

Article

Qur'anic Moral Education for Addressing Students' Moral Degradation in the Digital Era: A Thematic Exegesis of Q. Luqman 31:12–19

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Abstract

Students' moral degradation in the digital era has become an increasingly urgent educational issue, characterized by declining civility, weakened respect for parents and teachers, cyberbullying, excessive dependence on digital media, and diminished self-control. Although previous studies have discussed Islamic education, character formation, and Qur'anic moral values, limited attention has been given to explaining how Qur'anic moral education functions as an integrated pedagogical framework for addressing these challenges. This study aims to analyze the concept of moral education in the Qur'an through a thematic exegetical (tafsīr mawḍūʿī) approach, identify the forms of students' moral degradation in the digital era, and formulate a Qur'anic moral education framework for contemporary character education. This library research employs thematic Qur'anic exegesis focusing on Q. 31:12–19, supported by classical and contemporary Qur'anic commentaries and relevant scholarly literature. The findings culminate in an integrated Qur'anic moral education framework comprising tawḥīd, adab, spiritual formation, social and communication ethics, and educational methods based on exemplary conduct, moral exhortation, habituation, and supervision. These elements constitute an integrated pedagogical framework that strengthens students' internal moral regulation through God-consciousness (murāqabah), self-regulation, and ethical digital communication. This study contributes to thematic Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic education by providing a conceptual framework for character formation that is both theoretically grounded and relevant to the moral challenges of the digital era.

Keyword

Character education, Digital era, Moral education, Qur'anic exegesis, Thematic exegesis



Abstrak

Degradasi moral peserta didik di era digital menjadi salah satu persoalan pendidikan yang semakin mendesak, ditandai dengan menurunnya kesantunan, berkurangnya penghormatan kepada orang tua dan guru, maraknya perundungan siber, ketergantungan berlebihan pada media digital, serta melemahnya pengendalian diri. Meskipun berbagai penelitian telah membahas pendidikan Islam, pembentukan karakter, dan nilai-nilai moral Al-Qur'an, masih terbatas kajian yang menjelaskan bagaimana pendidikan moral Qur'ani berfungsi sebagai kerangka pedagogis terpadu untuk menjawab tantangan tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis konsep pendidikan moral dalam Al-Qur'an melalui pendekatan tafsir maudhu'i, mengidentifikasi bentuk-bentuk degradasi moral peserta didik di era digital, serta merumuskan kerangka pendidikan moral Qur'ani bagi pendidikan karakter kontemporer. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan yang menggunakan metode tafsir maudhu'i dengan fokus pada QS. Luqman [31]:12-19, didukung oleh kitab-kitab tafsir klasik dan kontemporer serta berbagai literatur ilmiah yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan moral Qur'ani membentuk suatu kerangka pedagogis terpadu yang mencakup tauhid, adab kepada orang tua dan guru, pembinaan spiritual, etika sosial dan komunikasi, serta metode pendidikan melalui keteladanan, nasihat, pembiasaan, dan pengawasan. Kerangka tersebut memperkuat regulasi moral internal peserta didik melalui muraqabah, pengendalian diri, dan komunikasi digital yang beretika. Penelitian ini berkontribusi terhadap pengembangan kajian tafsir tematik dan pendidikan Islam dengan menawarkan kerangka konseptual pendidikan moral Qur'ani yang relevan bagi pembentukan karakter peserta didik di era digital.

Kata Kunci

Era digital; Pendidikan karakter; Pendidikan moral; Tafsir Al-Qur'an; Tafsir tematik

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has brought profound changes to various aspects of human life, including the field of education. The widespread availability of the internet, social media, artificial intelligence, and increasingly unrestricted access to information has created extensive opportunities for students to acquire knowledge more efficiently and flexibly. However, alongside these advantages, the digital era has also posed significant challenges to the cultivation of character and moral values among younger generations. The declining respect for teachers and parents, the growing prevalence of individualistic attitudes, the use of inappropriate and discourteous language, weakening discipline, excessive dependence on social media, and the increasing incidence of cyberbullying have emerged as clear indicators of moral degradation among students (Nurulhayati 2025). These conditions suggest that technological advancement does not necessarily correspond with the moral and spiritual development of human beings (Nurulhayati 2025; Simanjuntak and Ritonga 2025).

This issue has become increasingly complex, as contemporary educational systems often place greater emphasis on the attainment of cognitive competencies and technical skills than on the cultivation of students' character and moral values (Sakban and Sundawa 2023). Education has increasingly been oriented toward academic achievement, while the affective, ethical, and spiritual dimensions have yet to receive

proportional attention. As a consequence, it has produced a generation that excels intellectually but exhibits deficiencies in self-regulation, social responsibility, and moral awareness. From an Islamic perspective, however, the ultimate purpose of education is not merely to cultivate knowledgeable individuals, but to develop human beings who embody faith (*īmān*), civility (*adab*), and noble moral character (*akhlāq*). Therefore, the moral crisis among students in the digital era necessitates a reconstruction of the educational paradigm—one that extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge to emphasize the internalization of moral and spiritual values (Elyati 2026; Iqbal Kholidi 2025).

In this context, the Qur'an, as the primary source of Islamic teachings, offers a comprehensive and timeless framework for moral education. The Qur'an not only provides normative principles governing the relationship between human beings and God (*ḥabl min Allāh*), but also establishes the ethical foundations of social relationships (*ḥabl min al-nās*) through values such as honesty, responsibility, courtesy, self-restraint, respect for parents and teachers, and social concern. These moral educational values are articulated throughout the Qur'an, particularly in Q. 31:12–19, which contains Luqman's moral exhortations to his son; Q. 17:23–24, which emphasizes respect and kindness toward parents; and Q. 49, which outlines the principles of social ethics and ethical communication. Accordingly, the Qur'anic paradigm of moral education occupies a strategic position in addressing the moral challenges faced by students amid the rapid expansion of digitalization.

Numerous previous studies have examined the issue of moral degradation and Islamic education from various perspectives. Romadhon and Eni Elyati (2026) emphasize the importance of a Qur'an-based Islamic education model as a response to the moral challenges confronting the younger generation through an integrative educational approach grounded in Qur'anic values. However, their study primarily formulates a general model of Islamic education and does not specifically examine the pedagogical mechanisms of moral education through a thematic Qur'anic exegetical (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) perspective. Meanwhile, Iqbal Kholidi and Shintia Faradina (2025) highlight the historical role of Islamic education in addressing identity crises and moral degradation in Indonesia. Nevertheless, their discussion remains centered on the historical development of Islamic education rather than explaining how Qur'anic moral values function as a framework for shaping students' moral behavior in contemporary educational contexts.

Similarly, Abdul Jabar and Ahmad Subagyo (2025) examine the integration of Qur'anic values into character development in the Society 5.0 era, emphasizing curriculum strategies for Qur'an-based character education. However, their study does not provide a thematic exegetical analysis of Qur'anic moral education nor explain the pedagogical processes through which these values are internalized by students. Likewise, Evi Luthfi Nurulhayati and Tarsono (2025) approach students' moral degradation through al-Ghazālī's concepts of *nafs* and *tazkiyat al-nafs*, resulting in an analysis that is predominantly philosophical and psychological rather than grounded in Qur'anic exegesis. Rizki Nurbaiti Simanjuntak and Asnil Aidah Ritonga (2025) also discuss moral education in the Qur'an; however, their analysis remains limited to general Qur'anic moral principles without specifically relating them to students' moral degradation in the digital era through a thematic exegetical approach.

Although these studies have contributed to discussions on Islamic education, character formation, and Qur'anic morality, they remain largely descriptive and fragmented. Existing scholarship has yet to explain how Qur'anic moral education functions as an integrated pedagogical framework capable of strengthening students' internal moral regulation in digital environments, where limited external supervision, instant communication, and continuous digital exposure intensify moral challenges. Consequently, a significant knowledge gap persists concerning the pedagogical mechanisms through which Qur'anic moral values may foster students' self-regulation, ethical digital communication, and moral resilience in the digital era.

