

Islamic Curriculum Management and Madrasah Leadership in Shaping Students' Social Media Ethics: A Case Study at MTs Ma'arif Kraton

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Abstract: *The increasing use of social media among madrasah students has not been fully accompanied by the strengthening of digital ethics grounded in Islamic values. Previous studies have largely focused on students' digital literacy, yet limited attention has been given to the role of madrasah leadership in integrating Islamic curriculum management to shape students' social media ethics. This study aims to analyze the role of madrasah leadership and Islamic curriculum management in shaping students' social media ethics at MTs Ma'arif Kraton. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns of leadership strategies and curriculum implementation. The findings reveal three main strategies: (1) the integration of Islamic values into all stages of curriculum management, particularly through strengthening moral (akhlaq) and digital fiqh (fiqh muamalah) content; (2) the development of a madrasah culture emphasizing manners (adab), discipline, and regulations on social media use; and (3) the enhancement of teachers' capacity in digital literacy and online ethical guidance. These strategies contribute to increasing students' awareness and ethical behavior in using social media in accordance with Islamic principles. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on Islamic educational leadership by highlighting the linkage between madrasah leadership and Islamic curriculum management in shaping students' digital character. Practically, the findings provide implications for madrasah administrators in designing integrated curriculum policies and strategies to foster students' social media ethics.*

Keywords: *Head Of School, Islamic Curriculum Management, Social Media Ethics, Leadership Strategies, Islamic Education*

Introduction

Digital transformation has significantly changed the ways students interact, communicate, and learn at various levels of education. Social media has become the primary space for teenagers to express themselves, build relationships, and obtain information. However, this development has also been accompanied by a rise in various digital ethics issues, such as the spread of misinformation, hate speech, and cyberbullying, which impact students' psychological well-being and social relationships. Various findings indicate

that low self-control and digital ethics literacy are factors that influence negative behavior in online spaces.¹ This situation requires educational institutions to focus not only on technological proficiency, but also on character development and ethical use of social media.²

In educational research, the curriculum is viewed as a strategic tool for shaping students' character. The character education approach emphasizes the importance of integrating values throughout the entire learning process, whether through intracurricular, cocurricular, or extracurricular activities.³ A number of studies show that a systematically designed, values-based curriculum can enhance students' moral awareness and ethical behavior. However, most studies still focus on character building in general and have not specifically linked the curriculum to the development of social media ethics in the digital age.⁴

From an Islamic educational perspective, the curriculum serves not only as an academic tool but also as a means of instilling spiritual and moral values. Values such as good character, etiquette, trustworthiness, and responsibility form the cornerstone of shaping students' personalities.⁵ A number of studies indicate that integrating Islamic values into the curriculum can strengthen students' character in their daily lives. However, these studies are generally still limited to the context of conventional learning and have not yet explored the application of these values in the context of digital ethics, particularly in the use of social media.⁶

School leadership plays a crucial role in determining the direction and success of curriculum implementation. The literature on educational leadership emphasizes that the principal, as an instructional leader, is responsible for developing a vision, motivating teachers, and creating a school culture conducive to learning.⁷ Previous research has shown that effective

¹ Unik Hanifah Salsabila, Maragustam, dan Murtono, "Peran Teknologi dalam Meningkatkan Literasi Digital Peserta Didik", (*Jurnal Pendidikan Progresif*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2023), p. 210. <https://doi.org/10.23960/jpp.v14.i3.2024116>

² Layla Al-Hariri, Youssef Al-Mansour, dan Ahmed Hossam, "The Influence of Digital Citizenship Education on the Legal and Moral Awareness of Generation Z", (*International Journal of Educational Narratives*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2025), p. 9. <https://doi.org/10.70177/ijen.v3i1.2145>

³ Abdullah Sahin, "Rethinking Islamic Education in a Digital Age," (*Religions*, vol. 14, no. 5, 2023), p. 6. <https://doi.org/10.38073/adabuna.v5i1.2908>

⁴ Darcia Narvaez, "Moral Education in a Time of Human Ecological Devastation," (*Journal of Moral Education*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2020), p. 58. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12152-011-9117-5>

⁵ Ahmad Tafsir, "Ilmu Pendidikan Islam dalam Perspektif Nilai dan Karakter", (*Remaja Rosdakarya*, 2014), p. 75.

⁶ Abdullah Sahin, "New Directions in Islamic Education: Pedagogy and Identity Formation," (*Religions*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2018), p. 10.

