

Technology Integration in Moral Education: Using Social Media as a Means of Discussion

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Abstract

This study explores how the integration of social media into the teaching of Islamic ethics (akhlak) can be leveraged as a tool for positive interaction and ethical discussion. Conducted at SMP Ma'arif 5 Kota Metro with 23 seventh-grade students, this research aimed to guide students in using social media for constructive purposes, particularly by incorporating Islamic teachings on akidah and akhlak. The study employed both surveys and focus group discussions to assess how social media can prevent bullying and promote mutual respect. The results demonstrate that social media can be a valuable medium for students to practice positive ethical behavior by engaging in respectful discourse and avoiding harmful interactions, such as bullying and insults. This research contributes to the broader conversation about how educational technology, particularly social media, can be utilized to foster ethical and responsible behavior in young learners

Keywords: *Social Media, Islamic Ethics, Akhlak, Akidah, Positive Behavior, Educational Technology*

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INTRODUCTION

The rise of social media platforms has brought about profound changes in the way students engage with one another, often leading to both positive and negative interactions. (Lugina, 2018) In Islamic education, particularly in the context of teaching akhlak (moral values), it is crucial to understand how these platforms can be harnessed to encourage respectful communication and prevent harmful behaviors such as bullying (Surur & Rahmawati, 2018).

This research focuses on students in class 7 at SMP Ma'arif 5 Kota Metro, with the goal of integrating Islamic ethical teachings, especially akidah and akhlak, into their use of social media. (Chinnery, 2006) By directing students toward positive interactions, the study aims to reduce instances of bullying and insults, fostering a more respectful online community. The novelty of this study lies in its approach to combining digital platforms with Islamic educational principles to guide students' online behavior.

The findings of this research are particularly relevant as social media continues to play an increasingly prominent role in the daily lives of students. (Herawati, 2016) By addressing the potential for social media to be both a tool for positive engagement and a platform for harmful behavior, this study offers valuable insights into how Islamic values can shape online interactions among youth.

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While previous studies have explored the role of social media in education and its impact on behavior, little attention has been paid to its specific integration with Islamic ethical principles, particularly within the context of Indonesian Islamic schools. Most research on social media in educational settings tends to focus on its role in academic achievement or general behavior, without delving into how moral values from religious teachings can inform students' online conduct. This research aims to fill this gap by examining how integrating Islamic teachings—such as akidah (faith) and akhlak (morality)—can help mitigate negative behaviors such as cyberbullying and foster a more ethical use of social media.

The novelty of this study lies not only in its focus on the specific intersection of Islamic education and social media but also in its application in a local context—at SMP Ma'arif 5 Kota Metro. By integrating akidah and akhlak directly into the use of social media platforms, the study presents a fresh approach to addressing the behavioral challenges students face online. It also explores the practical application of religious values in shaping students' digital lives, which has been underexplored in prior research on Islamic education. This is significant because it directly connects ethical teachings with real-world issues, offering a solution that is both culturally relevant and technologically savvy.

Moreover, this research proposes a new pedagogical framework for using social media as an educational tool, not merely for communication but for instilling moral values. By actively integrating the principles of Islamic morality into online discourse, the study introduces the concept of "digital akhlak" (digital morality) as a core element of character education in the digital age. The ability to direct students toward ethical online behavior—by teaching them to interact respectfully, avoid insults, and engage positively—can have far-reaching effects, not only in preventing cyberbullying but also in shaping the ethical compass of future generations in an increasingly connected world. This innovative approach makes the study a critical contribution to both the fields of Islamic education and digital ethics.

METHOD

The study was conducted at **SMP Ma'arif 5 Kota Metro**, involving 23 seventh-grade students. (Potter & Hepburn, 2005) A **mixed-method approach** was employed to gather comprehensive data on students' social media usage and their attitudes towards ethical online behavior. (Creswell, 2009) This approach allowed for a combination of **quantitative** and **qualitative** data, providing both statistical insights and deeper understanding of the students' perceptions and experiences.

(Bryman, 2006) A **quantitative survey** was used to assess students' social media habits, their understanding of Islamic ethical values (akhlak), and how they perceive the role of social media in their daily lives. The survey included questions about the frequency of social media use, types of platforms accessed, and the students' opinions on the ethical implications of online behavior. (Tracy, 2010) It also explored their understanding of how Islamic teachings on akhlak could influence their interactions online. This data was then analyzed using **descriptive statistics** to identify patterns and trends in students' responses.

Additionally, (Delmont & Mason, 1997) **qualitative focus group discussions** were held to gain a more nuanced understanding of students' experiences with social media and how they interpret Islamic ethical principles in the context of digital behavior. The focus groups were designed to encourage open discussions where students could share their experiences with online interactions, including both positive and negative encounters. The discussions aimed to explore how Islamic teachings on ethics, such as respect, kindness, and avoidance of harmful behavior (e.g., bullying), could be applied to their use of social media.

