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Digital Ethics in The Perspective of Islamic Education: A Qualitative Study of The Behavior of Students at SMAN 01 Hulu Sungkai, North Lampung

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A B S T R A C T

The rapid growth of digital technology has increased adolescents' engagement with social media while raising concerns about digital ethics, including misinformation and cyber bullying. This study aims to analyze students' understanding and behavior regarding digital ethics from an Islamic education perspective, examine school efforts to promote digital ethics, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. A qualitative descriptive approach was conducted at SMAN 01 Hulu Sungkai, North Lampung. Participants included students, Islamic Education teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and the principal. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and non-participant observation and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model with source triangulation. The findings indicate that students demonstrate an emerging awareness of digital ethics, reflected in verifying information before sharing, avoiding harmful online interactions, and recognizing the importance of honesty and responsibility in digital communication. The school supports ethical development through the integration of Islamic values, particularly honesty and tabayyun, classroom learning, regulations on gadget use, and counseling interventions. However, a gap remains between students' ethical understanding and their behavior outside school due to limited parental supervision and social influences. These findings highlight the importance of stronger school family collaboration in fostering sustainable Islamic-based digital ethics.

1. Introduction

The wave of digitalization that has increasingly dominated all levels of society over the past decade has brought opportunities for innovation and opened up major challenges, especially among teenagers (Jasminto, 2022). Digital ethics issues are also gaining serious attention at the global level (Guenduez et al., 2025). According

to the Global Digital 2023 report, more than 64% of the world's population is currently connected to the internet, with an average usage of seven hours per day (We Are Social Meltwater, 2023). This high intensity is accompanied by an increase in cases of digital ethics violations, ranging from the spread of disinformation and hate speech based on ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA) to cyber bullying among teenagers (Unicef, 2021). This phenomenon confirms that the digital space has become a new social space that requires a strong ethical framework.

In Indonesia, in 2022, a report by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) also confirmed that reports of cyber bullying and misuse of social media among students showed a significant upward trend (KPAI, 2018). This means that many users abuse the digital space, for example, by spreading hate speech and intolerance on social media. Furthermore, the 2022 APJII review also shows that the majority of Indonesian internet users aged 13–18 years old use the internet more for entertainment and social media than for educational purposes (APJII Indonesia, 2022). His finding shows a gap between the technical skills and digital ethics maturity of adolescents. Thus, this article should be understood as a bridge connecting legal provisions and digital ethics in guiding the public For high school students, digital ethics plays a very central role because at this age of self-formation, they are in the process of forming their identity and character (Gui et al., 2024; Nurkhafifah et al., 2026). The lack of understanding of digital ethics at this age can lead to risky behavior, such as being easily influenced by hoaxes, engaging in cyber bullying, and forgetting about the privacy of oneself and others (Nurhayati et al., 2025). Values such as maintaining trust, respecting the rights of others, refraining from harmful mistakes, and fighting for justice are important aspects that are relevant to contextualize in the digital environment (Daryanto & Ernawati, 2024; Nugraha et al., 2026). These values demonstrate the strong relevance of Islamic teachings in building a digital ethical framework.

In line with this, field data shows that 70% of the population in North Lampung Regency actively uses the internet, indicating the widespread participation of students in cyberspace (BPS, 2022). This widespread access has a positive impact on information enrichment but, at the same time, increases ethical risks, such as the spread of hoaxes, cyber bullying, privacy violations, and media addiction, which can interfere with the learning process and psychological development of adolescents (Wahanisa et.al., 2021; Zuhriah et.al., 2025). SMAN 01 Hulu Sungkai, Lampung Utara, as one of the public schools in an area with continuously developing digital access, represents the reality that students in the region are indeed very active in digital media but do not yet fully understand digital ethics. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of digital ethics and the role of Islamic education in responding to the challenges of the digital age. The study by Setiawan et.al., (2025) emphasizes the concept of digital ethics based on Islamic values such as trustworthiness, responsibility, and communication etiquette but is still limited to literature review without looking at practices in schools. Meanwhile Supriadi et.al., (2024) discuss the implementation of digital literacy in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in schools but focus more on the use of media and do not highlight aspects of digital ethics in depth. At the curriculum level, Mustapha

et.al., (2025) developed a digital ethics framework in Islamic studies but did not directly examine student behavior. Research by Muqsonah and Hudha (2025) shows that Islamic education learning contributes to shaping adolescents' social media behavior but has not specifically analyzed students' digital ethics practices in the school environment, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of students' digital ethics practices as well as the contribution of Islamic education in shaping responsible digital behavior. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap with the aim of analyzing students' understanding and behavior of digital ethics in the use of digital media from an Islamic education perspective

2. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design (Sugiyono, 2018), to gain an in-depth understanding of students' digital ethics behavior from an Islamic education perspective in a secondary school environment. The study was conducted at SMAN 01 Hulu Sungkai Lampung Utara. The research subjects were selected purposively, involving several key informants who were considered to have a direct connection with the development of students' digital ethics, namely, students, Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers, homeroom teachers, and the principal.

Data collection was conducted in two main stages, namely in-depth interviews and non-participant observation. Interviews were carried out using semi-structured interview guidelines to explore participants' understanding, experiences, and perspectives regarding students' digital ethics, the role of Islamic education, school policies, and the challenges encountered in its implementation. Each interview was conducted individually with key informants and focused on recurring themes related to digital behavior, ethical awareness, and educational interventions.

Non-participant observation was conducted during school activities to examine students' digital behavior in the school environment, particularly in relation to gadget use, communication patterns, student interactions, and the implementation of values such as honesty and responsibility in digital-related activities. Observations were guided by an observation framework to ensure consistency in documenting relevant behaviors and school practices. Data analysis was conducted in stages using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the data, this study applied source triangulation by comparing and cross-checking information obtained from different informants, namely students, Islamic Education teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and the principal. The triangulation process was carried out by identifying similarities and differences across participants' accounts and then confirming whether the observed school practices were consistent with the interview data. For example, students' statements regarding responsible social media use were compared with teachers' explanations, counseling practices, and

observed school regulations on gadget use. This process was intended to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings and reduce single-source bias.

Semi-structured interviews were guided by an interview protocol developed for each informant category (students, Islamic Education teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and the principal). To improve methodological transparency, a summary of the interview domains and representative questions is presented in Table 1, while the full interview protocol is provided in Appendix.

3. Results and Discussion

This study was conducted at SMAN 01 Hulu Sungkai, North Lampung, a public secondary school located in an area experiencing increasing access to digital technology and internet connectivity. In the school context, students are actively engaged with smartphones and social media as part of their daily communication and learning routines. Although the school has implemented policies restricting gadget use to academic purposes during school hours, digital interaction remains a significant part of students' social lives. This condition makes the school an important setting for examining how digital ethics is understood, practiced, and guided through educational and religious values. Accordingly, Table 1 presents a structured overview of the interview domains alongside the representative questions designed to capture these dimensions.

Table 1. Summary of Interview Domains and Representative Questions

Informant Category	Interview Domain	Representative Questions
Students	Understanding of digital ethics	How do you understand digital ethics? What social media platforms do you use most frequently?
Students	Islamic values in digital use	Do Islamic teachings guide how social media should be used? Do you try to be honest when using digital media?
Students	Attitudes toward information and online interaction	What do you do when receiving unverified information? What is your view on mocking or insulting others on social media?
Students	Digital communication and responsibility	How do you communicate online? Do you feel responsible for what you post or comment?
Islamic Education Teacher	Learning content and instructional strategies	Is digital ethics discussed in Islamic Education classes? What methods are used to teach it?
Islamic Education Teacher	Islamic values in digital ethics	What Islamic values are emphasized in guiding students' digital behavior? How are *tabayyun* and communication ethics introduced?
Islamic Education Teacher	Student responses and instructional challenges	How do students respond to digital ethics learning? What challenges are faced in teaching it effectively?
Guidance and Counseling Teacher	Cases of digital ethics violations	Have there been cases of digital ethics violations at school? What forms of misconduct are most common?

