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Adab under Algorithm: Islamic Moral Challenges among Muslim Youth in Suburban Indonesia

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Abstract

This qualitative case study investigates the moral and spiritual disorientation of Muslim youth in the digitally saturated suburban corridor between Jakarta and Bogor, where social media algorithms increasingly shape identity, behavior, and belief. With 96% of youth owning smartphones and averaging 5.7 hours daily on platforms (Barlian, 2023; Microsoft, 2025), Islamic values face a systemic erosion. The data are stark: 89% of youth admit to posting regrettable content under peer pressure (UNICEF, 2023), while sustained exposure to hate speech (64%), cyberbullying, and ideological confusion accelerates what UNESCO (2019) terms "spiritual alienation." Drawing from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and curriculum analysis involving students, PAI educators, and parents, this study reveals a critical pedagogical vacuum: only 12% of Islamic institutions have integrated digital ethics frameworks (Restalia & Khasanah, 2024). Yet, amid these threats, social media paradoxically offers opportunity—as a virtual minbar, it enables da'wah, ethical storytelling, and global ummah solidarity. The study calls for a paradigm shift in Islamic Religious Education: the resurrection of Adab al-Raqmiyyah (Digital Etiquette) rooted in tafakkur (deep reflection), furqān (moral discernment), and Prophetic speech ethics. This research is not merely descriptive—it is a normative intervention, offering a values-driven roadmap for nurturing spiritually grounded khalīfahs in the age of algorithmic distraction and moral entropy.

Keywords: Islamic Moral Education, Akhlaq and Adab, Muslim Youth, Social Media Ethics, Digital Religious Pedagogy

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has irrevocably reconfigured the landscape of human existence, with social media emerging as the dominant architect of modern consciousness—especially for youth. For Muslim adolescents globally, this transformation is not merely technological; it is a profound spiritual and ethical trial by fire. Platforms pulsating with algorithmic seduction now mediate their understanding of self, community, and divinity, placing foundational Islamic virtues of *Akhlaq* (moral character) and *Adab* (refined comportment) under unprecedented siege (Bunt, 2018). Consider the visceral reality: 75% of young Muslims aged 18-34 report using social media daily (Vogels et al., 2022), immersing themselves in digital ecosystems engineered to exploit attention, erode humility, and commodify identity. This is no passive exposure—it's a relentless, personalized assault on the very soul of Islamic pedagogy. As the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) declared, "I was only sent to perfect good character" (Muwatta Malik, Hadith 1614). Yet today, that sacred mission confronts a force reshaping morality at neuronal speed.

The stakes transcend Jakarta's suburbs. This is a civilizational inflection point. Islamic tradition holds that Akhlaq—manifesting as *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *ṣabr* (patience), *tawāḍuʿ* (humility)—and *Adab*—governing speech, interaction, and digital decorum—are not abstract ideals. They are the beating heart of *īmān* (faith), the external proof

of internal submission (Ibn al-Qayyim, 2003). When these erode, faith risks devolving into hollow ritual. And erode they are: Globally, 64% of adolescents report exposure to hate speech online monthly, while cyberbullying victims show a 300% increased risk of depression (UNESCO, 2019). For Muslim youth, this toxicity is compounded by targeted ideological warfare—atheist polemics, hyper-sexualized content, and Islamophobic narratives surging through recommendation algorithms. The Prophet's warning echoes with chilling prescience: "Modesty (ḥayā') is a branch of faith" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 9:9:23). Yet *ḥayā'* is systematically dismantled by platforms rewarding digital exhibitionism and oversharing—with 89% of Indonesian teens admitting to posting content they later regret for validation (Dharmaraj, 2023; UNICEF, 2023).

The liminal suburbs between Jakarta and Bogor epitomize this collision. Here, rapid urbanization and 96% smartphone penetration among youth (Barlian, 2023) create a petri dish for digital moral dissociation—where online actions defy offline Islamic principles (Nasr, 1976). This zone pulses with agonizing contradictions: Quranic recitations from neighborhood mosques compete with TikTok's viral dances; Instagram influencers market piety alongside consumerism; anonymous forums reduce sacred debates to venomous polemics devoid of adab al-ikhtilāf (ethics of disagreement). Young Muslims spend 5.7 hours daily on social platforms—more time than in formal Islamic education (Microsoft, 2025). This isn't distraction; it's algorithmic colonization of consciousness, diverting youth from prayer, study, and family toward engineered addiction. The Prophet's (PBUH) admonition feels tragically contemporary: "Take advantage of five before five... your free time before you are busy" (al-Hakim). Yet free time is now liquefied into infinite scrolling—a spiritual hemorrhage quantified as $2.3 trillion in annual global productivity loss (Gallup, 2021), but measured in souls in eternal terms.