Addressing this gap, the present study offers two principal contributions. First, it systematically synthesizes the concept of Qur'anic moral education through a thematic exegetical (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*) analysis centered on Q. 31:12–19, thereby constructing an integrated conceptual framework that links *tawḥīd*, *adab*, spiritual formation, social ethics, and educational methods within a coherent model of character education. Second, the study contextualizes this framework within the contemporary phenomenon of students' moral degradation in the digital era by explaining how these interconnected Qur'anic values function as pedagogical mechanisms for strengthening students' internal moral regulation, ethical digital behavior, and social responsibility.

Against this background, the present study aims to (1) analyze the concept of moral education in the Qur'an through a thematic exegetical (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*) approach, (2) identify the forms and underlying factors of students' moral degradation in the digital era, and (3) formulate a Qur'anic moral education framework that explains the pedagogical mechanisms through which Qur'anic values contribute to strengthening students' faith (*īmān*), civility (*adab*), self-regulation, and social responsibility amid the rapid advancement of digital technology.

Theoretically, this study seeks to enrich scholarship on thematic Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic education by proposing an integrated conceptual framework of Qur'anic moral education that explains the pedagogical relationship between *tawḥīd*, moral habituation, spiritual discipline, and social ethics in fostering students' character formation. Furthermore, it contributes to the growing discourse on Qur'anic educational thought by demonstrating how thematic exegesis can provide a systematic and contextually relevant response to contemporary educational challenges in digitally mediated environments. Practically, the findings are expected to provide educators, parents, curriculum developers, and educational policymakers with a theoretically grounded framework for designing character education programs that integrate Qur'anic values with students' digital experiences. More specifically, the proposed framework offers conceptual guidance for cultivating self-regulation, ethical digital communication, and moral resilience while preserving the spiritual and ethical dimensions of education in the digital age.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research design to examine the concept of Qur'anic moral education as a response to the moral degradation of students in the digital era. The study adopts a thematic Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr mawḍūʿī*) approach by collecting Qur'anic verses related to moral education, including

those concerning *tawhīd* (belief in the oneness of God), respect for parents and teachers, self-regulation, social ethics, and civility in interpersonal interactions. These verses are then analyzed comprehensively in light of their textual context and their relevance to the contemporary moral challenges faced by students.

The primary sources of data consist of the Qur'an and classical as well as contemporary Qur'anic commentaries, particularly *Tafsir Al-Misbah* by M. Quraish Shihab and *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, supplemented by other relevant exegetical works. The secondary sources include scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and previous studies related to Islamic education, moral education, moral degradation, and the development of the digital era. Data were collected through document analysis of relevant literature, while the data were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method. The analytical procedure involved four stages: (1) identifying Qur'anic verses related to moral education; (2) interpreting their meanings based on the views of authoritative Qur'anic exegetes; (3) categorizing the values of Qur'anic moral education; and (4) contextualizing these values to address the problem of students' moral degradation in the digital era.

Results and Discussion

The Phenomenon of Students' Moral Degradation in the Digital Era

1. The Transformation of Students' Behavior amid the Advancement of Digital Technology

The advancement of digital technology has brought about profound changes in students' behavior, influencing not only their learning processes but also their social interactions and character development. The widespread availability of the Internet, social media, artificial intelligence (AI), and various digital learning platforms has transformed the lifestyles of younger generations, shifting them toward a digital environment that is increasingly open, dynamic, and interactive. Today's students belong predominantly to the *digital native* generation, having been exposed to technology from an early age. Consequently, the ways in which they acquire information, learn, communicate, and even construct their personal identities are profoundly shaped by the digital environment. While this transformation offers significant advantages, including greater access to information, increased flexibility in learning, and enhanced digital literacy, it also presents substantial challenges to students' behavior and moral development (Safitri et al., 2024; Triyanto, 2020).

In the educational context, digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped students' learning patterns, shifting them from conventional face-to-face instruction toward more autonomous, technology-mediated learning. A study on the impact of digital transformation on changes in student behavior found that the use of digital platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, and various online learning applications has enhanced learning flexibility while fostering greater learner autonomy in acquiring knowledge (Safitri, Qodriyah, and Jadid 2024). Students are no longer entirely dependent on teachers' classroom instruction; instead, they can independently access learning materials through educational videos, search engines, and other online resources. This transformation has fostered learning behaviors that are more open, self-directed, and adaptable to technological advancements. Nevertheless, these changes have also

reduced the intensity of direct interaction between teachers and students, thereby limiting the educational process founded upon exemplary conduct, mentorship, and character formation (Safitri et al., 2024).

Beyond transforming learning patterns, the advancement of digital technology has also profoundly influenced students' patterns of social interaction. The widespread use of social media has made virtual communication increasingly predominant over face-to-face interaction. As a result, students are more inclined to establish and express their identities through digital platforms, leading to a shift in social engagement from physical interactions to virtual ones. This phenomenon has given rise to a generation of digital natives characterized by greater openness, expressiveness, and rapid access to information. At the same time, however, they are more vulnerable to social pressures, the influence of an instant culture, and diminished self-regulation (Triyanto 2020). Moreover, the digital era has not only transformed the way students communicate but has also shaped cognitive and behavioral patterns that are faster, more open, and often more assertive—even at times confrontational—in expressing their opinions (Purba et al., 2024; Triyanto, 2020).

On the other hand, the transformation of students' behavior has also been accompanied by the emergence of various moral challenges resulting from uncontrolled exposure to digital technology. Numerous studies indicate that excessive and inadequately supervised use of social media and the Internet may contribute to deviant behaviors, including cyberbullying, online gaming addiction, the dissemination of misinformation (*hoaxes*), declining standards of communication ethics, and increasingly consumerist and hedonistic lifestyles (Hasan & Rhain, 2026). From the perspective of Islamic education, these developments are regarded as manifestations of moral degradation arising from weakened moral safeguards and a diminished sense of ethical responsibility in the use of digital technology. Moreover, excessive technology use has been shown to adversely affect the quality of family relationships, as reflected in declining respect and courtesy toward parents, reduced healthy social interaction, and the erosion of students' spiritual awareness (Iqbal Kholidi, 2025; Pratiwi, 2024).

Furthermore, the digital era has introduced new challenges to students' character education. These challenges encompass maintaining a balanced use of technology, ensuring digital safety and security, respecting intellectual property rights and avoiding plagiarism, as well as preventing cyberbullying. Many students spend a considerable amount of time engaging with digital games and social media rather than utilizing digital resources for educational purposes (Purba et al., 2024). This situation demonstrates that technological advancement does not necessarily correspond to improvements in students' moral development. Therefore, education in the digital era should not be confined to fostering technological competence alone; it must also prioritize character formation, digital ethics, and moral education as the fundamental pillars for the responsible use of digital technology (Triyanto, 2020).

In summary, the transformation of students' behavior amid the advancement of digital technology reflects a multidimensional shift encompassing learning practices, patterns of social interaction, and moral orientation. While digital technology offers significant opportunities to enhance the quality of education, without adequate moral guidance and a strong foundation in moral education, these developments may also

contribute to the deterioration of students' behavior (Fella Sufah Qotrunnadya, Aprilia Kartika Muhtar, 2025; Safitri et al., 2024). Therefore, there is a pressing need for an educational approach that integrates digital literacy with character development grounded in moral and spiritual values. Such an approach will enable students not only to develop technological competence but also to cultivate the moral integrity necessary to navigate the challenges of the digital era responsibly.

2. Forms of Students' Moral Degradation

The rapid advancement of digital technology has brought about profound changes in students' behavioral patterns, including their moral values and character development. The widespread accessibility of the Internet, social media, smartphones, and various digital platforms has placed students in an environment characterized by an unprecedented flow of information. While this development has generated significant benefits, such as greater access to learning resources and more efficient communication, it has also contributed to increasingly alarming forms of moral degradation (Agung Prihatmojo, 2020). Students' moral degradation is no longer understood merely as a matter of individual behavioral deviance; rather, it has evolved into a broader social and educational concern, reflecting a decline in moral character (*akhlāq*), ethical conduct, and the moral responsibility of the younger generation. Numerous studies further indicate that moral decline among students in the digital era is manifested through changes in attitudes, behavior, communication patterns, and a weakening of religious consciousness in everyday life (Fadhila, 2024).

