



Parents' Islamic Educational Strategies for Teaching Children to Manage the Negative Effects of Social Media

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the strategies employed by parents in guiding children's social media use. The study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach. The participants consisted of parents and children aged 10–15 years who actively used social media and were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data credibility was established through source and technique triangulation. The findings identified four main strategies employed by parents in guiding children's social media use: i) active parental guidance and open dialogue; ii) rules and time restrictions on social media use; iii) parental modeling in digital interaction; and iv) moral and religious value internalization. These findings indicate that parental guidance in children's social media use involves not only restrictions but also communication, modeling, and value-based education to foster responsible digital behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology in the digital era has brought significant changes to people's lives, including patterns of social interaction among children and adolescents Shadieff et al., (2021). The emergence of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp enables individuals to communicate, share information, and express themselves rapidly and extensively without spatial or temporal limitations. Social media has become not only a means of entertainment but also a source of information and education and a medium for identity formation (Czarnecka et al., 2022). According to a report by the social media management organization We Are Social, the number of internet users worldwide reached 5.56 billion in 2025, out of a global population of approximately 8.2 billion (Imbron et al., 2025). In Indonesia, the number of internet users has reached approximately 221 million, equivalent to 79.5% of the total population (Putri et al., 2024). These figures indicate that Indonesia is one of the countries with the largest number of internet users worldwide. The high level of internet penetration has directly contributed to the increasing use of social media across different age groups, including school-aged children.

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However, despite the various conveniences and benefits it offers, social media also presents negative impacts that cannot be overlooked. According to a survey conducted by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), Indonesia ranks fourth globally and second in the ASEAN region in terms of reported cases of child sexual exploitation material in digital spaces (Ramadani, 2024). This situation indicates that Indonesian children are particularly vulnerable to exposure to harmful content in the digital environment. In response to this concern, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto, instructed the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs and other relevant institutions to formulate regulations concerning age restrictions on social media use to protect the best interests of children (Dalimunthe et al., 2023; Kendrick & McKay, 2016). Psychologically, children are still in a developmental stage characterized by emotional and behavioral instability and a tendency to imitate behaviors they observe. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory explains that individuals, particularly children, learn through observation and imitation of their surrounding environment, including through digital media (Wahidar et al., 2023). Without adequate supervision and guidance, children may imitate negative behaviors encountered on social media, such as inappropriate language, consumerist lifestyles, and behaviors that conflict with religious and cultural values.

From an Islamic perspective, parents have a primary responsibility to protect and guide their children from behaviors that may undermine their moral and religious development. This responsibility is emphasized in the Quran through the command to protect oneself and one's family from the Hellfire. Allah states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

Meaning: "O believers! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, overseen by angels who are stern and severe, who never disobey Allah's commands and do as ordered." (Quran, At-Tahrim 66:6)

According to Abudin Nata's interpretation of educational verses (*tafsir tarbawi*), this verse emphasizes the importance of establishing barriers against punishment by avoiding sinful acts, strengthening oneself against desires, and refraining from actions prohibited by Allah so that individuals may remain obedient and committed to His commands (Chen et al., 2023). The family, including the wife, children, servants, and dependents, is entrusted with the responsibility of providing protection through guidance, advice, and education. This indicates that parental guidance can have an important influence on children. The verse emphasizes the importance of parental education, guidance, and supervision as a form of spiritual and moral responsibility.

The Quran also emphasizes the importance of time discipline, the observance of religious practices, and the habituation of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* as foundations for character development. Allah states:

وَالْعَصْرُ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

Meaning: "By time, surely humanity is in loss, except those who have faith, do good, and urge each other to the truth and patience." (Quran, Al-Asr 103:1–3)

This verse indicates that Allah commands human beings to make proper use of their time and avoid wasting it on unbeneficial activities. It therefore highlights the importance of discipline in managing the time available. In the context of modern parenting, the mindful parenting approach is also considered a relevant strategy (Helena et al., 2020; Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020; Maulidah et al., 2025). Mindful parenting emphasizes parents' full presence when accompanying their children, providing non-judgmental attention, and establishing warm and open communication. Through this approach, parents are expected to develop harmonious relationships with their children, thereby facilitating more proportional and

educational supervision of their social media use.

