Moral Character Education via Social Media: Youth in Urban Bandung Mosques

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Social media increasingly shapes urban youth's moral development, including mosque youth expected to model religious values—a challenge prior character education efforts, focused on cognitive and ritual aspects, have failed to address amid digital advances. Adolescents struggle to filter information, resist negative content, and sustain moral behavior online and offline. This study innovates by empowering mosque youth as moral agents blending religious values with digital literacy. Objectives include describing social media's moral impacts, evaluating character education's role, and assessing mosque-based community service in Bandung. Using qualitative case studies of three mosque youth groups (via observation, interviews, and documentation), findings reveal social media's ambivalent effects: bolstering religious identity yet risking degradation. Mosque-rooted programs effectively build moral literacy, self-control, and value-based networks, underscoring adaptive, community-driven models for youth morality in the social media era.

1. PENDAHULUAN

The development of social media over the past decade has truly shaped a new reality that is difficult to separate from the lives of urban youth, especially in Bandung. The very high internet penetration makes social media a primary space in adolescents' daily activities—from communication, seeking entertainment, to building self-identity. However, this easy access to information has not always been balanced by adequate strengthening of moral literacy. As a result, a paradox arises between technological progress and the decline of moral values. As conveyed by Cho et al. (2024), social media literacy should not be understood solely as technical skills in using digital platforms, but also include a critical understanding of the social, ethical, and cultural impacts of online interactions. In Bandung, adolescents attending mosques face a dual challenge: they must maintain their religious identity while adapting to the currents of digital globalization. Therefore, this study is important to map the role of moral character education in shaping adolescents' moral resilience amidst the rapid flow of information.

Social phenomena among mosque youth demonstrate a tension between the religious values acquired through religious education and the influence of digital popular culture. In this regard, a study by van der Wal et al. (2024) showed that social media is a primary arena for adolescents to express their identity, but this process is often accompanied by significant pressure to conform to algorithmic standards of popularity. As a result, many adolescents are caught in a dilemma between maintaining their authenticity and projecting an image that aligns with social expectations. For mosque youth, this contradiction is especially pronounced because their moral values often clash with permissive digital practices. This situation makes mosque youth in Bandung a relevant

research object, as they stand at a crucial juncture between maintaining their religious identity and facing the penetration of global culture. Through this research, not only are adolescents' psychological challenges mapped, but strategies are also sought to bridge the religious and digital worlds.

To date, character education in Indonesia has largely focused on traditional religious practices as a means of internalizing moral values, but has not yet seriously linked it to the phenomenon of social media. As Suwardin (2022) emphasized, religious activities such as religious study groups or tadarus (Islamic recitation) play an important role in shaping adolescents' moral awareness, but this emphasis is generally limited to the physical spaces of religious communities. However, in reality, adolescents spend more time in the digital world, potentially eroding the values instilled in mosques by exposure to negative social media content. This indicates a gap in the literature; research on religion-based character education has not sufficiently highlighted how the integration of religious values with media literacy can be realized in real-world practice. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining how adolescents in mosques can become social laboratories for developing moral character education that is relevant to the digital context, while remaining grounded in religious values.

Globally, studies of moral education emphasize the importance of an integrative approach that emphasizes not only cognitive aspects but also affective and social aspects in moral learning. Namgung (2022) emphasized that moral education needs to be designed based on a holistic approach that involves moral judgment as a process of thinking, feeling, and acting. At the same time, Gao & Wang (2021) reminded that moral education must be continuously recontextualized to suit the dynamics of the times, especially in the digital era that brings new complexities. This study presents a novelty by combining the concept of integrative moral education with social media literacy practices in the context of a religious community of mosque youth in Bandung. The novelty of this research lies in its effort to integrate traditional religious discourse with contemporary dynamics, which have rarely been explored in depth in the moral education literature in Indonesia. With this approach, the study does not simply repeat old findings but offers a new perspective on moral education in the digital era.

This study highlights the psychosocial aspects of social media use among adolescents. In his view, Choi (2024) asserts that adolescent engagement in social media has two sides. On the one hand, social media can increase life satisfaction through social support. However, on the other hand, social media can also decrease psychological well-being due to social comparison, online bullying, and existential pressures. This phenomenon demonstrates that social media is not a neutral entity, but rather a potentially ambivalent space that can both strengthen and weaken adolescents' moral foundations. In the context of adolescents attending mosques in Bandung, this dynamic is even more complex. Their religious values can serve as a moral bulwark, but these values are also vulnerable to erosion if not reinforced through systematic character education relevant to today's digital life. This study emphasizes the need for an approach that integrates social support from religious communities with critical media literacy. As a result, adolescents are expected to be able to face digital challenges without losing moral resilience.