One of the most prevalent manifestations of students' moral degradation is the decline in *adab* (proper conduct) and respect toward teachers and parents. Research on the deterioration of students' manners has documented a growing incidence of discourteous behavior, including the use of offensive language, disruptive conduct in the classroom, diminished respect for teachers, and a declining culture of honoring elders. These tendencies are reflected in behaviors such as failing to greet others, neglecting to ask permission before entering a room, disregarding teachers' instructions, and speaking in an inappropriate or disrespectful manner to both peers and educators (Rimba et al. 2019). This condition suggests that courtesy and respectful conduct, once regarded as fundamental values within the educational culture, are gradually being eroded under the influence of the digital environment and changing patterns of social interaction. Ultimately, this weakening of the culture of respect has adverse implications for students' discipline, sense of responsibility, and adherence to educational norms (Nadia, 2025; Rimba et al., 2019).

In addition, students' moral degradation is also reflected in the erosion of communication ethics and the increasing use of discourteous language. The rapid and open nature of digital communication has made students more inclined to express themselves freely without adequately considering established norms of civility and respect. Research indicates that the use of offensive language, verbal ridicule of peers, aggressive communication, and habitual impolite speech have become increasingly common within school environments. Furthermore, some students exhibit behaviors such as belittling others, interrupting conversations, and showing insufficient respect for their peers' opinions (Rimba et al. 2019). From the perspective of character education, these trends signify a growing crisis in communication ethics, shaped by prolonged

exposure to social media, digital popular culture, and the inadequate internalization of moral values within both the family and the school environment (Rimba et al., 2019).

Another prominent manifestation of students' moral degradation is the increasing prevalence of bullying and cyberbullying among young learners. The advancement of digital technology has expanded the scope of bullying beyond face-to-face interactions within school settings, making it more pervasive and complex through social media and online communication platforms. Students can readily engage in acts of humiliation, verbal intimidation, online harassment, and psychological abuse against their peers in virtual spaces. This phenomenon is particularly alarming because its consequences extend beyond the deterioration of students' social relationships to include adverse effects on their mental well-being, such as anxiety, diminished self-esteem, emotional distress, and other psychological problems (Wulandari et al. 2024). Studies on moral degradation in the digital era further indicate that cyberbullying has emerged as one of the most significant challenges to character education among the digital generation, primarily due to weakened self-regulation and a limited sense of ethical responsibility in the use of digital technology (Fadhila, 2024).

Beyond bullying, students' moral degradation is also reflected in the growing prevalence of social media and online gaming addiction. The intensive use of smartphones has led many students to spend considerably more time in the digital environment than engaging in academic study, reading, or maintaining healthy social interactions with those around them. Numerous studies indicate that students are increasingly becoming dependent on digital media, making it difficult for them to regulate the amount of time they spend using electronic devices (Agung Prihatmojo 2020). The consequences extend beyond diminished academic concentration to include behavioral shifts toward consumerism, individualism, and hedonism. Moreover, continuous exposure to the digital popular culture disseminated through social media has contributed to shaping students' life orientations in ways that are increasingly materialistic and driven by the pursuit of social recognition. In this context, digital media no longer functions merely as a learning tool; rather, it has become a powerful environment that shapes patterns of thought and lifestyles that may be inconsistent with moral values and the educational ideals promoted by schools (Agung Prihatmojo, 2020).

Furthermore, students' moral degradation is also manifested in declining religious consciousness and weakened self-regulation. Several studies have found that students are increasingly exhibiting indifference toward religious activities, diminished discipline in performing religious obligations, and a reduced sensitivity to the distinction between right and wrong. These trends indicate an erosion of the religious values that should serve as the foundation for students' character formation. The pervasive influence of social media, inadequate parental supervision, and a limited understanding of moral values have made some students more susceptible to negative behaviors, ranging from the habitual use of offensive language and academic dishonesty to other forms of deviant conduct. Moreover, weakened self-regulation renders students more vulnerable to adopting harmful trends in pursuit of social recognition within digital communities (Atiqah Revalina, Isnarmi Moeis, 2023).

Equally important, students' moral degradation is also reflected in the weakening of social concern and the growing tendency toward individualistic behavior. The

increasing dominance of digital life has led students to cultivate virtual relationships more frequently than direct, face-to-face social interactions. Consequently, empathy, solidarity, mutual cooperation, and concern for the surrounding community have gradually declined. Studies on students' moral degradation have identified a diminishing commitment to humanitarian values and social cohesion, as evidenced by reduced concern for others, increasingly self-centered attitudes, and a weakening spirit of cooperation. If these trends persist, education risks producing a generation that is technologically proficient yet afflicted by a profound crisis of morality and humanity (Atiqah Revalina, Isnarmi Moeis, 2023).

In summary, the manifestations of students' moral degradation in the digital era include the decline of *adab* (proper conduct) toward teachers and parents, the erosion of communication ethics, the increasing prevalence of bullying and cyberbullying, addiction to social media and online games, declining religious consciousness, and the growing tendency toward individualistic behavior. These manifestations demonstrate that the advancement of digital technology has not only transformed students' behavioral patterns but has also contributed to a shift in their moral orientation (Agung Prihatmojo, 2020; Fadhila, 2024). Therefore, educational institutions must adopt more integrative strategies for character development by strengthening moral education (*tarbiyah al-akhlāq*), fostering active family involvement, promoting teachers as moral role models, and advancing digital literacy grounded in moral and spiritual values. Such efforts are essential for cultivating students who are not only intellectually competent but also ethically grounded and spiritually mature.

3. Factors Contributing to Moral Degradation in the Digital Era

The phenomenon of students' moral degradation in the digital era does not emerge spontaneously; rather, it results from the complex interplay of internal and external factors that mutually reinforce one another. The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the lifestyles, patterns of thinking, and behaviors of younger generations. Amid these profound changes, students face increasingly complex moral challenges as they navigate the overwhelming flow of information, shifting cultural values, and the weakening of social and spiritual controls. Accordingly, understanding the factors contributing to moral degradation constitutes a crucial step toward developing educational approaches capable of addressing students' moral challenges in a more comprehensive and holistic manner.

One of the primary factors contributing to students' moral degradation is the unchecked influence of digital technology and social media. The internet, smartphones, and various social media platforms have become integral to students' daily lives. While these technologies provide unprecedented access to information and facilitate communication, they also expose students to a wide range of harmful content, including verbal abuse, pornography, hate speech, consumerist lifestyles, and an instant-gratification culture with limited educational value (Fadhila, 2024). The intensive use of social media without adequate guidance and supervision makes students more susceptible to imitating the behaviors they encounter in digital spaces. Consequently, many students adopt patterns of aggressive communication, individualistic attitudes, and hedonistic lifestyles under the pervasive influence of digital popular culture. In this context, social media functions not merely as a means of communication but also as a

powerful agent in shaping the behaviors and identities of younger generations (Atiqah Revalina, Isnarmi Moeis, 2023).

Another significant factor contributing to students' moral degradation is the inadequate integration of moral education within the educational system. Contemporary education often places greater emphasis on academic achievement and technical competencies than on the cultivation of students' character and moral development. As a result, schools tend to regard intellectual accomplishment as the primary indicator of educational success, while the moral and spiritual dimensions of education receive comparatively less attention (Rimba et al. 2019). Yet, the cultivation of *akhlāq* requires a continuous process of habituation, exemplary role modeling, consistent supervision, and the sustained internalization of moral values. When moral education remains confined to theoretical instruction without meaningful application in students' everyday lives, they become increasingly vulnerable to the negative influences prevalent in both social and digital environments. The limited internalization of values such as respect, discipline, honesty, and responsibility indicates that character education has not yet been implemented effectively to address the moral challenges posed by the digital era (Rimba et al., 2019).

