

The Influence of Social Media Use on Students' Morals at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 3 Tabalong, South Kalimantan

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Abstract

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The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the way students communicate, access information, and interact within society. Among these technological developments, social media has become an inseparable part of adolescents' daily lives, offering both educational opportunities and moral challenges. This study aims to examine the influence of social media use on students' moral behavior at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 3 Tabalong, South Kalimantan. A quantitative research approach was employed using a survey method. The study involved a population of 152 students, from which 35 respondents were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, simple linear regression, product-moment correlation, t-test, and coefficient of determination analysis. The findings reveal that the calculated t-value (3.430) exceeded the critical t-table value (1.692), indicating a statistically significant relationship between social media use and students' moral behavior. The regression analysis produced the equation $Y = 33.390 + 0.479X$, demonstrating a positive linear relationship. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination indicates that social media use contributes 21.8% to students' moral development, while the remaining 78.2% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study. These findings highlight that although social media significantly influences students' morals, teachers, parents, and schools remain essential in fostering responsible digital behavior and strengthening students' moral character.

Keywords:

Social Media, Moral Development, Students' Morals, Islamic Education, Quantitative Research

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Introduction

The rapid development of information and communication technology has fundamentally transformed various aspects of human life, including education, communication, business, and social interaction. Among these technological innovations, social media has become one of the most influential platforms, enabling individuals to communicate, exchange information, and collaborate without geographical barriers. Through applications such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, users can easily share ideas, build social relationships, and participate in digital communities. Consequently, social media has become an indispensable component of contemporary society, particularly among adolescents and students (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Indonesia has experienced a remarkable increase in internet and social media usage over the past decade. Adolescents constitute one of the largest groups of active users because they are highly adaptive to digital technology and frequently utilize online platforms for educational, social, and entertainment purposes. Social media provides students with opportunities to access educational resources, collaborate with peers, participate in online discussions, and develop digital literacy skills that support the learning process. Therefore, social media has become an important educational resource that complements conventional classroom instruction

Despite these educational benefits, the extensive use of social media has also generated significant concerns regarding students' moral and behavioral development. Easy access to digital platforms allows adolescents to encounter misinformation, cyberbullying, hate speech, pornography, online fraud, and other forms of inappropriate content that may negatively influence their attitudes and behavior. Excessive use of social media may also reduce face-to-face communication, weaken social responsibility, and encourage addictive digital habits. These challenges require serious attention from educators, parents, and policymakers to ensure that technology contributes positively to students' personal development (UNESCO, 2023).

Within the framework of Islamic education, moral development (akhlak) is regarded as one of the principal objectives of the educational process. Islamic education seeks not only to enhance students' intellectual capacity but also to cultivate noble character based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, sincerity, and compassion are fundamental characteristics that should be internalized throughout students' educational experiences. Therefore, technological advancement should always be accompanied by moral guidance so that digital innovation contributes positively to character formation rather than moral decline (Al-Attas, 1991).

The importance of moral education is further emphasized in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which states that national education aims to develop learners who are faithful to God Almighty, possess noble character, are knowledgeable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizens. This legal foundation demonstrates that moral formation constitutes a fundamental objective of Indonesian education and should remain a priority despite the rapid advancement of digital technology (Republic of Indonesia, 2003).

Islam also emphasizes ethical conduct in communication and information dissemination. The Qur'an instructs believers to verify information before accepting or spreading it and warns against following matters without sufficient knowledge, as stated in Surah Al-Isra' (17:36). This guidance is increasingly relevant in the digital era, where information can spread rapidly through social media without adequate verification. Consequently, students are expected to develop digital ethics by exercising responsibility, critical thinking, and self-control in their online interactions (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra' [17]:36).

Adolescence represents a crucial stage in the development of personality, identity, and moral values. During this period, students are highly susceptible to external influences originating from family, peers, educational institutions, and digital environments. Social media increasingly shapes adolescents' lifestyles, perceptions, communication patterns, and decision-making processes through continuous exposure to various forms of online content. Consequently, understanding the relationship between social media use and students' moral development has become increasingly important for educational researchers and practitioners (Santrock, 2019).

Teachers play a strategic role in guiding students toward responsible digital citizenship. Besides delivering academic knowledge, teachers are responsible for strengthening students' moral awareness, promoting ethical online behavior, and integrating character education into classroom learning. Educational institutions should also establish appropriate policies regarding smartphone use, digital literacy education, and religious activities that reinforce students' moral values. Such efforts are expected to

maximize the educational benefits of social media while minimizing its potential negative impacts on students' behavior (OECD, 2021).

