foundation for navigating technology with integrity and social awareness.

Moral and character education in Islamic teachings functions as a mechanism for self-control and behavioral guidance. It directs individuals to align their moral conduct with Islamic values from an early age, ensuring that they grow accustomed to virtuous behavior and remain distant from moral corruption (Kusumawati, 2021). This finding is consistent with the classical view of Ibn Miskawaih, who emphasized that virtue arises from habitual ethical discipline, forming individuals capable of harmonizing personal morality and social responsibility (Hayati et al., 2024).

Among respondents, 14 students (28%) identified akidah as the essential basis for moral and spiritual awareness. The conviction that Allah SWT constantly observes every action (*muraqabah*) instills a profound sense of accountability and ethical restraint in digital interactions. This spiritual consciousness prevents moral deviation and nurtures consistent adherence to virtuous principles.

In Islam, akidah functions not merely as a set of theological beliefs but also as a guiding worldview that influences one's entire moral orientation. A strong foundation of faith allows Muslims to maintain integrity and resist the moral ambiguities of contemporary change (Faiza et al., 2025). Thus, akidah serves as an inner compass that governs one's conscience, linking divine accountability with the development of moral discipline and digital responsibility.

About 18% of participants identified ibadah as a crucial dimension in fostering moral discipline. Regular worship practices such as prayer, fasting, and

remembrance (dzikr) cultivate sincerity, patience, and self-awareness, which are reflected in students’ online behavior. Those who maintain consistency in worship tend to exercise greater caution, emotional stability, and ethical consideration in their digital engagement.

Prayer represents the spiritual core of human connection with the Creator. When performed consistently and in accordance with divine guidance, it promotes good deeds and prevents transgression (Masrofah et al., 2024). Accordingly, ibadah not only fortifies spiritual devotion but also strengthens emotional intelligence and moral equilibrium, enabling individuals to interact ethically in virtual environments.

Although identified by only six students (12%), the social dimension of Islamic education remains significant in nurturing ethical sensitivity. Principles of justice, empathy, and social responsibility derived from Islamic ethics encourage mutual respect and prevent harmful online behavior. Social ethics in Islam extend beyond ritual devotion, offering a moral framework that governs interpersonal relations within the digital sphere.

The principles of Islamic social ethics, grounded in the Qur’an and the prophetic tradition, have shaped Muslim societies for centuries by emphasizing compassion, dignity, and the pursuit of collective welfare (*maslahah*) (Hayati et al., 2024). These principles remain relevant in the digital age, promoting a balance between freedom of expression and moral restraint, thereby preserving human dignity and social harmony in virtual communication.

The findings confirm that Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in nurturing both moral and spiritual consciousness in the digital age. Among the four aspects, akhlak emerged as the most influential, reflecting its practical relevance to students’ daily behavior. This supports Al-Ghazali’s view that akhlak represents the purification of the soul and the reflection of faith manifested in ethical behavior. Moral education, therefore, functions not only to regulate outward actions but also to refine inner values through continuous spiritual discipline.

Moreover, the prominence of akidah underscores the importance of faith-based awareness (*iman*) as the anchor of digital morality. When individuals recognize divine accountability, their sense of responsibility transcends social norms and becomes spiritually grounded. This aligns with the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (self-purification), which emphasizes that moral excellence originates from spiritual awareness and self-control.

From a broader perspective, these findings are consistent with the framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Integrating moral and spiritual education into digital literacy initiatives promotes a balanced approach to technological development. It ensures that future generations are not

only intellectually capable but also spiritually and ethically grounded.

Overall, this study reveals that Islamic Religious Education is essential for guiding students in navigating moral challenges in the digital age. By integrating akidah, ibadah, akhlak, and social ethics, students develop both ethical sensitivity and spiritual balance. The results demonstrate that moral and spiritual awareness cultivated in PAI classrooms can extend beyond theoretical understanding into practical digital behavior. Hence, Islamic education not only strengthens faith but also equips students with the moral resilience necessary to face modern ethical dilemmas in a globally connected world.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this research demonstrate that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) serves as a crucial foundation in promoting moral and spiritual awareness among students in the digital era. Through its core components of aqidah, ibadah, akhlak, and social ethics, PAI provides comprehensive guidance that shapes students' ethical attitudes and spiritual discipline in using digital technology responsibly. Among these aspects, akhlak is identified as the most dominant factor influencing moral behavior, followed by aqidah, the spiritual basis that instills accountability; ibadah, the source of discipline; and muamalah, the principle of social ethics in digital interactions. These findings underscore that moral integrity and spiritual consciousness must be strengthened simultaneously to prevent the degradation of values in an increasingly digitalized society. Therefore, integrating moral and spiritual education with digital literacy into the Islamic education curriculum is essential to prepare students to be morally upright, spiritually aware, and socially responsible digital citizens who contribute positively to sustainable human development.