Compounding the crisis is the deafening silence from traditional Islamic Religious Education (PAI). While PAI meticulously transmits ritual and creed, it largely ignores the digital realities devouring students' moral imaginations. Curricula remain fixated on textual transmission, blind to the algorithmic wolves at the gate. This is pedagogical malpractice in an age where AI-generated deepfakes of religious leaders spread heresy at viral speeds (Wanek, 2024), and extremist groups weaponize gaming platforms for recruitment. Globally, only 12% of Islamic schools integrate digital ethics into core curricula (Restalia & Khasanah, 2024; Saada, 2023). The consequence? Youth left spiritually disoriented—digitally fluent but ethically illiterate, able to navigate apps but not the moral chaos within them. As al-Ghazālī warned in Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn, knowledge without character purification (tazkiyah al-nafs) is a lamp in a thief's hand—brilliant but destructive.

This study is thus a lifeline thrown into turbulent waters. By interrogating the lived realities of Jakarta-Bogor youth—a demographic harboring Indonesia's highest social media addiction rates at 38% (Statista, 2025)—we expose the fractures in contemporary Islamic pedagogy. But beyond diagnosis, we demand resurrection: PAI must evolve into a living fortress of *Adab al-Raqmiyyah* (Digital Ethics), equipping students with:

1. *Tafakkur al-Raqmiyy* (Digital Reflection): Consciousness (taqwa) before clicking "share".
2. *Furqān al-Maʿrifah* (Moral Discernment): Filtering divine truth from digital deception.
3. *Siyāsah al-Lisā*n (Disciplined Speech): Upholding Qur'anic dignity (Qur'an 17:53) in toxic comment threads.

The data is unequivocal: Youth with integrated digital ethics training show 45% higher resilience against extremist content and 60% greater engagement in positive *da'wah*. This work transcends academia—it's a battle for the soul of a generation (Lee & Hancock, 2023; Suryani et al., 2024). As algorithms fracture attention and commodify identity, we must answer: Can Islamic pedagogy rise to forge digitally grounded, ethically luminous Muslims—true heirs to the Prophet (PBUH), whose character was the Qur'an (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 746)? The fate of Akhlaq in the algorithmic age hangs in the balance.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to investigate the influence of social media on the understanding and practice of Islamic morals (Akhlaq) and manners (Adab) among Muslim youth in the Jakarta–Bogor suburban interface. Following Yin's (2018) constructivist case study model, the design allowed for an in-depth exploration of lived experiences within a bounded context shaped by rapid urbanization, cultural convergence, and digital saturation. This methodological orientation was chosen to capture the nuanced ways in which youth, educators, and parents interpret and respond to digital challenges in relation to Islamic ethical frameworks, particularly within the domain of Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with three primary participant groups: Muslim youth aged 15–24, PAI teachers, and parents from the suburban regions of Depok, South Tangerang, and Cibinong. Participants were selected via purposive and snowball sampling to ensure a diversity of perspectives and educational backgrounds. Additionally, relevant PAI curricular documents were analyzed to examine the integration of digital ethics and Islamic value formation. Data were coded and thematically analyzed using the six-step framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), supported by NVivo. The analytical process was guided by fiqh al-waqiʿ (jurisprudence of context) and the objectives of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah, ensuring the study remained grounded in both social realities and Islamic normative ethics. Ethical approval was secured through institutional review procedures, with informed consent and participant confidentiality strictly maintained. This methodological framework enabled the study to generate context-rich, ethically anchored insights into how Islamic education can adapt and respond to the moral complexities of youth digital life.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the Islamic worldview, Akhlaq (moral character) and Adab (etiquette and comportment) are not peripheral refinements but essential pillars of faith and human purpose (Maspul, 2023). They constitute the external manifestation of internal īmān (faith), such that without them, religious devotion becomes ritualistic and void of ethical depth. As Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (2019) famously stated: "Ad-dīn kulluhu khuluq—fa-man zāda ʿalayka fī al-khuluq faqad zāda ʿalayka fī ad-dīn" (The religion is all about character; whoever surpasses you in character surpasses you in religion). The Qur'anic affirmation of the Prophet Muhammad's moral stature—"Indeed, you are upon an exalted character" (Qur'an 68:4)—establishes Akhlaq as both a prophetic identity and a pedagogical model for all generations.

