

The Role of Digital Media in Forming Islamic Character of Students of Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

Amidst the rapid development of information technology, the existence of digital platforms has become an inherent part of the dynamics of children's lives, including elementary school students. Ideally, these technology-based tools are expected to be a bridge for the internalization of Islamic values through educational content with religious nuances. However, the reality in the field shows that the use of these media is often unfocused, tending towards entertainment consumption that does not provide significant benefits. This condition raises concerns regarding its negative influence on the formation of Islamic morality in children. This study seeks to explore the variety of digital platforms used by elementary school students in their daily activities and understand their contribution to shaping Islamic character. The approach used is a library research method with thematic analysis to explore relevant academic sources. The results of the study revealed that elementary school students generally use internet-based short video applications and online education platforms as the main medium. In addition, digital media has great potential as a vehicle for internalizing Islamic values if used wisely. The recommendation given is the need for assistance from parents and educators in selecting and directing the use of digital media towards holistic development goals

Keywords: *Digital Tools, Islamic Morals, Madrasah Students, Virtual Learning Process*

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INTRODUCTION

The formation of Islamic character in elementary madrasah students is one of the main foundations in religious education (Zuhdi, 2021). Islamic character not only includes understanding religious rituals but also moral values that are integrated into daily behavior. According to the theory of religious psychology, the development of early childhood religiosity is influenced by the social environment and educational stimulation (Rahman & Huda, 2020). At the age of 7-12 years, children are in a stage of spiritual exploration that is vulnerable to external influences. Therefore, it is important for madrasahs to ensure that Islamic values are firmly embedded in students. In this context, the formation of Islamic character is not only the responsibility of the family but also formal educational institutions such as madrasahs (Fauzi, 2022). Thus, the role of madrasahs becomes very strategic in forming a generation of Muslims with noble morals.

The phenomenon of the use of digital media among elementary madrasah students currently raises deep concerns (Nasution, 2023). Digital media such as short video applications and online platforms are often used without adequate supervision. This has the potential to expose children to negative content that can damage their Islamic character (Hidayat & Sari, 2021). Research shows that excessive exposure to entertainment content can reduce children's interest in religious values (Wahyudi, 2022). In addition, the lack of digital literacy makes students vulnerable to the negative impacts of technology. Digital media, which should be an educational tool, has instead become a threat to the formation of children's morality.

Therefore, it is important to understand how the use of digital media can be controlled so as not to damage students' Islamic character. Ideally, digital media has great potential to support the formation of Islamic character in elementary madrasah students (Rohman, 2023). Online platforms can be used as a means of religious learning through educational content with an Islamic nuance (Sofyan & Fauziah, 2021). For example, videos of prophet stories or Al-Quran learning applications can be effective media for instilling Islamic values. However, this requires systematic efforts from the madrasah to provide appropriate content guidance and recommendations (Kurniawan, 2022). With proper guidance, digital media can be a tool that supports the internalization of Islamic values holistically. Therefore, it is important to direct the use of digital media towards educational goals that are beneficial for the development of students' Islamic character.

The demands of parents and society for character education in madrasahs are increasing (Azizah, 2023). Parents hope that their children will not only gain religious knowledge but also avoid the negative impacts of digital media (Hakim & Nuraini, 2021). They view madrasahs as institutions that are able to provide moral protection for children amidst the rapid flow of digital information. Madrasahs are expected to be at the forefront of protecting students from the negative influences of technology (Maulana, 2022). Therefore, the responsibility of madrasahs is not only limited to the transfer of knowledge but also includes the development of Islamic character. This expectation shows the urgency for madrasahs to integrate character education with the wise use of technology.

The ideal condition expected is the maximum utilization of digital media by the madrasah to support the development of children's religious psychology (Yusuf, 2023). If digital media is utilized properly, it can be an effective tool to strengthen students' Islamic character (Rahmawati & Prasetyo, 2021). For example, through a structured online learning program, students can gain a deep understanding of Islamic values. In addition, digital media can be a means of communication between madrasahs, students, and parents to ensure harmony in character formation (Santoso, 2022). Thus, the wise use of digital media can have a positive impact on the development of children's religious psychology, especially in forming a strong and sustainable Islamic character.

