

Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Control over the Viral Trend of Imitating Impolite Language from TikTok Social Media in Shaping Students' Moral Character

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of TikTok viral trends on students' imitation of impolite language, examine the control strategies implemented by Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers, and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting students' moral character development through language regulation. This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study design at SD Negeri Jatibarang Lor 01. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. The findings reveal that TikTok's algorithm accelerates students' imitation of impolite language by repeatedly exposing them to viral expressions and communication patterns that gradually become part of their daily

interactions at school. IRE teachers address this phenomenon through intensive supervision, educative corrective feedback, habituation of polite language, integration of Islamic communication ethics into classroom instruction, exemplary behavior, reinforcement of a religious school culture, and continuous collaboration with parents. The study also identifies excessive smartphone use, limited parental supervision, peer influence, and the rapid expansion of digital culture as the primary obstacles to effective moral education. The novelty of this study lies in the development of an Integrative Educational Control Model, which combines Islamic moral education, digital literacy, teacher role modeling, character habituation, and family school collaboration as a comprehensive framework for mitigating the negative influence of TikTok on students' moral character in the digital era.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Tiktok, Impolite Language, Social Imitation

Introduction

The development of information and communication technology has transformed nearly every dimension of human life, including the world of primary education. Digitalization provides easy access to a variety of information without the constraints of space or time, allowing students to acquire knowledge from sources other than school.¹ Furthermore, this convenience also expands children's opportunities to consume content that may not be appropriate for their psychological or moral developmental level. The presence of social media has shifted children's interaction patterns from face-to-face to virtual communication, which occurs almost constantly. This phenomenon makes social media not merely a means of entertainment but also a new agent of socialization that shapes students' mindsets, behaviors, and character. From an Islamic education perspective, these changes require a transformation in moral development strategies to remain relevant to the challenges of the digital era. This research is based on the fact that digital transformation not only brings educational benefits but also raises various new issues in the formation of students' morals.

Among the various social media platforms currently developing, TikTok has become the most popular app among elementary school-aged children. This popularity is supported by an algorithm that can display personalized content according to user habits, increasing the intensity of exposure to certain types of content. Short videos, the use of music, viral dialogue, and a variety of unique expressions make TikTok highly appealing to students who are still in the concrete cognitive development stage. This situation encourages imitation behavior towards the various forms of communication they see every day. Many viral content uses rude language, insults, sarcasm, and verbal expressions that violate norms of politeness. As a result, these terms have begun to

¹ Jenuri et al., "Overcoming the Spiritual Emptiness of Students in the Modern Era through the Integration of Al-Ghazali's Human Concepts in the Islamic Religious Education Learning Model," *Cogent Education* 12, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2497147>.

be used in students' social interactions both at home and at school.² This phenomenon indicates that social media has become an informal learning space that has a significant influence on the development of children's language behavior.

Language plays a strategic role in character formation, as it serves not only as a means of communication but also as a representation of a person's values, ethics, and personality. From the perspective of Islamic Religious Education, the quality of one's language reflects the quality of one's morals.³ The Quran commands Muslims to always speak good words (*the roof of the house, sadida's qaulan, And qaulan layyina*) as part of the implementation of faith. Therefore, the use of impolite language by students cannot be viewed solely as a linguistic issue, but rather as an indicator of a shift in moral values in their lives. If this habit continues to develop, the process of internalizing noble moral values will face serious obstacles. This situation makes the phenomenon of language imitation from social media worthy of further study from an Islamic educational perspective.

Psychologically, students' imitative behavior can be explained through Social Learning Theory developed by Albert Bandura. This theory explains that individuals acquire new behaviors through observing models they find appealing and then reproducing those behaviors in real life. TikTok's algorithm reinforces this process because users are continually exposed to similar content, increasing the frequency of observation. The more frequently students see a particular language used, the more likely it is to become part of their communication habits. In the elementary school context, this condition is reinforced by the developmental characteristics of children who still have limited moral reflection skills.⁴ Therefore, the behavior of imitating viral language cannot be separated from the social learning mechanisms that occur through digital media. This shows that social media has now become a very dominant learning environment for children.

This phenomenon becomes even more complex when analyzed using the moral development theories of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. At elementary school age, children are generally still in the early heteronomous and conventional moral stage, so adherence to rules is more influenced by the external environment than by internal moral awareness. As a result, students more easily accept various behaviors deemed popular without conducting critical ethical assessments. When offensive language receives a large positive response on social media, students tend to view it

² Dwi Mariyono, "Multicultural Values: Meeting Point of Two Forces in Developing Islamic Education," *Quality Education for All* 1, no. 1 (2024): 46–69, <https://doi.org/10.1108/QEA-02-2024-0018>.

³ Nur Wakhidah and Erman Erman, "Examining Environmental Education Content on Indonesian Islamic Religious Curriculum and Its Implementation in Life," *Cogent Education* 9, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2034244>.

⁴ Nadya Huda et al., "Strategies for Strengthening Character Education in Islamic Boarding Schools Through Extracurricular Activities," *Munaddhomah* 5, no. 3 (2024): 354–66, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v5i3.1397>.

as a normal form of communication.⁵ This process gradually shifts standards of politeness previously established through family and school education. Therefore, moral development at elementary school age must be carried out more intensively by strengthening a conducive learning environment. This moral development perspective demonstrates that controlling language is not sufficient through prohibitions but must be accompanied by a continuous process of internalizing values.