Parenting challenges become increasingly complex in environments characterized by demanding work schedules. Parents whose occupations involve high workloads, on-call duties, and unpredictable assignments may have relatively limited time to spend with their children. Such conditions may reduce the intensity of interpersonal communication within the family, even though warm and open communication constitutes a fundamental basis for establishing emotional closeness and effective supervision of children. Based on preliminary observations, children aged 10–15 years were found to use social media platforms such as WhatsApp, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube relatively intensively. Some children continued using their devices late at night, neglecting prayer, mealtimes, and adequate rest. In addition, there was a tendency to imitate lifestyles presented on social media, including clothing styles, communication patterns, and forms of social interaction. Face-to-face interactions with family members and the surrounding community also appeared to decrease as some of their leisure time was increasingly spent interacting in digital spaces (Sholekhah et al., 2024).

This phenomenon demonstrates the importance of parental supervision and educational strategies in guiding children's social media use. In families where parents have demanding schedules, supervision should not rely solely on prohibitions or unilateral restrictions but should instead be developed through mutual agreements, dialogic communication, and an understanding of the risks and benefits of social media (Fam et al., 2022). Without appropriate guidance, social media use may contribute to reduced discipline, weakened self-control, and diminished quality of children's social interactions. In the long term, these conditions may also influence children's character development, ways of thinking, and value systems. Conversely, appropriate parenting strategies involving consistent time restrictions, redirection toward educational and creative activities, and the internalization of religious values and discipline can encourage children to use social media wisely and productively. Parents can guide children to use social media as a means of learning, developing their talents, and expanding their knowledge. Active parental involvement, such as accompanying children when accessing particular content or discussing information obtained online, can help children develop digital literacy and critical thinking skills (Fam et al., 2022; Mascheroni et al., 2022).

Furthermore, support from the social environment is also needed, including collaboration among parents, community leaders, and educational institutions, to establish a healthy culture of social media use. A supportive environment can strengthen family efforts to instill discipline and responsibility in children. Through shared rules or structured educational programs, supervision becomes not only an individual parental responsibility but also a collective responsibility within the community. Therefore, research on parental strategies for monitoring and guiding children's social media use is important. This study seeks not only to describe the phenomenon but also to examine the strategies employed by parents in guiding children's social media use. The findings are expected to provide both conceptual and practical contributions to the development of effective parenting practices grounded in religious values and psychological approaches, with the aim of fostering disciplined, morally responsible children who are capable of using social media responsibly amid the dynamics of the digital era.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of parents' strategies for monitoring and guiding children's social media use. The case study approach was selected to examine parents' experiences, forms of guidance, communication patterns, and challenges in shaping

children's digital behavior. The participants consisted of parents and children aged 10–15 years who actively use social media. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their relevance to the research focus. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to explore parents' experiences and strategies, while observations and documentation were used to provide supporting data (Elizabeth, 2016; Engkizar et al., 2023, 2024; Khan, 2019; Liang, 2019).

The data were analyzed qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data credibility was established through source and technique triangulation by comparing information obtained from parents and children and across different data collection techniques. This method was used to obtain a comprehensive understanding of parental strategies for guiding children's social media use and fostering discipline, self-control, and responsibility in the digital environment (Engkizar et al., 2025; Lemon & Hayes, 2020; Renz et al., 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Thematic analysis of interviews with parents and children identified three main themes concerning parental strategies for guiding children's social media use: i) active parental guidance and open dialogue; ii) rules and time restrictions on social media use; iii) parental modeling in digital interaction; and iv) moral and religious value internalization. These three themes indicate that parental strategies are not solely oriented toward restricting children's access to social media but also involve communication, providing understanding, fostering discipline, and internalizing moral and religious values.

Active Parental Guidance and Open Dialogue

The findings indicate that active parental guidance and open dialogue constitute one of the main strategies used by parents to guide children's social media use. Parents do not merely impose prohibitions but also provide explanations regarding the duration of use, the types of content that can be accessed, and appropriate behavior in digital spaces. This approach demonstrates that parents seek to develop children's understanding of social media use rather than merely controlling their access.

