

UTILIZATION OF INSTAGRAM SOCIAL MEDIA IN DELIVERING ISLAMIC CHARACTER EDUCATION CONTENT AT IT KHAIRUL IMAM HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract. The rapid development of digital media has triggered a conflict between positive effects, such as easy access to knowledge, and negative effects such as moral decline and gadget addiction in students' mindsets. This dilemma demands an adaptive transformation of Islamic character education to strengthen the morals of the younger generation directly in cyberspace. Therefore, this study aims to test the effectiveness of the Instagram platform as a means of delivering Islamic character education content at SMA IT Khairul Imam. This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods through observation, interviews, and documentation techniques, involving the principal, Islamic Religious Education teachers, student activity coordinators, the student council media team, and students. The results show that Instagram is used as a medium to convey Islamic values through engaging visual content such as educational videos, moral campaigns, and documentation of religious activities. The published content contains values of religiosity, responsibility, and etiquette in daily life. Furthermore, the publication process also goes through a monitoring stage to ensure it remains in accordance with Islamic norms and teachings. Thus, these findings demonstrate the importance of social media such as Instagram as an effective means to support the formation of Islamic character in students in a more contextual and engaging manner.

Keywords:

Instagram, social media, Islamic character education, Islamic content

Introduction

In the digital era, the need for Islamic character education is increasing, marked by the rapid flow of information and easy access to various content without limits of space and time. As a digital generation, students not only have the opportunity to utilize technological advancements, but they must also face values that are not always in accordance with Islamic teachings. Currently, digital media has become a new space for society that can influence attitudes, ways of thinking, and traits, especially in the younger generation. In such a situation, character education must be adapted to the digital world to remain relevant and capable of internalizing important principles such as religiosity, responsibility, honesty, tolerance, and leadership through approaches that are in line with the evolution of the times (Arif, 2021).

According to Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017, schools and educational institutions are responsible for implementing Character Education

Article info:

<https://doi.org/10.29240/jf.v11i1.16888>

Strengthening (PPK) to develop students' character through the application of basic values such as honesty, religiosity, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, patriotism, love of peace, love of reading, and love of the homeland. This affirmation indicates that character building is an important part of the education process and not merely an addition to the curriculum. It must be incorporated into all learning activities and school culture (Peraturan Presiden, 2017). According to the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 2 of 2020, religious education not only focuses on providing knowledge; it also aims to shape the attitudes, personality, and skills of students to practice religious teachings in daily life. This process becomes an important part of the education system as it is implemented in various pathways, levels, and types of education (PMA No. 2, 2020).

Moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral behavior are three interrelated components that shape character, which aligns with the concept of character education. A person of character not only has an understanding of the values of goodness, but they also have a desire to love and apply those values in their life. These three components are very important for moral maturity, which means a person can judge what is right, care about it, and continue to practice it even when facing various challenges or pressures (Lickona, 2022). Therefore, in addition to understanding to build character, application in daily life is also required.

Various studies have discussed the utilization of educational technology and social media in the field of education. The use of social media as a means of educational institution branding has become an important strategy to strengthen image, increase visibility, and attract public trust in the digital era, particularly as an innovative means of delivering learning messages in the digital era. Among them, the findings of Rahmah et al. (2025) stated that social media has great potential to strengthen Islamic education if used wisely. The active role of teachers, parents, and educational institutions is very important so that its use aligns with Islamic values and provides a positive impact on the formation of students' character (Rahmah et al., 2025). This is supported by the findings of Nisa and Sulistyorini (2024) which show that social media functions as a two-way communication channel that strengthens transparency, participation, and trust between schools and the public (Anggita & Sulistyorini, 2025).

Based on previous studies, this research provides novelty and research gaps compared to previous researchers. The findings of Rahmah et al. (2025) used a literature study, while the findings of Nisa and Sulistyorini (2024) used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach; both focused on data sources from scientific works (books, journals, and others). Meanwhile, this study offers a new approach, namely using a qualitative approach with field studies that focus the research on one high school, SMA IT Khairul Imam, and examines the use of Instagram social media that has been utilized by SMA IT Khairul Imam as a medium to support building students' character.