Initial observations at Jatibarang Lor 01 Public Elementary School showed that students had begun using various viral terms from TikTok when interacting with friends and teachers. These expressions were used without understanding their true meaning, as they were viewed merely as entertainment or jokes. Some students also imitated the intonation, expressions, and communication styles found in digital content, thereby reducing the quality of interactions within the school environment. Teachers found that these habits were beginning to impact relationships between students and reduce respect for teachers during the learning process. This phenomenon demonstrates that social media has significantly impacted the communication culture in elementary schools. This situation presents a new challenge for Islamic Religious Education teachers in carrying out their role in fostering students' morals. Therefore, teacher supervision is no longer solely oriented towards mastery of religious material but also includes controlling digital communication culture.

In the context of Islamic education, Islamic Religious Education teachers have the following position: *teacher, teacher, editor*, at a time *good deeds* for students. This role positions teachers not merely as transmitters of learning materials, but as guides responsible for shaping students' character and morals comprehensively. Teachers' role models are crucial because students more readily imitate concrete behavior than verbal advice. Therefore, language control strategies must be implemented through a combination of role models, habituation, supervision, and positive reinforcement. Teachers are also required to integrate the values of polite speech into all learning activities, not just when discussing morals.⁶ This approach aligns with the Islamic educational paradigm, which views moral formation as the primary goal of education. Thus, teacher control is a strategic instrument in facing the challenges of a rapidly evolving digital culture.

Changes in communication culture due to social media also demonstrate the need to strengthen the concept of digital literacy based on Islamic values. Digital literacy not only means the ability to use technology, but also includes the ability to think critically, filter information, evaluate content, and make decisions based on moral and religious considerations. Students need to be guided to distinguish between

⁵ Zainal Asril et al., "Advancing Educational Practices: Implementation and Impact of Virtual Reality in Islamic Religious Education," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2023): 199–210, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v9i2.20567>.

⁶ Harikumar Pallathadka et al., "The Study of Islamic Teachings in Education: With an Emphasis on Behavioural Gentleness," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8193>.

content worthy of imitation and content that conflicts with Islamic teachings. In this context, Islamic Religious Education teachers have a responsibility to develop students' ethical awareness in using digital media.⁷ Moral education is no longer sufficient through normative lectures; it must be linked to the digital realities students face every day. Integrating character education with digital literacy is a relevant strategy for developing a generation with noble character and able to adapt to technological developments. This approach is one of the new paradigms of Islamic education in the era of Society 5.0.

Various researchers have previously conducted studies on the influence of TikTok on student behavior. Most studies indicate that intense TikTok use correlates with increased imitative language behavior, changes in communication patterns, and a decrease in students' verbal politeness. Other research also highlights the importance of teachers' roles in building student character through habituation and role modeling.⁸ However, most of these studies examine these two aspects separately. Few studies specifically integrate the influence of TikTok's viral trend, Islamic Religious Education teacher control, and the moral development of elementary school students within a single, comprehensive analytical framework. This gap indicates a scientific gap that needs to be filled through this research. Thus, this study offers a new perspective on the relationship between digital culture, Islamic religious education, and student character development.

Based on this description, this research has both academic and practical urgency in the development of Islamic education in the digital era. Academically, this research expands the study of the integration of social learning theory, moral development, and Islamic moral education in explaining the phenomenon of students' digital communication. Practically, the research results are expected to serve as a reference for Islamic Religious Education teachers in designing adaptive moral development strategies to the development of social media. This research is also expected to contribute to schools in formulating policies to strengthen a culture of polite communication based on digital literacy. Furthermore, the research results can serve as a reference for parents to strengthen supervision of social media use in the family environment. Thus, synergy between schools, families, and the community can be realized in developing students who have digital literacy skills and noble morals in accordance with Islamic teachings. Based on this basis, this research focuses on the control of Islamic Religious Education teachers over the viral trend of imitating impolite language from TikTok social media in the moral development of students at SD Negeri Jatibarang Lor 01.

⁷ Muhammad Roy Purwanto et al., "Optimization of Student Character Education through the Pesantren Program at the Islamic Boarding School of the Universitas Islam Indonesia," *Review of International Geographical Education Online* 11, no. 5 (2021): 2829–37, <https://doi.org/10.48047/rigeo.11.05.179>.

⁸ Jonas Kolb, "Muslim Diversity, Religious Formation and Islamic Religious Education. Everyday Practical Insights into Muslim Parents' Concepts of Religious Education in Austria," *British Journal of Religious Education* 45, no. 2 (2023): 172–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2021.1911787>.

Literature Review

The development of social media as a digital interaction space has given rise to a phenomenon which in the study of communication sociology is known as digital imitation culture (*digital imitation culture*). This culture is formed when individuals no longer simply consume information but actively reproduce language, expressions, speaking styles, symbols, and behaviors that are popular on social media.⁹ TikTok is a platform that accelerates this process because its algorithm continuously presents content that has characteristics similar to user preferences. As a result, the imitation process occurs repeatedly and unconsciously forms new habits in daily communication. For elementary school students, this condition is even more complex because they are still at a stage of social development that makes the environment the primary source of behavioral learning. Therefore, digital imitation culture needs to be understood not only as a technological phenomenon, but also as a character education issue that requires a systematic pedagogical approach. This perspective shows that the digital transformation has changed the way children learn about values, norms, and communication ethics.