Beyond the influence of formal education, inadequate parental supervision and family guidance also constitute significant factors contributing to students' moral degradation. The family represents the primary educational environment and plays a fundamental role in shaping children's character. However, the demands of modern life have left many parents with limited time to provide consistent moral guidance and supervision for their children. Occupational commitments, weakened family communication, and permissive parenting practices often result in students learning more from the digital environment than from the moral values imparted within the family. In many cases, students use digital devices with insufficient parental oversight, making them more vulnerable to exposure to harmful online content that influences their attitudes and behaviors (Syifa, Setianingsih, and Sulianto 2019). Furthermore, several studies indicate that weak family supervision, coupled with the limited provision of religious education at home, has accelerated the moral decline of students in the digital era (Nadia, 2025).

A crisis of role models also constitutes a significant factor exacerbating students' moral degradation. In the educational process, students acquire moral values not only through instruction and advice but also through observing and imitating individuals whom they regard as worthy of emulation. However, the digital era has introduced new challenges, as students' role models are no longer confined to parents and teachers but increasingly include social media personalities, influencers, digital celebrities, and content creators whose conduct may not always reflect positive moral values. Continuous exposure to public figures who normalize consumerism, offensive language, sensationalist culture, and other forms of unethical behavior gradually shapes students' moral orientations. At the same time, the limited availability of authentic role models within both the family and school environments further weakens the process of internalizing *akhlāq* in students' daily lives (Rimba et al., 2019).

In addition, the influence of the social environment and peer groups also plays a substantial role in shaping students' deviant behavior. Adolescence is a critical stage

of identity formation during which individuals are particularly susceptible to the influence of their social surroundings. The desire to gain acceptance within peer groups often encourages students to conform to group behaviors, even when such behaviors conflict with moral or religious norms. Behaviors such as the use of offensive language, truancy, bullying, and consumerist lifestyles frequently develop through peer influence and the culture of digital social interaction (Atiqah Revalina, Isnarmi Moeis 2023). In unsupportive social environments, students are more likely to adopt negative behaviors as a means of social adaptation. Therefore, fostering a healthy social environment is essential for supporting and safeguarding students' moral development (Atiqah Revalina, Isnarmi Moeis, 2023).

Another equally significant factor is students' weakened self-regulation and declining religious consciousness. During adolescence, students often experience identity crises and emotional instability, making them particularly vulnerable to external influences. Limited self-regulatory capacity increases their susceptibility to impulsive behaviors, including social media addiction, the use of inappropriate or offensive language, and aggressive conduct in digital spaces (Fella Sufah Qotrunnadya, Aprilia Kartika Muhtar 2025). This condition is further exacerbated by declining spiritual awareness and a weakened understanding of religious values as guiding principles for life. From the perspective of Islamic education, a weakened spiritual connection to religious values inevitably undermines the cultivation of *akhlāq*, since morality is fundamentally rooted in an individual's awareness of responsibility toward God and fellow human beings. Therefore, students' moral degradation should be understood not merely as a social problem but also as a spiritual one, requiring a fundamental strengthening of Qur'anic moral education to foster enduring moral character (Fella Sufah Qotrunnadya, Aprilia Kartika Muhtar, 2025).

Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be understood that students' moral degradation in the digital era is shaped by a constellation of interrelated factors, including the influence of digital technology, inadequate moral education, limited parental supervision, a crisis of role models, unsupportive social environments, and weakened self-regulation and religious consciousness. The complexity of these interconnected factors demonstrates that addressing moral degradation cannot be achieved through isolated or fragmented interventions; rather, it requires an integrated approach involving the family, schools, the wider community, and religious values. Accordingly, there is a pressing need for an educational paradigm that extends beyond the pursuit of intellectual achievement to prioritize the cultivation of *akhlāq* and spiritual development as the essential foundation for enabling students to navigate the moral challenges of the digital era.

The Concept of Qur'anic Moral Education: A Thematic Exegetical Analysis

1. Tawhīd Education as the Foundation of Moral Character

Tawhīd education constitutes the primary foundation of the Islamic educational system, as it serves as the essential basis for the formation of human character, moral conduct, and life orientation. From the Qur'anic perspective, education begins not with intellectual development or the acquisition of practical skills, but with the strengthening of *'aqidah* (Islamic creed) as the foundation of an individual's spiritual consciousness

and relationship with God. Tawḥīd is understood not merely as the affirmation that Allah is the One and Only God, but also as a comprehensive worldview that guides every aspect of human attitudes, behavior, and moral decision-making (Fauziah Amna Sipahutar, Nazwa Nadia, Nurul Izzati, M. Ridho Baihaqi, 2025). Consequently, tawḥīd education occupies a central position in cultivating individuals who possess both spiritual integrity and moral character. Indeed, good *akhlāq* is fundamentally the manifestation of sound *‘aqidah*. The stronger an individual’s faith in Allah, the greater their awareness of the responsibility to regulate their conduct, avoid wrongdoing, and live in accordance with divine values and guidance. This underscores that, within Islam, the cultivation of *akhlāq* is inseparable from the strengthening of tawḥīd as its foundational principle (Qomariyah, 2022).

The concept of tawḥīd education as the foundation of *akhlāq* is clearly illustrated in Q. 31:13, where Luqmān the Wise begins his counsel to his son with the fundamental principle of monotheism:

يٰۤاِبْنٰى لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ ۚ اِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيْمٌ...

“O my dear son, do not associate anything with Allah. Indeed, associating partners with Him (shirk) is truly a grave injustice.” (Q. 31:13).

This verse demonstrates that the first lesson Luqmān imparted to his son was neither practical life skills, intellectual development, nor social norms, but rather tawḥīd education through the emphatic prohibition of *shirk* (associating partners with Allah). From the perspective of Islamic education, the sequence of this counsel carries profound philosophical significance: the cultivation of moral character must begin with the strengthening of *‘aqidah*. Luqmān’s affectionate address, *yā bunayya* (“O my dear son”), reflects an educational approach grounded in compassion, dialogue, and emotional closeness in nurturing faith and religious conviction. Thus, tawḥīd education is not founded upon rigid doctrinal instruction but upon the internalization of faith through love, wisdom, and gentle guidance (Ahmad Naqib, 2025).

In *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, Q. 31:13 is interpreted as an affirmation that *shirk* constitutes the gravest form of injustice (*ẓulm ‘aẓīm*), because it places something where it does not rightfully belong—namely, by equating the created with the Creator. Ibn Kathīr explains that Luqmān begins his counsel with the affirmation of tawḥīd because all forms of moral education lack a firm foundation in the absence of sound faith. Tawḥīd is therefore understood as the fundamental principle that gives rise to *murāqabah* (spiritual vigilance), namely, the awareness that Allah continually observes every human thought, intention, and action. This consciousness serves as the basis for self-regulation and safeguards an individual’s *akhlāq* from moral deviation. In other words, individuals who possess a strong *‘aqidah* grounded in tawḥīd are better equipped to regulate their conduct because they remain constantly aware of their moral accountability before Allah (Katsir, 1431, . vol: 114).

Meanwhile, M. Quraish Shihab, in *Tafsīr al-Miṣbāḥ*, interprets tawḥīd education in Q. 31:13 as demonstrating that one’s relationship with Allah must constitute the primary orientation of education before the cultivation of social relationships with fellow human beings. Quraish Shihab explains that the prohibition of *shirk* should not be

understood merely as the physical worship of idols, but also as encompassing excessive dependence upon anything other than Allah that diverts human life from its proper spiritual orientation. In the contemporary context, *shirk* may manifest itself through the excessive glorification of material wealth, popularity, technology, or power, to the extent that these eclipse one's consciousness of God. Accordingly, tawḥīd education is not confined to theological instruction; rather, it seeks to cultivate a moral consciousness that enables individuals to resist excessive worldly attachments and maintain a life centered upon divine values (Shihab, 2002, vol. 11: 121-124).

The inseparable relationship between tawḥīd and *akhlāq* is evident in the fact that, within Islam, moral conduct arises from the consciousness of faith rather than from social norms alone. An individual acts honestly not merely out of fear of social sanctions, but because honesty is recognized as a divine command. Likewise, one refrains from lying, violence, and other forms of immoral behavior not simply because they are prohibited by legal regulations, but because of the conviction that every action will ultimately be accounted for before Allah. In this sense, tawḥīd education functions as an internal ethical foundation that guides and regulates human conduct from within. When tawḥīd is weakened, moral character likewise becomes fragile because it loses the spiritual foundation that governs human behavior. This perspective is consistent with numerous studies in Islamic education, which emphasize that the moral crisis among younger generations is often rooted in a weak understanding of religion and the inadequate internalization of tawḥīd-based values in everyday life (Fauziah Amna Sipahutar, Nazwa Nadia, Nurul Izzati, M. Ridho Baihaqi, 2025).