This study focuses on two main aspects. First, exploring the types of digital media used by elementary madrasah students in their daily lives as part of an initial exploration of their usage patterns. Second, examining the role of digital media in the formation of Islamic character in elementary madrasah students to understand the potential and challenges that arise. This study is limited to students aged 7-12 years with

a focus only on digital media without covering non-digital or traditional media. The purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth overview of the relationship between digital media use and the development of students' Islamic character. The benefits of this study are expected to be a reference for madrasahs, parents, and stakeholders in designing educational strategies that utilize digital media wisely to support the formation of strong and sustainable Islamic character

Literature Review

Digital media has become an important element in the lives of children, including elementary madrasah students. The use of digital media at an early age can significantly affect children's cognitive and social development (Pratama & Wijaya, 2022). However, uncontrolled exposure to negative content has the potential to damage children's moral values (Rahmawati & Hidayat, 2021). Short video applications and online platforms are often the main source of entertainment for children, but the lack of digital literacy makes them vulnerable to the negative impacts of technology (Kurniawan, 2023). Therefore, it is important to understand the types of digital media used by students so that they can be better controlled. Digital media has great potential as an educational tool if used wisely (Sari & Fauzi, 2022).

The formation of Islamic character in early childhood is influenced by various factors, including the family environment, school, and the media they consume (Huda & Rahman, 2021). Stimulating Islamic values through educational media can strengthen children's spirituality in the context of religious psychology (Wahyudi, 2022). Islamic-themed content such as videos of prophet stories or Al-Quran learning applications can help internalize religious values effectively (Rohman & Fauziah, 2023). However, low digital literacy among parents and teachers often exposes children to content that is not in accordance with religious values (Nasution, 2023). Therefore, the use of digital media must be directed towards the goal of holistic Islamic character education.

The theory of religious psychology explains that the moral development of children aged 7-12 years is at a stage of spiritual exploration that is vulnerable to external influences (Azizah, 2023). Interaction with digital media can strengthen or weaken children's religious values depending on the type of content consumed (Hakim & Nuraini, 2021). The role of madrasahs as formal educational institutions is very strategic in protecting students from the negative impacts of technology (Maulana, 2022). Madrasahs are expected to be able to integrate Islamic values into technology-based learning to support the formation of a strong Islamic character (Yusuf, 2023). This is in line with society's expectations for character education in the digital era.

Digital literacy is an important aspect in the use of digital media to form the Islamic character of elementary madrasah students (Rohman, 2023). Digital literacy not only includes the ability to use technology but also an understanding of ethics and responsibility in digital media (Sofyan & Fauziah, 2021). Students who have high digital literacy tend to be more selective in choosing the content they consume (Kurniawan, 2022). Digital literacy training for students and teachers is a strategic step to maximize the benefits of technology (Santoso, 2022). Digital literacy is also key in directing students towards the use of technology that supports Islamic values.

The role of digital media in Islamic character education has become a widely discussed topic in academic research. Digital media has great potential as a means of religious learning if used with proper guidance (Zuhdi, 2021). Online learning programs with an Islamic nuance can significantly improve students' understanding of religious values (Fauzi, 2022). The integration of technology and character education is important to create a holistic learning environment (Rahman & Huda, 2020). Thus, digital media can be an effective tool to support the formation of Islamic character in elementary madrasah students if used wisely.

Collaboration between madrasahs, parents, and the community is key to maximizing the use of digital media for the formation of Islamic character in students (Rahmawati & Prasetyo, 2021). Good communication between madrasahs and parents can ensure harmony in fostering children's character (Yusuf, 2023). The role of society in creating an environment that supports the positive use of technology is also very important (Azizah, 2023). With this collaboration, digital media can be utilized optimally to support the development of children's religious psychology (Hakim & Nuraini, 2021). Therefore, joint efforts from all parties are very important to ensure that digital media has a positive impact on the formation of students' Islamic character

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method to explore data and information in depth regarding the role of digital media in the formation of Islamic character in elementary madrasah students (Sugiyono, 2023). This method was chosen because the focus of the study is on the analysis of secondary data sourced from relevant literature and documents (Arikunto, 2022). The research steps begin with a literature study to collect academic references, followed by digital documentation to identify relevant digital media content, and source selection to ensure data accuracy and reliability. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques to identify main patterns and themes from various references collected (Moleong, 2021). This technique allows researchers to compile findings systematically and comprehensively (Creswell, 2023). With these steps, the research is expected to be able to find answers to the 2 main problem formulations according to the research focus..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The results of the study on the types of digital media used by elementary madrasah students in their daily lives are as found in the following table:

No. Author Title Research Procedure Results

No.	Author	Title	Research Procedure	Results
1	Pratama & Wijaya (2022)	Use of Short Video Applications by Early Childhood	The study used a survey and observation method on the pattern of use of short video applications among elementary madrasah students aged 7-12 years. Data were obtained through interviews and digital documentation	The results of the study showed that short video applications such as YouTube and TikTok are the dominant media for students to access entertainment, education, and general information content. Religious content is also starting to be in demand
2	Rohman & Fauziah (2023)	Utilization of Online Learning Platforms in Religious Education	The study was conducted by analyzing the content of online platforms and in-depth interviews with madrasah students. The focus of the study is the effectiveness of online platforms in religious learning	The results show that online platforms such as Ruangguru Islami are very effective in helping students learn the Qur'an, hadith, and other Islamic materials interactively and enjoyably
3	Kurniawan (2023)	Social Media Usage Patterns in Elementary School Children	This study uses digital documentation methods and surveys on the use of social media such as Instagram and Facebook by madrasah students	Social media is used by students to interact with peers, but often also causes exposure to negative content if there is no guidance from parents or teachers
4	Sari & Fauzi (2022)	Educational Games as a Medium for Learning Islamic Character	Experimental research was conducted by implementing educational games with Islamic nuances to madrasah students. Data were analyzed based on student	Educational games succeeded in increasing students' understanding of Islamic values such as honesty, cooperation, and responsibility. This media is considered effective because it conveys moral messages interactively

			responses to the values conveyed through the game	
5	Nasution (2023)	Religious Podcasts as a Medium for Forming Children's Spirituality	This study uses a qualitative analysis of religious podcasts consumed by madrasah students. Data obtained through interviews and observations of the habit of listening to religious lecturer	Religious podcasts such as stories of the prophet and short lectures are effective in strengthening children's spirituality. This media has a positive influence on the development of students' religious psychology
6	Huda & Rahman (2021)	Utilization of E-Books in Children's Education	This study uses a documentation study and content analysis of Islamic e-books used by madrasah students. Data obtained through observations and interviews with teachers and students	E-books are one of the main reading sources used by students to improve religious literacy. Relevant and interactive e-book content can support the formation of students' Islamic character

The results of the study on the Role of Digital Media in the Formation of Islamic Character of Elementary Madrasah Students have been proven in various studies as in the following table:

No.	Author	Title	Research Procedure	Results
1	Wahyudi (2022)	Internalization of Islamic Values through Digital Media	The study used thematic analysis of Islamic digital content consumed by madrasah students. Data was obtained through digital documentation and interviews	Digital media can support the internalization of Islamic values such as honesty, patience, and piety if the content consumed is in accordance with Islamic values
2	Rahmawati & Hidayat (2021)	The Role of Digital Media in Strengthening	This study uses a case study of the use of religious	Religious applications such as the digital Qur'an and daily prayer

		Children's Spirituality	applications such as the digital Qur'an and daily prayer applications by madrasah students. Data was obtained through observation and in-depth interviews	applications are effective in strengthening children's spirituality. This media helps students get closer to religious values in everyday life
3	Maulana (2022)	Digital Literacy as a Tool for Islamic Character Education	This study uses observation and analysis of digital literacy of madrasah students. The focus of the study is how digital literacy can support the formation of students' Islamic character	Good digital literacy can help students choose content that is in accordance with Islamic values, thus supporting the formation of Islamic character holistically
4	Yusuf (2023)	Prevention of Exposure to Negative Content through Parental Guidance	This study uses a qualitative method with in-depth interviews with parents and teachers about their roles in directing students' use of digital media	Parental and teacher guidance is effective in preventing exposure to negative content for students. This collaboration helps students utilize digital media for Islamic character education purposes
5	Azizah (2023)	Collaboration between Madrasahs and Parents in Character Education through Digital Media	This study uses interviews and observations to see the collaboration between madrasahs and parents in directing students' use of digital media	Collaboration between madrasahs and parents has succeeded in maximizing the use of digital media to support the formation of students' Islamic character. Digital media becomes an effective tool in holistic education
6	Rahman & Prasetyo (2022)	Integration of Digital Media in Islamic	This study uses a qualitative analysis of the integration of digital media in	The integration of digital media in learning creates a learning environment

Character Learning	Islamic character learning in madrasas. Data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation of online learning practices	that supports the formation of students' Islamic character. Digital media is used to convey Islamic values interactively and effectively
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Discussion