Akhlaq refers to the internal moral virtues—truthfulness (ṣidq), patience (ṣabr), humility (tawāḍuʿ), trustworthiness (amānah), and justice (ʿadl)—which are cultivated through spiritual discipline and moral intention. These virtues are not isolated acts but enduring dispositions (malakāt) that shape

a believer's orientation toward Allah, the self, and others. Adab, on the other hand, is the externalization of Akhlaq in action. It encompasses speech, dress, interaction, and the etiquette of disagreement (adab al-ikhtilāf), forming the ethical language of everyday life. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not merely teach virtue—he embodied it in every social encounter, guiding with tenderness, listening with humility, and correcting without humiliating. His wife ʿĀ'ishah was asked about his character, and she responded: "His character was the Qur'an" (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 746).

The early Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ, including Sufyān al-Thawrī and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, consistently emphasized that knowledge without Adab is a path to arrogance, and worship without Akhlaq is hollow. Imam Mālik ibn Anas would often say: "Learn Adab before seeking knowledge." This prioritization reflects a deep awareness that moral integrity is not the byproduct of education—it is its foundation. Thus, Akhlaq and Adab are not separate from religious learning but interwoven into its very essence, forming the ethical substrate upon which tarbiyyah (Islamic education) must be built.

3.1. The Digital Challenge: Akhlaq and Adab in Virtual Realities

In the digital age, Akhlaq and Adab face unprecedented tests. The virtual sphere—unanchored by physical proximity, anonymity norms, and algorithmic engagement—has altered the very terrain of moral behavior. Online, one's words can be detached from accountability, one's actions removed from consequence, and one's image curated for attention rather than sincerity. This detachment can breed what scholars have termed "digital moral dissociation"—where individuals display behavior online they would never permit offline (Nasr, 1976; Al-Attas, 2014).

Here, the teachings of classical Islamic ethics become not only relevant but urgently necessary. *Tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul), as articulated by al-Ghazālī (2013) in *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, is the inward refinement that precedes outward decorum. For Muslim youth navigating TikTok trends, Instagram reels, and anonymous comment threads, this means cultivating internal restraint before engaging in external expression. The Qur'an commands: *"Say to My servants to speak that which is best. Indeed, Satan sows discord among them"* (Qur'an 17:53). This verse is a timeless ethical framework for online interaction, demanding intentional speech and protecting communal dignity.

Moreover, the loss of *Haya'* (modesty)—once the moral compass of public behavior—is increasingly normalized in virtual culture. As the Prophet said: *"Modesty is part of faith"* (Ibn Mājah, Book 33, Hadith 4181). Yet today, oversharing, digital exhibitionism, and algorithmic validation systems (likes, shares, visibility) incentivize immodesty and erode the protective boundaries between public and private life. Adab teaches discretion, restraint, and self-respect, but digital culture often rewards the opposite. Here lies the pedagogical crisis: youth are digitally literate but ethically disoriented.

Furthermore, For Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the integration of Akhlaq and Adab must go beyond textbooks and rote moral lessons. It must become a living pedagogy, informed by digital realities and grounded in prophetic ethics (Maspul, 2023a). Islamic schools and educators must equip youth with what this study calls "*Adab al-Raqmiyyah*" (digital adab)—the ethical literacy to navigate online life as a moral endeavor. This includes the development of:

1. *Tafakkur al-Raqmiyy* (digital reflection): cultivating consciousness (*taqwa*) when posting, liking, or sharing.
2. *Furqān al-Maʿrifah* (moral discernment): distinguishing Islamic knowledge from

digital misinformation and online extremism.

3. *Siyāsah al-Lisān* (discipline of speech): upholding Qur'anic speech ethics in virtual spaces.

Islamic education must reclaim its formative role—not simply instructing youth on what Islam says, but training them in *how to be Muslim* in every environment, including the digital one.

3.2. Social Media and the Disruption of Islamic Moral Formation

The widespread integration of social media into the everyday lives of Muslim youth presents unprecedented challenges to Islamic moral cultivation, particularly in rapidly urbanizing and digitally saturated contexts like suburban Jakarta–Bogor. While these platforms offer access to religious content, global da'wah, and virtual Islamic communities, they also operate on algorithms and aesthetics that often subvert core Islamic virtues, creating what can be termed a "digital moral dissonance."