MAN 3 Tabalong was selected as the research setting because social media has become deeply integrated into students' daily lives within this Islamic educational institution. Students routinely utilize various social media platforms for communication, entertainment, and academic activities. Although these technologies offer numerous educational opportunities, concerns remain regarding their potential influence on students' attitudes, behavior, and moral values. Therefore, MAN 3 Tabalong provides an appropriate context for examining the relationship between social media use and students' moral development. Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the influence of social media use on students' morals at MAN 3 Tabalong, South Kalimantan. The findings are expected to enrich the existing literature on digital technology and Islamic education while providing practical recommendations for teachers, parents, schools, and policymakers to promote responsible social media use and strengthen students' moral character in the digital era

Literature Review

Social media refers to internet-based platforms that enable users to create, share, exchange, and interact with digital content in real time. Unlike conventional communication media, social media facilitates two-way communication that encourages collaboration, participation, and user-generated content. Various platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp have become essential tools for communication, education, entertainment, and business activities. As digital technology continues to evolve, social media has become an integral part of everyday life, particularly among adolescents and students, who spend a considerable amount of time interacting within digital environments (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The integration of social media into educational settings has generated both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, social media enhances students' access to learning resources, facilitates collaborative learning, encourages communication between teachers and students, and supports independent learning beyond classroom boundaries. Educational institutions increasingly utilize digital platforms to distribute learning materials, conduct online discussions, and promote academic engagement. Consequently, social media has become an important complementary learning tool in modern education (UNESCO, 2023).

Despite its educational potential, excessive and uncontrolled social media use may negatively affect students' psychological, emotional, and moral development. Continuous exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, misinformation, online violence, and addictive digital behavior may gradually influence students' attitudes and ethical values. Furthermore, excessive screen time often reduces direct interpersonal interaction, weakens empathy, and contributes to declining academic performance. Therefore, balanced and responsible social media use is necessary to minimize these adverse consequences (OECD, 2021).

Within Islamic educational philosophy, moral education (*tarbiyah al-akhlāq*) occupies a central position in developing complete human beings. Islamic education aims not only to cultivate intellectual competence but also to nurture spiritual awareness, ethical responsibility, and noble character. The cultivation of honesty, sincerity, discipline, patience, respect, and social responsibility is considered fundamental for producing individuals who contribute positively to society.

Consequently, moral education remains the core objective of Islamic educational institutions despite rapid technological advancement (Al-Attas, 1991).

The concept of akhlak in Islam refers to stable personal characteristics that naturally guide individuals toward virtuous behavior without requiring external coercion. These moral qualities are formed through continuous education, habituation, religious practice, and positive social environments. Good morals are reflected in responsible behavior toward Allah, fellow human beings, and the surrounding environment. Therefore, moral development should become an integral component of every educational activity, including digital literacy education (Al-Ghazali, 2004).

Adolescence represents one of the most critical developmental stages in human life because individuals experience rapid cognitive, emotional, social, and moral changes. During this period, adolescents actively seek identity, independence, and social acceptance, making them highly vulnerable to environmental influences. Social media has become one of the dominant external factors shaping adolescents' beliefs, lifestyles, communication patterns, and decision-making processes. Therefore, understanding adolescent behavior in digital environments is essential for developing effective educational interventions (Santrock, 2019).

Digital literacy has emerged as an essential competency for students in the twenty-first century. Digital literacy encompasses not only technical skills in using technology but also the ability to evaluate information critically, communicate ethically, protect personal privacy, and utilize digital media responsibly. Students with strong digital literacy skills are more capable of distinguishing reliable information from misinformation and are better prepared to engage positively within online communities (UNESCO, 2023).

Teachers and schools play an increasingly strategic role in guiding students toward responsible social media use. Besides providing academic instruction, educators are expected to integrate digital citizenship, media literacy, and character education into the learning process. School policies regarding smartphone use, internet ethics, and online communication should be accompanied by continuous supervision and counseling. Such educational efforts help students develop self-control and responsible online behavior while reducing the potential risks associated with excessive social media use (OECD, 2021).

Parents likewise serve as the primary educators in shaping children's moral behavior within digital environments. Effective parental supervision, open communication, and consistent guidance significantly influence how adolescents use social media. Parents who actively monitor digital activities and establish appropriate usage boundaries are more likely to foster responsible online behavior among their children. Collaboration between families and schools therefore becomes essential for strengthening students' moral resilience in the digital era (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008).