This research shows that social media is no longer merely a tool for entertainment but can already be utilized as a tool for teaching, as an alternative media in this case to promote Islamic character values through educational, inspiring, and communicative content. Directed and organized content management can help students creatively and innovatively convey messages about honesty, responsibility, social etiquette, social care, and religious attitudes according to the characteristics of the digital generation. Through this activity, students not only act as information recipients but can also create content that has a positive impact on their surrounding environment.

Based on the description, the use of the social media platform Instagram to convey Islamic character education content becomes an interesting phenomenon to study. The aim of this research is to find out how content is delivered by students and how the platform contributes to supporting the formation of Islamic character in the school environment.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach and employs a descriptive approach. This method is chosen because the goal of the research is to describe and understand comprehensively the phenomenon of utilizing Instagram social media in delivering Islamic character education content at SMA IT Khairul Imam in a natural way. Qualitative research observes the object without treatment or manipulation, so the data obtained reflects the actual conditions in the field. The researcher acts as an important tool in this study because they are directly involved in the process of collecting and interpreting data. They also strive to uncover the meaning of every data they obtain (Sugiyono, 2021).

The data collection techniques used are the Miles and Huberman model, including interviews, field observations, and documentation (Miles, 1992). This research was conducted at SMA IT Khairul Imam. The data collection process was systematically carried out through observation and interviews, scheduled as follows:

Observation Schedule (2026)

Jan 14–16: Observation on Islamic Character Education Values.

Jan 27–30: Observation on Instagram Utilization Strategies.

Feb 02–06: Observation on the Impact of Instagram on Student Character.

Interview Schedule: Management & Teachers (2026)

Feb 09 (11:00 AM) | Principal's Office: School Principal
(Policy & program objectives).

Feb 24 (10:15 AM) | Teacher's Lounge: Ustad Gumriadi Tambunan, S.Sos., S.Pd
(Integration of Islamic values).

Feb 24 (11:15 AM) | Student Affairs Office: Vice Principal of Student Affairs
(Content supervision & guidance).

Interview Schedule: OSIS Media Team & Students (2026)

Feb 26 (11:00 AM) | OSIS Room: Siti Maryam Br. Sinaga Head of Media Team
(Planning & coordination).

Feb 26 (11:30 AM) | OSIS Room: Nahda Vice Head of Media Team
(Content creation & types of content).

Mar 05 (02:00 PM) | OSIS Room: Novrida Lidwina Media Team Member
(Documentation & captions).

Mar 05 (02:30 PM) | OSIS Room: Luthfi Arandra Media Team Member
(Technical role overview).

Mar 12 (08:30 AM) | Class X Room: Grade 10 Students
(Feedback & character impact).

This research data was obtained from the school principal, Islamic education teachers, student affairs PKS, OSIS media team, as well as students of SMA IT Khairul Imam who were involved in creating and disseminating Islamic character education content. In addition, data was also collected through documentation in the form of Instagram posts, activities, and relevant school programs. Data analysis is conducted inductively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Qualitative data reduction was conducted by summarizing and categorizing the results of field observations and transcripts of in-depth interviews with

school management, the student council media team, and students of SMA IT Khairul Imam. The focused data was then presented in the form of descriptive narratives and chronological tables to map the relationship between Instagram content strategies and student character development. Finally, conclusions were drawn inductively to understand the deeper meaning of Instagram's effectiveness as a contextual medium for fostering Islamic morals in adolescents. Data validation uses data, source, and time triangulation techniques so that the level of data validation can be trusted for authenticity (moleong & surjaman, 1989).

Results and Discussion

Results

Islamic Character Education in Instagram Content of SMA IT Khairul Imam

The results of the research observation show that the content uploaded on the SMA IT Khairul Imam Instagram account also instills Islamic character education values. The results indicate that the posted content includes Islamic character education and various religious activities, such as reciting the Quran, Yasin gatherings, congregational prayers, and commemorations of Islamic holidays. The content not only records school activities but also contains moral messages relevant to students' lives.