In international educational discourse, the importance of balancing freedom of expression and the instilling of universal moral values is also a concern. Broer et al. (2024) emphasized that freedom of education cannot be left ungoverned but must be supported by educational idealism that emphasizes fundamental human values. Furthermore, Gökçe (2021) also stated that core values such as honesty, responsibility, empathy, and solidarity are foundations that should not be neglected in shaping future generations. In Bandung's urban society, mosque youth have the potential to make mosques centers for educating core values, which can then be adapted to the digital world through media literacy practices. Therefore, this study views moral character education not merely as a normative teaching, but as a practical strategy to bridge the gap between freedom of expression on social media and the strengthening of universal values aligned with religious teachings.

In the realm of educational policy, the integration of religious values and moral character education often remains trapped in conventional approaches that emphasize lectures or dogma, without innovation relevant to the lifestyles of adolescents in the digital age. In this regard, Neumann (2023) cites the example of religious education in Hungary, which is used as a political instrument to strengthen national identity, but provides little space for the development of adaptive moral practices. If this approach is rigidly applied in Indonesia, particularly in Bandung, there is concern that character education in mosques will simply repeat traditional values that are less relevant to facing the challenges of social media. This research offers a different approach, namely making adolescents in mosques not merely objects of guidance, but active subjects capable of translating religious values into creative and relevant digital content. Ultimately, mosques have the potential to become spaces for social innovation that combine spirituality with digital literacy.

The urgency of this research is increasingly apparent because moral education practices in the social media era cannot be separated from the dynamics of the religious communities in which adolescents grow. Religious values such as ukhuwah (brotherhood), shiddiq (trustworthiness), and amanah (trustworthiness) have significant potential to serve as moral filters against negative content online. However, these values will be effective if taught contextually, directly linked to adolescents' digital experiences. However, Gao & Wang (2021) caution that a dogmatic approach to moral education is inadequate to address contemporary challenges, as adolescents need space to reflect on values through real-life experiences. This research emphasizes the importance of adolescents' active involvement in designing social media-based moral campaigns so that they not only understand values theoretically but also apply them through the practice of producing good-oriented content.

The main problem faced by mosque youth in Bandung essentially lies in the gap between their high digital exposure and their limited critical literacy. Although the majority of youth are active in religious activities, only a small proportion are truly able to integrate religious teachings into their daily digital behavior. As a result, the moral values that should be the foundation are often not reflected in online interactions—whether in language use, commenting, or participation in the dissemination of information. As stated by Cho et al. (2024), social media literacy ideally can serve as a critical framework for assessing the truth, impact, and moral consequences of every digital action. Unfortunately, this framework has not yet been firmly established among mosque youth in Bandung. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by offering a character education model that combines religious teachings and digital literacy. This model not only aims to prevent media misuse but also aims to enable youth to become producers of educational and moral content.

From a social perspective, mosque youth in Bandung can be categorized as a strategic community with a high level of solidarity, thus possessing great potential as agents of change. A study by van der Wal et al. (2024) showed that peer support is more effective in reducing the negative impacts of social media than parental or school intervention. This is understandable, given that adolescents tend to be more receptive to peer influence than authority figures. This study positions mosque youth at the center of a social experiment, where moral character formation takes place in a participatory manner—involving them in critical discussions, co-producing content, and even collective campaigns. Through this model, religious values are not only instilled externally but also develop through a process of collective reflection facilitated by the community. The hope is that this will produce adolescents who are not only religious in their rituals but also moral in their daily digital practices.

The urgency of this research is also closely related to the role of mosques, which have tended to be limited to mere places of worship. In fact, throughout Islamic history, mosques have served as centers of education, social life, and culture. Broer et al. (2024) highlight the importance of educational freedom grounded in moral values as an ideal foundation, while Gökçe (2021) emphasizes that core educational values are key to fostering a generation of integrity. Mosques in urban areas like Bandung actually have great potential to reclaim their historical function—as centers for character development that integrate spiritual, social, and digital aspects. By using mosques as a basis, this research offers a new perspective on viewing adolescents, not merely as participants in religious activities, but also as moral agents capable of interacting creatively and responsibly in the digital realm. Thus, the urgency of this research is not only theoretical but also practical, given its direct relevance to the moral sustainability of the younger generation of urban Muslims.