In the perspective of media ecology (*Media Ecology Theory*) developed by Neil Postman, technology is not merely a tool used by humans, but rather a new environment that shapes the way humans think, interact, and understand reality. This theory explains that every change in media will result in cultural changes that also influence people's social behavior.¹⁰ TikTok, as a digital medium, presents a culture of fast, concise, emotional, and highly visual communication, thus influencing the communication patterns of the younger generation. Students are slowly adopting this communication character into interactions at school without considering the differences in context between the digital space and formal education. As a result, language that was initially only used in digital entertainment has become part of everyday communication.¹¹ From an Islamic education perspective, this condition shows that media changes must be balanced with changes in educational strategies so that moral values remain the main foundation in student development. Thus, media ecology theory complements Bandura's theory in explaining the relationship between technology, communication culture, and character formation.

The concept of digital literacy has undergone significant development in recent years. Digital literacy is no longer understood simply as the ability to operate

⁹ Salami Mahmud et al., "Integrating Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences in Islamic Education: A Systematic Review of Indonesian Practices," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 12, no. 3 (2024): 1017–50, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i3.1215>.

¹⁰ Nur Ali et al., "Interreligious Literacy Learning as a Counter-Radicalization Method: A New Trend among Institutions of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 32, no. 4 (2021): 383–405, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2021.1996978>.

¹¹ Masturin, "Development of Islamic Religious Education Materials Based on Religious Moderation in Forming Student Character," *Munaddhomah* 3, no. 4 (2022): 346–55, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v3i4.310>.

technological devices, but also encompasses the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and use information responsibly.¹² UNESCO has designated digital literacy as one of the core competencies of the 21st century because it is the foundation for the development of digital citizens (*digital citizenship*) responsible. In the context of elementary school students, digital literacy should be directed at the ability to filter content that is age-appropriate and morally appropriate. Students should not only know how to use TikTok but also understand the social, psychological, and religious consequences of any behavior they imitate. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education learning needs to integrate digital literacy into moral development so that students have the ability to think critically about the evolving digital culture.

Islamic Religious Education teachers hold a strategic position as agents of social change within the school environment. From an Islamic pedagogical perspective, teachers not only carry out the function of transferring knowledge (*education*), but also carries out educational functions (*education*), building manners (*correction*), as well as the purification of the soul (*purification*). These four functions make teachers central figures in the process of internalizing Islamic values in students.¹³ As students face the rapid flow of digital culture, teachers are required not only to master religious material but also to understand the dynamics of social media that influence their lives. This understanding allows teachers to connect learning materials to the realities students face every day, thus making learning more contextual. This approach demonstrates that the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education teachers depends on their ability to integrate religious values with the challenges of modern life. Thus, teachers become mediators between technological developments and the formation of students' morals.

Teacher control strategies for student behavior can be analyzed through social control theory (*Social Control Theory*) which emphasizes the importance of the process of internalizing norms through strong social relationships. In the school context, social control is not only carried out through sanctions, but also through habituation, supervision, interpersonal communication, and the creation of a positive school culture. Islamic Religious Education teachers carry out this function through role models, providing advice, spiritual guidance, and strengthening a culture of polite communication.¹⁴ A persuasive approach has proven more effective than a repressive approach because students have the opportunity to understand the moral reasons behind each rule. On the other hand, a good emotional relationship between teachers

¹² Achruh and Sukirman, "An Analysis of Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions in the Era of Globalization," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 23, no. 9 (2024): 78–102, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.9.5>.

¹³ Fathur Rohman, "Problem Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education: The Case of the Indonesian Pesantren," *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah* 12, no. 1 (2022): 82–97, <https://doi.org/10.7187/GJAT072022-5>.

¹⁴ Ahmad Juhaidi et al., "The Effect of Brand Personality, Brand-Self Congruity, and Brand Love on E-WOM in Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia: A Mediating Effect of Brand Trust," *Social Sciences and Humanities Open* 10 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100955>.

and students increases the effectiveness of the moral development process. Therefore, teacher control should be understood as an educational process aimed at building awareness, not simply monitoring student behavior.

From an Islamic perspective, moral development is a lifelong educational process involving various educational environments. Abdullah Nashih Ulwan explains that a child's educational success is greatly influenced by the synergy between family, school, community, and social environment. This opinion is relevant to the conditions of students in the digital era, who are simultaneously influenced by various sources. Schools are no longer the sole center of character formation, as social media also plays a powerful informal educational role.¹⁵ Therefore, moral development requires harmonious collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community to ensure that the values taught in schools do not conflict with students' experiences at home or in the digital world. This collaborative approach is a crucial strategy in facing the challenges of developing information technology.¹⁶ Therefore, moral education must be viewed as a shared responsibility of the entire educational ecosystem.

Agustyn's in 2022 research shows that TikTok use is significantly related to changes in elementary school students' character and manners. The study found that the more intense TikTok use, the greater the tendency for students to imitate the language, expressions, and behaviors developed on the platform. However, the study focused more on the influence of social media on student behavior without examining in-depth the forms of teacher interventions to address this phenomenon. Consequently, there is no clear picture of effective pedagogical strategies for mitigating the negative impacts of social media. This limitation presents a research gap that this study aims to address. By including Islamic Religious Education teachers as a control variable, this study offers a more comprehensive perspective on the process of character formation in the digital era.