Thus, the use of social media in Islamic character education requires the active role of teachers. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering lessons, but they also provide examples of educational content to be used in the digital environment. This urgency arises because social media has become a part of the daily lives of students, so they must be supervised to prevent being dominated by uneducational content.

This is reinforced by the informant's statement:

"that every content to be uploaded is first reviewed in terms of ethics, politeness, and conformity with Islamic values. Students also receive guidance regarding the content and are equipped with digital literacy to be able to use social media wisely. This shows that the use of Instagram is carried out in a directed manner through supervision and coaching, not freely (interview with G)".

Based on observations of several posts on the official Instagram account of sma it khairul imam, various content was found reflecting humanity's relationship with god, such as quotations from the Quran, hadiths of the prophet, and documentation of religious activities like the yasin recitation, congregational prayers, and commemorations of Islamic holidays. This content is not only presented as documentation but also includes moral messages that encourage students to strengthen their faith and obedience. Several posts demonstrate content that teaches values such as discipline, responsibility, self-confidence, and independence. For example, documentation of Quran memorization activities, carrying out religious duties, and videos of students delivering moral messages or reciting the Quran. This content demonstrates efforts to develop individual character so that students have self-awareness, are able to control their behavior, and are confident in appearing in public spaces with positive values. Observations also revealed content related to social relationships, such as etiquette towards teachers, politeness towards friends, and anti-bullying campaigns. This content is presented in the form of educational videos and engaging visuals, making it easy for students to understand. The message conveyed emphasizes the importance of respecting others, maintaining etiquette in social interactions, and building harmonious social relationships both within the school

environment and on social media. As the following picture shows, figure 1 shows content about manners



Figure 1. Adab Content

Several posts showcase social activities such as sharing takjil (breaking fast), charity events, and calls to maintain a clean school environment. This content demonstrates an effort to instill a sense of caring for others and the surrounding environment. Students are not only encouraged to understand these values theoretically but also to practice them in real life, which is then documented and shared on Instagram as a form of social education. As the following images, figure 2 shows content about the importance of maintaining cleanliness



Figure 2. Maintaining Cleanliness

Some content also demonstrates the instilling of national values through school activities, fostering a love of the homeland, togetherness, and a spirit of unity. While not directly dominant, these values are present in activities that instill an appreciation for differences, cooperation, and responsibility as part of society. This demonstrates that Islamic character education aligns with national values in shaping holistic individuals. As the following figure, figure 3 shows content about anti-bullying.



It can be concluded that Instagram is not only used as a medium for publication, but also utilized as a means of instilling Islamic character values. Every content to be uploaded is first reviewed from the aspects of ethics, decency, and accordance with Islamic values. Students also receive guidance regarding content and are equipped with digital literacy to be able to use social media wisely. Islamic character education values are conveyed through directed and educational content. Student involvement and school supervision make this medium effective as a means of moral development.

The utilization of Instagram social media as a means of Islamic character education in IT Khairul Imam high school

Based on the results of the observation, it is known that Instagram is utilized by the school not only as a medium for delivering information but also as a means of instilling Islamic character education. This is evident from various content uploaded, such as short videos, educational campaigns, and documentation of activities that contain moral values.

This is reinforced by the informant:

"The utilization of Instagram is driven by the rapid development of technology, so schools need to adapt in order not to fall behind. Considering that students today are very close to social media, the use of Instagram is considered able to make learning more interesting and not boring. However, its use must still be within limits and under the guidance of teachers so as not to deviate from Islamic values (interview with W)".

This is also expressed by the informant:

"The utilization of Instagram is considered relevant to the development of the digital era. Through this platform, religious activities are not only documented but can also be used again as a learning medium for students (interview with U)".