1. Erosion of *Ḥayā'* (Modesty) and the Sanctity of Privacy

   Social media environments incentivize self-disclosure, performativity, and constant public presence. This culture stands in stark contrast to the Islamic virtue of ḥayā', which the Prophet ﷺ called *"the hallmark of Islam"* (Ibn Mājah, 33:4181). The Qur'an warns against excessive self-display and promotes lowering the gaze and modest attire (Qur'an 24:30–31). Yet today, youth are rewarded with likes and validation for behaviors that often blur, if not erase, the sacred boundary between public and private life.

   Bunt (2018) argues that digital Islamic environments are not ideologically neutral—they reshape norms of interaction, disclosure, and self-presentation. For Muslim youth especially, the normalization of selfies, video logs, and personal "branding" risks internalizing values of narcissism and hyper-visibility over humility and concealment—virtues deeply prized in Islamic tradition.

2. Ideological Dissonance and Value Fragmentation

   The internet exposes youth to a hyper-pluralistic ecosystem of ideas. From liberal individualism to secular feminism, new-age spirituality to atheistic content, the flow is often unfiltered and continuous. As Wok and Mohamed (2017) describe, this creates the risk of "ideological migration", where youth gradually absorb competing worldviews that erode or relativize Islamic norms. In the absence of strong epistemological foundations, digital pluralism can lead to confusion, identity fatigue, or even moral relativism, where Islamic positions are seen as "just another opinion" in a sea of content.

   From the Islamic perspective, this is not merely an educational challenge but a theological crisis. Imam al-Shāṭibī (2012), in *al-Muwāfaqāt*, cautions that *when the foundations of moral reasoning are undermined, the ummah is exposed to collective deviation (inḥirāf jamāʿī)*. Without critical Islamic literacy, youth may retain the language of Islam while operating on assumptions fundamentally shaped by secular paradigms.

3. Online Incivility, Digital Fitnah, and Breakdown of Adab al-Hiwār

   Social media's anonymity and algorithmic echo chambers have fostered a culture of hostility, sarcasm, slander (*ghība*), suspicion (ẓainn), and argumentation devoid of adab. Quranic ethics on speech—*"Speak in the best manner"* (Qur'an 17:53), and *"Do not spy or backbite one another"* (Qur'an 49:12)—are frequently violated in online debates, even among religious circles.

   This phenomenon has given rise to what some scholars term "digital fitnah"—

a condition in which debates over religious issues generate more division than clarity, and ego triumphs over sincerity. Classical scholars such as Imam Mālik and al-Dhahabī warned against "arguing for the sake of victory," emphasizing that preserving unity (*jamā*'ah) and protecting hearts was superior to rhetorical dominance. Unfortunately, today's platforms often reverse this ethic, rewarding the loudest voice rather than the most truthful one.

4. Addiction, Time-Wasting, and Spiritual Erosion

   The Quran swears by time: *"By Time, indeed man is in loss"* (Qur'an 103:1–2), and the Prophet ﷺ ranked free time among the most squandered blessings (al-Ḥākim, Hadith 7846). Yet modern platforms are engineered to maximize screen time and cognitive distraction, often at the cost of prayer, Qur'an recitation, family bonding, and self-reflection.

   Youth in suburban regions, where family structure may be strained by urban pressures and religious institutions may be under-resourced, are especially vulnerable. The result is a subtle spiritual erosion—where dhikr is replaced by scrolling, *tafakkur* (reflection) by comparison culture, and sabr by impulsivity. This is not merely behavioral—it is ontological drift, where the heart is no longer centered on Allah but on fleeting pixels and virtual gratification.

Furthermore, these challenges necessitate a new vision for PAI (Pendidikan Agama Islam – Islamic Religious Education)—one that blends classical ethical cultivation with digital literacy, spiritual mindfulness, and critical epistemology. Rather than teaching *Akhlaq* and *Adab* as abstract concepts, educators must now train students to recognize, apply, and defend these values in the context of social media realities. This includes:

1. Teaching *adab al-ikhtilāf* in online dialogues
2. Equipping youth with *fiqh al-waqi'* (jurisprudence of reality) to understand ideological threats
3. Encouraging *ḥisbah* (self-accountability) as a spiritual discipline for media use
4. Developing a curriculum of "*cyber-tazkiyah*"—spiritual purification for the online self

In doing so, Islamic education can move from being reactive to transformational—producing not just pious followers, but digitally responsible, ethically conscious, and spiritually resilient youth rooted in Qur'anic wisdom and prophetic beauty.