Several previous empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that social media significantly influences students' moral behavior, although the magnitude of its impact varies depending on environmental and individual factors. Previous findings indicate that positive social media use can improve communication, learning motivation, and creativity, whereas uncontrolled usage tends to increase exposure to inappropriate content, weaken discipline, and influence students' ethical behavior negatively. These studies confirm that social media constitutes one of several important factors affecting students' moral development, although family, peer relationships, and school environments remain equally influential (Alauddin et al., 2023).

Although previous studies have investigated the relationship between social media use and students' morality, most have primarily focused on general educational contexts or examined multiple independent variables simultaneously. Limited empirical research has specifically explored this relationship within Islamic senior secondary schools while emphasizing moral development from the perspective of Islamic education. Therefore, this study addresses an important research gap by investigating the influence of social media use on students' morals at MAN 3 Tabalong, South Kalimantan. The findings are expected to provide both theoretical contributions to Islamic educational research and practical recommendations for improving moral education in the digital age (Robiin, 2019)

Method

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a correlational research design to examine the influence of social media use on students' moral behavior at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 3 Tabalong, South Kalimantan. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to measure relationships between variables objectively through statistical analysis. The correlational design was specifically selected to determine the magnitude and direction of the relationship between the independent variable (social media use) and the dependent variable (students' morals) without manipulating the research variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 3 Tabalong, located in Pugaan District, Tabalong Regency, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. This institution was selected because social media has become an integral part of students' daily academic and social activities. Furthermore, the school actively implements Islamic character education, making it an appropriate setting for investigating the relationship between digital technology use and students' moral development within an Islamic educational context.

The population of this study consisted of all students enrolled at MAN 3 Tabalong during the academic year, totaling 152 students. Considering the research objectives and accessibility of respondents, purposive sampling was employed to select participants who actively used social media and met the predetermined research criteria. Based on these considerations, 35 students, representing approximately 23% of the total population, were selected as research respondents (Sugiyono, 2022).

Data were collected using four complementary techniques, namely questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire served as the primary instrument for obtaining quantitative data regarding students' social media usage patterns and moral behavior. Observation was conducted to examine students' actual behavior within the school environment, while interviews with teachers and school administrators provided additional qualitative information to strengthen the interpretation of quantitative findings. Documentation was used to obtain institutional data related to the research setting and respondents (Cohen et al., 2018).

The questionnaire was developed based on indicators of social media use and students' moral behavior derived from relevant theoretical frameworks and previous empirical studies. All questionnaire items employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, allowing respondents to express their perceptions systematically. Before administering the questionnaire to respondents, the

instrument was reviewed to ensure that each item adequately represented the research variables and objectives (Likert, 1932).

To ensure the quality of the research instrument, validity and reliability tests were conducted before hypothesis testing. Item validity was examined using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation technique, while instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. An instrument was considered valid if each item's correlation coefficient exceeded the critical value, whereas a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient greater than 0.70 indicated satisfactory internal consistency and reliability (Hair et al., 2022).

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques with the assistance of SPSS version 29. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and variable distributions. Inferential statistical analysis included simple linear regression, Pearson Product-Moment correlation, coefficient of determination, and t-test analysis to determine whether social media use significantly influenced students' moral behavior. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) (Field, 2024).

Simple linear regression analysis was employed to estimate the predictive relationship between social media use and students' moral behavior. The regression model was expressed using the equation $Y = a + bX$, where Y represents students' moral behavior, X represents social media use, a denotes the regression constant, and b represents the regression coefficient. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was subsequently calculated to determine the proportion of variance in students' moral behavior explained by social media use (Montgomery et al., 2021).

To strengthen the credibility of the research findings, the quantitative results obtained from statistical analysis were supported by qualitative evidence derived from interviews and classroom observations. The triangulation of multiple data sources enabled the researcher to compare statistical findings with actual educational practices implemented at MAN 3 Tabalong. Consequently, the interpretation of research results became more comprehensive, valid, and contextually relevant for understanding the influence of social media on students' moral development within an Islamic educational environment (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Results and Discussion

Research Setting and Respondent Characteristics

This study was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 3 Tabalong, a public Islamic senior secondary school located on Jalan Tamunti, RT.03 No. 81, Pugaan District, Tabalong Regency, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. As an educational institution operating under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia, MAN 3 Tabalong integrates general education with Islamic values to promote students' intellectual competence, religious commitment, and moral character. The school was selected as the research site because social media has become an inseparable part of students' daily activities, both for educational and non-academic purposes, making it an appropriate context for investigating the relationship between social media use and students' moral development (Republic of Indonesia, 2003).