Based on the description above, this study has three main objectives. First, to analyze the impact of social media on the moral character formation of mosque youth in Bandung. Second, to formulate a moral character education model that integrates religious values with media literacy. Finally, to test the effectiveness of a participatory, mosque-based approach in strengthening adolescent morality. This research is significant because it offers a novelty rarely explored in the literature—namely, the integration of integrative moral education theory with digital literacy practices within the context of a local religious community. By integrating psychosocial (Choi, 2024), religious (Suwardin, 2022), and global moral education (Gao & Wang, 2021; Namgung, 2022), perspectives, this research is expected to not only enrich academic discourse but also make a tangible contribution to the formation of a generation of urban Muslim youth with strong, critical, and adaptive character.

2. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design combined with a literature review, as its primary focus is to deeply understand the practice of moral character education among mosque youth in the social media era. As explained by Creswell & Poth (2018), a qualitative approach is highly appropriate for exploring participants' subjective experiences, especially when research is directed at complex and value-laden social phenomena. The case study was chosen to allow researchers to explore the specific context of the mosque youth

community in Bandung in detail, thus obtaining a comprehensive picture of the internal and external dynamics that influence the formation of their moral character. Literature review is also used as a conceptual basis, by examining theories and previous research findings related to media literacy, moral education, and religious practices. In this regard, Savin-Baden & Major (2023) emphasize that the combination of empirical studies and literature analysis provides methodological strength, so that the resulting understanding is not only descriptive, but also reflective and practically relevant.

The research participants focused on youth mosque communities in three different locations in Cileunyi District, Bandung Regency, which have diverse socio-religious characteristics. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, as the researchers targeted groups relevant to the research focus: youth active in mosque activities and engaged in social media use. Hammond & Wellington (2020) state that purposive sampling is a common technique used in qualitative research, especially when the research emphasizes data depth over breadth. The communities involved included the Nurul Falah Mosque Youth Association in Ciborelang Village, the Al-Falaah Mosque Youth Association in Hegarmanah Alley, Babakansitu, and the Al-Muhajirin Mosque Youth Association in the Griya Mitra Posindo Complex. These three locations were chosen because they have a strong youth base and are located in urban environments with high levels of social media use. Furthermore, Clift et al. (2021) stated that qualitative research that is sensitive to temporality and social context can reveal participant dynamics that are not apparent in quantitative data, making these locations strategic for achieving the research objectives.

Data collection methods included a combination of participant observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review. Participant observation was used to understand the interaction patterns of mosque youth, both within the physical mosque environment and in their digital activities, enabling researchers to capture authentic behavior. In-depth interviews were conducted with mosque youth administrators, religious leaders, and active youth to explore subjective experiences related to moral challenges in the social media era. Documentation in the form of mosque activity records, organizational archives, and digital content on their social media platforms was analyzed as supplementary data. According to Weaver-Hightower (2018), the strength of qualitative research lies in the diversity of complementary data sources, thus strengthening validity. Furthermore, literature review was used to corroborate empirical findings with a conceptual framework from the latest literature on character education and media literacy. This method provides rich and multi-layered data, enabling the research to comprehensively address the research objectives.

The description of the research location plays a crucial role in framing the social and cultural context that influences the practice of moral education for adolescents. For example, the Nurul Falah Mosque in Ciborelang Village is known as a religious space with strong religious traditions and regular youth activities. This represents a relatively conservative religious community. Meanwhile, the Al-Falaah Mosque in Babakansitu is characterized by a much more open atmosphere, given its proximity to an urban area and the active use of social media by its youth for digital da'wah (Islamic outreach). Conversely, the Al-Muhajirin Mosque in the Griya Mitra Posindo Complex reflects a middle-urban community, with intense digital interactions and modern religious expressions. In line with Silverman (2015), argument, in qualitative research, detailed descriptions of the social context are essential to understanding how participants' backgrounds shape meaning. Therefore, the location descriptions in this study are not only informative but also serve as analytical foundations for examining how each context generates unique strategies for moral character education for adolescents in the digital age.