## REFERENCES

- Adhani, R. N., Rahmawati, V., & Rachman, I. F. (2024). Meningkatkan Kesadaran Digital: Peran Literasi Digital Dalam Merespon Masalah Moral dan Ketimpangan Sosial Menuju Pencapaian SDGS 2030. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Kebudayaan Dan Agama*, 2(3), 107–114.
- Faiza, N. D. A., Angrelia, T., Ahmad, S. N., Sari, R. P., Mayasari, F., & Wismanto, W. (2025). Aqidah dan etika: Membangun moralitas di tengah perubahan sosial. *Karakter: Jurnal Riset Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, 2(1), 72–79.
- Hayati, N., Arif, M., Pdi, S., & Mustapha, R. (2024). ISLAMIC SOCIAL ETHICS: A SCHOLAR'S VIEWS. *International Journal of Islamic Theology and Civilization*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13943148>
- Hibatillah, H. M. (2022). The Concep of Akhlaq in Islamic Educational Curriculum.

- In *Educational Review: International Journal* / (Vol. 19, Issue 2).
- Ismanto, B., Yusuf, Y., & Suherman, A. (2022). Membangun kesadaran moral dan etika dalam berinteraksi di era digital pada remaja Karang Taruna RW 07 Rempoa, Ciputat Timur. *Jurnal Abdi Masyarakat Multidisiplin*, 1(1), 43–48.
- Iwani, F. N., Abubakar, A., & Ilyas, H. (2024). Moralitas Digital dalam Pendidikan: Mengintegrasikan Nilai-Nilai Al-Qur’an di Era Teknologi. *Journal of Instructional and Development Researches*, 4(6), 551–565.
- Khaidir Fadil, Noor Isna Alfaien, & Ahmad Mulyadi Kosim. (2023). UPAYA MENINGKATKAN KUALITAS PENDIDIKAN AGAMA ISLAM DI INDONESIA DALAM MEWUJUDKAN PROGRAM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS). *Edupedia : Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Dan Pedagogi Islam*, 7(2), 127–142. <https://doi.org/10.35316/edupedia.v7i2.2513>
- Kusumawati, S. P. (2021). Pendidikan Aqidah-Akhlak Di Era Digital. *EDUSOSHUM: Journal of Islamic Education and Social Humanities*, 1(3), 130–138.
- Masrofah, S., Kistoro, H. C., Sumantri, D., & Ma’ruf, A. (2024). The Relationship Between Prayer Worship Intensity and Emotional Intelligence of Islamic Religious Education Students. In *Insightchology The Journal of Psychology* (Vol. 1, Issue 1). <https://Insightchology.com>
- Muttaqin, M. I., Fasichullisan, M. I., Afkari, N. N., Sabella, S. A., Azzahro, S. H., & Sholikhah, S. L. (2023). Facing The Challenges of Youth Moral Degradation In The Digital Age. *MA’ALIM: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 4(1), 54–70.
- Sofyana, N. L., Haryanto, B., Pendidikan, P., & Islam, A. (2023). MENYOAL DEGRADASI MORAL SEBAGAI DAMPAK DARI ERA DIGITAL. In *Jurnal Manajemen dan Pendidikan Islam* (Vol. 3, Issue 4).
- Sugiyono, D. (2010). *Memahami penelitian kualitatif*.
- Wahid, A., & Maskhuroh, L. (2024). TASAWUF DALAM ERA DIGITAL: Menjaga Kesadaran Spiritual di Tengah Arus Teknologi. *ILJ: Islamic Learning Journal*, 2(1), 55–73