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Siri'-Metawe' Contextual Akhlak: A Framework for Digital-Era Islamic Moral Education in West Sulawesi

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Abstract

This article aims to examine conceptually how moral education (akhlak) can be strengthened through Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the digital era by integrating the local wisdom of the Mandar community in West Sulawesi. This study employs qualitative library research, drawing on journal articles, books, and educational policy documents that were analyzed through content analysis consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that students' digital moral challenges, namely the unfiltered flow of information, weakened direct social control, and declining respect toward elders, require PAI teachers, parents, and community figures to act together as role models and facilitators of value-based digital literacy. The Mandar values of siri' (a sense of shame and dignity) and metawe' or metabe' (respect toward elders) correspond philosophically with Islamic moral teachings and can serve as internal and relational anchors of conduct that remain effective where external supervision is absent. These findings are synthesized into a tiered conceptual framework of Siri'-Metawe' Contextual Akhlak, which links the three values to observable behavioral indicators and a three-step learning sequence. The study concludes that Mandar local wisdom can function not merely as a cultural supplement but as an analytical and pedagogical framework for PAI-based moral education in the digital era, although its effectiveness still needs to be tested empirically in West Sulawesi schools.

Keywords: Moral Education; Islamic Religious Education; Digital Era; Mandar Local Wisdom; West Sulawesi.

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan mengkaji secara konseptual bagaimana pendidikan akhlak dapat diperkuat melalui pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di era digital dengan mengintegrasikan kearifan lokal masyarakat Mandar, Sulawesi Barat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif jenis studi kepustakaan (library research) dengan data berupa artikel jurnal, buku, dan dokumen kebijakan pendidikan yang dianalisis melalui analisis isi yang terdiri atas reduksi data, penyajian data, dan

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Akhlak; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Era Digital; Kearifan Lokal

penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa tantangan akhlak digital peserta didik, yaitu arus informasi yang tidak tersaring, melemahnya kontrol sosial langsung, dan menurunnya penghormatan kepada yang lebih tua, menuntut guru PAI, orang tua, dan tokoh masyarakat berperan bersama sebagai teladan sekaligus fasilitator literasi digital berlandaskan nilai. Nilai siri' (rasa malu dan harga diri) serta metawe' atau metabe' (penghormatan kepada yang lebih tua) selaras secara filosofis dengan ajaran akhlak Islam dan dapat menjadi jangkar internal dan relasional perilaku yang tetap bekerja ketika pengawasan eksternal tidak ada. Temuan tersebut disintesiskan menjadi kerangka konseptual berjenjang Siri'-Metawe' Akhlak Kontekstual yang menghubungkan ketiga nilai dengan indikator perilaku yang dapat diamati dan alur pembelajaran tiga langkah. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kearifan lokal Mandar dapat berfungsi bukan sekadar pelengkap budaya, melainkan kerangka analitis dan pedagogis bagi pendidikan akhlak berbasis PAI di era digital, meskipun efektivitasnya masih perlu diuji secara empiris di sekolah-sekolah Sulawesi Barat.

Mandar; Sulawesi Barat.

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1. Introduction

Moral formation lies at the heart of Islamic education, and the formation of noble character (akhlak) is regarded as the ultimate goal of the entire educational process rather than merely one of its parts (D. Fitriana, 2020). In schools, this mandate is carried primarily by Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which is expected to nurture students' understanding, awareness, and practice of moral values (Frimayanti, 2017). However, the setting in which students practice these values has changed profoundly. Smartphones and social media now allow young people to obtain information from every corner of the world within seconds, and these platforms have also become spaces where identity and lifestyle are shaped, particularly among adolescents (M Ravii Marwan, 2023). Because digital spaces are marked by weak direct social control and high anonymity (Karunia H et al., 2021), moral conduct that was once supported by face-to-face supervision must increasingly rest on students' own internalized values. This shift raises the question of how PAI can build such internal moral anchors in a way that is meaningful to students, and one promising answer lies in the local wisdom that students already live with. In West Sulawesi, the Mandar community's values of siri' (a sense of shame and dignity) and metawe' or metabe' (respect toward elders) offer a culturally rooted resource for this task. This article therefore examines conceptually how moral education can be strengthened through PAI in the digital era by integrating Mandar local wisdom.