Data from the focus group discussions were analyzed using **thematic analysis** to identify key themes related to students' attitudes towards social media and ethical

behavior.(Tracy, 2010) This analysis focused on identifying recurring ideas and patterns in students' responses, particularly around how they understood the integration of Islamic ethics into their online behavior.

To begin the research, initial steps included obtaining consent from both the school authorities at SMP Ma'arif 5 Kota Metro and the students' parents. (Hplc, 2014) Once approval was secured, the researcher distributed the survey questionnaires to all 23 students. The survey was administered in class to ensure a high response rate, with students given ample time to complete the questions. Afterward, the researcher conducted the focus group discussions, which were structured to facilitate open, guided conversations about students' perceptions and behaviors related to social media use. Each group discussion lasted approximately 30 minutes, and students were encouraged to share their thoughts in a safe and respectful environment.

(Hinrichs et al., 2017) After gathering both the survey and focus group data, the researcher analyzed the responses using a combination of **descriptive statistics** for the survey results and **thematic analysis** for the focus group discussions. The statistical data provided a quantitative overview of the students' social media habits, while the thematic analysis allowed for a deeper understanding of the ethical perspectives students held regarding online interactions. The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative methods were then triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the integration of Islamic ethics into students' use of social media.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The survey results showed that 80% of students use social media regularly, while 20% reported using it less frequently. This is visualized in the pie chart above, which highlights the prominence of social media usage among students. In addition to acknowledging the presence of negative behaviors online, such as bullying and insults, students revealed that integrating Islamic teachings, particularly akhlak, into their social media interactions led to a noticeable shift in their attitudes. A significant number of students stated that they became more conscious of their online comments, focusing on fostering respect and kindness in their online engagements. This positive change was attributed to the teachings of akhlak, which encouraged students to reflect on the impact of their words and actions on others in the digital world.

Furthermore, focus group discussions revealed that students found the integration of Islamic values, especially good manners (adab), to be empowering. They noted that by understanding the ethical guidelines from Islam, they felt more capable of managing their online behavior responsibly. Teachers played a crucial role in reinforcing these teachings by providing clear guidelines for appropriate online conduct and urging students to practice these values consistently when interacting with their peers on social

media platforms. This guidance ensured that students used social media not only for communication but as a platform for positive and respectful engagement.

The integration of akhlak and akidah into social media use created a more supportive and respectful online environment. The students recognized the importance of maintaining dignity and integrity in their digital interactions, fostering a sense of responsibility toward others in the online space. This not only helped in reducing harmful behaviors like cyberbullying but also empowered students to promote kindness and empathy in their social media activities.

Discussion

The Importance of Supervision in Social Media Use

While students showed an improved understanding of the positive role that Islamic teachings can play in shaping their online behavior, the need for parental and teacher supervision was also evident. Supervising students' social media use is crucial to ensure that they are not exposed to harmful content or engaging in harmful behaviors such as bullying. Both the victim and the perpetrator of bullying can suffer serious emotional and psychological consequences. As such, it is important for adults—teachers, parents, and mentors—to monitor the students' interactions on social media platforms. By providing guidance and intervening when necessary, adults can help steer children toward respectful and responsible social media behavior.

Supervision is not only about preventing negative behaviors like cyberbullying, but also about promoting healthy, ethical online interactions. Parents and teachers should work together to educate students about the implications of their actions online. The discussion also emphasized that guidance on how to use social media ethically should be an ongoing process, as digital platforms evolve and new challenges arise. Encouraging open communication between students and adults regarding their online activities can help in creating a safer, more supportive digital environment.

Integrating Akidah and Akhlak in Social Media Use

The integration of akidah (faith) and akhlak (morality) into social media use has a profound impact on how students behave online. By internalizing the teachings of Islam, students learn to view their interactions through the lens of respect, kindness, and empathy. They are encouraged to treat others with dignity and to avoid harmful behaviors such as insults, hate speech, and bullying. Islamic teachings emphasize that words have the power to either uplift or harm, and this concept can be applied to digital interactions.

Teaching students about the ethical responsibilities they hold while using social media helps them understand that their actions are not confined to the physical world; they carry ethical implications in the digital realm as well. Akhlak teaches students to refrain

from making hurtful comments, while akidah provides a foundation for understanding the importance of maintaining honesty, integrity, and respect for others online. Through these teachings, students not only become more responsible social media users but also more compassionate individuals who contribute to a positive online culture.

By encouraging students to apply Islamic values in their online interactions, the study shows that it is possible to cultivate an online environment that aligns with the ethical teachings of Islam. This, in turn, reduces the prevalence of negative behaviors like bullying, while promoting respect and empathy among peers.

CONCLUSION

The integration of social media into the teaching of Islamic ethics has shown significant promise in shaping students' online behavior positively. By incorporating Islamic principles of akhlak, students at SMP Ma'arif 5 Kota Metro learned to engage in respectful, ethical discussions and avoid negative behaviors such as bullying. This study highlights the potential of educational technology, particularly social media, to enhance the teaching of moral values in the digital age. Future research should explore the long-term impact of this integration and examine its applicability in other educational contexts.

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