⁷ Ping He, Fangyun Guo, dan Genevive Anulika Abazie, "School Principals' Instructional Leadership as a Predictor of Teacher's Professional Development,"

leadership contributes to improving the quality of learning and fostering students' character development. However, most studies still treat leadership and the curriculum as two separate aspects, without considering their interconnection in addressing the challenges of digital ethics.

Studies on students' social media ethics indicate that adolescents' digital behavior is influenced by various factors, such as family environment, peers, and digital literacy levels. However, research that specifically links social media ethics to curriculum-based interventions in schools remains relatively limited.⁸ Furthermore, there have not been many studies examining how religious values can be systematically integrated into the curriculum to shape students' digital ethics, particularly in the context of madrasahs.

Based on the above discussion, there appears to be a gap in research that integrates madrasah leadership, Islamic curriculum management, and the development of social media ethics within a single, comprehensive framework.⁹ Some studies focus only on the curriculum or leadership aspects separately, while research on digital ethics is often not linked to religious values. Therefore, an approach is needed that can explain how madrasah leadership guides the management of the Islamic curriculum as a strategy for shaping students' digital character.¹⁰

This study aims to analyze the role of madrasah leadership through Islamic curriculum management in shaping students' social media ethics at MTs Ma'arif Kraton. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the development of research on Islamic educational leadership integrated with issues of digital ethics, as well as serve as a practical reference for madrasah administrators in formulating curriculum strategies relevant to the challenges of the digital age.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a single-case study design. This design was chosen because the study focuses on a single specific case, namely madrasah leadership practices in managing the Islamic curriculum to shape students' social media ethics in a specific context. Case

(*Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, vol. 9, 2024), p. 5.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-024-00290-0>

⁸ Abdullah Sahin, "New Directions in Islamic Education: Pedagogy and Identity Formation", *Op.cit*, p. 45.

⁹ Murni, "Kepemimpinan Kepala Madrasah dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Islam", (*Jurnal Mudarrisuna*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2018), p. 410.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.22373/jm.v10i3.8079>

¹⁰ Sonia Isna Suratin, Pandu Prayogo, Hailen Ike Yunida, Hujjatul Fakhruddin, dan Dewi Fitriana, "Manajemen Kepemimpinan Lembaga Pendidikan Islam di Madrasah Aliyah Unggulan K.H. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang." (*re-JIEM (Research Journal of Islamic Education Management)* 7, no.2, 2024), p. 197.
<https://doi.org/10.19105/re-jiem.v7i2.6593>

studies allow for an in-depth exploration of contextual and complex phenomena, especially when the boundary between the phenomenon and its context cannot be clearly defined. Thus, this study not only describes the phenomenon but also analyzes the dynamics at play in leadership practices and curriculum implementation in madrasahs.¹¹

The study was conducted at MTs Ma'arif Kraton, a junior high madrasah located in a semi-urban area whose students are active users of social media in their daily lives. This madrasah's vision is to strengthen Islamic character, which is integrated into the curriculum and school culture. Institutionally, madrasahs have developed digital literacy programs based on Islamic values and have established regulations regarding students' use of social media. These conditions make the research site relevant for examining the relationship between madrasah leadership, Islamic curriculum management, and the development of students' digital ethics in a real-world context. Research participants were selected using purposive sampling, taking into account their direct involvement in curriculum implementation and social media ethics training. Participants consisted of madrasah principals, Islamic Religious Education teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, and several students selected based on specific criteria, such as their level of activity on social media and their involvement in the madrasah's digital literacy program. Participant selection was based on the principle of "information-rich cases," meaning individuals who possess knowledge and experience relevant to the research focus.¹² The number of participants was determined based on data sufficiency until information saturation was reached, ensuring that the data obtained was in-depth and comprehensive.¹³

Data collection was conducted in stages using three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach with a flexible guide to explore the participants' experiences and perspectives in depth. Participatory observation was conducted by observing the learning process, student interactions, and the implementation of policies related to social media ethics within the madrasah setting. Meanwhile, a documentary study was conducted on various official documents, such as the madrasah

¹¹ Ricarda B. Bouncken, Wojciech Czakon, dan Florian Schmitt, "Purposeful Sampling and Saturation in Qualitative Research Methodologies: Recommendations and Review", (*Review of Managerial Science* 20, no. 2, 2026), p. 579. <https://doi.org/10.19105/re-jiem.v7i2.6593>

¹² Benjamin Saunders et al., "Saturation in Qualitative Research: Exploring Its Conceptualization and Operationalization", (*Quality & Quantity* 52, no. 4, 2018), p. 1893. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8?urlappend=%3Futm_source%3Dresearchgate.net%26utm_medium%3Darticle