The respondents consisted of 35 students selected through purposive sampling from a total population of 152 students. The respondents represented both male and female students aged between 15 and 19 years. Adolescence is widely recognized as a critical developmental period during which individuals experience significant cognitive,

emotional, and social changes. At this stage, students increasingly rely on digital technology and social media as sources of information, communication, entertainment, and learning. Consequently, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to both the positive and negative influences of digital environments, making them an appropriate population for this study (Santrock, 2019).

Following the completion of data collection through questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documentation, all data were processed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Statistical analyses included instrument validity testing, reliability testing, simple linear regression analysis, Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis, hypothesis testing using the t-test, and coefficient of determination analysis. These analytical procedures were employed to ensure that the research findings were statistically valid and scientifically reliable before drawing conclusions regarding the influence of social media use on students' moral behavior (Field, 2024)

Instrument Validity Test

Before testing the research hypotheses, the questionnaire instruments measuring social media use and students' moral behavior were subjected to validity testing. The purpose of this analysis was to determine whether each questionnaire item accurately represented the theoretical constructs of the variables being measured. The validity test was performed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation with the assistance of SPSS version 29 (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 1. Results of Instrument Validity Test

| Variable | Number of Items | r-count | r-table | Result |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Social Media Use (X) | 15 | > r-table | 0,2319444 | Valid |
| Students' Moral Behavior (Y) | 15 | > r-table | 0,2319444 | Valid |

Source: Research Data Processed Using SPSS 29

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that all questionnaire items measuring social media use obtained calculated correlation coefficients greater than the critical **r-table value (0.334)**. Likewise, all questionnaire items measuring students' moral behavior also exceeded the required validity threshold. These findings demonstrate that every statement included in the questionnaire successfully measured the intended research construct and therefore fulfilled the statistical requirements for validity.

The validity of the research instrument is an important prerequisite in quantitative research because invalid questionnaire items may produce biased measurements and inaccurate conclusions. A valid instrument ensures that the data collected truly reflect respondents' actual perceptions and experiences rather than measurement error. Therefore, the satisfactory validity results obtained in this study provide confidence that subsequent statistical analyses accurately represent the relationship between social media use and students' moral behavior (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

From a methodological perspective, the validity results indicate that the indicators used to measure social media use adequately represent various dimensions of students' digital activities, including communication, information seeking, entertainment, educational utilization, and social interaction. Similarly, the indicators

used to assess students' moral behavior successfully capture essential aspects of Islamic moral values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, and ethical conduct. Consequently, the questionnaire provides an appropriate empirical basis for investigating the research problem (Hair et al., 2022).

The successful validation of all questionnaire items also reflects the careful development of the research instrument based on established theoretical frameworks and previous empirical studies. Instruments derived from sound theoretical foundations generally produce higher construct validity because each item represents clearly defined conceptual dimensions. This strengthens the overall quality of the research findings and increases confidence in the interpretation of subsequent statistical analyses (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021).

Instrument Reliability Test

After establishing instrument validity, reliability testing was conducted to evaluate the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Reliability refers to the ability of a research instrument to produce stable and consistent results when measuring the same construct under similar conditions. In this study, reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient through SPSS version 29 (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 2. Results of Instrument Reliability Test

| Variable | Cronbach's Alpha | Standard | Interpretation |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Social Media Use (X) | 0,577777778 | >0.70 | Highly Reliable |
| Students' Moral Behavior (Y) | 0,575694444 | >0.70 | Highly Reliable |

Source: Research Data Processed Using SPSS 29

The findings presented in **Table 2** demonstrate that the social media use questionnaire obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of **0.832**, whereas the students' moral behavior questionnaire achieved a coefficient of **0.829**. Both values exceed the recommended minimum reliability threshold of **0.70**, indicating that the research instruments possess high internal consistency and are therefore suitable for hypothesis testing.

High reliability indicates that respondents interpreted the questionnaire items consistently and that the items measured the same underlying construct. Consequently, variations in respondents' answers primarily reflect genuine differences in social media use and moral behavior rather than inconsistencies in the measurement instrument. Reliable instruments reduce measurement error and improve the overall accuracy of statistical analyses, thereby increasing the credibility of the research findings (Field, 2024).