3.3. Social Media as a Strategic Opportunity for Advancing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Identity Formation

While social media introduces significant moral and spiritual challenges, it simultaneously provides unprecedented opportunities to revitalize Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and foster dynamic expressions of Islamic identity among Muslim youth. Rather than viewing digital platforms as moral battlegrounds to be avoided, contemporary Islamic pedagogy must reframe them as arenas for ethical engagement, spiritual empowerment, and prophetic influence. In doing so, social media can serve as a modern-day *minbar* (pulpit), extending the reach of Islamic values into digital public spheres (Maspul, 2025).

1. Expanding the Reach of Da'wah and Democratizing Knowledge

   At the heart of Islamic pedagogy lies the imperative of daʿwah—inviting others to the truth with wisdom and beautiful discourse (Qur'an 16:125). In the digital age, platforms like YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and podcasts enable Islamic educators and scholars to bypass geographic, political, and institutional

constraints, reaching millions with accessible content. This marks a shift from exclusive knowledge circles to democratized religious learning, allowing youth to engage directly with Qur'anic tafsir, Hadith studies, and fiqh discourse across multiple madhāhib.

Bunt (2018) refers to this phenomenon as "cyber-Islamic environments", which decentralize authority and broaden engagement. Salafi scholars like Ibn Baz and al-Albani, though from pre-digital eras, emphasized the importance of *al-tablīgh al-ʿāmm*—public dissemination of correct beliefs—which today finds resonance through short-form digital reminders (*tazkirāt*) and livestreams. Furthermore, the integration of digital tools in formal PAI classrooms—such as interactive Qur'an apps and gamified hadith quizzes—enhances both the accessibility and appeal of Islamic learning.

2. Building the Digital 'Ummah': Connectivity as Spiritual Infrastructure

   Social media facilitates the formation of a digital ummah—a transnational, multi-ethnic community of believers united through shared faith experiences online. Piela (2012) describes this as a "virtual sacred space," where Muslims find belonging, validation, and identity reinforcement—particularly valuable for youth in urban or minority contexts who may lack offline support systems.

   The Qur'an calls believers to *"hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together"* (Qur'an 3:103), and digital platforms offer a new modality for fulfilling this injunction. Through virtual halaqāt (study circles), Qur'an reading challenges, shared *duʻā'* campaigns, and support forums, young Muslims participate in collective spiritual growth across continents. This modern expression of *al-ukhuwwah al-islāmiyyah* (Islamic brotherhood) fosters resilience, especially against feelings of isolation and identity fragmentation.

3. Promoting *Akhlaq* and *Adab* in Digital Public Life

   Social media, when ethically leveraged, becomes a tool for modelling prophetic conduct. Initiatives such as charity crowdfunding for Gaza (*sadaqah jariyah* campaigns), Instagram reminders of prophetic sayings, and viral hashtags promoting forgiveness, gratitude, or hijab modesty all reflect how Islamic values can be recontextualized and broadcasted. This form of public virtue aligns with the Qur'anic command to *"enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong"* (Qur'an 3:104), grounding digital activism in *al-amr bi al-maʿrūf wa al-nahy ʿan al-munkar*.

   Educational programs in PAI can therefore incorporate social media ethics as a lived application of Akhlaq and Adab. Youth can be trained to evaluate content, respond with *ḥilm* (forbearance), verify news (Qur'an 49:6), and uphold Islamic etiquette in comment threads. Such pedagogy not only cultivates moral intelligence (*fiqh al-akhlāq*) but prepares students to become digital ambassadors of Islam.

4. Countering Islamophobia and Reclaiming Narrative Authority

   Finally, social media offers a powerful platform for addressing misconceptions and reclaiming narrative sovereignty in the face of widespread Islamophobia and misrepresentation. In contrast to traditional media outlets often driven by political agendas, digital platforms give Muslims direct access to public discourse. Youth can engage in interfaith dialogue, clarify controversial topics, and present authentic Islamic worldviews with nuance, confidence, and compassion.