This condition brings positive effects in the form of broader perspectives and easier learning, but at the same time carries potential threats to moral formation, especially when this flow of information is not balanced by adequate value filters and guidance. Various studies indicate that exposure to uncontrolled

digital content contributes to shifts in students' behavior, ranging from declining respect toward parents and teachers, the emergence of coarse language habits in cyberspace, to an increasing tendency to imitate lifestyles far removed from Islamic values (Suhartono & Rahma Yulieta, 2019). Such phenomena confirm that moral education can no longer be adequately delivered through conventional approaches, but needs to be reconstructed to remain relevant to the characteristics of a generation growing up alongside digital technology.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as one of the compulsory subjects in schools, has a strategic role in addressing this challenge. PAI does not merely function to convey religious knowledge cognitively, but is also responsible for instilling affective and psychomotor values that shape students' personalities as a whole, in line with the view that value education in PAI encompasses instilling beliefs and attitudes as well as the skills to act in accordance with religious guidance (Frimayanti, 2017). PAI teachers are required to elaborate moral material in relation to the digital realities students face daily, so that Islamic values do not remain merely theoretical but are genuinely internalized in students' social media behavior (Dwi Kasnuri, 2025).

This issue becomes even more compelling when examined in relation to a regional context rich in local culture, as is the case with West Sulawesi Province. The Mandar community, as the majority ethnic group in this region, holds a system of values and local wisdom that has long served as a guide for behavior, including the concept of siri' (a sense of shame and dignity) and the tradition of metawe' or metabe', which teaches respect and courtesy toward others, particularly toward elders (F. Fitriana et al., 2023). These values are essentially philosophically close to Islamic moral teachings, and therefore hold considerable potential for integration into PAI instruction as a contextual strategy for addressing moral challenges in the digital era, as also affirmed in various studies on local-wisdom-based character education across different regions of Indonesia (Zulkarnaen, 2022).

A review of previous research shows that the issues of moral education in the digital era and the integration of local wisdom into PAI have each been fairly extensively studied, though rarely brought together within a single analytical frame. On the aspect of morality and the digital era, for instance, studies on strengthening digital ethics through social-media conduct material in PAI subjects (Novita, 2023) and literature reviews on the role of PAI in shaping students' character amid the rapid flow of digital information (Anggun Syahriani Putri & Rizka Harfiani, 2025) affirm the urgency of this topic, yet neither study touches on the dimension of local wisdom specific to a particular region. On the aspect of integrating local wisdom into PAI, research has been conducted across various contexts in Indonesia, whether in the form of religious character transformation through local wisdom values in general (Walad et al., 2025) or critical perspectives and alternative solutions for cross-regional integration (Umam & Husain, 2024), but these studies generally focus on strengthening character or broad religious moderation, without specifically targeting the social-media ethics challenges faced by students.

Specifically within the Mandar context, research explicitly linking local wisdom with PAI instruction has also been conducted, for example through a field study on the design of PAI instruction based on Mandar local wisdom in fostering students' religious character (Khatimah, 2024). This research makes an important contribution in documenting PAI instructional strategies and techniques grounded in Mandar culture in the field, but is a field research study that focuses on strengthening religious character in general, and has not specifically addressed students' moral issues in interacting within digital spaces or social media. Thus, two research strands have so far run separately: general digital-moral research without regional roots, and empirical Mandar local-wisdom-PAI research that has not yet touched on digital issues.

This gap between the two research strands is the point of departure for the novelty of this article. Unlike previous studies, this article specifically brings together three elements at once, namely moral education, the challenges of social media ethics in the digital era, and Mandar local wisdom, through a library research approach. As far as the search conducted shows, the combination of these three elements within a single conceptual study has not been found in the available literature, so this article is expected to fill that gap while also opening space for further, more in-depth empirical research.