The high Cronbach's Alpha values obtained in this study also suggest that the questionnaire items complement one another in measuring the respective constructs. This internal consistency indicates that each statement contributes meaningfully to the overall measurement of social media use and students' moral behavior. As a result, the instrument provides a stable empirical foundation for investigating the influence of

social media on students' morals within the Islamic educational context (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021).

From the perspective of educational research, reliable instruments are essential because they ensure that research findings can be replicated in similar educational settings. Consistent measurement enhances the trustworthiness of empirical evidence and supports the development of evidence-based educational policies. Therefore, the satisfactory reliability results obtained in this study strengthen the validity of the subsequent regression, correlation, and hypothesis testing analyses (Cohen et al., 2018).

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Following the confirmation that the research instruments satisfied both validity and reliability requirements, the next stage of the analysis involved testing the research hypothesis using simple linear regression. This statistical technique was employed to examine whether social media use significantly influenced students' moral behavior and to determine the direction and magnitude of this relationship. Simple linear regression is appropriate because the present study involves one independent variable (social media use) and one dependent variable (students' moral behavior), allowing the researcher to estimate the predictive contribution of the independent variable to changes in the dependent variable (Montgomery et al., 2021).

The regression analysis was conducted using SPSS version 29. The estimated regression parameters consisted of the regression constant (a) and the regression coefficient (b). Based on the statistical calculations, the regression constant was **33.390**, while the regression coefficient was **0.479**. These values were subsequently used to formulate the regression equation describing the relationship between social media use and students' moral behavior.

Table 3. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

| Variable | Regression Coefficient (B) | t-value | Significance |
|------------------|----------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Constant | 33.390 | - | - |
| Social Media Use | 0,332638889 | 3.430 | 0.001 |

Regression Equation

$$Y=33.390+0.479X \quad Y = 33.390 + 0.479X \quad Y=33.390+0.479X$$

Source: Research Data Processed Using SPSS 29

Table 3 shows that the regression equation obtained from the statistical analysis is $Y = 33.390 + 0.479X$. The regression constant of **33.390** indicates the estimated level of students' moral behavior when the social media use variable is assumed to remain unchanged. Although this value does not imply that students never use social media, it represents the baseline level of moral behavior predicted by the model before considering the contribution of the independent variable. In practical terms, this constant reflects the influence of other educational and environmental factors that contribute to students' moral development but were not explicitly included in the present study (Field, 2024).

The regression coefficient of **0.479** demonstrates that every one-unit increase in the social media use score is associated with an increase of approximately **0.479 units** in students' moral behavior. The positive sign of the coefficient indicates that the relationship between the two variables is positive rather than negative. In other words, students who demonstrate more constructive and responsible social media use tend to

exhibit higher levels of moral behavior than students who use social media less responsibly. This finding suggests that social media, when utilized appropriately, may function as an educational resource that contributes positively to students' character development (Hair et al., 2022).

The positive regression coefficient should not be interpreted as evidence that unrestricted social media use automatically improves students' morality. Rather, the findings emphasize that the educational value of social media depends primarily on the quality of its use. Students who utilize digital platforms to access educational materials, Islamic lectures, academic discussions, online learning resources, and constructive communication are more likely to benefit from positive digital experiences. Conversely, students who primarily consume inappropriate entertainment, misinformation, or harmful online content may experience adverse behavioral consequences. Therefore, responsible digital behavior serves as the determining factor rather than technology itself (UNESCO, 2023).

The regression findings also indicate that digital technology has become deeply integrated into students' educational experiences. Contemporary students no longer rely exclusively on printed books or face-to-face communication to acquire knowledge. Instead, they increasingly utilize digital platforms to complete assignments, communicate with teachers, access scientific information, and participate in collaborative learning activities. This transformation illustrates that social media has evolved beyond its original entertainment function and now serves as an important component of the educational process. Consequently, educational institutions should consider social media as a potential learning resource rather than merely a source of distraction (OECD, 2021).

From the perspective of Islamic education, these findings reinforce the principle that technological advancement should always be accompanied by moral guidance. Islamic educational philosophy emphasizes that knowledge and technology must ultimately contribute to the development of righteous individuals who demonstrate ethical responsibility toward God, society, and the environment. Therefore, students should be encouraged not only to master digital technology but also to cultivate wisdom, honesty, self-discipline, and accountability while interacting within digital environments. Such an approach enables technological innovation to support rather than undermine students' moral formation (Al-Attas, 1991).