Data analysis was conducted in stages using Miles et al. (2014), interactive model, which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. In the reduction stage, data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation were selected and then categorized into relevant themes, such as the influence of social media on morality, character education strategies in mosques, and digital literacy practices. The reduced data were then presented in the form of matrices, narratives, and direct quotations to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were drawn iteratively with repeated verification to ensure the findings truly represent the existing reality. According to Creswell & Poth (2018), the validity of qualitative research can be strengthened through data triangulation, namely by comparing information from various sources and methods. Based on this procedure, the research can ensure that the resulting findings are comprehensive, not just a one-sided representation, thus fully reflecting the dynamics of mosque youth in Bandung.

Methodologically, this research design is appropriate for understanding complex social phenomena, particularly moral character education in the social media era. The strength of a qualitative approach lies in its ability to explore the meaning behind behavior, rather than simply presenting statistical data. As Savin-Baden & Major (2023), argues, qualitative research allows researchers to enter the world of participants, understand their perspectives, and present reflective analysis. By combining case studies of a youth mosque community, this

research not only provides a specific picture of Bandung but also contributes theoretically to the discourse on moral education and media literacy. The relevance of this methodology is further reinforced by Clift et al. (2021) who emphasize that temporality and context are key to understanding social processes. Therefore, the methodology used here is not simply a procedure but also a bridge between empirical phenomena and broader academic discourse.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transformation from Conventional to Digital Methods

The results of this study clearly demonstrate that social media has a quite complex impact on the mindset, behavior, and moral formation of mosque youth in Bandung. Based on field observations and in-depth interviews, the majority of mosque youth use social media for various purposes, ranging from entertainment and communication with peers to a means of preaching and spreading religious values. This complexity arises because social media not only provides positive opportunities but is also filled with negative content such as hate speech, pornography, and hoaxes, which have the potential to weaken the process of internalizing moral values. The findings of this study emphasize the ambivalence in the use of social media. On the one hand, social media can act as an effective tool to strengthen religious values, but on the other hand, without adequate critical literacy skills, adolescents become more vulnerable to moral degradation. The urgency of character education that integrates religious values and digital literacy skills is becoming increasingly important, so that adolescents are not merely passive consumers, but are also able to play a role as producers of moral content.

Further data analysis showed that exposure of mosque-going youth to social media content did not necessarily lead to a loss of moral compass. In fact, most youth attempted to apply the religious values learned from mosque activities as a filter in evaluating content. Variations in these abilities were evident: youth who regularly attended religious studies and were active in mosque leadership tended to be more critical, able to reject content inconsistent with religious teachings, and actively reminded peers to be more judicious in their use of social media. Conversely, youth who were less active or only occasionally involved in mosque activities appeared more vulnerable to the negative influences of social media. This indicates that the intensity of involvement in community-based character education is closely related to youth's ability to maintain moral consistency in the digital world. In other words, mosques serve not only as centers of worship but also as moral fortresses that strengthen youth's critical capacity in navigating the flow of digital information.

Furthermore, this study found that social media is not only used by mosque youth for consumption but also as a means of content production. Many youth actively produce posts containing Islamic preaching, motivational, and religious-themed entertainment. Through documentation analysis, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube were found to be the primary platforms used. The following table illustrates the trends in content themes produced across the three research locations.

Table 1. Content Themes Produced by the Mosque Youth Association

Content Type	Nurul Falah Mosque Youth Association	Al-Falaah Mosque Youth Association	Al-Muhajirin Mosque Youth Association
Islamic Da'wah	40%	35%	30%
Moral Motivation	30%	25%	25%
Islamic Entertainment	20%	30%	35%
Mosque Activity Information	10%	10%	10%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that da'wah and motivational content still dominate, although Islamic entertainment content is now also gaining significant traction. This phenomenon highlights an adaptive strategy among mosque youth in conveying moral messages, namely by packaging them in entertainment formats that are more appealing to the digital generation. This paradigm shift is clear—da'wah is no longer limited to conventional forums, but is also delivered through media familiar to teenagers' daily lives.