Research by Hafifah et al. in 2025 also shows that students' polite behavior is influenced by the frequency of TikTok use. The study confirms that viral language appearing in digital content is often used by students without understanding its meaning or social consequences. However, the study emphasized the behavioral aspect of communication and did not connect it to the dimensions of religious education or Islamic moral development. Furthermore, the study did not explain how teachers integrate religious values into the process of controlling student behavior. This situation indicates that there is still room for research linking the phenomenon of digital language imitation with Islamic education strategies. Therefore, this study expands the analysis by examining the relationship between social media, Islamic

¹⁵ Suhayib and M. F. Ansyari, "Design of Islamic Religious Education: Purposes, Alignment of Curriculum Components and Contexts," *British Journal of Religious Education* 45, no. 4 (2023): 382–93, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2023.2220940>.

¹⁶ Wardana Said et al., "Marriage Traditions and Family Resilience in Bugis Bone Society: A Study of Islamic Law and Islamic Education," *Samarah* 8, no. 3 (2024): 1372–90, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjkh.v8i3.23227>.

Religious Education teacher control, and the formation of student morality in an integrated manner.

Research by Maya and Qomariyah in 2024 emphasized that teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' morals through role models, habituation, and character development. The study's findings suggest that the success of moral education is strongly influenced by the quality of the relationship between teachers and students. However, the study was conducted at the secondary school level, thus differing from elementary school levels in student development. Furthermore, the study focused more on the general impact of social media without specifically examining the viral language phenomenon that has developed through TikTok. These differences in context mean that the study's findings cannot fully explain the dynamics affecting elementary school students. Therefore, this study presents a new perspective by examining this phenomenon in an elementary school setting through an Islamic Religious Education approach.

Based on the overall synthesis of previous theories and research, it can be identified that there are *research gaps* which serves as the basis for this research. First, most studies only discuss the impact of TikTok on student behavior without integrating social learning theory, moral development, and Islamic moral education simultaneously.¹⁷ Second, research on Islamic Religious Education teacher control still focuses more on general aspects of character development and has not specifically examined strategies for controlling viral language imitation from social media. Third, there is little research linking the TikTok algorithm, language imitation behavior, Islamic Religious Education teacher control, and the moral formation of elementary school students in a single, complete conceptual model.¹⁸ Based on these gaps, the novelty (*novelty*) This research is based on the development of an integrative model that explains how Islamic Religious Education teachers' control can mediate the influence of digital culture on the formation of students' morals through supervision, role models, habituation, Islamic digital literacy, and collaboration with families. This conceptual model is expected to enrich the scientific treasury of Islamic Religious Education while providing practical contributions to the development of character education strategies in the era of digital transformation. Thus, this research not only produces a description of the phenomenon, but also offers a new conceptual construction regarding the development of students' morals amidst the development of social media.

¹⁷ Syamsul Ma'arif et al., "Islamic Moderation in Education and the Phenomenon of Cyberterrorism: A Systematic Literature Review," *Indonesian Journal of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science* 31, no. 3 (2023): 1523–33, <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijeecs.v31.i3.pp1523-1533>.

¹⁸ Muljono Damopolii, Muhammad U. Shabir, and Muhammad Alqadri Burga, "The Phenomenon of Punishment at Pesantren in South Sulawesi: An Islamic Law and Islamic Education Approaches," *Samarah* 7, no. 3 (2023): 1643–60, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i3.18207>.

Method

This research uses an approach qualitative with design case study to gain a deep understanding of the control of Islamic Religious Education Teachers over the viral trend of imitating impolite language from social media TikTok in the formation of students' morals at SD Negeri Jatibarang Lor 01. A qualitative approach was chosen because the phenomenon being studied cannot be explained solely through numbers or statistical measurements, but rather requires interpretation of the behavior, experiences, social interactions, and meanings constructed by the research subjects. A case study was used because the research focuses on a particular location that has unique characteristics related to the emergence of the viral language imitation phenomenon in the elementary school environment. Through this approach, researchers can understand the relationship between social media use, student language behavior, and pedagogical strategies implemented by Islamic Religious Education teachers contextually. The research was conducted at SD Negeri Jatibarang Lor 01, Jatibarang District, Brebes Regency, during April 2026 as stated in the research document. The location selection was based on the discovery of the phenomenon of the use of viral language imitated by students from social media TikTok and the various coaching efforts carried out by Islamic Religious Education teachers to overcome it.

The research subjects were determined using the technique purposive sampling, namely selecting informants who are considered to be most knowledgeable about the phenomenon being studied. The primary informants consisted of Islamic Religious Education teachers because they have a central role in fostering students' morals and directly supervise students' communication behavior during the learning process. Supporting informants included the principal, class teachers, several students who showed a tendency to use viral language in daily interactions, and parents of students to gain perspectives on social media use in the family environment.¹⁹ The selection of various information sources was intended to obtain a comprehensive picture of the relationship between the school environment, family, and digital media in shaping student behavior. The diversity of informants allowed researchers to triangulate perspectives so that interpretation of the data became more objective and in-depth. Thus, the data obtained not only describes individual experiences but also reflects the social dynamics surrounding the formation of student morals in the digital era.