The regression results further demonstrate that schools should adopt educational approaches emphasizing responsible digital citizenship instead of relying solely on restrictive policies. Although limiting smartphone use during school hours may reduce distractions, it cannot fully address students' digital behavior outside the classroom. Accordingly, schools should integrate digital ethics, media literacy, and Islamic moral values into classroom instruction so that students develop the ability to evaluate online information critically and make responsible decisions independently. Such educational strategies prepare students to become competent digital citizens capable of balancing technological opportunities with ethical responsibilities (Ribble, 2015).

Another important implication concerns the role of teachers in facilitating students' moral development in the digital era. Teachers should no longer function merely as transmitters of academic knowledge but also as mentors who guide students in navigating increasingly complex digital environments. By modeling ethical online communication, encouraging respectful interactions, promoting critical thinking, and integrating character education into daily instruction, teachers contribute significantly to

developing students who are both academically competent and morally responsible. Consequently, teacher professionalism in the digital era extends beyond pedagogical competence to include digital leadership and moral guidance (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

The findings of this study are consistent with previous empirical research indicating that responsible social media use may contribute positively to students' academic engagement, communication skills, and character development. Previous studies have similarly concluded that digital technology becomes beneficial when accompanied by adequate supervision from teachers and parents as well as sufficient levels of digital literacy. This consistency strengthens the reliability of the present findings and confirms that social media should not be viewed exclusively as a source of educational problems but rather as an opportunity for strengthening character education within contemporary schools (Alauddin et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, the regression analysis also indicates that social media represents only one component within the broader process of students' moral development. Students' ethical behavior emerges through continuous interaction among family upbringing, religious education, peer relationships, school climate, personal values, and community influences. Therefore, improving students' moral behavior requires a comprehensive educational strategy involving collaboration among schools, families, and society rather than focusing solely on regulating students' social media use. This multidimensional perspective reflects the complexity of moral education within the rapidly evolving digital era (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis

Following the simple linear regression analysis, Pearson's Product-Moment correlation analysis was performed to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between social media use and students' moral behavior. Correlation analysis provides an empirical measure of how closely the two variables are associated and whether changes in one variable are accompanied by changes in the other. The analysis was conducted using SPSS version 29 at a significance level of 0.05 (Field, 2024).

Table 4. Results of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis

| Variables | Pearson Correlation (r) | Interpretation |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Social Media Use (X) – Students' Moral Behavior (Y) | 0,324305556 | Moderate Positive Correlation |

Source: Research Data Processed Using SPSS 29

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that the Pearson correlation coefficient between social media use and students' moral behavior is **0.467**. Based on commonly accepted interpretation criteria, this value represents a moderate positive correlation. The positive direction indicates that students who demonstrate more responsible and constructive social media use tend to exhibit better moral behavior. Although the correlation is not categorized as strong, it is sufficiently meaningful to demonstrate that social media contributes to students' moral development.

The moderate magnitude of the correlation suggests that moral development is influenced by multiple factors rather than social media alone. Moral behavior develops through continuous interaction among educational experiences, family upbringing, peer relationships, religious instruction, and community values. Consequently, although social media contributes to students' moral formation, it functions as one component

within a broader educational ecosystem that collectively shapes students' character and ethical behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

These findings demonstrate that social media should not be perceived solely as a source of educational problems. Instead, digital platforms provide opportunities for students to access educational resources, Islamic lectures, online discussions, digital libraries, and collaborative learning activities. Students who utilize these opportunities responsibly are more likely to strengthen their academic competence while simultaneously developing positive attitudes such as responsibility, cooperation, discipline, and respect toward others (UNESCO, 2023).

Conversely, inappropriate patterns of social media use may reduce these educational benefits. Excessive exposure to misinformation, online violence, cyberbullying, hate speech, and addictive digital behavior has the potential to weaken students' emotional regulation and moral awareness. Therefore, educational institutions should emphasize digital literacy and ethical decision-making to ensure that students develop the ability to distinguish constructive digital content from information that may negatively influence their behavior (OECD, 2021).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was subsequently conducted using the t-test to determine whether the observed relationship between social media use and students' moral behavior was statistically significant. The calculated t-value was compared with the critical t-table value at a significance level of 5%.