Informant Category	Interview Domain	Representative Questions
Guidance and Counseling Teacher	Student behavior patterns and contributing factors	What patterns are seen among students involved in digital misconduct? Do family or peer environments influence such behavior?
Guidance and Counseling Teacher	Intervention and prevention strategies	What forms of counseling or intervention are provided? Are parents or other teachers involved in case handling?
Principal	School policy and digital ethics programs	Does the school have specific policies on students' digital media use? Are there school programs related to digital ethics?
Principal	Supervision and institutional response	How does the school monitor students' digital behavior? How are violations handled?
Principal	Supporting and inhibiting factors	What factors support or hinder the implementation of digital ethics education at school?
Homeroom Teacher	Classroom observation of digital behavior	How do students behave digitally in class? Does digital behavior affect discipline or peer relations?
Homeroom Teacher	Homeroom teacher role and coordination	What is the homeroom teacher's role in fostering digital ethics? How is coordination with BK and PAI teachers conducted?

The interview protocol was developed in alignment with the study objectives and tailored to each informant category to ensure that the data captured students' digital ethics understanding, school-based interventions, and the supporting as well as inhibiting factors in implementation. The questions were used flexibly in a semi-structured format, allowing the researcher to explore emerging themes while maintaining consistency across interviews.

Understanding and Awareness of Digital Ethics Among Students

The interview results show that students have a general understanding of digital ethics as actions that must be demonstrated when using social media. Students appreciate the need to be honest, responsible, and careful before posting information. Students also appreciate the need to avoid actions such as insulting or mocking others on social media platforms, as these actions can affect the psychological well-being of others. In addition, students appreciate the need to check the validity of information before reposting it.

These results indicate that students' understanding of digital ethics is still in its early stages (awareness level), but it still needs to be strengthened with more consistent practice. These results are in line with research conducted by Muqsonah and Hudha (2025) who argue that the Islamic Religious Education learning process has contributed to the development of more ethical behavior on social media among adolescents. These findings suggest that students' understanding of digital ethics is situated primarily at the level of normative awareness rather than deeply internalized ethical judgment. In other words, students are able to identify what is considered "right" or "wrong" in digital interactions, but this awareness does not necessarily indicate stable ethical self-regulation in everyday online behavior.

This pattern indicates that Islamic-based digital ethics education at the school level may have succeeded in building initial moral literacy, but has not yet fully transformed students' awareness into habitual digital discipline. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that adolescents often possess basic digital knowledge while still experiencing difficulty in translating ethical principles into consistent online conduct. Thus, the main issue is not merely the absence of ethical understanding, but the gap between ethical cognition and behavioral enactment in real digital contexts.

Integrating Islamic Values in Fostering Digital Ethics

The results of the study show that Islamic values have been internalized in digital ethics education, particularly in Islamic Religious Education classes. Teachers emphasize honesty and tabayyun (reconciliation) as the main foundations for using digital media. Furthermore, students are reminded that the moral implications of every digital activity must be considered. The results of the study show that Islamic education is highly relevant in the development of students' digital ethics framework. The importance of tabayyun, for example, is a very significant foundation in advising students not to easily spread unverified information. These findings are in line with the views of Setiawan et.al., (2025), who state that the values of trust, responsibility, and communication ethics are the basis of digital ethics in the context of Islam. However, unlike the above-mentioned study, which is conceptual in nature, this study has proven the actual implementation of the values of trust, responsibility, and communication ethics in the learning process at the school level.

Furthermore, these findings are also in line with the views of Mustapha et.al., (2025), who highlight the importance of incorporating digital ethics into the Islamic studies curriculum. This study supports that research with empirical evidence that the integration of digital ethics has actually begun to be implemented at the secondary school level, but still needs to be strengthened. However, the findings also imply that the integration of Islamic values remains largely instructional rather than transformative. The values are present in classroom discourse, but their influence depends heavily on whether they are reinforced across school culture and home environments. This means that the effectiveness of Islamic-based digital ethics education is not determined solely by curriculum content, but by the extent to which these values are continuously modeled, monitored, and normalized in students' everyday digital experiences.

The Role of Schools in Fostering Digital Ethics Among Students

Schools play a vital role in instilling digital ethics through the use of devices, classroom learning, and guidance from counselors. Schools have a policy that mobile phones may only be used for learning purposes. Digital ethics education is also enhanced through school activities, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) classes, and guidance from counselors. Cases of digital ethics violations, such as cyber bullying, have been experienced and handled through guidance and support from

parents. This shows that schools have measures in place to deal with cases of digital ethics violations.