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques, namely observation, in-depth interview, And documentation Observations were conducted through passive participatory observation of Islamic Religious Education learning activities, interactions between students, and forms of communication that emerged

¹⁹ Zulpahmi et al., "Evaluation of Awareness and Perception of Islamic Microfinance Institutions and Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia Towards the Implementation of Sharia Governance: Dyad'S Perspective," *International Journal of Professional Business Review* 7, no. 4 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2022.v7i4.743>.

during the learning process. In-depth interviews were conducted semi-structured using flexible interview guidelines, allowing informants to explain their experiences, perceptions, and strategies applied in addressing the phenomenon of imitating impolite language. Documentation was used to supplement the data through analysis of learning tools, school regulations, documentation of character building activities, observation notes, and other relevant archives. Furthermore, researchers also explored several TikTok content sources used by students in using viral language, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of the relationship between digital behavior and communication behavior in schools. The combination of these three techniques yielded rich data (*rich data*) so that it is able to provide an empirical picture of the process of forming students' morals in the school environment.

Data analysis was performed using an interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, Dan Saldaña, which consists of three main stages, namely data condensation, data display, And drawing and verifying conclusions In the condensation stage, all interview, observation, and documentation results were transcribed, classified, and then selected based on their relevance to the research focus. The data presentation stage was carried out by compiling a thematic matrix that illustrates the relationship between TikTok viral trends, students' language imitation behavior, forms of Islamic Religious Education teacher control, supporting factors, inhibiting factors, and their implications for moral formation. Next, conclusions were drawn in stages by comparing various data categories to obtain a consistent pattern of relationships between research variables.²⁰ Interpretation of the research results was then linked to Albert Bandura's Social Learning theory, Jean Piaget's and Lawrence Kohlberg's theories of moral development, the concept of Islamic moral education, and previous research findings to provide a strong theoretical basis for the discussion. Through this analysis process, the research not only produced empirical descriptions but also developed conceptual explanations regarding the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education teacher control in dealing with the influence of digital culture.

Result and Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the use of TikTok social media has become an integral part of the lives of students at Jatibarang Lor 01 Public Elementary School. Most students have been familiar with the TikTok application since elementary school age through their parents' smartphones or personal devices. The high intensity of social media use makes it very easy for students to follow various viral trends, especially in the form of dialogue snippets, verbal expressions, and communication styles that are considered funny and entertaining. Based on the results of observations, various viral expressions are not only used when students are outside of school, but also carried over into the learning process and daily interactions in the school

²⁰ Mochamad Irfan Yusuf et al., "Transformational Leadership of KH. Yusuf Hasyim in Preserving Traditional Islamic Education at Pesantren Tebuireng," *Munaddhomah* 5, no. 4 (2024): 383–94, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v5i4.1430>.

environment.²¹ Some of the expressions used contain insults, sarcasm, and forms of communication that do not reflect the values of politeness. This phenomenon indicates that social media has become one of the external factors influencing the formation of student communication patterns. This condition shows that the process of internalizing language from digital media occurs quickly through the mechanism of social imitation.

Interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers indicate that changes in students' language behavior have begun to emerge in recent years, along with the increasing use of social media among children. Teachers observed that students frequently use terms popular on TikTok without understanding the meaning or social consequences of their remarks. On several occasions, students used impolite language when joking with friends or interacting with teachers. According to the teachers, this behavior did not arise from an intention to insult, but rather because students considered the language humorous and commonly used by social media figures they idolize.²² Nevertheless, this habit still has the potential to reduce the quality of social interactions and respect for teachers if not immediately addressed. Therefore, teachers believe that moral development must be carried out more intensively, adapting to ongoing developments in digital culture. These findings demonstrate that the challenges of moral education in the digital era come not only from the family environment but also from the virtual spaces students consume daily.

The study also found that Islamic Religious Education teachers not only reprimand students when they use impolite language, but also integrate the values of polite speech into the entire learning process. Material on morals is not limited to specific chapters but is inserted into explanations of Islamic jurisprudence (fikih), creed (aqidah), and Islamic history.²³ Teachers utilize various real-life examples, including the viral language phenomenon on TikTok, as contextual learning media. This approach makes it easier for students to understand the relationship between Islamic teachings and their daily digital lives. Teachers also explain the social and religious consequences of every word, so that students understand that guarding one's tongue is part of practicing faith. Thus, the Islamic Religious Education learning process is oriented not only toward achieving cognitive competencies but also toward character development and a culture of polite communication.

²¹ Maali Mohammed Jassim Alabdulhadi and Kalthoum Mohammed Alkandari, "Practices of Islamic Education Teachers in Promoting Moderation (Wasatiyyah) Values among High School Students in Kuwait: Challenges and Obstacles," *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2365577>.

²² Ilyya Muhsin, Sukron Ma'Mun, and Wardah Nuroniyah, "Sexual Violence in an Islamic Higher Education Institution of Indonesian: A Maqasid Al-Shariah and Foucauldian Perspective," *Samarah* 5, no. 1 (2021): 127–53, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v5i1.9144>.

²³ Achruh et al., "Challenges and Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence Adoption in Islamic Education in Indonesian Higher Education Institutions," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 23, no. 11 (2024): 423–43, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.11.22>.

In addition to classroom instruction, teachers monitor student behavior through daily school habits. Every morning, teachers encourage students to greet their teachers politely, and use polite language when interacting with their peers and other school members. When students are found using impolite language, teachers provide persuasive reprimands without embarrassing them in front of their peers. The approach emphasizes providing an understanding of the reasons why a particular language is inappropriate rather than simply imposing punishment.²⁴ Teachers also offer appreciation to students who maintain good communication behavior as a form of positive reinforcement. This habituation is carried out consistently so that it gradually becomes part of the school culture. Observations indicate that this strategy is effective in reducing the frequency of impolite language use in the classroom.