1.1. The Concept of Akhlak in the Islamic Perspective

In the Islamic view, akhlak (morality) is a reflection of a person's faith manifested in daily behavior. Etymologically, akhlak is understood as an ingrained state of the soul that gives rise to spontaneous action without the need for lengthy deliberation, as explained by Al-Ghazali in Ihya Ulumuddin, while Ibn Miskawayh, in Tahdzib al-Akhlaq, views akhlak as the outcome of a continuous process of habituation and education. This view is reinforced by contemporary studies affirming that Al-Ghazali's thinking on the purification of the soul (tazkiyat al-nafs), habituation (ta'dib), and teacher exemplarship (uswah hasanah) remains relevant for application in present-day character education (Apdifa et al., 2025).

Akhlak is also understood as an inner state that naturally gives rise to good or bad conduct, meaning that noble character can only be formed through a consistent and graduated process of cultivation (Ilallah et al., 2022). A study of Qur'anic verses, for example the series of Luqman's advice to his son, affirms that moral education encompasses four dimensions at once: akhlak toward Allah, akhlak toward oneself, akhlak toward family, and akhlak toward society (Yasin, 2019). These dimensions show that akhlak in Islam is not partial but comprehensive, applying to every domain of a Muslim's life, including interaction within digital spaces.

Furthermore, akhlak in Islam is consistently grounded in the exemplary conduct of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the primary model, as reflected in various aspects of leadership and education that he demonstrated to his companions (Siregar & Musfah, 2022). It is these universal values, such as honesty, trustworthiness, and responsibility, drawn from the Qur'an, that then serve as the basis for developing Qur'an-based character education within formal educational settings (Siti Rohmah, 2019).

1.2. The Position of Akhlak in Islamic Religious Education

Within the context of formal education, PAI is mandated to instill moral values through three domains at once: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The cognitive domain relates to students' understanding of the arguments and concepts of akhlak, the affective domain relates to internalizing values so that moral awareness grows, while the psychomotor domain relates to practicing these values in concrete action (Dwi Kasnuri, 2025). Effective moral education is education capable of integrating these three domains in a balanced way, rather than merely transferring knowledge about right and wrong, as also affirmed in a study on the perspective of noble-character education in changing students' behavior (Adri et al., 2020).

Value instillation in PAI should ideally also be integrated across subject areas, not limited solely to religious education class hours, as recommended in models for developing character education integrated into school learning (Nur Khasanah & Ima Rosila, 2025). Such an integrative approach is important so that moral values do not remain merely rote material, but become a foundation for students' thinking and action across various situations, including when they are at school, at home, or in digital spaces. Efforts to internalize character education in schools, as formulated in various practical guidelines for educators, also demand consistency between what is taught and what teachers model on a daily basis (Octaviani et al., 2019). This policy direction is also in line with the government's mandate through Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 on Strengthening Character Education, which affirms the importance of harmonizing heart, feeling, thought, and physical cultivation (olah hati, olah rasa, olah pikir, and olah raga) in shaping students' character through cooperation among schools, families, and communities (Peraturan Presiden, 2017). More technically, the PAI curriculum itself is regulated through Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 183 of 2019 on the Curriculum of Islamic Religious Education and Arabic in Madrasah, which serves as the official reference for madrasah in designing PAI instruction, including its moral content (Agama RI, 2019).

The Islamic value foundation underlying moral education in PAI can also be traced to the idea of actualizing Qur'anic values within the Islamic education system, which affirms that every component of education, from objectives and curriculum to methods, should be grounded in Qur'anic values as its primary source (Toyibah et al., 2024). Classical perspectives on the foundations of Islamic education likewise affirm that the formation of noble character is the ultimate goal of the entire Islamic education process, not merely one of its parts (D. Fitriana, 2020), as also affirmed in historical and methodological studies of Islamic education that position personality and moral formation as the primary orientation of the Islamic education system (Zulhimma, 2021).

1.3. Characteristics of Digital Interaction and Its Challenges for Adolescents

Social media was initially understood as a collection of internet-based applications that enable users to create and exchange content (Andary & Khairullah, 2022). The high intensity with which adolescents use it is also driven by psychological needs for information, entertainment, and social recognition, as

explained in uses and gratification theory (Karunia H et al., 2021). Understanding these motives matters for moral education because they explain why students remain highly engaged with digital spaces even when those spaces expose them to morally problematic content.