Based on field observations regarding social media management at SMA IT Khairul Imam, several tactical patterns were identified, showing the school's structured approach to utilizing digital technology: Structured Content Planning: Before any content is published, the school media team coordinates and plans meticulously with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and the Vice Principal of Student Affairs. Theme selection is never spontaneous; instead, it is structurally aligned with Islamic holidays, internal school programs, or contemporary issues relevant to teenage life. Optimization of Instagram's Multi-Modal Features: Character values are delivered through various features, including the feed, reels, and stories. The reels feature is identified as the most effective instrument due to its wider audience reach and its

ability to engage students through dynamic audiovisual formats. Meanwhile, the feed is prioritized for documentative, formal, and informative content. Consistent Publication and Routine Scheduling: The school's commitment to internalizing digital moral values is reflected in its consistent uploading schedule, which is set for 3 to 4 times a week. Peak uploading times are optimized on Fridays and specific religious occasions to maximize the students' absorption of spiritual messages. Positive Audience Response and Interaction: This digital activity triggers high engagement from both the school community and the general public. Active feedback in the form of likes, comments, and shares demonstrates that the character education content is not merely viewed passively, but receives widespread appreciation and moral support.

Apart from being based on interview findings, the use of Instagram as a tool to teach Islamic character can also be seen from various content published by the school on the SMA IT Khairul Imam Instagram account. These contents contain moral messages and Islamic values that are packaged visually, making them easier for students to understand. This is supported by documentation of activities showing the process of content creation by the OSIS media team, the implementation of Qur'an recitation (tadarus), as well as the delivery of Islamic character education materials.

Based on the documentation, it can be seen that Instagram is used not only as an information platform but also as an educational platform, teaching Islamic character values through engaging visual content that is relevant to the students' lives.

The role of Instagram social media in supporting the formation of Islamic character in students at SMA IT Khairul Imam

The results of the observation show that the use of Instagram at SMA IT Khairul Imam plays an important role in building the Islamic character of students. This is seen from the high usage of Instagram by students, which causes Islamic content to appear and serve as a reminder for them. The messages conveyed become easier to understand and accept because the content presented in the form of videos seems to attract the students' attention more. Thus, the use of this media in the educational process not only enhances the learning experience but also shapes the attitudes and behaviors of students in accordance with Islamic teachings. Instagram has a fairly significant contribution in supporting the formation of Islamic character in students, especially because social media has become part of their daily life.

this is reinforced by informants.

"Instagram has a fairly significant role because it is often accessed by students every day, so the content displayed can serve as a reminder of the messages conveyed. Delivery through video is considered easier to accept because it does not feel like coercion, but rather encourages students' self-awareness (interview with W)".

the change in students' attitudes or habits after actively creating or viewing Islamic content.

this is stated by the informant:

"Overall, students have shown positive changes, especially in terms of manners towards teachers and their dress. Students have become more aware that behavior reflects themselves and also the good name of the school. The use of Instagram is considered quite effective because it has a wide reach and is easily accessible for students. In addition, students tend to be more interested in video content compared to long texts, making religious messages easier to receive. The presence of such content is also seen as being able to

counterbalance other content that is not in accordance with Islamic law (interview with U)".

It can be concluded that the role of social media and its proper utilization can:
Research Findings: The Impact of Instagram Utilization on Student Character Based on field observations and in-depth interviews at SMA IT Khairul Imam, the utilization of Instagram as a medium for Islamic character education has delivered a significant impact across four main aspects: Strengthening Religiosity: Direct student involvement in the content creation process encourages them to interact more frequently with Qur'anic verses and hadiths. This activity is proven effective in enhancing religious understanding and fostering a deeper spiritual awareness among students. Enhancing Self-Confidence: Active student participation in documenting school activities and appearing directly as presenters in digital videos successfully trains their mindset. This process builds courage, mental readiness, and sharpens their public speaking skills in the digital space. Islamic Digital Literacy: Through managing the school's social media, students receive practical education on digital etiquette (netiquette). Consequently, students become wiser in using social media, understand sharia boundaries, and realize the importance of spreading positive content. Cultivating Noble Character (Akhlak Mulia): The moral values, manners, and Islamic messages produced and consumed via Instagram content are well-internalized by the students. This yields a real impact on their daily behavior at school, particularly in increasing politeness and mutual respect.