¹³ Asrulla Asrulla, Risnita, M. Syahrani Jailani, dan Firdaus Jeka, "Populasi dan Sampling (Kuantitatif), Serta Pemilihan Informan Kunci (Kualitatif) dalam Pendekatan Praktis", (*Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 7, no. 3, 2023), p. 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.14421/almahara.2025.0112-014>

curriculum, vision and mission statements, digital literacy programs, student codes of conduct, and other policy documents. The combination of these three techniques enabled the researcher to obtain data that complemented one another and strengthened the validity of the findings.¹⁴

Data analysis was conducted inductively through the stages of coding, theme development, and data interpretation. In the initial stage, the researcher performed open coding to identify units of meaning from the data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation. Next, axial coding was performed to group related codes into more structured categories. The next stage was selective coding, which involved integrating these categories into main themes representing the relationship between madrasah leadership, Islamic curriculum management, and students' social media ethics. The analysis process was conducted iteratively and reflectively until a deep and consistent understanding of the data was achieved.¹⁵

To ensure the validity of the data, this study employs trustworthiness criteria, which include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is achieved through triangulation of sources and methods, as well as member checking with participants to ensure that the data align with their experiences. Transferability is ensured by providing a detailed description of the research context, so that readers can understand the potential application of the findings in other contexts. Dependability is maintained through systematic documentation of the research process, while confirmability is ensured by verifying that the research findings are based on empirical data, not the researcher's subjective interpretations.¹⁶

This study also took research ethics into account by ensuring that all participants gave their informed consent before participating in the study. The participants' identities were kept confidential by using initials or specific codes. Furthermore, the data collected were used solely for academic purposes and reported objectively without causing harm to any party.

¹⁴ Busetto, Loraine, Wendy Wick, dan Claudia Gumbinger, "How to Use and Assess Qualitative Research Methods," (*Neurological Research and Practice*, vol. 2, no. 14, 2020), p. 3. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06813-3_19

¹⁵ Qomaruddin dan H. Sa'diyah, "Kajian Teoritis tentang Teknik Analisis Data dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Perspektif Spradley, Miles dan Huberman", (*Journal of Management, Accounting, and Administration* 1, no. 2, 2024), p. 77-84. <https://doi.org/10.52620/jomaa.v1i2.93>

¹⁶ Nowell, Lorelli S., Jill M. Norris, Deborah E. White, dan Nancy J. Moules, "Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria," (*International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2017), p. 5. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>

Results and Discussion

Research Findings

The results of the study show that Islamic values-based curriculum planning in madrasahs is carried out systematically by integrating values such as trustworthiness, honesty, responsibility, and good manners into teaching materials and school programs. This integration is not limited to Islamic Religious Education classes, but is also applied in digital literacy activities and student conduct. The madrasah principal emphasized that these values must be present in all student activities, including the use of social media, as stated: *"We don't just teach religious material in class; we ensure that those values are integrated into all student activities, including when they use social media."* This finding is supported by classroom observations, in which teachers linked the material to real-world phenomena such as the spread of misinformation and digital conflicts among students. In addition, the curriculum documents indicate the inclusion of reflective assignments related to students' digital footprints. This demonstrates that curriculum planning has been tailored to students' contextual needs in the digital age.

The leadership of the madrasah principal is also a key factor in shaping students' social media ethics. The results of the analysis show that the madrasah principal employs transformational leadership that emphasizes setting a good example, intensive communication, and strengthening the school culture. Madrasah principals serve not only as policymakers but also as role models for ethical digital practices. In an interview, a madrasah principal stated: *"If we want students to behave ethically on social media, teachers and administrators must lead by example first. You can't just have rules without setting an example."* Observations show that madrasah principals routinely provide guidance on digital ethics during school activities and encourage teachers to integrate these values into their lessons. Policy documents also reveal the existence of a "Digital-Friendly Madrasah" program aimed at fostering a positive digital culture. These findings indicate that leadership plays a strategic role in shaping an educational environment that supports digital ethics.

In the classroom, teachers serve as the primary mediators in helping students internalize Islamic values into their social media etiquette. Teachers use a contextual approach by drawing on real-life cases as topics for classroom discussion. One teacher explained: *"I usually use examples from events that are currently trending, and then ask students to assess whether they align with proper etiquette or not."* Observations show that students actively participated in discussions about hoaxes and cyberbullying and were able to reflect on their own experiences using social media. In addition, the teacher's interactions during digital classroom communication demonstrated the use of polite language, which the students then emulated. This indicates that the teacher's role is not only as a conveyor of material but also as a role model and guide in shaping digital ethics.