Based on the research results in the first table, it can be seen that elementary madrasah students use various types of digital media in their daily lives. Media such as short video applications (YouTube, TikTok), online learning platforms, social media, educational games, religious podcasts, and e-books are an integral part of their activities (Pratama & Wijaya, 2022; Rohman & Fauziah, 2023). Short video applications are predominantly used for entertainment and education, while online platforms such as Ruangguru Islami are effective for religious learning. Social media such as Instagram are also used for social interaction, although they are vulnerable to exposure to negative content (Kurniawan, 2023). Educational games and religious podcasts show great potential as Islamic character education tools because they convey moral values interactively (Sari & Fauzi, 2022; Nasution, 2023).

E-books are also an important reading source that supports students' religious literacy (Huda & Rahman, 2021). Thus, the variation in digital media usage reflects the complex technology consumption patterns among elementary madrasah students. The second table reveals the role of digital media in the formation of Islamic character in elementary madrasah students. The results of the study showed that digital media is able to support the internalization of Islamic values through relevant educational content (Wahyudi, 2022). Religious applications such as digital Al-Quran and daily prayer applications are effective in strengthening children's spirituality (Rahmawati & Hidayat, 2021). Good digital literacy is also an important factor in helping students choose content that is in accordance with Islamic values (Maulana, 2022). Guidance from parents and teachers is very strategic in preventing exposure to negative content (Yusuf, 2023). In addition, collaboration between madrasahs and parents has succeeded in maximizing the use of digital media to support the formation of students' Islamic character (Azizah, 2023). The integration of digital media in learning also creates a holistic learning environment that supports Islamic character education (Rahman & Prasetyo, 2022). The author's in-depth analysis of the findings of the first study showed that elementary madrasah students use digital media in a variety of ways, including short video applications, online learning platforms, social media, educational games, religious podcasts, and e-books.

This usage pattern reflects students' tendency to utilize technology not only as a means of entertainment but also for educational needs and social interaction. However, the dominance of short video applications for entertainment shows that

students are more often exposed to general content than Islamic content. On the other hand, online platforms such as Ruangguru Islami, educational games, and religious podcasts have great potential in supporting Islamic character formation because they convey moral values interactively. However, the lack of assistance makes students vulnerable to exposure to negative content, especially through social media. This variation in the use of digital media illustrates a complex pattern of technology consumption, where digital media plays a dual role as a means of entertainment and education. Therefore, understanding the types of digital media used by students is the first step in directing their optimal use to support the formation of Islamic character.

The author's in-depth analysis of the findings of the second study shows that digital media has a strategic role in the formation of Islamic character in elementary madrasah students. Digital media is able to support the internalization of Islamic values through relevant educational content, such as religious applications and online learning platforms. Applications such as the digital Qur'an and daily prayer applications have proven effective in strengthening children's spirituality, while good digital literacy helps students choose content that is in accordance with Islamic values. However, this success is highly dependent on guidance from parents and teachers to prevent exposure to negative content. Collaboration between madrasahs and parents is also key to maximizing the use of digital media for character education purposes. The integration of digital media in learning creates a holistic learning environment that supports the formation of Islamic character comprehensively. Thus, digital media not only functions as a means of entertainment but can also be an effective means of instilling Islamic values if used wisely and in a targeted manner.

CONCLUSION

This study answers two main problem formulations. First, elementary madrasah students use various types of digital media in their daily lives, such as short video applications, online learning platforms, social media, educational games, religious podcasts, and e-books. Short video media is predominantly used for entertainment, while online platforms are effective for religious learning. Second, digital media has a strategic role in the formation of students' Islamic character through educational content with Islamic nuances. Religious applications such as the digital Qur'an and the integration of technology in learning create a holistic learning environment that supports the internalization of Islamic values. However, the lack of mentoring makes students vulnerable to exposure to negative content.

The recommendation from this study is the importance of increasing digital literacy for students, parents, and teachers to direct the optimal use of digital media. Parents and teachers must collaborate in choosing content that is in accordance with Islamic values and preventing exposure to negative content. Madrasahs also need to integrate digital media into Islamic character learning systematically. The implications of this study indicate that digital media can be an effective educational tool if used wisely. For further research, it is recommended to develop a more structured digital media-based learning model and conduct further evaluation of the long-term impact of digital media use on the formation of students' Islamic character. Future research can also

involve active student participation in designing educational content with Islamic nuances.

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