However, this study also found a gap between theoretical moral understanding and its implementation in digital practice. While some teenagers claim to understand the values of honesty, responsibility, politeness, and trustworthiness, inconsistencies are often found in interactions on social media. For example, some teenagers use inappropriate language in comments, spread unverified information, or share content inconsistent with religious values. This situation suggests that the internalization of moral values has not yet been fully realized in

everyday behavior. Therefore, moral education cannot be emphasized solely through lectures or theory; it must also be instilled through a process of reflection, habituation, and collective community supervision. A mosque-based approach has proven to be quite helpful in reducing this gap, although challenges in maintaining consistency in adolescents' digital behavior remain.

The implementation of a moral character education program by mosque youth has shown quite positive results. Various activities such as thematic studies, peer mentoring, and digital literacy training have had a significant impact on how youth interact on social media. Evaluations have shown that youth participating in this program have become more courageous in rejecting invitations that conflict with moral values, more selective in choosing content, and more creative in producing positive messages. Therefore, religious community-based moral character education not only enhances individual capacity but also strengthens group solidarity as a collective moral control. These findings also confirm that a collective approach is more effective than an individual one due to the power of peer groups that encourage mutual reminders.

The active involvement of mosque youth in initiating creative digital programs is also a significant finding. For example, at the Al-Falaah Mosque, they initiated the "Creative Da'wah TikTok" program, which presents excerpts from Quranic verses and hadith in short videos, accompanied by background music relevant to youth preferences. This program received a positive response from the audience, even beyond the mosque community itself. Meanwhile, youth from the Nurul Falah Mosque launched a digital da'wah podcast discussing contemporary moral themes such as communication ethics on social media, healthy relationships, and the importance of digital literacy. These two innovations demonstrate that mosque youth are able to internalize moral values through creative practices relevant to digital culture. This also demonstrates the great potential of mosque youth as agents of change who not only maintain the morality of their internal community but also contribute positively to the digital public sphere.

The positive impact of moral character education on mosque youth is evident, particularly in the solidarity and social responsibility among members. In the digital realm, they are not merely passive users, but rather form a mutually supportive online community. Not only do they share positive content, but social control mechanisms are also quite active. When a member uploads content deemed deviant, peer reactions are swift, with reprimands. This phenomenon demonstrates that moral character education truly fosters collective awareness to maintain a shared moral reputation. This organically growing peer control mechanism serves as an effective form of oversight in strengthening the consistency of adolescent morality in the digital world. Thus, moral character education not only impacts individuals but also strengthens social networks based on religious values.

On the other hand, the research also found external contributions through community service activities carried out by mosque youth. Some concrete programs found in the field include digital literacy workshops for children and adolescents in the surrounding area, seminars on social media ethics, and training in creating creative content with religious nuances. These activities involved not only mosque members but also the general public, religious leaders, and village officials. Field documentation demonstrated high enthusiasm from the community, particularly parents who expressed concerns about their children's use of social media. This indicates that mosque youth are able to go beyond their internal functions by acting as moral agents, disseminating positive values to the wider community.

Evaluation of the community service activities demonstrated significant results. Workshop and seminar participants reported an increased understanding of the importance of verifying information before sharing content, as well as a new awareness of the importance of using social media productively and morally. Some residents even began following the mosque youth's social media accounts to gain inspiration for positive content. This demonstrates that the mosque youth's efforts are not merely incidental activities but are capable of having a lasting impact on the surrounding community. Thus, this study confirms that religious community-based moral character education is effective not only internally but also has broader social impact, making mosque youth a catalyst for moral change in the digital age.

Overall, the results of this study conclude that mosque youth in Bandung not only act as recipients of moral values, but also as producers and disseminators of values through social media. While the challenge of inconsistencies between theoretical moral understanding and digital practice remains, the mosque-based character education approach has proven effective in strengthening adolescents' moral capacity. Furthermore, their involvement in creative programs and community service demonstrates that moral education is not merely an individual matter but also directly contributes to moral social development. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the importance of strengthening a model of religious community-based moral character education as a strategy for developing a generation of urban Muslim youth who are religious, critical, and possess integrity amidst the challenges of the social media era.

Discussion

This research clearly shows that social media among Bandung mosque youth is not merely a means of communication, but also an arena for a tug-of-war between efforts to maintain moral values and the rapid flow of information that often leads to behavioral degradation. This finding emphasizes that digital technology indeed carries an ambivalent character—as revealed by the OECD (2016)— where educational innovation must always be accompanied by skills in utilizing technology so that its negative potential does not dominate the digital space. In the context of mosque youth, social media has proven to be a vehicle for preaching and spreading moral messages, while also opening up opportunities for the emergence of consumer behavior, hate speech, or even misinformation. This fact shows that morality cannot be separated from adequate digital literacy skills. This aligns with Ng (2015) view that educational professionalism in the digital era demands adaptive strategies, so that students—including youth in religious communities—are able to integrate moral values into their digital practices.