Madrasah culture and school regulations also help reinforce the internalization of Islamic values in students' digital behavior. Data shows that madrasahs have specific rules regarding social media use that are based on Islamic values, such as a ban on spreading false information and the obligation to maintain proper etiquette in communication. A Guidance and Counseling teacher explained: *"We don't just impose sanctions; we also guide students to understand the consequences of their behavior on social media."* Observations show that students are beginning to get used to using more polite language and being more careful when sharing information. In addition, habit-forming activities—such as reminders about digital etiquette during daily school activities—reinforce consistency in student behavior. Thus, the school culture serves as an environment that supports the ongoing development of digital character.

A digital literacy program based on Islamic values is also an important part of the strategy for fostering students' social media ethics. This program includes education on verifying information, digital communication ethics, and reflecting on Islamic values in the use of technology. One student stated: *"Now, whenever I want to share something, I think about it first – whether it's true or not, and whether it's good for others."* Observations indicate that students are beginning to apply the principle of *tabayyun* in their digital activities. In addition, school program documents show that structured digital literacy training is being conducted. These findings suggest that digital literacy not only enhances students' technical skills but also strengthens their moral awareness in using social media.

Overall, the implementation of Islamic values-based curriculum management, madrasah leadership, and digital literacy programs has had a positive impact on student behavior. The research findings indicate an increase in students' awareness of the importance of using social media wisely, such as being more selective in sharing information, using polite language, and avoiding online conflicts. Guidance and Counseling teachers stated: *"Compared to before, students are now better able to control themselves, especially when commenting on social media."* Observations also show a decline in cases of social media misuse among students. These findings suggest that an integrated approach combining the curriculum, leadership, and school culture is effective in shaping students' social media ethics.

The findings of this study reinforce the view that a values-based curriculum plays a strategic role in character development, while also extending this concept to the context of digital ethics. Transformational leadership in madrasahs has proven effective in guiding curriculum implementation and fostering a school culture that supports the internalization of values. Furthermore, the role of teachers as mediators of values demonstrates that contextual learning based on real-life experiences is

more effective in fostering students' ethical awareness.¹⁷ Thus, the development of students' social media ethics cannot be approached in isolation; rather, it requires synergy among the curriculum, leadership, and contextual and sustainable learning practices.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that an Islamic values-based curriculum serves not only as a learning tool but also as a moral foundation that shapes students' digital behavior. The integration of values such as trustworthiness, honesty, responsibility, and good manners into the curriculum serves as "moral infrastructure" that guides how students understand and practice ethics in their use of social media. This occurs because these values are not taught in isolation, but are internalized through contextual learning experiences, including discussions of cases involving hoaxes, hate speech, and cyberbullying. From the perspective of curriculum integration theory, this approach demonstrates that an effective curriculum is one that connects knowledge with values and real-life practices. These findings expand upon previous studies, which tended to separate character education from digital literacy, by showing that the two can be systematically integrated within the context of Islamic education. Thus, the curriculum not only fosters cognitive competencies but also serves as a normative framework that guides students' behavior in the digital space.¹⁸

Furthermore, the leadership of the madrasah principal serves as the primary mediator in transforming curricular values into students' actual behavior. Transformational leadership—demonstrated through setting a good example, communicating a vision, and strengthening school culture—operates through a process of collective internalization of values. Changes in student behavior do not occur directly through rules, but through a process of imitation, habituation, and reinforcement of values carried out consistently by leaders and teachers.¹⁹ From the perspective of transformational leadership theory, this indicates that effective leaders are able to inspire change through idealized influence and inspirational motivation, thereby making the values they champion an integral part of the organizational culture. These findings

¹⁷ Arif Samsudin, Arja Bayirudin, dan Helmawati, "Pendidikan Karakter Integrasi Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI)", (*Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Isu-Isu Sosial*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2024), p. 5. <https://doi.org/10.37216/tadibjurnalpendidikanislamdanisu-isusosial.v23i2.2974>

¹⁸ Ahd. Mujahid dan Mohamad Madum, "Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Islam dalam Pendidikan Karakter Siswa Perspektif Pendidikan Agama Islam", (*Journal of Islamic Education and Learning*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2024), p. 3. <https://doi.org/10.63761/jiel.v5i1.139>

¹⁹ Zainal Abidin, Ahmad Qusairi, dan Iqmal Wahyudi, "Islamic Transformative Leadership: The Role of School Principals in Encouraging Curriculum Innovation in Islamic-Based Schools", (*Tarbawiyah: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2025), p. 45–60. <https://doi.org/10.32332/tarbawiyah.v9i2.11561>

are consistent with studies on educational leadership that emphasize the importance of leaders' roles in shaping school culture; however, this study extends that focus to the context of digital ethics, a topic that has not yet been extensively examined in the madrasah setting. Therefore, leadership serves not only as a policy guide but also as an agent of change that bridges the values of the curriculum with students' social practices.²⁰