One parent explained:

"We cannot simply prohibit our children from using social media because today's world is already highly digital. However, we try to provide clear explanations and boundaries. For example, when they are allowed to use their phones, what content they may watch, and how they should behave in the digital world. We also often discuss with our children the things they see on social media so that they understand what is good and what is not."

This statement indicates that parental guidance is carried out through communication that enables children to understand the reasons behind the rules provided. Parents do not merely determine what may or may not be done but also discuss children's experiences when interacting with social media.

Findings from interviews with children also indicate that understanding has begun to develop through this process of parental guidance. One child stated:

"I use TikTok and Instagram. If I come across content that is not appropriate, I usually skip it because my father has already explained it to me and I understand its impact. I usually watch content that contains educational information and creativity."

This statement indicates that children have begun to apply parental guidance when encountering digital content. They not only recognize that some content is inappropriate but also identify an appropriate response, namely skipping such content and selecting materials that they perceive as educational or creative.

These findings can be understood from the perspective of parental mediation, which positions parents as mediators of children's media experiences. From this

perspective, parental guidance is not limited to monitoring or restricting access but also involves helping children understand and evaluate their media experiences. Open dialogue provides children with opportunities to discuss the content they encounter, enabling parents to provide explanations according to their children's circumstances and needs.

In the context of this study, children's ability to skip inappropriate content also indicates the development of self-regulation in social media use. Children have begun to apply the understanding gained from their parents when making decisions about the content they access. However, this finding should not be interpreted as evidence of a causal relationship, but rather as an indication that parental guidance is associated with the development of children's awareness in selecting digital content.

This dialogic approach is also relevant to Islamic education within the family. Children's education is not carried out solely through instruction but also through advice, communication, habituation, and guidance. In the digital context, these processes enable parents to connect children's social media experiences with values in everyday life. Thus, discussions about social media can become part of character education, particularly in developing selective, responsible, and respectful attitudes toward others in digital spaces.

Therefore, the findings indicate that active parental guidance and open dialogue function as mechanisms for both protecting children and developing their capacity to navigate the digital environment. This strategy is particularly important because parents cannot always directly monitor all of their children's digital activities.

The findings indicate that active parental guidance and open dialogue constitute one of the main strategies employed by parents to guide their children's social media use. Parental guidance is not implemented solely through prohibitions but also through communication concerning the types of content consumed, the duration of social media use, and the consequences of digital behavior. Parents attempt to explain why certain content is considered appropriate or inappropriate so that children do not merely follow the rules but also understand the rationale behind them. This finding indicates a shift from a predominantly controlling form of supervision toward a more educational and communicative approach (Nasril et al., 2025).

This finding can be understood from the perspective of parental mediation, which positions parents as mediators of children's digital experiences. Within this approach, parents do not merely restrict children's access to media but also help them understand, evaluate, and respond to their media experiences. Open dialogue is important because it provides children with opportunities to share their experiences, including when they encounter confusing or inappropriate content. Thus, parent-child communication functions as a mechanism for developing children's decision-making abilities when using social media (Hanifah & Farida, 2023).

In the present study, active parental guidance is also reflected in children's ability to begin selecting the content they consume. Children not only recognize that negative content should be avoided but also identify appropriate actions when encountering such content, such as skipping it (Sun et al., 2021). This suggests that parental guidance may contribute to the development of self-regulation in social media use. Children gradually become less dependent on external parental supervision and begin to develop internal control over their digital behaviour (Linder et al., 2021; Meng et al., 2020).

This finding is consistent with the view that parent-child communication is an important component in developing responsible digital behavior. Guidance accompanied by explanations enables children to understand the risks associated with social media through a dialogic process rather than merely through compliance with prohibitions. Such an approach may also reduce the likelihood that children perceive

social media rules merely as restrictions. Instead, the rules can be understood as part of parental efforts to provide protection and education.