This study also found that mosque youth who are active in religious activities tend to be more critical of the digital content they consume. This critical attitude can be explained through character education theory, which emphasizes the ongoing process of virtue formation. In this regard, Kulkarni & Karim (2022) state that character education is not simply the transfer of knowledge, but rather the process of forming a generation with integrity through the internalization of moral values. Mosque activities such as religious studies, mentoring, and regular preaching have been proven effective in strengthening adolescents' moral filters in dealing with the flow of social media. Sanderse (2024) adds that adolescent morality develops through a process of emulation, namely imitating and emulating moral figures in their environment. The presence of role models in the mosque is important in helping adolescents align moral understanding with real-world practices in the digital world. These findings confirm that religious communities serve as effective social learning spaces in shaping morality, going beyond mere formal approaches.

The involvement of mosque youth in producing religious content on social media also demonstrates the positive side of this phenomenon. They are no longer merely passive consumers but are beginning to take on the role of producers of moral messages. Chapman (2023) argues that social media can be utilized as a space for civic education, where the younger generation learns to express their identity, values, and aspirations. Through the production of digital da'wah content, mosque youth indirectly contribute to building a healthier public sphere. This is in line with Jones et al. (2015) who assert that digital practices are always closely linked to evolving social discourse. Therefore, the production of religious content by mosque youth not only reflects their personal identities but also contributes to shaping moral discourse within society. This practice highlights the novelty of the research, namely demonstrating the role of religious communities in utilizing social media as a means of both internalizing and externalizing moral values.

However, this study also found behavioral inconsistencies. Some mosque youth who understand moral values are still involved in spreading unverified information or using impolite language in the digital world. This phenomenon reinforces Boer et al. (2022) thesis that social media use among adolescents can develop into problems if not accompanied by strong control mechanisms. Ardesch et al. (2023) added that problematic behavior on social media is often correlated with unhealthy lifestyles, demonstrating the link between the digital world and everyday reality. These findings emphasize that moral education is not limited to cognitive understanding but must be internalized as a consistent moral habitus. Saada (2022) emphasized the importance of balancing communal, civic, and liberal goals in religious education so that the values taught are not only understood but also implemented in real life. Therefore, these behavioral weaknesses demonstrate the need for a more integrative and sustainable character education strategy.

This research clearly demonstrates that mosque communities play a crucial role as collective moral monitoring spaces. Through various programs such as peer mentoring, digital literacy forums, and faith-strengthening activities, their impact on adolescents' moral consistency is palpable. Yar (2023), notes, mosques are not merely centers of worship but also play a socio-cultural role in nurturing the younger generation. This finding is supported by Wnuk (2021), who found a positive correlation between religious commitment and character strength. In the context of adolescents attending mosques in Bandung, active community involvement provides a social environment that reinforces moral values when facing the challenges of social media. These findings confirm that community-based moral education is more effective in building a collective moral habitus than individual approaches. Consequently, mosques serve as safe spaces that mediate the intersection between traditional values and the challenges of digital modernity.

In addition to serving as a space for internal strengthening, the mosque youth community also demonstrates innovation in adapting da'wah through digital media. They utilize platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and podcasts to convey moral messages creatively and in accordance with the communication styles of the younger generation.

In his view, Ng (2015) emphasized the importance of technological innovation in education to remain relevant. This aligns with the opinion of Alpaydın & Demirli (2022) who highlight the importance of integrating science, technology, and social values in 21st-century education. The digital da'wah carried out by mosque youth can be seen as a concrete implementation of this theory in a local context. This innovation demonstrates the novelty of the research, as it demonstrates that moral values are not only taught through conventional lectures but are also packaged in popular digital formats.