Research findings indicate that teacher role models are a crucial factor in successfully developing students' morals. Islamic Religious Education teachers consistently strive to use polite language, a gentle tone of voice, and an attitude that respects students in every interaction. Students tend to imitate their teachers' communication style because they view them as figures of moral authority. When teachers demonstrate patience when dealing with students who make mistakes, they also learn the importance of controlling their emotions in communication. Conversely, if teachers display a harsh attitude or use inappropriate language, students are likely to imitate such behavior. Therefore, role models are a more effective educational strategy than simply providing verbal advice. These findings confirm that the success of teacher control is greatly influenced by the consistency between words and actions in everyday life.

Table 1. Forms of Islamic Religious Education Teachers' Control over Imitation of Impolite Language from TikTok

No	Forms of Islamic Education Teacher Control	Implementation in Schools	Impact on Students' Morals
1	Integration of moral values in learning	Inserting speaking etiquette into every Islamic Education material	Students understand Islamic communication ethics
2	Teacher's exemplary behavior	Teachers use polite language in all activities	Students imitate good communication behavior
3	Educational warning	Reprimand students persuasively	Reduce the use of bad language
4	Habituation	Greetings, hellos, smiles, and polite communication	A religious school culture is formed

²⁴ Maurits S. Berger, "Shifting Paradigms in Islamic Higher Education in Europe: The Case Study of Leiden University," *Religions* 12, no. 1 (2021): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010063>.

No	Forms of Islamic Education Teacher Control	Implementation in Schools	Impact on Students' Morals
5	Supervision	Monitor student interactions inside and outside the classroom	Prevent the development of negative behavior
6	Collaboration with parents	Communication regarding the use of social media	Monitoring of gadget usage becomes more optimal
7	Islamic digital literacy	Provides an understanding of the impact of digital content	Students are more selective in imitating TikTok content
8	Positive reinforcement	Giving appreciation for polite behavior	Motivating students to maintain good morals

The research also shows that the effectiveness of teacher control is influenced by the support of the school environment. The principal, class teachers, and educational staff share a commitment to maintaining a culture of polite communication. The entire school community implements rules regarding the use of polite language in daily interactions, so that students gain consistent experiences from various parties. A conducive school environment strengthens the process of internalizing moral values because students not only learn theory in the classroom but also see real-life practices in school life. A religious school culture is an important supporting factor in mitigating the negative impact of social media. Thus, Islamic Religious Education teacher control becomes more effective because it is supported by the school system as a whole. These findings demonstrate that moral formation is a collective responsibility of the entire school community.

On the other hand, research has found several factors that hinder the effectiveness of teacher control. The main factor stems from the high intensity of smartphone use by students outside of school. Some parents provide access to devices to their children without providing guidance or limiting the content they consume. This situation causes students to learn more from social media than from their family environment.²⁵ Furthermore, peer influence also reinforces the use of viral language because students receive social reinforcement when using popular terms. Another obstacle is the speed of change in social media trends, which is much faster than the adaptation process of learning in schools.²⁶ Therefore, teachers are required to

²⁵ Mussa Saidi Abubakari, "Digital Technologies Adoption in Islamic Education for Fostering Lifelong Learning Culture: Pilot Survey Preliminary Insights," *Multi-Industry Digitalization and Technological Governance in the AI Era*, 2025, 103–25, <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-1681-9.ch005>.

²⁶ Azwani Masuwai, Hafizhah Zulkifli, and Mohd Isa Hamzah, "Self-Assessment for Continuous Professional Development: The Perspective of Islamic Education," *Heliyon* 10, no. 19 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e38268>.

continuously update their knowledge of digital culture developments to ensure that development strategies remain relevant.

Further research findings indicate that collaboration between schools and parents is a key factor in successfully developing students' morals. Teachers regularly communicate with parents regarding students' behavioral development, including their social media habits at home. Parents are encouraged to provide guidance when their children use smartphones and to limit their social media use.²⁷ Furthermore, teachers educate parents about the importance of being role models in language use within the family environment. This synergy strengthens the habituation process already underway at school, ensuring students receive a consistent educational experience. The research findings show that students who receive supervision from their families tend to be better able to control their language use than those who receive less guidance. Overall, the research results indicate that Islamic Religious Education teachers' control over the viral trend of imitating impolite language on TikTok is not only realized through reprimands, but is a comprehensive educational process. Teachers integrate moral values into learning, build a religious school culture, provide role models, foster habits, strengthen Islamic digital literacy, and collaborate with parents. This strategy demonstrates that moral formation in the digital era requires a multidimensional approach involving various educational environments. Although various obstacles stemming from the development of social media remain, teachers' efforts have been able to reduce students' tendency to use impolite language.²⁸ These findings confirm that Islamic Religious Education teachers remain strategically positioned as agents of character formation in the era of digital transformation. Thus, strengthening teacher competency in the field of digital literacy is a crucial need to address the challenges of 21st-century education.

Research findings indicate that students' imitation of impolite language is a logical consequence of their high level of exposure to TikTok in their daily lives. This phenomenon can be explained by Social Learning Theory developed by Albert Bandura. According to this theory, individuals learn behavior through observing models they find attractive, then storing that behavior in memory to be reproduced in different situations. In the context of this research, TikTok content creators act as *symbolic models*. Students continuously observe the use of short videos that capture their attention. TikTok's algorithm further reinforces this process by repeatedly presenting similar content, increasing the opportunity for imitation. The study showed that students use various viral terms not because they understand their meaning, but because they perceive them as symbols of modern social interaction and a fun form of

²⁷ Arbain Nurdin et al., "Developing the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Inclusive Schools or Madrasah and Its Implementation: A Systematic Literature Review," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 21, no. 1 (2024): 94–110, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v21i1.6907>.