From an Islamic educational perspective, this pattern of parental guidance also demonstrates that children's education does not take place solely through instruction but also through advice, dialogue, habituation, and modeling. Parents serve as children's first educators by helping them connect their digital experiences with values in everyday life. Therefore, discussions about social media can become part of character education, particularly in developing responsible, selective, and respectful behavior in digital spaces (Khasanah & Wulandari, 2026; Nudin et al., 2024).

Thus, the findings demonstrate that active parental guidance and open dialogue enable parents to perform two functions simultaneously: protecting children from the risks of social media and developing their ability to manage digital experiences independently. This strategy is increasingly important because the development of social media makes it difficult for parents to directly monitor all of their children's digital activities.

Rules and Time Restrictions

The second theme concerns rules and time restrictions on social media use. The findings indicate that parents establish limits on device use and regulate the types of content that children can access. These restrictions are also associated with children's responsibilities to complete their learning activities before using digital devices.

One parent explained:

"I establish clear rules regarding social media use, approximately two hours per day, and regulate the types of content they are allowed to access on the devices they use. I select content that is positive and supports children's development, such as educational, creative, or knowledge-based content. I also explain which content may involve violence, hate speech, or material that is inconsistent with religious and cultural values."

These findings indicate that parental restrictions involve two main aspects: time restriction and content restriction. Parents pay attention not only to how long children use social media but also to the characteristics of the content they consume.

However, the interview findings indicate that these rules are not always implemented consistently. One parent stated:

"Rules have been established, but they are often violated. After school, phone use is limited to one or two hours and only after they have completed their assignments or homework. In my view, social media has more negative than positive aspects. Its use can become too unrestricted. When children are accompanied, they can watch positive content, but when they are left alone, they may watch something else. Peer influence is stronger."

This statement indicates that the existence of rules does not necessarily ensure consistent digital behavior among children. Parental supervision and the social environment influence the implementation of these rules. Peer influence, particularly when children observe differences between the restrictions imposed on them and those experienced by their peers, can become a challenge in maintaining limits on social media use.

From the perspective of parental mediation, this strategy can be understood as a form of restrictive mediation, namely guidance through establishing boundaries on media use. Time and content restrictions can serve as protective mechanisms for children, particularly when they have not yet developed sufficient capacity to regulate their media use independently.

However, the findings also indicate that restrictions are insufficient when implemented separately from communication and education. When children are not supervised, the possibility of violating the rules increases. Therefore, restrictive strategies need to be combined with active mediation, namely providing explanations

about the reasons for establishing particular rules and the consequences of excessive media use.

Children's understanding of the reasons behind these restrictions is reflected in the following statement from one child:

"If I spend too much time on social media, my eyes can hurt, it can become difficult to focus on studying, and I may neglect my religious duties. I understand the time limits set by my parents, and inappropriate content is restricted because it helps me become more disciplined. I learn what should be done first and when I can watch or use my phone, rather than using it throughout the day."

This statement indicates that children have begun to understand restrictions as part of establishing priorities. Social media use is considered alongside learning and religious activities, indicating an emerging awareness of the importance of regulating digital device use.

Thus, rules and time restrictions represent an important form of external control in parental digital guidance. However, their effectiveness depends heavily on consistency in implementation, the intensity of supervision, parent-child communication, and the child's social environment. Restrictions become more meaningful when they gradually help children develop the ability to regulate their own social media use.

The findings show that the second strategy employed by parents is the establishment of rules concerning the duration of social media use and the types of content accessible to children. Some parents set a limit of approximately two hours per day and require children to complete their learning responsibilities before using digital devices. In addition to time restrictions, parents also screen content by directing children toward educational, creative, and religious materials while discouraging exposure to violent content, hate speech, and content that is inappropriate for their age or inconsistent with family values (Adrivat et al., 2024; Putra & Melkias, 2022).

These findings indicate that parental strategies consist of two dimensions, namely time restriction and content restriction. Time restrictions are intended to prevent excessive social media use, whereas content restrictions aim to reduce children's exposure to potentially harmful material. Both forms of restriction demonstrate that parents are concerned not only with how long children use social media but also with what they do while engaging in digital spaces.