Digital spaces, particularly social media, have interaction characteristics that differ from face-to-face communication. The lack of direct social control, high anonymity, and the speed of information dissemination make digital spaces an arena vulnerable to misuse for conduct contrary to moral values, such as hate speech, cyberbullying, and the spread of unverified information (Karunia H et al., 2021). Adolescents, as an actively engaged group of social media users, tend to treat digital platforms as spaces for shaping their self-identity, so that what they see and consume in digital spaces also shapes their outlook on norms and propriety (M Ravii Marwan, 2023).

This condition calls for a clear ethical framework for interaction in digital spaces. From an Islamic perspective, social media ethics is grounded in a number of fundamental principles, such as tabayyun, or the principle of verifying and cross-checking before disseminating information, guarding one's speech and writing, and avoiding gossip (ghibah) and slander (fitnah) (Juminem, 2019). These are precisely the principles that should become teaching material in PAI instruction at school, so that students are not only technically proficient in using technology but also possess a moral compass in responding to every piece of content they encounter or share.

1.4. Character Education Based on Local Wisdom

Local wisdom is a system of values, knowledge, and norms that grows and develops within a community as the result of prolonged interaction with its social and cultural environment. A number of studies show that character education is more easily internalized by students when delivered through a contextual approach rooted in local culture, compared with a generic and uniform approach (Ramdani, 2018). Local wisdom also functions to reinforce cultural identity while serving as a means of shaping the character of the younger generation amid the currents of globalization that risk eroding traditional values (Zulkarnaen, 2022).

The implementation of local-wisdom-based character education has been practiced in various regions of Indonesia in diverse forms suited to each region's cultural distinctiveness, and has proven able to strengthen the instilling of discipline, courtesy, and social responsibility in students (Faiz & Soleh, 2021). Local wisdom also plays an important role in building tolerant character that respects differences, while serving as a bridge between ancestral cultural values and the demands of character education in the modern era (Balaya & Zafir, 2020). These various findings reinforce the assumption that integrating Mandar local wisdom into PAI instruction in West Sulawesi is not merely a normative idea, but an approach with a strong conceptual foundation and precedents of application in various other local contexts across Indonesia.

Based on the discussion above, this article is prepared to conceptually examine how moral education can be strengthened through PAI instruction in the digital era, positioning Mandar local wisdom as an element that enriches the

process of value internalization. This study is important given the still-limited literature that specifically links PAI-based moral education with the cultural distinctiveness of West Sulawesi, particularly in responding to the challenges posed by digitalization. As a concrete contribution to addressing this gap, this article proposes a tiered conceptual framework of Siri'-Metawe' Contextual Akhlak, which will be elaborated in detail in the discussion section as a proposed synthesis between universal Islamic values and Mandar local wisdom in responding to moral challenges in digital spaces.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of library research, a method that collects and analyzes data sourced from written materials without requiring direct field data collection. The data sources in this study consist of more than thirty references, including national scientific journal articles, Islamic education reference books, classical scholarly works, and education policy documents relevant to the themes of moral education, Islamic Religious Education, the digital era, local-wisdom-based character education, and the culture of the Mandar community.

Data collection was carried out through literature searches and documentation from national scientific journal databases, after which the collected data were analyzed using content analysis techniques through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted by sorting out information relevant to the study's focus; data display was carried out by organizing findings into thematic categories covering the concept of akhlak, digital-era challenges, the roles of teachers and families, and local wisdom; while conclusion drawing was carried out by connecting the findings so as to arrive at a coherent conceptual picture of PAI-based moral education and Mandar local wisdom in the digital era.

To deepen the analysis beyond description, the thematically organized data were examined in three analytic steps. First, the digital moral challenges identified in the literature were classified by type (epistemic, expressive, and relational) and related to the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of moral education in PAI. Second, the Mandar values of siri' and metawe' were compared with corresponding Islamic moral concepts to identify their similarities, differences, and limits as pedagogical resources. Third, the results of the first two steps were synthesized into a conceptual framework, whose internal logic was checked against the classical theories of akhlak of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh discussed in Section 1.1. Because this is a conceptual study, the framework is presented as a proposition to be tested rather than as an empirically validated model.