Table 5. Results of Hypothesis Testing

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------------------------|--|
| t-count | 3.430 |
| t-table ($\alpha = 0.05$) | 1.692 |
| Decision | H ₀ Rejected; H ₁ Accepted |

Source: Research Data Processed Using SPSS 29

The statistical analysis revealed that the calculated **t-value (3.430)** exceeded the critical **t-table value (1.692)**. Consequently, the null hypothesis (**H₀**) was rejected, whereas the alternative hypothesis (**H₁**) was accepted. These findings indicate that social media use has a statistically significant influence on students' moral behavior at MAN 3 Tabalong.

The significance of the t-test confirms that the observed relationship between social media use and students' moral behavior is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Instead, the findings provide empirical evidence that students' patterns of digital interaction contribute meaningfully to variations in their moral attitudes and behavior. Although statistical significance does not necessarily imply a large practical effect, it confirms that the relationship identified in this study represents a genuine educational phenomenon requiring attention from educators and policymakers (Field, 2024).

The acceptance of the alternative hypothesis also supports the growing body of literature suggesting that digital environments have become increasingly influential in shaping adolescents' attitudes, communication patterns, and behavioral development. Since students spend considerable amounts of time interacting through digital platforms, online experiences inevitably become part of the broader educational process. Consequently, schools should recognize digital environments as important contexts for

character education rather than treating them as separate from formal educational activities (Bandura, 1986).

Within the perspective of Islamic education, the significant relationship identified in this study reinforces the importance of integrating moral education into digital literacy programs. Islamic educational philosophy emphasizes that technological advancement should always be guided by ethical responsibility, enabling students to utilize knowledge for beneficial purposes while avoiding harmful behavior. Accordingly, digital competence should always be accompanied by the cultivation of honesty, responsibility, moderation, and respect in online communication (Al-Attas, 1991).

Coefficient of Determination

To determine the magnitude of the contribution of social media use to students' moral behavior, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated.

Table 6. Results of Coefficient of Determination Analysis

| Indicator | Value |
|--|-------------|
| Correlation (R) | 0,324305556 |
| Coefficient of Determination (R^2) | 0,151388889 |
| Percentage of Contribution | 21.8% |

Source: Research Data Processed Using SPSS 29

Table 6 demonstrates that the coefficient of determination (R^2) is **0.218**, indicating that social media use explains approximately **21.8%** of the variation in students' moral behavior. The remaining **78.2%** is influenced by other variables not included in the present research model.

The coefficient of determination reveals that social media contributes significantly to students' moral development, yet its contribution remains relatively limited when compared with the influence of other educational and social factors. This finding emphasizes that students' morality cannot be explained solely through digital behavior. Instead, moral development represents the cumulative outcome of interactions among family education, religious instruction, peer relationships, school culture, community values, and individual psychological characteristics. Therefore, social media should be viewed as one important determinant rather than the sole predictor of students' moral behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The finding that approximately one-fifth of students' moral behavior is explained by social media use highlights the growing educational significance of digital technology. In contemporary society, students spend substantial portions of their daily lives interacting through smartphones and digital platforms. These environments expose them to various forms of information, opinions, values, and behavioral models that continuously influence their attitudes and decision-making processes. Consequently, digital environments have become important educational spaces that require the same level of attention as traditional classroom settings (UNESCO, 2023).

The remaining **78.2%** of unexplained variance suggests that moral education remains fundamentally multidimensional. Family upbringing continues to provide the earliest foundation for moral development by introducing children to honesty,

discipline, empathy, and responsibility. Schools reinforce these values through formal instruction and institutional culture, while peer interactions further shape students' social behavior during adolescence. Religious education also contributes significantly by strengthening students' spiritual awareness and ethical responsibility. Therefore, effective moral education requires cooperation among multiple educational environments rather than relying exclusively on one institution (Santrock, 2019).

From the perspective of Islamic education, these findings reaffirm that character formation (*tarbiyah al-akhlāq*) constitutes the ultimate objective of education. Intellectual achievement alone is insufficient unless accompanied by moral excellence and spiritual maturity. Consequently, digital technology should function as an instrument supporting ethical development rather than replacing the moral guidance traditionally provided by families, teachers, and religious institutions. This perspective reflects the Islamic educational principle that knowledge must always be integrated with righteous action (*'amal ṣāliḥ*) (Al-Ghazali, 2004).

The findings further indicate that schools should adopt comprehensive educational strategies emphasizing digital ethics rather than relying exclusively on restrictive policies such as banning smartphones. Although restrictions may reduce distractions during school hours, they cannot regulate students' digital activities outside the classroom. Accordingly, schools should integrate digital citizenship, media literacy, and ethical reasoning into classroom instruction so that students develop the capacity to evaluate online information independently and responsibly. Such educational approaches encourage students to become active and ethical participants in digital society (Ribble, 2015).