From the perspective of parental mediation, these restrictions can be categorized as a form of restrictive mediation. This approach positions parents as the parties responsible for establishing boundaries regarding media use according to children's age, needs, and circumstances. However, the findings also show that restrictions are not always implemented consistently. One informant reported that established rules were sometimes violated when parental supervision was reduced. This finding is important because it demonstrates that the existence of rules alone is insufficient to establish healthy digital behaviour (Banić & Orehovački, 2024).

This inconsistency also indicates an interaction between family rules and children's social environments. Peer influence represents one of the challenges in implementing restrictions. When children observe their peers being given greater freedom to use digital devices, family rules may be perceived as restrictions that differ from those experienced within their peer environment. Therefore, restrictions on social media use need to be accompanied by explanations of their rationale and benefits so that children do not merely comply with the rules when supervised but understand the purposes underlying them (Gede et al., 2024; Hussin & Tamuri, 2019).

The findings further support the argument that restrictions on social media use should not be implemented as a stand-alone strategy. Restrictions need to be

combined with communication and education. In this study, parents not only established limits on the duration of use but also explained which types of content could be accessed and why certain content should be avoided. This combination of restriction and active mediation allows parental control to move beyond simple supervision toward the development of children's awareness (Nafiah et al., 2021).

From an educational perspective, restrictions can also be understood as part of the development of discipline. Children are encouraged to establish priorities among learning, religious practices, family interaction, and social media use. Interviews with children indicate that some of them have understood that excessive social media use can interfere with concentration in learning and religious activities. This suggests that parental rules are beginning to be understood by children as mechanisms for self-management rather than merely as external prohibitions.

Thus, this study demonstrates that rules and time restrictions constitute important protective strategies, but their effectiveness depends on consistent supervision, communication, and parents' ability to explain the rationale underlying the rules. Restrictions combined with dialogue can gradually support children in developing greater independence in regulating their social media use.

Moral and Religious Value Internalization

The third theme indicates that parents integrate moral and religious values into their guidance of children's social media use. The values emphasized include politeness, responsibility, self-control, respect for others, and awareness of the need to avoid content that contradicts religious values.

One parent explained:

“Children today are easier to guide when we are close to them and frequently communicate with them. When the family atmosphere is warm, they are more willing to listen to advice. In addition, religious activities at home also help, such as reciting the Quran together or listening to religious lectures, so that children can understand what is good and what is bad when using social media.”

This statement indicates that religious activities within the family constitute part of the educational process used by parents to help children understand the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate behavior when using social media. Thus, religious values are not treated as rules separate from children's digital lives but are used as a basis for evaluating the behaviors and content they encounter.

This understanding is also reflected in children's ability to identify the risks and characteristics of negative content. One child explained:

“Positive content can help us learn good things, such as educational videos, creativity, and other useful things. Negative content can make us uncomfortable; it may contain harsh words, hurt other people, involve bullying, or encourage us to imitate something wrong.”

This statement indicates that children are able to identify negative content not only based on the type of material but also according to its moral and social consequences. Harsh language, bullying, harmful behavior, and behavior perceived as wrong are understood as characteristics that should be avoided.

Children's understanding of religious values is also reflected in their recognition of the relationship between social media use, learning activities, and religious practices. This indicates that children have begun to consider social media use in relation to other responsibilities rather than solely in terms of enjoyment or entertainment (Ilahin, 2022; Mascheroni et al., 2022; Mulida & Silma, 2025).

From the perspective of Islamic education, these findings indicate that moral education can be extended to digital spaces. Morality is not limited to behavior in face-to-face interactions but also encompasses how individuals communicate, select information, respond to others, and treat people through social media. Therefore, digital literacy can be integrated with moral and religious education within the family.

Value internalization is also related to the development of self-control. When children understand the moral reasoning underlying a particular rule, behavioral regulation does not depend entirely on external parental supervision. Children may begin to use internal considerations when deciding what content to consume or how to behave in digital spaces. Activities such as reciting the Quran together and listening to religious lectures represent forms of habituation that support this process. Religious habituation provides children with a context for understanding social media use as part of everyday behavior that continues to have a moral dimension (Amaruddin et al., 2020; Asdiniah & Lestrai, 2021; Feijoo & Sádaba, 2022).