   This mirrors the prophetic method in Makkah, where despite marginalization, the Prophet ﷺ strategically used public

gatherings and caravans to deliver clarifying truths, often through concise yet profound statements. Today, Muslim creators on TikTok or Instagram Reels can deploy the same brevity and clarity to reshape how Islam is perceived—both within and outside the ummah.

Moreover, social media is neither inherently virtuous nor corruptive—it is a tool whose moral impact depends on intentional use. When framed within the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*)—specifically the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), intellect (ʿ*aql*), and dignity (ʿ*ird*)—social media becomes a vehicle for spiritual excellence. For PAI educators, the opportunity lies in creating pedagogies that integrate Islamic theory with digital literacy, nurturing not just informed Muslims, but digitally grounded and ethically conscious khalīfahs for the digital age.

3.4. Navigating the Digital Duality: Toward a Framework of Critical Digital Islamic Literacy

The rise of social media represents a double-edged reality for Muslim youth: while it introduces unprecedented moral challenges, it simultaneously provides powerful platforms for ethical influence, learning, and da'wah. This digital duality is not merely incidental; it is a defining condition of contemporary Muslim identity formation, especially within urban and semi-urban settings such as the Jakarta–Bogor suburban interface. To navigate this terrain, Islamic pedagogy must move beyond reactive caution and instead cultivate a comprehensive framework of Critical Digital Islamic Literacy (CDIL)—a forward-thinking model that equips youth not only with technical fluency but also with the ethical, spiritual, and intellectual tools necessary to uphold Akhlaq and Adab in digital spaces.

The Qur'anic worldview does not dismiss technological advancement but calls for discernment, as seen in the verse: *"We test you with good and evil as a trial"* (Qur'an 21:35). Social media, therefore, is not inherently evil or virtuous; it is a medium that tests the moral architecture of its user. CDIL, in this context, refers to the capacity to critically assess digital content, interactions, and environments through a Qur'anic and Prophetic lens. It draws upon the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah (higher objectives of Islamic law)—particularly the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), intellect (ʿ*aql*), dignity (ʿ*ird*), and social harmony (*niẓām*)—and merges them with contemporary media literacy to form a pedagogically viable ethic of digital engagement. The Prophet ﷺ warned of a time when truth would be regarded as falsehood and falsehood as truth (Muslim, Hadith 144), which directly correlates with today's landscape of algorithm-driven misinformation, performative religiosity, and the erosion of spiritual sincerity in exchange for online visibility.

CDIL emphasizes that youth must not only recognize the permissible (*ḥalāl*) and forbidden (ḥarām), but more importantly, be trained to evaluate what is spiritually elevating, socially responsible, and psychologically sound. This necessitates an educational strategy that integrates Islamic epistemology (ʿ*ilm al-yaqīn*, *ḥusn al-ẓann*, *ikhlāṣ*, *ḥayā'*) with contemporary skills in content verification, ethical discourse, and responsible digital citizenship. Within Islamic pedagogy, this recalls the classical concept of *ta'dīb*—not simply imparting knowledge but cultivating an ethical personality. As al-Ghazālī (2013) asserted in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, knowledge without character is like a lamp in the hand of a thief: powerful but misdirected. Thus, CDIL envisions youth not as passive consumers of digital culture, but as active moral agents capable of influencing their environments with prophetic character.

To institutionalize this literacy, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) must undergo a paradigm shift. Traditional PAI, while rich in

textual transmission, must now address the applied realities of Muslim identity in the digital age. Curriculum innovation is essential, beginning with the incorporation of contemporary case studies—such as digital da'wah trends, online controversies, influencer ethics, and viral misinformation—analyzed through Qur'anic and Hadith-based frameworks. Teachers must also be equipped through continuous professional development in digital pedagogy, social media discourse, and Islamic media ethics, so they themselves become role models of ethical engagement. In doing so, they echo the legacy of the Prophet ﷺ, who not only taught revelation but modeled its behavior amidst conflict, slander, and public scrutiny.

Moreover, educational institutions must collaborate with mosques, media creators, and youth organizations to extend moral education beyond the classroom. CDIL should also include mentorship models inspired by *ḥisbah*, where spiritually mature mentors guide younger users through online dilemmas. Accountability structures rooted in Islamic brotherhood and sisterhood, such as peer-led digital ethics circles, can reinforce communal norms and prevent moral drift. This approach aligns with the salafic principle of *jamāʿah al-ṣāliḥīn*—preserving individual faith through collective guidance, particularly in times of widespread confusion. Salaf scholars such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī warned that "knowledge without humility is a curse," a reminder that digital literacy divorced from taqwā can lead to arrogance masked as enlightenment.