Conceptually, the interpretations of Q. 31:13 offered by Ibn Kathīr and Quraish Shihab may be understood as describing a coherent pedagogical mechanism through which tawḥīd functions to prevent moral degradation, rather than merely affirming that the two are related. Luqmān's prohibition of *shirk* instills the concept of *murāqabah*—the conviction that Allah constantly observes every human action (Katsir 1431). Psychologically, this conviction functions as an internal locus of control: individuals who internalize *murāqabah* no longer depend primarily on external supervision to maintain righteous conduct, because their moral self-regulation is rooted in a constant awareness of the Divine (Maftuhah 2023). This mechanism explains the continuing relevance of the verse to the problem of moral degradation in the digital era, where online environments are, by their very nature, characterized by limited external supervision. Teachers, parents, and the social norms that ordinarily regulate face-to-face interactions are not consistently present to oversee students' behavior on social media platforms or in online gaming environments.

It is precisely under conditions of limited external supervision that internal control grounded in *murāqabah* becomes decisive. Students who are continually conscious of being “seen” by Allah are more likely to exercise self-restraint and refrain from deviant behavior, even in the absence of human oversight. This interpretation is consistent with Quraish Shihab's contextual reading that modern forms of *shirk* may manifest as excessive dependence on digital validation, virtual popularity, or consumerist culture (Shihab 2002), all of which flourish where internal moral control is weak. Accordingly, tawḥīd education in Q. 31:13 extends far beyond the transmission of theological beliefs. Rather, it functions as a pedagogical mechanism for cultivating self-control rooted in

spiritual consciousness, a quality that is directly relevant as a preventive strategy against the various forms of students' moral degradation in digital environments characterized by limited external supervision.

Based on the foregoing discussion, *tawhīd* education in Q. 31:13 occupies a fundamental position as the cornerstone of students' moral character formation. It not only instills the theological conviction of Allah's absolute oneness but also cultivates moral consciousness, spiritual awareness, and a sense of ethical responsibility in everyday life. Through the compassionate and wisdom-centered educational approach exemplified by Luqmān the Wise, the internalization of *tawhīd* becomes the essential first step in nurturing a generation that is not only intellectually accomplished but also spiritually grounded and endowed with exemplary *akhlāq* amid the moral challenges of the digital era.

2. Moral Education toward Parents and Teachers

After establishing *tawhīd* education as the primary foundation of *akhlāq*, the Qur'an proceeds to cultivate students' moral character through education in respect for parents and educational figures. From the perspective of Islamic education, *tawhīd* is not confined to the vertical relationship between human beings and Allah; rather, it must be manifested in the form of social *akhlāq*, particularly toward those who have made profound contributions to one's life (Diah, 2017). Accordingly, immediately following the prohibition of *shirk* in Q. 31:13, the Qur'an commands believers to show kindness and devotion to their parents, as articulated in Q. 31:14–15. The sequential arrangement of these verses demonstrates that moral education in Islam follows a systematic pedagogical framework: it begins with the strengthening of faith, which is subsequently expressed through attitudes of respect, compassion, and social responsibility toward others—especially one's parents, who serve as a child's first educators (Sit, 2021).

In Q. 31:14–15, Allah emphasizes the importance of *birr al-wālidayn* (dutiful devotion to one's parents) as an integral component of Qur'anic moral education. These verses vividly portray the immense sacrifices of a mother, who endures increasing hardship throughout pregnancy and nurses her child for two years. This emphasis demonstrates that honoring one's parents is not merely a matter of social etiquette but a moral obligation grounded in recognition of their sacrifices, care, and unconditional love from the very beginning of a child's life. According to studies on Qur'anic education, the values embodied in *birr al-wālidayn* encompass respectful obedience, reverence, compassion, gentleness in speech, as well as a willingness to assist and pray for one's parents (Alimuddin & Rhain, 2023). Even when parents adhere to different religious beliefs or encourage their children to act in ways that contradict *tawhīd*, Islam instructs children to continue treating them with kindness while refraining from following beliefs that compromise their *'aqidah*. This demonstrates that moral education in the Qur'an is founded upon a balanced integration of unwavering commitment to *tawhīd* and the ethics of human relationships (Moh. Safrudin, 2025; Sit, 2021).

The emphasis on moral education toward parents is further reinforced in Q. 17:23–24, where the obligation to honor one's parents is placed immediately after the command to worship Allah alone. These verses prohibit children from even uttering the word "*uff*" (an expression of annoyance or impatience) to their parents, rebuking them, or speaking to them harshly. Instead, they are instructed to address their parents with

words of honor and respect. This injunction demonstrates that Islamic moral education places considerable emphasis on ethical communication and emotional self-regulation. Respect for parents is measured not only by outward obedience but also by the ethics of speech, emotional expression, and the gentle manner in which they are treated, particularly in their old age. From the perspective of character education, these verses illustrate that the moral formation of students should encompass the cultivation of courtesy, respect for elders, and the capacity to regulate emotions with maturity (Moh. Safrudin, 2025).

Within the Islamic educational tradition, the values of respect cultivated toward parents are subsequently extended to teachers, who are regarded as spiritual educators (*al-ab al-rūḥī*). Teachers are viewed not merely as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral guides and character builders for their students. Consequently, the relationship between students and teachers in Islam is founded upon the principles of respect, *adab* (proper conduct), and courtesy. Studies examining students' *adab* toward teachers from the perspective of Imam al-Ghazālī explain that learners are expected to uphold ethical conduct in every interaction with their teachers, including the manner in which they speak, ask questions, listen attentively to lessons, and maintain respectful behavior both inside and outside the classroom. A student who fails to observe proper *adab* toward teachers risks being deprived of the blessings (*barakah*) of knowledge, because, within the Islamic educational tradition, successful learning depends not only on intellectual ability but also on the nobility of one's moral character in relation to one's educators (Fauzi, 2023).

Fundamentally, respect for parents and respect for teachers share the same philosophical foundation: the recognition of their invaluable contributions, sacrifices, and roles in shaping the character and development of students. Parents serve as the primary source of love, protection, and early education, whereas teachers function as intellectual and spiritual mentors who guide students in acquiring knowledge and understanding the values that shape human life. Accordingly, respect for teachers may be understood as an extension of the principle of *birr al-wāliḍayn* within the educational sphere. In the classical Islamic educational tradition, many Muslim scholars emphasize that *adab* toward teachers should occupy an especially elevated position because the knowledge they impart profoundly influences the course of a person's life. Consequently, successful education is measured not merely by its ability to produce intellectually capable students, but also by its capacity to cultivate individuals who honor the sources of knowledge and value the process of learning itself (Fauzi, 2023).

Based on the foregoing discussion, the pattern of moral education reflected in Q. 31:14–15 and Q. 17:23–24 may be understood through the pedagogical mechanisms of modeling and attachment, both of which are rooted in children's earliest relationships with moral authorities—namely, their parents and teachers. The prohibition against uttering the word “*uff*” and the command to speak with honor (*qaulan karīmā*) are not merely prescriptions of social etiquette; rather, they represent a process of habituating emotional self-regulation from an early age through direct interaction with the figures to whom children are emotionally closest and most frequently exposed. This mechanism operates because children learn to regulate their emotional impulses precisely in situations where they are most tempted to respond with defiance—namely, in their interactions with emotionally significant authority figures. The capacity for self-restraint

cultivated through these relationships subsequently becomes an enduring behavioral pattern that extends into other social contexts, including digital environments.