Discussion

The findings of this study have answered the research objective of understanding how content is delivered by students and how the platform contributes to supporting the formation of Islamic character in the school environment. Here is an explanation of the research findings.

Islamic character education in SMA IT Khairul Imam's Instagram content

The findings show that Islamic character education in the Instagram content of SMA IT Khairul Imam includes religious activities, such as tadarus, yasin recitation, congregational prayers, and the commemoration of Islamic holidays. This aligns with Tika's (2023) findings that the values of Islamic teachings are instilled through moral education so that they manifest in human behavior, not merely at the knowledge level. During this process, efforts are made to educate, nurture, and shape the personalities of students so that they possess intellectual reasoning and moral maturity (Nasution, 2023).

In the word of Allah SWT in Q.S Al-Imran verse 10, which reinforces that the cultivation of Islamic character values is not only limited to understanding but also to efforts to invite to goodness and prevent evil, including through the use of social media.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

Meaning: You (Muslims) are the best community brought forth for mankind as long as you enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah. If the People of the Book believed, it would certainly be better for them. Among them are some who believe, but most of them are defiantly disobedient (RI, 2022)

In the science of Islamic education, good character is character that aligns with Islamic teachings, as exemplified by the actions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), which are closely related to the formation of students' personalities (Daradjat, 2012).

The fact that formal education is where most of the students' time is spent, the cultivation of religious character must begin early through the role of the family and the school environment. This becomes increasingly important over time because students' character values can change due to the development of the times, so continuous guidance is needed to maintain religious values (Sinaga & Mahariah, 2023). Choosing the right parenting style will impact a child's growth and development and behavior. Children tend to imitate the habits of those around them (Adib & Mujahidah, 2021).

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The use of Instagram social media as a means of Islamic character education at IT Khairul Imam High School

The findings show the use of Instagram social media as a means of Islamic character education at SMA IT Khairul Imam by creating short videos, educational campaigns, and documentation of activities containing moral values. The forms of content include a No Valentine's Day campaign, education on manners when meeting teachers, anti-bullying movements, sharing iftar activities, as well as various other Islamic messages aimed at shaping students' character. This indicates that the formation of Islamic character through social media is not only related to the dissemination of information, but also to how students can apply these principles in daily life. This aligns with the findings of Ramanda (2025) emphasizing that digital transformation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an inevitability. Its success greatly depends on the ability of teachers to wisely integrate technology while still making the values of noble character the main foundation, supported by strategies for digital literacy training, strengthening digital ethics, and a blended learning approach oriented towards development (Saputro, 2025).

According to Pujiono, social media is also one of the most relevant learning media in the digital era, especially as a tool to connect teachers and students. By using social media, communication and delivery of learning materials become easier and more flexible (Pujiono, 2023). Nevertheless, the use of social media in learning will not succeed without the creativity of teachers. Teachers must be able to create and present learning materials that are innovative, interesting, and relevant to the students' lives so that they are engaged and involved in the learning process. Therefore, to convey Islamic values through digital media, it needs to be done properly and communicatively. The message must be well received, especially by the younger generation.

The role of the social media Instagram in supporting the formation of Islamic character in students at IT Khairul Imam High School

The findings show the role of Instagram social media in supporting the formation of Islamic character among students at SMA IT Khairul Imam, enhancing students' thinking abilities, generating motivation and innovation in creating educational content, encouraging students to be independent and responsible, increasing teachers' effectiveness in using technology, helping students understand new skills in utilizing social media, and the increasingly rapid flow of technology causes students to quickly receive new information and knowledge. (Adit Febrianto et al., 2024).

this is in line with the findings of Fadilah 2021, which mentioned the scope of character education, including several core values that determine the formation of a person's personality:

Divine values, which are character values related to the relationship between humans and god. these values are reflected in obedience to religious teachings.