²⁸ Susanto et al., "Trends of Educational Technology (EdTech): Students' Perceptions of Technology to Improve the Quality of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 21, no. 6 (2022): 226–46, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.6.14>.

communication. Therefore, the impolite language behavior found at SD Negeri Jatibarang Lor 01 is the result of a continuous social learning process through digital media and reinforced by the platform's algorithmic mechanisms.

From a developmental psychology perspective, the findings of this study also align with Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Elementary school students are still in the concrete operational stage, so their ability to conduct abstract moral reasoning has not yet developed optimally.²⁹ At this stage, children more easily understand directly observable behavior than conceptual moral values. Therefore, the viral language they see on TikTok is more easily accepted as interesting than considered from an ethical communication perspective. The results showed that most students were unaware that some of the terms they used contained elements of insult, ridicule, or impoliteness. They considered the use of such language to be a common form of joking because they saw many people using it on social media. This condition confirms that the process of moral formation at elementary school age requires intensive guidance so that cognitive development can go hand in hand with moral and spiritual development.

Analysis of the research results also demonstrates the relevance of Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development. According to Kohlberg, elementary school-aged children are generally at the level of preconventional until the beginning conventional, a phase where judgments of right and wrong are still influenced by rewards, punishments, and acceptance from the social environment. This study found that students tend to use viral language because they receive positive responses in the form of laughter, attention, and acceptance from their peer groups. This social reinforcement becomes a factor that strengthens imitative behavior, so that language that was initially used only for entertainment then develops into a daily communication habit.³⁰ These findings indicate that moral formation is not only done through conveying school rules, but must also build students' moral awareness so that they are able to evaluate each behavior based on religious values, not solely based on social popularity. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers have a crucial role in facilitating students' moral development towards a more mature stage through reflective learning and moral habituation.

The research results show that the control of Islamic Religious Education teachers through role models has a very significant influence on changes in student behavior. From an Islamic educational perspective, teachers function not only as facilitators but also as facilitators. Teacher (teacher), but also as teacher, editor, And good deeds who serve as real-life examples for students. Al-Ghazali emphasized that

²⁹ Muhammad Nasir and Muhammad Khairul Rijal, "Keeping the Middle Path: Mainstreaming Religious Moderation through Islamic Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 213–41, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.213-241>.

³⁰ Miftachul Huda, "Islamic Philosophy and Ethics of Education: Al-Zarnūjī's Concept of Ta'zīm in His Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim," *Ulumuna* 25, no. 2 (2021): 399–421, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v25i2.464>.

moral education will not be successful if teachers only provide advice without demonstrating behavior consistent with the teachings conveyed. Research findings show that students more easily imitate a teacher's way of speaking than remember advice given verbally.³¹ This proves that learning through real-life examples is more effective than approaches that only emphasize cognitive aspects. Thus, teacher role models are the most fundamental form of control in building a culture of polite communication in the school environment.

In addition to role models, this study found that habituation strategies (*habituation*) is one of the main factors in the formation of students' morals. Teachers consistently teach students to greet, speak politely, respect teachers, and maintain good manners when interacting with friends. From Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's perspective, habituation is an effective educational method because moral values will transform into character if they are carried out continuously in everyday life. Research findings show that students who receive consistent habituation show a lower tendency to use impolite viral language compared to students who receive less reinforcement. This shows that character formation requires a continuous process, not a temporary intervention. Therefore, a religious school culture is a very important factor in strengthening the success of moral development.

Research findings also show that effective teacher control is not repressive, but rather educational and persuasive. Teachers do not immediately impose punishment upon students using impolite language, but first explain the moral, social, and religious reasons why the language is inappropriate. This approach aligns with Islamic educational principles, which prioritize wisdom, good judgment, and dialogue as the primary methods in the educational process. Students are given the opportunity to reflect on their behavior so that changes stem from internal awareness, not solely from fear of punishment. These findings also support social control theory, which emphasizes that compliance built through positive interpersonal relationships is more sustainable than compliance built through external pressure. Thus, a persuasive approach is a relevant strategy in addressing the challenges of moral formation in the social media era.

The research results show that the success of teacher control is greatly influenced by the quality of collaboration between schools and families. This finding reinforces Bronfenbrenner's view. Ecological Systems Theory Child development is influenced by the interaction of various interrelated environments, particularly family and school. When the values taught in school are reinforced through parental supervision at home, students gain a consistent educational experience, making the

³¹ M. Amin Abdullah, "Islamic Religious Education Based on Religious Intersubjectivity: Philosophical Perspectives and Phenomenology of Religion," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 19, no. 1 (2022): 141–63, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2022.191-11>.

internalization of morals more effective.³² Conversely, if students receive guidance at school but are not supported in using social media at home, the influence of digital culture will outweigh the values taught by teachers. Therefore, intensive communication between teachers and parents is an integral part of the strategy for character development. This synergy demonstrates that character education is a collective responsibility of the entire educational environment.