This explains the continuing relevance of these two passages to the problem of moral degradation in the digital era. The decline in students' *adab* toward their parents and teachers should not be viewed as an isolated phenomenon; rather, it is an indicator of the weakening of the self-regulatory foundation that ought to be cultivated through these primary authority relationships. As this formative source of moral regulation becomes less influential, students are more likely to adopt disrespectful patterns of communication and display poor *adab* in digital environments, where interactions are relatively anonymous and immediate social consequences are often limited (Moh. Safrudin, 2025). Accordingly, strengthening *birr al-wālidayn* and *adab* toward teachers should not be regarded merely as promoting norms of courtesy that are separate from the challenges of the digital age. Instead, they constitute a fundamental mechanism for cultivating the capacity for self-regulation, which serves as an essential prerequisite for enabling students to maintain ethical communication in digital spaces, even in the absence of direct supervision from parental or educational authority figures.

Therefore, moral education concerning parents and teachers occupies a strategic position in the Qur'an as a tangible manifestation of tawhīd education. Moral conduct toward parents is expressed through *birr al-wālidayn*—manifested in respect, compassion, gentleness, and appropriate obedience—while moral conduct toward teachers is demonstrated through reverence for knowledge, courtesy, and proper learning etiquette. Such education is indispensable for nurturing students who are not only intellectually competent but also morally mature, respectful, and guided by a strong sense of ethical responsibility in social life, particularly in responding to the various challenges of moral degradation in the digital era.

3. *Spiritual Education and Self-Regulation*

After the Qur'an establishes tawhīd education as the foundation of *akhlāq* and moral education in respect for parents and teachers as its social manifestation, the next stage is the cultivation of students' spirituality and self-regulation. In Q. 31:16–17, Luqmān the Wise shifts his emphasis beyond the human relationship with Allah and with others, directing his counsel toward the formation of the child's inner consciousness so that moral behavior is governed by internal rather than external control. Spiritual education in the Qur'an seeks to cultivate the awareness that every human action remains under Allah's constant observation. Consequently, moral conduct does not depend solely upon external supervision but emerges from a deeply internalized moral and spiritual consciousness. Such an educational approach is essential because genuine *akhlāq* is ultimately rooted in a soul that has been spiritually nurtured and is capable of regulating its desires and impulses. From the perspective of Islamic education, spirituality constitutes a fundamental dimension that purifies the soul, strengthens one's orientation toward life, and cultivates individuals who are spiritually tranquil, self-aware, and endowed with exemplary *akhlāq* (Sahroni, Fathul Anwar, 2024).

This dimension of spiritual education is vividly illustrated in Q. 31:16, where Luqmān instills in his son the consciousness of *murāqabah*—the conviction that no human deed, however small, escapes Allah's knowledge. The Qur'anic imagery of a mustard seed concealed within a rock, in the heavens, or in the earth underscores

Allah's perfect knowledge of every human action, whether manifest or hidden. Such an educational approach carries profound psychological and moral implications, as it cultivates in students an ethical consciousness rooted in faith and conscience rather than merely in fear of social sanctions (Agustina Kamilatun Nuha, Burhan Djamiluddin, 2025). This spiritual consciousness is further reinforced in Q. 31:17 through the commands to establish prayer (*ṣalāh*), to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong (*al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*), and to remain patient in the face of life's trials. *Ṣalāh* functions as a means of cultivating spiritual discipline, *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* fosters social responsibility, while patience (*ṣabr*) serves as a vital instrument for developing emotional self-regulation and psychological resilience in confronting life's challenges (Maftuhah, 2023).

A closer examination reveals that the four elements taught by Luqmān in Q. 31:16–17 collectively constitute an integrated mechanism for the development of self-regulation, rather than a collection of independent moral values. *Murāqabah* serves as the cognitive foundation by instilling the conviction that every human action—even one as insignificant as a mustard seed—is known to Allah, thereby cultivating a constant and internally driven awareness of self-monitoring. This cognitive awareness is subsequently transformed into a stable habit through *ṣalāh*, which, from a pedagogical perspective, functions as an instrument of habituation by fostering discipline in time management, orderliness in conduct, and repeated moments of self-reflection performed five times each day. In this respect, prayer represents a structured and systematic practice of self-regulation that extends beyond purely cognitive moral instruction. The command to *enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong* (*al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*) further extends this internalized discipline from the individual sphere to the domain of social responsibility, ensuring that self-regulation does not culminate merely in personal piety but also inspires the moral courage to uphold virtue within society. Finally, patience (*ṣabr*) functions as the capacity for endurance that sustains the consistent practice of these preceding elements when individuals encounter temptation, adversity, or failure. Indeed, spiritual awareness and habitual worship, in the absence of emotional resilience, are likely to weaken when confronted with real-life challenges. Accordingly, from the Qur'anic perspective, self-regulation is not acquired instantaneously but is cultivated through four interrelated stages: awareness (*murāqabah*), habituation (*ṣalāh*), the expansion of social responsibility (*al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*), and endurance (*ṣabr*) (Maftuhah, 2023).

This four-stage mechanism provides a more concrete explanation of how Qur'anic spiritual values can be internalized within the educational process to prevent students' deviant behavior in the digital era, rather than merely being asserted as normatively relevant. From a pedagogical perspective, *murāqabah* may be cultivated through the habitual practice of self-reflection before and after using digital devices or engaging with social media. Likewise, the discipline fostered through *ṣalāh* develops the capacity for *delay of gratification*, a psychological competence that is directly relevant to resisting social media addiction and excessive online gaming, both of which require individuals to postpone immediate gratification in pursuit of more meaningful and enduring goals. Within this framework, *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* may be actualized through students' willingness to discourage or refrain from disseminating harmful content, hate speech, and cyberbullying within their digital communities. In this way,

personal self-regulation contributes to the cultivation of a healthier and more ethical digital environment. Meanwhile, *ṣabr* serves as the capacity for perseverance that sustains the consistent practice of these three preceding processes amid the pressures of digital culture, which often encourages immediacy and impulsive reactions, such as responding hastily to hostile comments or conforming to online trends that conflict with moral values. By conceptualizing these four values as a sequential and mutually reinforcing pedagogical process, Qur'anic spiritual education should no longer be understood merely as a normative call to become "closer to Allah." Rather, it should be recognized as a comprehensive character-building strategy grounded in a clearly identifiable psychological mechanism for preventing students' deviant behavior in digital environments.

From the perspective of Islamic education, spirituality is intrinsically linked to the capacity for self-regulation. Self-regulation is understood as an individual's ability to regulate impulses, emotions, and behavior in accordance with moral values and religious principles. Within the Islamic tradition, this capacity is closely associated with the concept of *mujāhadat al-naḥs*—the continual struggle against one's lower desires to prevent them from leading to morally deviant behavior. Studies have shown that Islamic Religious Education grounded in spiritual values makes a significant contribution to the development of students' self-regulation, as religious understanding enables them to manage their emotions, resist negative impulses, and make more prudent moral decisions. Consequently, spirituality extends far beyond the observance of religious rituals; it serves as a psychological foundation for cultivating moral resilience and the capacity for self-regulation in the face of temptations and the various pressures of life (Maftuhah, 2023).

The relevance of spiritual education and self-regulation becomes even more pronounced in light of the growing phenomenon of students' moral degradation in the digital era. Digital environments, characterized by constant distractions, a culture of instant gratification, exposure to harmful content, and increasingly blurred ethical boundaries, require students to develop strong internal regulatory capacities. In this context, the model of Qur'anic spiritual education exemplified by Luqmān the Wise offers a highly relevant educational framework. Students who cultivate *murāqabah* (the consciousness of Allah's constant observation), maintain disciplined religious practice, and develop strong self-regulation are better equipped to use social media responsibly, resist impulsive behavior, uphold ethical standards of digital communication, and avoid deviant conduct in online environments. Therefore, spiritual education and self-regulation in the Qur'an serve not only to foster individual piety but also to provide the foundation for the development of a socially responsible, ethically grounded, and morally refined character capable of navigating the complexities of contemporary digital life (Sahroni, Fathul Anwar, 2024).