Therefore, moral and religious value internalization serves as a normative foundation for parental guidance strategies. Dialogue helps children understand values, rules establish behavioral boundaries, while value internalization helps children develop internal considerations when encountering digital content and interactions. Overall, these three strategies indicate that parental guidance is not merely directed toward limiting the risks of social media use but also toward developing children's ability to use digital media in a more selective, disciplined, and responsible manner.

The findings also indicate that parental modeling is an important component of parental guidance in children's social media use. Parents do not merely establish rules concerning children's digital behavior but also attempt to demonstrate appropriate ways of using social media. Such modeling includes using respectful language, selecting appropriate content, using social media to obtain useful information, and avoiding content that conflicts with moral and religious values.

These findings demonstrate that digital education within the family takes place through a process of modeling. Children learn not only from what their parents say but also from what their parents do in everyday life. When parents demonstrate selective and responsible social media use, children receive concrete examples of digital behavior that can be adopted in their own activities.

In the context of this study, modeling is important because some aspects of children's social media behavior develop through observation and imitation. This is consistent with the social learning perspective, which recognizes environmental models as an important source of behavioral development. Therefore, consistency between parental advice and parental behavior is an important aspect of digital education within the family.

Parental modeling also reinforces the two preceding strategies. Dialogue provides children with explanations regarding expected behavior, while rules establish boundaries concerning permitted behavior. Modeling then provides concrete examples of how these values and rules can be implemented in everyday life. Thus, these three strategies form complementary mechanisms of parental guidance (Khasanah & Wulandari, 2026; Nudin et al., 2024; Wang & Ngai, 2021).

From an Islamic educational perspective, modeling has an important position because moral education is not achieved solely through the transmission of knowledge but also through behavioral examples. Social media can therefore become a new space for practicing such modeling. Honesty, politeness, responsibility, and respect for others need to be demonstrated not only in face-to-face interactions but also in digital interactions.

Therefore, the findings indicate that parents should be positioned not only as digital supervisors but also as digital role models. Children need concrete examples so that the values and rules communicated by their parents can be translated into everyday digital behavior.

Moral and Religious Value Internalization

The fourth theme indicates that the internalization of moral and religious values serves as a foundation for guiding children's digital behavior. Parents connect social media use with values such as politeness, responsibility, self-control, respect for others, and discipline in fulfilling religious obligations.

The findings indicate that religious education within the family is used as a basis for helping children distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior in digital spaces. The internalization of values takes place through religious activities as well as communication between parents and children.

Children's understanding of these values is also reflected in their experiences. One child explained:

"If I spend too much time on social media, my eyes can hurt, it can make it difficult to focus on studying, and I may neglect my religious duties. I understand the time limits set by my parents and the negative effects of age-inappropriate content. These limits help me become more disciplined in deciding what should be done first rather than watching social media or using my phone all day."

This statement indicates that children have begun to associate social media use with their academic responsibilities and religious obligations. Thus, rules regarding device use are gradually understood not merely as parental restrictions, but also as part of the development of self-discipline.

Children's ability to evaluate digital content is also reflected in their understanding of positive and negative content:

"Positive content can help us learn good things, such as educational videos, creativity, and other useful things. Negative content can make us uncomfortable, such as content containing rude words, hurting others, bullying, or encouraging us to imitate inappropriate behavior."

This statement indicates that children have developed a basic understanding of the characteristics of content perceived as positive and negative. Educational and creative content is perceived as beneficial, whereas rude language, harmful behavior, and bullying are understood as behaviors that should be avoided.

These findings indicate that moral and religious values have begun to function as a framework for evaluating digital content and behavior. Children do not rely solely on parental supervision but have begun to use their moral understanding to assess whether particular content or behavior is appropriate. From the perspective of parental mediation, this condition indicates that parental guidance may facilitate a process of internalization. At the initial stage, control is exercised by parents through rules and supervision. However, through dialogue, habituation, and value-based guidance, this external control can gradually develop into internal self-regulation among children (Maimanah et al., 2022).