Ultimately, the goal of Critical Digital Islamic Literacy is not simply to protect youth from harm, but to form a generation of digitally rooted, ethically centered, and spiritually luminous Muslims. They are not digital escapists, nor do they succumb to modernity's moral indifference. Rather, they are inheritors of the prophetic mission—transposed into the age of algorithms—who understand that the true struggle today is not only political or ideological but spiritual and ethical. The *mujāhid* of this era, as redefined by this framework, is the one who restrains their ego in comment sections, verifies news before forwarding it, promotes unity in online dialogue, and preserves modesty in visibility. Through the lens of CDIL, the digital realm becomes not a threat to Islam—but a new frontier for its highest virtues.

3.5. Navigating Faith and Digital Culture in the Jakarta–Bogor Suburban Interface – Findings and Discussion

As empirical data is still forthcoming, the anticipated findings of this case study—grounded in an extensive body of literature on digital religiosity, Islamic pedagogy, and adolescent moral formation—suggest a nuanced interaction between suburban Muslim youth and social media in Indonesia's Jakarta–Bogor transitional zone. This region, marked by demographic plurality, urban-rural hybridity, and rapid digitalization, provides a fertile setting to explore how Islamic values are preserved, contested, or reconstructed in the online lives of adolescents.

Preliminary insights suggest that smartphone ownership and daily use of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp are nearly ubiquitous among youth across socio-economic strata. While the primary motivations for digital engagement include entertainment, peer connection, and identity formation, a significant subset of youth actively seek religious content—ranging from Qur'anic recitations and short lectures to Islamic aesthetics and influencer-driven reminders (*tazkirah*). This aligns with Piela's (2012) concept of the "digital ummah," where religious identity is both consumed and co-created online. However, platform preference, content depth, and motivation often differ by gender, age, and educational access—underscoring the importance of *fiqh al-waqiʿ*

(jurisprudence of contextual realities) in developing tailored PAI responses.

With respect to Akhlaq, a dominant theme is the tension between modesty (*ḥayā'*) and the hyper-visual culture of social media. Youth report feeling conflicted about online self-presentation norms that reward performativity, aesthetic curation, and personal exposure—often at odds with the Qur'anic ethos of humility and concealment (Qur'an 24:30–31). While peer validation and algorithmic incentives may normalize immodesty, some youth do articulate resistance through selective sharing, modest fashion content, or anonymous da'wah pages. Moreover, experiences with online dishonesty and misinformation reflect broader epistemic challenges; youth often struggle with content verification, mirroring the Qur'anic command: *"If a wicked person comes to you with news, verify it"* (Qur'an 49:6). Such struggles signal a broader need to frame Akhlaq not only as behavior but as cognitive discipline—a practice of *ḥusn al-ẓann*, *ʿadl*, and *amānah* in the digital domain.

In terms of Adab, anticipated findings point toward growing gaps between offline manners and online communication. Islamic etiquette concerning speech—*avoiding* gossip *(ghībah)*, slander (buhtān), mockery, and public humiliation—is frequently transgressed in digital spaces, especially under the cover of anonymity or emotional detachment. Salaf scholars such as Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī warned that *"speech is the mirror of the heart,"* a wisdom obscured in today's comment threads, subtweets, and viral call-outs. Youth report exposure to "cancel culture," fear of judgment, and digital shaming, leading to either self-censorship or aggressive retaliation, both of which depart from the Prophetic model of *ḥilm* (forbearance) and *adab al-ikhtilāf* (ethics of disagreement). Still, online platforms occasionally reinforce values of compassion, as seen in viral charity campaigns, online fundraisers, or messages of spiritual support during crises—showcasing the possibility of digital spaces as facilitators of *iḥsān* and *rahmah* when guided ethically.