Another interesting finding is the emergence of moral solidarity within the online community of mosque youth. They do not hesitate to reprimand or remind other members who commit moral violations on social media. This phenomenon indicates the existence of an effective peer monitoring mechanism. In this regard, West et al. (2023) stated that social media can foster or limit adolescent competence, depending on how the peer group manages digital interactions. In this case, the mosque youth group utilized social media to strengthen moral monitoring. This finding expands the character education literature by demonstrating that peer groups, often perceived as sources of deviance, can become moral agents when guided by strong religious values. Therefore, moral solidarity is not merely an internal strategy but also a form of collectivity-based moral education ecosystem.

This study also revealed that mosque youth not only receive moral values but also act as agents of value dissemination through community service programs. Activities such as digital literacy workshops and social media ethics seminars demonstrate their involvement in educating the surrounding community. This finding aligns with Febriani (2022), who emphasized that adult religious morality can be a strategy for addressing global challenges such as Islamophobia. By equipping the community with values-based digital skills, mosque youth successfully position themselves as drivers of constructive social change. Furthermore, Syeed & Hadsell (2020) also emphasize the importance of interreligious education in fostering empathy and tolerance, thus offering potential for this approach to foster interfaith dialogue. The primary contribution of this study lies in emphasizing that mosque youth can act as both moral and social agents in the digital media era.

The integration of spiritual, social, and digital aspects in the practices of mosque youth highlights the importance of a holistic approach to contemporary moral education. As Huda & Salem (2022), point out, the development of human moral behavior is inseparable from spirituality; this spiritual foundation is what enables moral values to endure over the long term. In this study, mosque youth demonstrated the ability to combine spirituality with digital literacy, resulting in a more contextual and relevant model of moral education. This strengthens the link between this research and contemporary educational theory, which emphasizes the need for integration of various dimensions in the educational process. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that moral education can no longer be separated from digital practices, as today's young generation forms their identity and habitus through online spaces. Therefore, the integration of spirituality and digital is one of this research's key contributions to the discourse on character education in the 21st century.

Overall, the research findings confirm that character education in the social media era requires synergy between families, schools, and religious communities. Mosques, as religious communities, play a crucial role in maintaining adolescent morality amidst the rapid digital tide. Saada (2022) also emphasized the need for a balance between communal, civic, and liberal goals in religious education to avoid being trapped in exclusivism and instead become an inclusive moral force. This research demonstrates the relevance of this idea to the local context of Bandung, where mosques have proven capable of serving as centers for the formation of morality that adapts to the challenges of digital globalization. When compared to previous literature, the novelty of this research lies in emphasizing the role of religious communities, particularly mosques, as key actors in technology-based moral education. These findings have significant implications for the development of character education policies in Indonesia going forward.

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that character education, particularly in the aspect of morality, is increasingly urgent in the era of social media, particularly in urban communities like Bandung, which face a rapid flow of information and changing communication patterns. The research findings indicate that social media is now not just a means of interaction but also an arena for the formation of identity and moral values among mosque youth. On the one hand, social media opens up positive opportunities to expand da'wah (Islamic outreach) and build social networks that can strengthen religious values. However, on the other hand, significant challenges arise in the form of potential moral degradation, consumerist behavior, and the spread of unverified information. In this context, mosque youth play a strategic role as moral agents who strive to balance the influence of social media with Islamic character values. This role is realized through religious study activities, discussions, and digital

literacy based on religious values, so that they are not only recipients of information but also active actors in the formation of identity and morality.

The implications of this research encompass two main dimensions: theoretical and practical. From a theoretical perspective, this research enriches the study of character education by positioning the mosque youth community as a social laboratory for understanding the interaction between morality, religion, and digital technology. The results indicate that moral education cannot be separated from the social media ecosystem and must transform to respond to the digital dynamics facing the younger generation. From a practical perspective, this research provides the basis for developing a community-based character education model that emphasizes not only religious rituals but also the importance of digital literacy, self-control, and critical thinking skills in managing information. This step is considered relevant for anticipating the misuse of social media while strengthening the moral and religious identity of urban youth.

Future research can focus on exploring the effectiveness of social media-based character education programs run by youth mosque communities in various regions. Further research could also examine differences in approaches and outcomes between youth in urban and rural areas, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural factors influencing moral formation. Furthermore, it is important to integrate interdisciplinary perspectives—including education, sociology, psychology, and religious studies—in formulating adaptive strategies to address the moral challenges of the digital age. Thus, this research is expected to contribute academically while also opening up opportunities for the development of character education policies and programs relevant to the needs of the younger generation of Muslims facing the complex realities of today's social media.

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