Within the context of Islamic education, these findings extend the application of moral education to the digital environment. Morality is not limited to behavior in face-to-face interactions but also encompasses how individuals select information, communicate, respond to content, and treat others through social media. Therefore, digital literacy needs to be integrated with moral and religious education so that children's technological competence develops alongside character formation. The internalization of religious values also provides a foundation for developing self-control and digital responsibility. When children understand that social media use has consequences for learning, religious practice, social relationships, and moral behavior, their decisions regarding social media use are not based solely on enjoyment or unrestricted access (Annisa et al., 2022; Khasanah & Wulandari, 2026; Sari et al., 2024).

Thus, moral and religious value internalization serves as a foundation that reinforces the other three strategies. Dialogue helps children understand values, rules establish behavioral boundaries, and parental modeling provides concrete examples

of how these values can be practiced. The internalization of values subsequently enables children to apply their understanding when evaluating digital content and behavior. The fourth theme demonstrates that parents integrate moral and religious values into their guidance of children's social media use. The values emphasized include politeness, honesty, responsibility, self-control, respect for others, and awareness of the need to avoid content that conflicts with religious teachings. Thus, social media use is not viewed merely as a technological issue but also as part of children's character development (Ruhsyahadati et al., 2024; Sulyandari, 2019).

The findings indicate that parents use religious values as a framework for evaluating digital behavior. Children are encouraged to consider whether particular content or behavior is consistent with the values they have learned within the family. This is reflected in children's ability to identify inappropriate language, bullying, content that may hurt others, and material considered unsuitable for their age or inconsistent with religious values. From an Islamic educational perspective, this approach extends the meaning of moral education into digital spaces. Morality is not limited to face-to-face interaction but also encompasses how individuals communicate, select information, respond to content, and treat others through digital media. Therefore, digital literacy within the family can be integrated with moral and religious education so that technological competence develops alongside character formation.

The internalization of religious values also provides a foundation for developing self-control. When children understand that digital behavior has moral consequences, supervision does not depend entirely on the physical presence of parents. Children begin to develop internal considerations when selecting content or determining how to respond to information. In this context, religious values function as an internalized mechanism that complements the external control established through parental rules (Rahmi et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2020).

The findings also indicate that family religious activities, such as reciting the Quran together and listening to religious lectures, serve as means of strengthening children's understanding of positive and negative values. The integration of religious education and digital guidance demonstrates that families have a strategic role in developing digital behavior that is not only safe but also oriented toward moral responsibility.

Thus, the internalization of moral and religious values serves as the normative foundation for the other three strategies. Dialogue helps children understand values, rules establish behavioral boundaries, and modeling demonstrates how those values can be practiced. Together, these four strategies form a pattern of parental guidance that is oriented not only toward reducing the risks associated with social media but also toward developing children's capacity to use digital media responsibly.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that parental guidance in children's social media use should be understood as a process of developing digital responsibility rather than merely controlling access to digital platforms. The findings suggest that effective family-based guidance requires a balance between external supervision and the gradual development of children's internal capacity to regulate their own digital behavior. In this process, parental involvement becomes meaningful when children are not only protected from inappropriate content but also encouraged to understand the reasons underlying digital boundaries and to apply these considerations independently.

The study further indicates that the family remains an important context for integrating digital literacy with moral and religious development. Social media use therefore needs to be addressed not only as a technological issue but also as part of

children's broader character formation. Communication, consistency in parental behavior, and value-based guidance can provide a foundation for helping children navigate digital environments while maintaining responsibility toward learning, religious obligations, and social relationships.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of digital parenting by highlighting the interaction between parental mediation, self-regulation, and moral-religious development. Practically, the findings suggest that family-based digital parenting programs should move beyond screen-time control toward approaches that strengthen children's decision-making, critical evaluation of digital content, and responsible online behavior. Future studies may examine how these processes develop over time and how family-based digital parenting can be integrated with school-based digital literacy and character education.

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