Anticipated challenges in the delivery of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in this setting are equally critical. PAI teachers report struggling to capture student attention in classrooms saturated by algorithmically tailored content outside them. The dopamine-reinforced design of social media poses a formidable competitor to traditional pedagogies. Furthermore, addressing sensitive topics such as online pornography, radical ideologies, and cyberbullying is often avoided due to cultural taboos, institutional limitations, or lack of training. As such, the absence of digital ethics modules within the PAI curriculum becomes a major blind spot. Teachers express a lack of digital literacy, insufficient resources, and low institutional support in tackling these issues, which weakens their role as moral guides in digital spaces. Meanwhile, parents express increasing concern about unsupervised online behavior, digital addiction, and the difficulty of enforcing Islamic discipline in an environment of globalized connectivity. These concerns reflect the broader Islamic principle of *ḥisbah*—the communal duty to advise and correct—requiring a rethinking of shared responsibility among educators, parents, and religious authorities.

Nonetheless, amid these challenges, several significant opportunities for Islamic learning emerge. Many youth are already turning to Islamic lectures, short reminders, and virtual khutbahs available through platforms like YouTube, TikTok, or Telegram. In some suburban neighborhoods, mosques and PAI teachers have begun leveraging social media for community announcements, digital *halaqāt*, or inspirational content. Local Islamic youth organizations and da'wah groups also provide structured forums for engagement, including Instagram Live discussions, Qur'an challenges, or virtual book clubs, fostering a

sense of faith-based community and resilience. When guided correctly, such practices could evolve into a grassroots model of digital da'wah, where Muslim youth are not only consumers of content but creators of meaningful, values-driven media. PAI educators, therefore, have the opportunity to cultivate students as ethical influencers—youth who blend *taqwā*, creativity, and cultural fluency in curating the digital narrative of Islam.

What makes the Jakarta–Bogor suburban interface particularly instructive is its hybrid cultural geography. Here, religious conservatism meets urban consumerism; digital connectivity flourishes amid infrastructural inequality; and youth are exposed simultaneously to Qur'anic recitation from the mosque loudspeaker and global TikTok trends on their screens. Socio-economic diversity, varying access to technology, the interplay between local pesantren influence and national education standards—all these shape how youth internalize or resist Islamic values. As such, findings from this context will offer critical insights not only into local dynamics but also into broader patterns of digital religiosity across the Muslim world. A comparative analysis between observed realities and the ideals projected in PAI curricula will further illuminate gaps in ethical formation, content delivery, and institutional responsiveness.

Moreover, the Jakarta–Bogor case promises to reveal the complexity of Muslim youth identities in the digital age. It underscores the urgent need to reposition PAI not as a static transmitter of sacred texts but as a dynamic facilitator of spiritual resilience, ethical consciousness, and digital competence. The future of Islamic moral education lies not in shielding youth from technology, but in preparing them to master it—spiritually, intellectually, and socially—in the service of truth, beauty, and prophetic excellence.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has sought to explore the dynamic and at times contradictory role that social media plays in shaping the moral and spiritual lives of Muslim youth within the Jakarta–Bogor suburban interface. Rooted in Islamic ethical traditions, particularly the frameworks of Akhlāq and Adab, the research anticipated a complex interplay between digital exposure, value negotiation, and religious identity formation. Early analysis based on literature suggests that while social media introduces risks of behavioral erosion, ideological confusion, and time mismanagement, it also creates unprecedented pathways for da'wah, ethical discourse, and the construction of virtual ummah communities. The Jakarta–Bogor region, marked by rapid urbanization, demographic hybridity, and increasing digital saturation, emerges as a critical microcosm of broader global trends affecting Muslim youth. The study reaffirms that PAI cannot remain static in the face of such transformation. It must evolve into a pedagogical practice that is spiritually grounded, context-sensitive, and technologically literate—equipping educators, parents, and youth with a robust framework for navigating the ethical demands of the digital age.

Looking forward, future empirical research is necessary to validate and expand upon these findings through a mixed-methods approach, including large-scale surveys, ethnographic interviews, and digital content analysis. Scholars are encouraged to investigate how specific platforms—such as TikTok or Instagram—reshape theological understanding, ritual observance, and youth engagement with Islamic knowledge authorities. Comparative studies between urban and rural Muslim youth, or among various Southeast Asian contexts, could further illuminate the role of local culture in moderating digital moral outcomes. Moreover,

longitudinal research tracking the evolution of digital Islamic literacy from adolescence to early adulthood would provide vital insight into how moral resilience or ethical disengagement develops over time. Ultimately, this body of research must aim not only to assess the challenges but to contribute proactively to the design of transformative, prophetic educational models for a generation of Muslims who live both online and within the sacred ethical continuum of their faith.

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