Character values in oneself, namely honesty, discipline, responsibility, hard work, self-confidence, independence, logical thinking, and a desire to learn.

Character Values in Social Relations, meaning a person must know what they are doing, respect others, respect what they have done, and behave democratically in social life.

Environmental Care Values, meaning maintaining and preserving the natural environment as well as helping others and underprivileged communities.

Nationalism Values, which are ways of thinking and acting that prioritize the interests of the country and nation over individual or group interests. (Fadilah et al., 2021).

Nilai-nilai yang ditanamkan secara rutin seperti kebebasan, tanggung jawab, refleksi, ketaatan, dan toleransi diintegrasikan secara terencana melalui pembelajaran, kegiatan keagamaan, dan budaya sekolah. Hasilnya, siswa menunjukkan perkembangan positif baik secara spiritual maupun sosial, mencerminkan individu dengan karakter dan moral yang mulia (Muslim & Susanto, 2025). Aizun et al. (2021) stated that character education has a very significant role in making Indonesian adolescents into adolescents who have positive character in accordance with religion and the noble values of the nation (Safitri et al., 2021). The role of schools as well as families greatly influences the formation of teenagers' character (Rosyidah & Ismeirita, 2023). Supervision from parents and educational institutions is needed to guide the use of social media so that it functions as a means of developing positive character and improving digital literacy among teenagers in this modern era (Fitri, 2025). This is supported by the findings of Desriani and Erni (2025) which indicate that character education needs to be adapted to the characteristics of Generation Alpha, by utilizing technology creatively and purposefully. Cooperation between educators, parents, and policymakers is necessary so that digital media truly becomes an effective tool in character formation (Nggolaon & Supu, 2025).

One of the social media platforms frequently used by the younger generation, Instagram, has developed into a social platform that not only functions as entertainment media but also serves as a shaper of opinions, thoughts, and attitudes of the younger generation in daily life (Laily et al., 2023). This shows that Instagram influences the attitudes, behavior, and way of thinking of teenagers through messages that are quick and easy to understand. Through the right approach, Instagram not only functions as an entertainment medium, but can also become an effective learning tool. In the end, a generation will emerge that not only possesses knowledge, but is also kind-hearted and able to make a positive impact on their community (Mardiyanto et al., 1982).

Therefore, it can be concluded that character should not only be understood as an idea or knowledge alone, but must also be manifested in daily behavior. So that the values of goodness are understood and practiced in the attitudes and actions of learners, character formation in education must be carried out continuously through habituation and exemplary behavior.

This research contributes to providing a new study regarding the use of social media. There are limitations in this study as it only discusses one type of social media

used in SMA IT Khairul Imam. Recommendations for further research include examining the types of social media that can be utilized by educational institutions, the function of social media in educational institutions, and good social media management systems by educational institutions.

Conclusion

Islamic Character Education in the Instagram Content of SMA IT Khairul Imam Islamic character education in SMA IT Khairul Imam's Instagram content includes religious activities, such as tadarus, Yasin recitation, congregational prayers, and Islamic holidays commemoration. The use of Instagram social media as a means of Islamic character education at SMA IT Khairul Imam short videos, educational campaigns, as well as documentation of activities that contain moral values. The forms of such content include no valentine's day campaigns, education on manners when meeting teachers, anti-bullying movements, sharing iftar activities, and various other Islamic messages aimed at shaping the character of students. The role of Instagram social media in supporting the formation of Islamic character among students at SMA IT Khairul Imam improving students' thinking ability, generating motivation and innovation in creating educational content, encouraging students to become independent and responsible, increasing teachers' effectiveness in using technology, helping students understand new skills in utilizing social media

This research contributes to providing a new study regarding the use of social media. There are limitations in this study as it only discusses one type of social media used in SMA IT Khairul Imam. Recommendations for further research include examining the types of social media that can be utilized by educational institutions, the function of social media in educational institutions, and good social media management systems by educational institutions.

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