4. Social Moral Education and Communication Ethics

After the foundations of tawḥīd education, respect for parents and teachers, and the cultivation of spirituality and self-regulation have been established, the Qur'an directs students toward the development of social *akhlāq* and communication ethics as tangible manifestations of faith. This is reflected in Q. 31:18, where Luqmān instructs his son not to be arrogant or conceited in his dealings with others: "*Do not turn your*

cheek away from people in contempt, nor walk upon the earth arrogantly." This verse embodies key Qur'anic values, including the cultivation of *tawāḍu'* (humility), modesty, and respect for others in social life. Accordingly, social moral education in the Qur'an extends beyond nurturing the vertical relationship between human beings and Allah; it also requires individuals to develop the capacity to build harmonious social relationships characterized by empathy and freedom from feelings of superiority over others. In this way, students are guided to cultivate humility, respect for others, and an aversion to arrogant behavior that undermines social harmony (Nur Annisa Tri Handayani, 2024).

From the perspective of Qur'anic exegesis, Q. 31:18–19 presents a comprehensive framework for social ethics and communication ethics. The prohibition against turning one's face away from others condemns attitudes of contempt and disrespect, while the commands *waqṣid fī mashyika* ("be moderate in your manner of walking") and *waghḍuḍ min ṣawtika* ("lower your voice") underscore the importance of self-restraint in both conduct and speech during social interactions. Studies on Qur'anic communication further emphasize that effective and ethical communication should be grounded in courtesy, gentleness, honesty, and empathy. Accordingly, principles such as *qaulan karīman* (gracious speech), *qaulan layyinan* (gentle speech), and *qaulan sadīdan* (truthful and upright speech) constitute the ethical foundation of Islamic communication in fostering healthy social relationships. Consequently, social moral education in Islam extends beyond outward behavior to encompass verbal ethics, emotional self-regulation, and the capacity to preserve the dignity of others through respectful and ethical communication (Nur Annisa Tri Handayani, 2024; Rohman & Rahman, 2023).

The relevance of social moral education and communication ethics has become increasingly significant in the digital era, where students engage in virtual interactions that are virtually boundless. The prevalence of cyberbullying, hate speech, abusive communication, online cultures of ridicule, as well as *flexing* and digital narcissism reflects a growing crisis of communication ethics among younger generations. In this context, the Qur'anic values embodied in Q. 31:18–19 provide a highly relevant ethical framework by emphasizing humility, respectful speech, and self-restraint in public expression. From the perspective of Islamic media ethics, students are expected to refrain from using provocative language, abusive speech, misinformation, or any form of communication that harms others. Instead, they are encouraged to foster digital interactions characterized by *akhlāq*, empathy, and a sense of ethical responsibility. Accordingly, Qur'anic social moral education is not only relevant to face-to-face social life but also serves as an essential framework for cultivating a healthy and ethical culture of digital communication among students (Sandra & Dewi, 2019).

5. Methods of Moral Education in the Qur'an

The Qur'an presents an approach to moral education that is humanistic, gradual, and attentive to the psychological development of students, as exemplified in Luqmān's counsel to his son in Q. 31:12–19. One of the principal pedagogical methods reflected in these verses is the method of exemplary conduct and moral exhortation (*mau'izah*). Luqmān does not convey moral instruction through an authoritarian or coercive approach; rather, he teaches with gentle and affectionate language, as illustrated by his repeated address, *yā bunayya* ("O my beloved son"). This choice of expression demonstrates that moral education in the Qur'an is founded upon emotional closeness, dialogue, and

persuasive communication, enabling moral values to be consciously internalized by students. Furthermore, Luqmān's use of moral exhortation illustrates that character education cannot be achieved solely through normative instruction. Rather, it requires a sustained process of value internalization through wisdom (*hikmah*), gentleness, and the authentic example set by the educator (Diah, 2017; Sit, 2021).

In addition to the method of moral exhortation, the Qur'an also emphasizes the importance of spiritual habituation and moral supervision in moral education. This is reflected in the commands to establish prayer (*ṣalāh*), to *enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong* (*al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*), and to remain patient in the face of life's trials, as articulated in Q. 31:17. Accordingly, Qur'anic moral education extends beyond the transmission of moral knowledge by guiding students toward the cultivation of virtuous habits through consistent spiritual practice. *Ṣalāh* nurtures discipline and God-consciousness, *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* develops social responsibility, while *ṣabr* fosters psychological resilience and emotional self-regulation. Furthermore, Q. 31:16 instills the consciousness of *murāqabah*—the conviction that every human action remains under Allah's constant observation. This spiritual consciousness functions as an internal mechanism of moral regulation, encouraging students to uphold righteous conduct even in the absence of external supervision (Agustina Kamilatun Nuha, Burhan Djamiluddin, 2025; Maftuhah, 2023).

The relevance of the Qur'anic methods of moral education has become increasingly evident in addressing the challenges of the digital era, which are characterized by moral degradation, weakened self-regulation, and shifting patterns of communication among younger generations. Educational approaches that focus exclusively on cognitive development have proven insufficient to address the complexity of students' moral challenges. Accordingly, the pedagogical methods of Qur'anic moral education should be implemented through an integrated framework that combines parental and teacher role modeling, dialogical communication, spiritual habituation, and moral supervision grounded in internal moral consciousness rather than external punishment alone. Likewise, the persuasive and humanistic approach exemplified by Luqmān the Wise remains highly relevant for fostering emotional closeness with students amid the predominance of an increasingly individualistic digital culture. Therefore, the Qur'anic methods of moral education offer an educational paradigm that seeks not only to cultivate intellectual competence but also to nurture students' spiritual, moral, and social maturity in a holistic manner. (Nur Annisa Tri Handayani, 2024; Sahroni, Fathul Anwar, 2024).

The Relevance of Qur'anic Moral Education to Students' Moral Degradation in the Digital Era

The preceding discussion has demonstrated that Qur'anic moral education in Q. 31:12–19 operates through three interrelated mechanisms. First, it strengthens the internal locus of control through the cultivation of *murāqabah*. Second, it develops students' capacity for self-regulation through close authority relationships grounded in *modeling* and *attachment*, as reflected in the principles of *birr al-wālidayn* and *adab* toward teachers. Third, it promotes self-control through a four-stage developmental framework consisting of moral awareness, spiritual habituation, the expansion of social responsibility, and resilience in the face of life's challenges. This section does not seek to

reiterate these educational values. Rather, it addresses the research question concerning their relevance to students' moral degradation by synthesizing these three mechanisms into a coherent framework for character strengthening, digital contextualization, and educational implementation. Accordingly, the following analysis is derived directly from the preceding exegetical findings and interpretations of the Qur'anic verses, rather than from general conceptual discussions of Islamic character education.

1. Qur'anic Moral Education as a Framework for Strengthening Students' Character

The phenomenon of students' moral degradation in the digital era demonstrates that educational approaches emphasizing academic achievement and technological competencies alone are insufficient to foster holistic character development. Challenges such as declining civility, diminishing respect for teachers and parents, aggressive behavior on social media, weakened self-regulation, and a crisis of spirituality all point to profound deficiencies in the moral formation of younger generations. In this context, the concept of Qur'anic moral education embodied in Q. 31:12–19 offers a more comprehensive framework for character strengthening by integrating faith, moral values, spirituality, and social responsibility into a unified educational model. Within the Qur'anic paradigm, moral education is developed progressively, beginning with the cultivation of *tawhīd* as the foundation of moral character, followed by the formation of *adab* toward parents and teachers, spiritual development through worship and self-regulation, and finally the cultivation of social ethics and communication ethics. This systematic educational structure demonstrates that the formation of students' character requires a sustained process of value internalization rather than the mere transmission of theoretical moral knowledge (Sit 2021).

As the core of Qur'anic moral education, *tawhīd* education occupies a strategic position in shaping students' character because it provides the fundamental source of moral orientation for all human conduct. The awareness that every human action remains under Allah's constant observation (*murāqabah*) encourages students to uphold righteous behavior, refrain from moral misconduct, and assume responsibility for their actions even in the absence of external supervision. This *tawhīd*-based moral orientation is further reinforced through moral education that cultivates *adab* toward parents and teachers, thereby fostering respect, discipline, responsibility, and appreciation for knowledge. Likewise, spiritual practices such as *ṣalāh*, *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, and *ṣabr*, as prescribed in Q. 31:17, function as pedagogical instruments for strengthening students' self-control, enabling them to regulate their emotions, resist negative impulses, and exercise sound judgment in their daily lives. A growing body of research likewise indicates that spiritual education integrated with religious values makes a significant contribution to strengthening students' moral resilience amid the challenges of contemporary society. (Fauzi 2023).