3. Result and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the literature analysis and discusses them in five parts: the moral challenges students face in the digital era (3.1), the roles of teachers and families (3.2), the potential of Mandar local wisdom (3.3), the strategies derived from these findings (3.4), and the tiered framework that

synthesizes them (3.5). Section 3.6 then positions the framework against previous research and discusses its implications and limitations. Table 1 summarizes the main findings, and each is elaborated and critically analyzed in the subsections that follow.

Table 1. Summary of the Main Findings

Theme	Main finding	Supporting literature	Analytical implication for PAI
Digital moral challenges	Unfiltered information, trend-driven value orientation, coarse language, disrespect toward authority figures, and diminished empathy	Tanamal (2022); Suhartono & Rahma Yulieta (2019); Karunia H et al. (2021)	Moral education must address students' habits in using social media, not only normative knowledge
Roles of teachers and families	Teachers act as role models and companions; families provide faith, habituation, and supervision; reflective case-based learning turns values into a thinking tool	Dwi Kasnuri (2025); Anggun Syahriani Putri & Rizka Harfiani (2025); Zamroni (2017); Prayitno & Mubarok (2022)	School–family collaboration is a prerequisite for success, not an option
Mandar local wisdom	Siri' corresponds with haya'; metawe' or metabe' corresponds with respect toward elders and parents; both are still practiced	Sukmawati et al. (2024); F. Fitriana et al. (2023); Ramdani (2018)	Akhlak can be taught as a lived cultural practice, not only as abstract text
Strategies	Five complementary strategies: exemplarity, habituation of local values, social-media-oriented teaching materials, school–family–community collaboration, and value-based digital literacy	Apdifa et al. (2025); Juminem (2019); Zamroni (2017)	The strategies must be applied simultaneously to be effective
Conceptual framework	Three tiered pillars (siri', metawe', contextual akhlak) linked to behavioral indicators and a three-step learning sequence	Synthesis of the above findings; Juminem (2019)	A testable basis for designing digital-morality evaluation instruments

3.1. Students' Moral Challenges in the Digital Era

The most tangible challenge currently facing moral education is the rapid, unfiltered flow of information. Students are easily exposed to entertainment content, trends, and opinions circulating on social media without having adequate digital literacy skills to filter them. This condition can give rise to a shift in value orientation, for example when standards of appropriate behavior are shaped more by online trends than by the religious values taught at home or at school (Tanamal, 2022).

In addition, the character of communication in digital spaces, which tends to involve minimal face-to-face contact, also influences how students express themselves. A number of studies note the emergence of a tendency toward

coarse language, disrespectful attitudes toward authority figures, and diminished social empathy as effects of interaction taking place more virtually than in person (Suhartono & Rahma Yulieta, 2019). Such phenomena require moral education not merely to stop at the level of normative knowledge, but also to address students' actual habits in using social media, in line with findings that the strengthening of digital ethics needs to be explicitly present in PAI teaching materials, for example through content on proper conduct in using social media (Novita, 2023).

These findings can be read at three levels. At the epistemic level, the problem is that students receive information faster than they can verify it, so hoaxes and unverified claims spread easily. At the expressive level, the problem is how students speak and write, visible in coarse language and hate speech. At the relational level, the problem is how students regard others, visible in disrespect toward authority figures and diminished empathy (Suhartono & Rahma Yulieta, 2019). This distinction matters because each level calls for a different emphasis in PAI. The epistemic level mainly concerns the cognitive domain, because students must understand the principle of tabayyun and be able to apply it (Juminem, 2019). The expressive level mainly concerns the psychomotor domain, because courteous speech must be practiced until it becomes habitual. The relational level mainly concerns the affective domain, because respect and empathy depend on internalized feelings rather than on rules (Dwi Kasnuri, 2025).