Teachers likewise occupy a strategic position in strengthening students' moral resilience. Beyond delivering academic content, teachers serve as moral role models who demonstrate ethical communication, responsible technology use, and respectful interpersonal relationships. By integrating Islamic values into digital learning activities, teachers help students understand that technological competence and moral responsibility should develop simultaneously. Such integration is particularly important because adolescents frequently imitate behaviors demonstrated by respected adults within their educational environment (Bandura, 1986).

Parental involvement remains equally essential because students' social media activities predominantly occur outside school hours. Parents who actively supervise digital activities, establish reasonable screen-time limits, encourage open communication, and model responsible online behavior contribute substantially to children's moral development. Conversely, limited parental supervision may increase students' exposure to inappropriate online content and reduce opportunities for constructive discussion regarding digital ethics. Therefore, strengthening collaboration between schools and families represents one of the most effective strategies for promoting responsible social media use among adolescents (Epstein, 2018).

The findings of this study are also consistent with previous empirical research indicating that responsible social media use may enhance students' communication skills, learning motivation, collaboration, and access to educational resources. However, previous studies similarly emphasize that these benefits emerge only when students possess adequate digital literacy and receive appropriate supervision from teachers and parents. Accordingly, educational interventions should focus on improving students' capacity to utilize technology critically, ethically, and productively rather than merely restricting digital access (Alauddin et al., 2023).

Another important implication concerns educational policy within Islamic schools. Madrasahs should consider integrating digital literacy into Islamic character education by developing curricula that combine technological competence with Qur'anic values, prophetic ethics, and responsible citizenship. Such integration enables students to recognize that digital behavior is inseparable from their religious and moral responsibilities. Through this approach, technology becomes a means of strengthening rather than weakening Islamic educational objectives (Al-Attas, 1991). Finally, this study contributes to the growing discourse on Islamic education in the digital era by demonstrating that technology and morality should not be viewed as opposing concepts. Instead, they should be integrated through comprehensive educational policies involving teachers, parents, school leaders, religious educators, and the wider community. Such collaborative efforts will better prepare students to become morally responsible, digitally competent, and socially accountable citizens capable of responding wisely to the opportunities and challenges presented by rapid technological development (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Conclusion

This study concludes that social media use has a positive and statistically significant influence on students' moral behavior at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 3 Tabalong. The findings of the simple linear regression analysis demonstrate that the regression equation $Y = 33.390 + 0.479X$ indicates a positive relationship between social media use and students' moral behavior. Furthermore, the hypothesis testing results confirmed that the calculated t-value (3.430) exceeded the critical t-table value (1.692) at the 5% significance level, indicating that the alternative hypothesis was accepted. These findings suggest that responsible and constructive social media use can contribute positively to students' moral development when supported by appropriate educational guidance and supervision.

The coefficient of determination analysis revealed that social media use accounted for 21.8% of the variation in students' moral behavior, while the remaining 78.2% was explained by other factors beyond the scope of this study. This result indicates that although social media represents an important factor influencing students' moral development, it is not the sole determinant. Family upbringing, religious education, peer interaction, school culture, individual personality, and community values continue to play substantial roles in shaping students' moral character. Therefore, efforts to strengthen students' morality should adopt a holistic educational approach involving multiple educational environments rather than focusing exclusively on digital media use. From the perspective of Islamic education, the findings reinforce the principle that technological advancement should always be accompanied by moral and spiritual development. Social media is not inherently beneficial or harmful; rather, its educational impact depends on how students utilize digital platforms and the ethical guidance provided by teachers, parents, and educational institutions. Consequently, Islamic schools should integrate digital literacy, media ethics, and character education into both curricular and extracurricular activities to ensure that technological competence develops alongside Islamic moral values. Such integration will enable students to become digitally literate while maintaining integrity, responsibility, and ethical awareness in both online and offline environments.

The practical implications of this study highlight the importance of collaborative efforts among schools, teachers, parents, and policymakers in fostering responsible social media use among adolescents. Schools should strengthen digital citizenship education through structured learning activities, teachers should consistently provide guidance regarding ethical online behavior, and parents should actively supervise students' digital activities outside school. Such collaboration is expected to maximize the educational benefits of social media while minimizing its potential negative consequences for students' moral development. Through comprehensive cooperation, digital technology can function not only as a communication tool but also as an effective medium for strengthening character education in the twenty-first century.

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