The findings of this study also contribute to the development of the concept Islamic digital literacy. Digital literacy has long been understood as the technical ability to use information technology. However, research shows that this competency is insufficient to face the challenges of a rapidly evolving digital culture. Students need the ability to evaluate content based on Islamic values, consider the social impact of digital behavior, and make responsible decisions. Islamic Religious Education teachers have a strategic role in integrating these skills into learning so that students not only become competent technology users but also possess moral integrity in the digital space.³³ The concept of Islamic digital literacy identified in this study expands the paradigm of Islamic religious education to be more adaptive to technological developments without losing its value orientation.

Compared with previous research, the results of this study demonstrate several important scientific contributions. Previous studies generally only explained the relationship between TikTok use and changes in student behavior or discussed the role of teachers in character formation in general.³⁴ This study shows that this relationship is actually mediated by the pedagogical control process carried out by Islamic Religious Education teachers through role models, habituation, supervision, Islamic digital literacy, and collaboration with families. Thus, this study offers a more comprehensive conceptual model regarding the mechanisms of character formation in students in the social media era. This contribution enriches the study of Islamic Religious Education, particularly in the field of character education based on digital transformation. In addition to its theoretical implications, the research findings also provide practical recommendations for elementary schools in developing character development programs that are more contextualized to the development of social media.³⁵ Overall, this study confirms that social media is not a factor that automatically corrupts students' morals, but rather a new social space that must be managed through

³² Akhmad Sirojuddin, Maskuri, and Junaidi Ghoni, "Integration of Higher Education Curriculum with Islamic Boarding Schools in the Perspective of Multicultural Islamic Education," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 2 (2025): 265–81, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v8i2.163>.

³³ Sulieman Ibraheem Shelash Al-Hawary et al., "The Education of Children in an Islamic Family Based on the Holy Qur'an," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i2.8273>.

³⁴ Nur Hannan et al., "Between Adherence to Madhhab and Adaptation to Context: Fatwās on Female Leadership in Nahdlatul Ulama-Affiliated Islamic Higher Education Institutions," *Journal of Islamic Law* 5, no. 2 (2024): 269–87, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v5i2.2725>.

³⁵ Wina Wardiana, Adi Fadli, and Masnun, "Contribution of Women in the Education Management of Islamic Boarding School," *Ulumuna* 28, no. 1 (2024): 398–423, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v28i1.805>.

appropriate educational strategies. TikTok can have negative impacts if students consume it without guidance, but it can also be utilized as a learning medium if directed wisely.³⁶ In this context, Islamic Religious Education teachers play a role as agents of transformation, bridging technological developments with the internalization of Islamic values. The effectiveness of teacher control is determined by their ability to integrate religious learning, digital literacy, role models, habituation, and collaboration with families into a sustainable educational system. The findings of this study produce a model for character-based moral development. educational-integrative control, a model that positions teachers as the primary drivers in controlling the influence of digital culture through simultaneous pedagogical, spiritual, and social approaches. This model represents a conceptual novelty in this research and offers a direction for the development of Islamic Religious Education that is more responsive to the challenges of the digital era.

³⁶ Munawar Rahmat and M. Wildan Bin H.M. Yahya, "The Impact of Inclusive Islamic Education Teaching Materials Model on Religious Tolerance of Indonesian Students," *International Journal of Instruction* 15, no. 1 (2022): 347–64, <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2022.15120a>.

Conclusion

This study shows that the viral trend of imitating impolite language that has developed through TikTok has had a significant impact on the communication patterns of students at Jatibarang Lor 01 Public Elementary School. The high intensity of exposure to digital content, supported by TikTok's personalized and repetitive algorithmic mechanisms, encourages students to imitate various forms of language, expressions, and communication styles that are currently popular without considering ethical dimensions or religious values. This phenomenon shows that social media has developed into a new socialization agent that has the ability to quickly shape students' communication behavior. From the perspective of Islamic Religious Education, this condition presents a serious challenge because language use is one indicator of a person's moral quality. Therefore, the formation of morality in the digital era can no longer be achieved solely through normative learning in the classroom, but requires educational strategies that are able to respond to the dynamics of information technology developments. The results of the study prove that Islamic Religious Education teachers have a strategic position as controllers and moral guides of students through the integration of Islamic values into daily communication practices. Thus, the success of moral education in the digital era depends heavily on teachers' ability to adapt learning methods to changes in communication culture influenced by social media. This study also found that effective control of Islamic Religious Education teachers was not built through a repressive approach, but rather through an educational-integrative control model that combines role models (*good deeds*), habituation (*habituation*), humanistic supervision, digital literacy based on Islamic values, positive reinforcement, and continuous collaboration between schools and families. This model has been proven to reduce the tendency of students to imitate impolite language while strengthening the internalization of moral values in everyday life. From a theoretical perspective, this study expands the study of Islamic Religious Education by integrating Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory, Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development theory, Al-Ghazali's concept of moral education, and Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's thoughts into an analysis of the influence of digital culture on the formation of students' character. The integration of these various perspectives produces a new conceptual framework that explains that moral formation in the social media era must be understood as a multidimensional process involving interactions between digital technology, the school environment, family, and society. Therefore, schools need to develop Islamic digital literacy policies as an integral part of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum so that students not only have digital competence, but also the moral ability to filter, evaluate, and use social media responsibly. Further research is suggested to expand the scope of research to different levels of education, using a mixed approach (*mixed methods*), and developing an Islamic digital literacy-based learning intervention model that can be implemented more widely in various educational units in Indonesia.

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