Drawing upon the mechanisms elaborated in the preceding discussion, the strengthening of students' character through Qur'anic moral education addresses the problem of moral degradation not by introducing additional moral content, but by reinforcing three interdependent layers of moral regulation. The first is cognitive-spiritual regulation, established through the cultivation of *murāqabah* as an internal locus of moral awareness. The second is behavioral regulation, developed through relational habituation, particularly the cultivation of *adab* toward parents and teachers.

The third is social-emotional regulation, fostered through the graduated practice of worship embodied in the four-stage model of self-control comprising moral awareness, spiritual habituation, the expansion of social responsibility, and resilience. Rather than relying merely on abstract virtues such as humility, empathy, and social responsibility, these three interrelated layers of regulation provide a more compelling explanation for why students who receive robust Qur'anic moral education are better equipped to withstand the pressures of deviant behavior in digital environments. They possess an internal system of moral supervision that does not depend upon the presence of external authority, patterns of disciplined conduct that have been internalized through familial relationships, and emotional resilience cultivated through a progressive process of spiritual habituation.

2. Contextualizing Qur'anic Moral Education in the Digital Environment

The rapid advancement of digital technology has profoundly transformed students' lives, influencing not only learning processes but also patterns of communication and character formation. While the widespread accessibility of the internet and social media has created unprecedented opportunities for expanding knowledge and fostering creativity, it has simultaneously given rise to a range of moral challenges, including individualism, cyberbullying, social media addiction, a culture of instant gratification, and the erosion of communication ethics. In this context, the principles of Qur'anic moral education embodied in Q. 31:12–19 offer a highly relevant framework for addressing the moral challenges faced by students in the digital era. The integrated educational model encompassing *tawhīd*, respect for parents and teachers, spiritual habituation, and social ethics demonstrates that technological advancement must remain guided by moral values and God-consciousness to prevent students from drifting into a crisis of character (Agung Prihatmojo 2020).

The contextualization of Qur'anic moral education within the digital environment can be realized by strengthening *tawhīd* and self-control as the moral safeguards that enable students to engage with technology wisely and responsibly. *Tawhīd* education cultivates the awareness that all digital activities—including interactions on social media—remain under Allah's constant observation (*murāqabah*), thereby encouraging students to exercise greater responsibility for their conduct in virtual spaces. Likewise, spiritual practices such as *ṣalāh*, *ṣabr*, and self-control, as prescribed in Q. 31:17, serve as essential means of protecting students from impulsive behavior, excessive dependence on digital devices, and the consumption of harmful online content. Consequently, Qur'anic spiritual education functions as an internal mechanism of moral regulation, enabling students to preserve ethical conduct and maintain a balanced way of life amid the accelerating process of digitalization. (Agustina Kamilatun Nuha, Burhan Djamiluddin 2025).

This contextualization is conceptually distinct from merely asserting that Qur'anic values are “relevant” to the digital era. Structurally, digital environments are characterized by limited external supervision and intense emotional pressures that encourage immediate reactions, as discussed in Sections B.1 and B.3. It is precisely under these conditions that internal regulation grounded in *murāqabah* and the emotional resilience cultivated through the habituation of worship become decisive rather than merely complementary. In other words, the effectiveness of Qur'anic moral education in

digital contexts does not stem simply from its compatibility with contemporary society. Rather, it lies in the fact that the structural characteristics of digital environments demand precisely the kind of self-regulation—internal, consistent, and independent of external surveillance—that is systematically cultivated through the pedagogical mechanisms of Qur'anic moral education identified in the preceding analysis.

3. *Implementing Qur'anic Moral Education in Students' Character Development*

The implementation of Qur'anic moral education in students' character development should begin within the family as the first and foremost educational environment (*madrasah al-ūlā*). From the Qur'anic perspective, the family bears the primary responsibility for establishing the foundations of *tawhīd*, cultivating regular worship, and shaping children's character through exemplary conduct and compassionate communication, as exemplified by Luqmān the Wise in his counsel to his son. Accordingly, parents are not merely providers of material needs but also serve as their children's spiritual and moral mentors, guiding them toward the development of sound *akhlāq* from an early age. Amid the rapid expansion of digital technology, the implementation of Qur'anic moral education within the family should likewise encompass the responsible supervision of children's digital media use, the limitation of exposure to harmful content, and the cultivation of respectful and open communication, thereby helping students maintain a clear moral orientation despite the overwhelming flow of digital information. Consequently, the family constitutes the foundational institution for fostering students' moral resilience and character strength in the digital era (Moh. Safrudin 2025).

In addition to the family, teachers and schools occupy a strategic position in implementing Qur'anic moral education through classroom instruction, value habituation, and exemplary conduct. Within the Islamic educational tradition, teachers are regarded not merely as transmitters of knowledge but also as *uswah ḥasanah* (exemplary role models) and moral mentors who guide students' character formation. Accordingly, the implementation of Qur'anic moral education in schools should extend beyond the delivery of normative content in the classroom and be embodied in a school culture that actively nurtures character development. Such a culture includes the habituation of worship, the cultivation of communication ethics, respect for teachers, discipline, and social responsibility. In the digital era, schools should likewise promote digital literacy grounded in Islamic values so that students not only develop technological competence but also acquire the capacity to critically evaluate digital information, uphold ethical communication on social media, and refrain from deviant online behaviors such as cyberbullying and the dissemination of hate speech (Fauzi 2023).

Building upon the mechanisms identified in the preceding analysis, the implementation of Qur'anic moral education should extend beyond the general recommendation that families and schools collaborate in students' moral development. Instead, it should be directed toward three concrete objectives that correspond to the three pedagogical mechanisms identified in this study. First, *murāqabah* should be strengthened through the habituation of self-reflection before and after engaging in digital activities within the family environment. Second, *modeling* and *attachment* should be reinforced through the consistent exemplary conduct of parents and teachers in digital spaces, given that students' capacity for self-regulation develops through close

authority relationships, as discussed in Section B.2. Third, schools should cultivate self-control progressively by integrating the habituation of worship with explicit training in delaying gratification (*delay of gratification*) in the use of digital devices, rather than treating religious activities as practices detached from the realities of students' digital lives. By deriving these implementation strategies directly from the three pedagogical mechanisms identified in the Qur'anic analysis, Qur'anic moral education becomes an evidence-based and theoretically grounded framework for character development, rather than a set of general appeals for exemplary conduct, habituation, and supervision.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that students' moral degradation in the digital era extends beyond declining civility and digital misconduct to reflect a broader crisis of moral regulation resulting from rapid technological advancement, weakened spiritual formation, and insufficient moral education. These findings indicate that technological development alone cannot foster students' moral maturity without an educational paradigm that integrates faith, character, and spirituality. Through a thematic exegetical (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) analysis of Q. 31:12–19, this study proposes an integrated Qur'anic moral education framework consisting of *tawḥīd*, *adab* toward parents and teachers, spiritual formation, social and communication ethics, and educational methods based on exemplary conduct, moral exhortation, habituation, and supervision. More importantly, the study argues that these elements function as interconnected pedagogical mechanisms that strengthen students' internal moral regulation through God-consciousness (*murāqabah*), self-regulation, and ethical digital communication. In this way, the study extends previous research by moving beyond describing Qur'anic moral values toward explaining how they contribute to students' character formation in digitally mediated environments. Theoretically, this study enriches scholarship on thematic Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic education by offering a conceptual framework for understanding Qur'anic moral education in contemporary educational contexts. Practically, the proposed framework provides a reference for educators, parents, and policymakers in developing character education that integrates spiritual formation, ethical digital behavior, and social responsibility. This study is limited by its library-based design, its primary focus on Q. 31:12–19, and its reliance on selected exegetical sources. Consequently, the proposed pedagogical framework remains conceptual and requires empirical validation. Future research is therefore encouraged to examine the implementation and effectiveness of this framework through interdisciplinary studies integrating thematic Qur'anic exegesis, educational psychology, and digital education.

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