In this study, teachers serve as agents of translation, linking abstract values in the curriculum to concrete practices in the digital space. Teachers do not merely convey ethical concepts; they contextualize them through real-life cases that are relevant to students' lives. This process is important because students tend to understand values more deeply when they are connected to their own experiences. This mechanism explains why case-based learning is more effective than one-way, normative approaches.²¹ From a pedagogical perspective, teachers serve as mediators who transform values into practice through social interaction in the classroom. These findings reinforce previous research on the role of teachers in character education, but offer a new contribution by demonstrating how teachers function in the context of digital ethics, particularly in guiding students through the complex dynamics of social media. Thus, teachers are not only educators but also facilitators of the development of digital moral awareness.²²

This study shows that the development of students' social media ethics cannot be understood in isolation, but rather as the result of an integrated educational ecosystem. The synergy between the curriculum, leadership, teachers, school culture, and digital literacy programs creates an environment that consistently reinforces expected values and behaviors. This ecosystem operates through a combination of formal regulations, habit formation, modeling, and contextual learning, so that students not only understand these values but are also motivated to put them into practice in their daily lives.²³ From a theoretical perspective, these findings indicate that an ecosystem approach is more effective than a single-factor approach in shaping student behavior. Previous research has tended to treat curriculum, leadership, or

²⁰ Silawati, Dian Hidayati, Lulu Khanifatul Ulya, dan Retno Himma Zakiyah, "Strategi Kepemimpinan Kepala Madrasah dalam Pendidikan Karakter Peserta Didik di Era Digital 4.0", (*Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan dan Keislaman*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2023), p. 45. <https://doi.org/10.55883/jipkis.v3i2.74>

²¹ Nurul Hidayah dan Suyadi, "Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam Pembentukan Karakter Peserta Didik", (*Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2020), p. 145. <https://doi.org/10.54543/syntaximperatif.v5i6.868>

²² Rina Febriana dan Dwi Wulandari, "Peran Guru dalam Pembelajaran Berbasis Nilai pada Era Digital", (*Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2023), p. 78. <https://doi.org/10.30870/jpsd.v4i2.3854>

²³ M. Qusyairi Abror dan Dwi Noviani, "The Role of Islamic Education in Building Digital Wellbeing and Social Media Ethics among Muslim Youth", (*West Science Islamic Studies*, vol. 3, no. 4, 2024), p. 12. <https://doi.org/10.58812/wsiss.v3i04.2303>

digital literacy as separate factors, whereas this study shows that the primary strength lies in the integration of these components. Thus, the main contribution of this study is to offer an integrative framework that explains how students' digital ethics can be shaped through the synergy of an education system grounded in Islamic values.²⁴

Overall, this discussion shows that the development of students' social media ethics is influenced not only by individual factors but also by a structured, values-based education system. This finding is important because it implies that strengthening digital ethics cannot be achieved through technical literacy alone but must be supported by a values-based curriculum, visionary leadership, and contextual learning practices. Thus, Islamic education has strategic potential to address the challenges of digital ethics in the modern era through an integrative and sustainable approach.

Conclusion

This study shows that students' social media ethics are shaped through the integration of an Islamic-values-based curriculum, madrasah leadership, and learning practices. The curriculum serves as the foundation of values, leadership as a transformational mediator, and teachers as the link between values and students' digital practices. Theoretically, this study offers an integrative framework that links the curriculum, transformational leadership, and character education in the context of digital ethics, and emphasizes that digital ethics is the result of a structured educational system, not merely an individual competency.

The conceptual implications emphasize the importance of building an integrated educational ecosystem, while the practical implications highlight the need to strengthen the curriculum, teacher capacity, and school culture in fostering digital ethics. From a policy perspective, guidelines for digital ethics based on Islamic values are needed in madrasahs. This study is limited to a single case study; therefore, future research is encouraged to broaden the context, employ a mixed-methods approach, and examine the long-term impact of fostering students' social media ethics.

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²⁴ Muhammad Faisal Reza, Novianto Ade Wahyudi, Muhammad Jembar Risky, dan Abul Mafaakhir, "Digital Ethics from the Perspective of Islamic Education: A Conceptual Study of the Manners of Interacting in Cyberspace", (*Kasyafa: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, vol. 2, no. 4, 2025), p. 434-446. <https://doi.org/10.61166/kasyafa.v2i4.126>

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