A deeper analysis shows that these three problems share a common root: the digital environment weakens the external mechanisms that normally regulate conduct. In face-to-face settings, a student's behavior is constrained by the immediate presence of parents, teachers, and peers. The lack of direct social control, high anonymity, and speed of dissemination in digital spaces (Karunia H et al., 2021) remove much of this constraint, so that students' conduct depends more heavily on what they have internalized. This is what classical akhlak theory would lead us to expect. Al-Ghazali's view of akhlak as an ingrained state of the soul that gives rise to spontaneous action, and Ibn Miskawayh's view that this state is formed through continuous habituation and education, see Section 1.1; (Apdifa et al., 2025), imply that moral education relying on external supervision alone will be least effective exactly where students are least supervised. The implication for PAI is that the central task is not to multiply prohibitions on social media use, but to cultivate internal regulators that remain active when no one is watching. This is the analytical entry point for the discussion of siri' and haya' in Section 3.3.

3.2. The Roles of Teachers and Families in Strengthening Digital Akhlak

PAI teachers occupy a key position in responding to this challenge. Besides serving as instructors of religious material, PAI teachers are also required to be role models in the wise use of technology and companions capable of guiding students to understand the ethical boundaries of social media use based on Islamic values (Dwi Kasnuri, 2025). This exemplary role becomes important given that students tend to imitate the behavioral patterns of figures they respect,

including the way teachers behave and communicate in digital spaces, as affirmed in a study on the role of PAI in shaping students' character in the digital era (Anggun Syahriani Putri & Rizka Harfiani, 2025).

The role of teachers cannot stand alone without the support of the family as the child's first and primary educational environment. Families are responsible for continuously instilling faith, worship, and morality from an early age through parental exemplarship, habituation, advice, and supervision (Zamroni, 2017). When schools and families move in the same direction in instilling moral values, students will have a stronger moral foundation for facing temptations and negative pressures arising from digital social interaction, making collaboration between PAI teachers and parents an important prerequisite for the success of moral education in the digital era.

Furthermore, PAI teachers need to develop instructional approaches that are not merely normative-textual but also reflective and contextual, for example by inviting students to discuss real cases they encounter on social media and then analyze them from the perspective of Islamic morality. Such an approach allows religious values to become not merely rote knowledge, but a thinking tool that students use in responding to the digital realities they face daily (Prayitno & Mubarok, 2022).

Analytically, the three actors identified in the literature perform different and complementary functions rather than the same function repeated. Teachers mainly contribute the cognitive and reflective dimension, through explanation of moral arguments and case-based discussion (Prayitno & Mubarok, 2022). Parents mainly contribute habituation and supervision in everyday life at home (Zamroni, 2017). Community and traditional leaders, whose role is raised in the strategies in Section 3.4, contribute social meaning, that is, the sense that conduct is observed and valued by a community to which the student belongs. When one of these functions is missing, moral education tends to become partial: knowledge without habituation, supervision without understanding, or cultural symbolism without religious grounding.

The literature also points to an important condition for this role: exemplarity must be visible in the digital space itself. Because students tend to imitate figures they respect, including how those figures behave and communicate online (Anggun Syahriani Putri & Rizka Harfiani, 2025), a teacher whose digital conduct contradicts classroom teaching weakens the credibility of moral education, which is consistent with the demand for consistency between what is taught and what teachers model (Octaviani et al., 2019). Likewise, the effectiveness of parental supervision can be expected to depend on parents' own familiarity with digital platforms, an assumption that the reviewed literature does not test and that therefore deserves empirical investigation.

3.3. Integrating Mandar Local Wisdom as a Reinforcement of Moral Education

One strength that can be optimized in PAI-based moral education in West Sulawesi is the richness of the Mandar community's local wisdom values. The concept of siri', which can simply be interpreted as a sense of shame and dignity, has long functioned as a form of social control guiding community behavior to

consistently safeguard personal and family honor. This value aligns with the concept of haya' in Islamic teaching, namely a sense of shame that drives a person to avoid reprehensible acts (Sukmawati et al., 2024).

In addition to siri', the tradition of metawe' or metabe', widely known within the Mandar community, teaches courteous conduct, particularly in the form of asking permission and showing respect when walking past or interacting in the presence of elders. This value of respect toward elders aligns with Islamic moral teachings that place respect toward parents and others as an important part of noble character. The practice of drawing on Mandar culture to instill discipline in adolescents at several schools in West Sulawesi shows that these local values remain alive and can be employed as instruments of character education (F. Fitriana et al., 2023).