These results support Supriadi et.al., (2024), who proved that schools play a crucial role in implementing digital literacy through learning. This study offers a broader perspective by considering the role of school policies and interdisciplinary collaboration among teachers in instilling digital ethics. These findings show that the school's role extends beyond formal instruction and includes regulatory, preventive, and corrective functions. In other words, the school does not merely teach students what digital ethics means, but also attempts to shape behavior through institutional structures such as rules, supervision, and counseling mechanisms. This indicates that digital ethics education in practice is more effective when it is embedded not only in subject content but also in school governance and student support systems.

Challenges and Gaps in Digital Ethics Development

However, despite the efforts that have been made, the problem identified in this study is the lack of supervision of social media use outside the school environment, which is a challenge in developing digital ethics among students. According to teachers, it is difficult to supervise students' digital use outside the school environment, and family and social environment factors greatly influence students' digital behavior. This study supports the findings of Putri dan Era Octafiona (2024) that synergy between religious education and the family environment is an important factor in adolescent character development. This study further supports these findings by establishing that collaboration between schools and parents is an important factor for success in digital ethics development.

This study offers several significant contributions to the field of digital ethics from an Islamic education perspective. First, the results of this study show that the promotion of digital ethics among students is achieved through multi-level involvement, including classroom activities, school policies, the role of guidance counselors, and support from families. This approach goes beyond the scope of previous studies, which mainly focused on digital literacy or the role of learning separately (Mustapha et.al., 2025; Supriadi, 2024). Second, this study shows that there is a discrepancy between digital ethics education in schools and students' behavior outside of school. Although the values of honesty and tabayyun (religious dialogue) are conveyed, the lack of supervision in the family and social environment is a significant obstacle to the application of digital ethics. These results support the importance of synergy between religious education and the family environment, as explained by Putri & Era Octafiona (2024).

This finding reveals the central paradox of school-based digital ethics education: although ethical values can be introduced and reinforced in formal educational settings, the actual practice of digital behavior largely occurs in less controlled environments shaped by peers, family habits, algorithm-driven media exposure, and emotional spontaneity. As a result, the school can provide ethical foundations, but it cannot independently guarantee behavioral consistency in students' digital lives.

This study contributes to the literature in three important ways. First, it provides empirical evidence from a secondary school context showing that students' digital ethics in Islamic education is not simply a matter of knowledge acquisition, but involves a dynamic relationship between moral awareness, institutional regulation, and social context. Second, unlike prior studies that mainly discuss digital ethics conceptually or focus on digital literacy in general, this study demonstrates how Islamic values such as honesty and *tabayyun* are translated into school-based practices through classroom learning, counseling support, and school policy. Third, the study identifies a critical gap between ethical understanding in school and ethical behavior outside school, highlighting that the effectiveness of digital ethics education depends not only on curricular integration but also on sustained collaboration between schools and families. These findings position digital ethics as a shared educational responsibility rather than a solely classroom-based issue.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that students' digital ethics from the perspective of Islamic education cannot be understood merely as a matter of digital awareness, but as a process of translating moral knowledge into consistent digital behavior. Although students show an initial understanding of ethical principles such as honesty, responsibility, and *tabayyun*, the findings indicate that ethical awareness alone is not sufficient to ensure responsible conduct in broader digital contexts. The main significance of this study lies in showing that Islamic education contributes meaningfully to building the moral foundation of students' digital behavior, particularly through value-based learning, school rules, and counseling support. However, the effectiveness of this effort depends on whether those values are reinforced beyond the classroom and school environment. Therefore, the development of digital ethics should be viewed not only as a pedagogical task within Islamic Education classes, but as a shared educational responsibility that requires alignment among curriculum, school culture, parental supervision, and the wider social environment. In this sense, the study highlights that the central challenge is not simply teaching digital ethics, but creating a sustainable ethical ecosystem that enables students to internalize and practice Islamic values consistently in their digital lives. This study is limited to a single-school setting and focuses mainly on interview and observation data collected within the school environment, which may not fully represent students' digital behavior outside school. Future research is recommended to involve multiple schools with different social contexts, include parents as additional informants, and examine students' actual digital practices beyond the classroom. Longitudinal or mixed-method studies may also provide deeper insight into how Islamic values such as honesty, tabayyun, and responsibility are internalized and sustained in students' digital lives.

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