When such local values are reintroduced into PAI instruction, students come to understand akhlak not merely as an abstract, text-derived concept, but also as something that has long lived and been practiced within their own culture, making the process of value internalization more meaningful. This is in line with findings that character education linked to students' local cultural context proves more effective than a uniform approach that does not take students' socio-cultural background into account (Ramdani, 2018).

A closer comparison shows that siri' and haya' overlap but are not identical. They share two features: both are moral emotions rather than formal rules, and both restrain a person from reprehensible acts before they are carried out (Sukmawati et al., 2024). They differ in their primary reference point. As described in the Mandar literature reviewed here, siri' functions as social control that safeguards personal and family honor, so its immediate audience is the community. In the Islamic framework discussed in Section 1.1, where akhlak is a reflection of faith, haya' is anchored first in the believer's relationship with Allah and only then in relationships with other people. This difference has a significant consequence for the digital era. If shame depends on being seen by a respected audience, it weakens in anonymous online settings where that audience seems absent. Grounding siri' in the Islamic awareness that one's conduct is always known to Allah gives it an audience-independent anchor, and this is why the proposed framework treats siri' as culturally rooted but religiously grounded, not as a freestanding cultural value.

Metawe' or metabe' presents a different analytical problem. It is an embodied etiquette: asking permission and showing respect while passing or interacting in the presence of elders relies on bodily and spatial cues such as posture, distance, and gesture. These cues disappear online, so applying metawe' in digital spaces is a matter of translation rather than simple transfer, in which bodily courtesy is converted into textual equivalents such as greeting, choice of diction, tone, and restraint in responding to others' posts. This is why the framework in Section 3.5 expresses metawe' in terms of digital communication patterns. The alignment with Islamic teaching on respect toward parents and others also needs a careful reading: respect toward elders should not be understood as suppressing legitimate disagreement, which is why the proposed indicator is courteous diction even when opinions differ.

From a pedagogical viewpoint, the value of local wisdom lies in reducing the distance between moral concepts and students' experience. Contextual approaches rooted in local culture are internalized more easily than uniform ones (Ramdani, 2018), and the use of Mandar culture to instill discipline in a kindergarten in West Sulawesi (F. Fitriana et al., 2023) indicates that these values remain alive in practice, although at a much earlier age than that of the students addressed by PAI in the digital era. At the same time, the reviewed studies are largely descriptive and concentrate on specific institutions, so they show the feasibility of integration but not its effect on students' online behavior. This article therefore treats local wisdom as a plausible but still unverified resource for digital moral education.

3.4. Strategies for PAI- and Local-Wisdom-Based Moral Education in the Digital Era

Based on the discussion above, several conceptual strategies can be formulated for strengthening moral education through PAI in West Sulawesi. First, strengthening the exemplary method, in which teachers and parents demonstrate concrete examples of wise and Islamic digital media use, in line with the principle of uswah hasanah emphasized in Al-Ghazali's thought (Apdifa et al., 2025). Second, consistently habituating local values such as siri' and metawe' in school activities, so that these values are not only taught cognitively but also practiced in daily interaction.

Third, developing PAI teaching materials that explicitly link moral arguments with the context of social media ethics, for example material on guarding one's speech linked to the ethics of commenting on social media and the principle of tabayyun before disseminating information (Juminem, 2019). Fourth, strengthening collaboration among schools, families, and local traditional leaders in overseeing the formation of students' character, given that moral education cannot be fully assigned to schools without the support of families and the community (Zamroni, 2017).

Fifth, strengthening digital literacy grounded in Islamic values, so that students are not only technically proficient in using technology but also capable of filtering and responding to digital content based on moral considerations. These five strategies are essentially complementary and need to be applied simultaneously so that PAI-based moral education can produce optimal results amid the challenges of the digital era, while also positioning Mandar local wisdom as a distinctive identity that enriches PAI instruction in West Sulawesi.

Analytically, the five strategies can be grouped by the level at which they operate. Exemplarity and habituation (the first and second strategies) work at the level of the individual student's formation. The development of teaching materials and the strengthening of digital literacy (the third and fifth strategies) work at the level of curriculum and content. Collaboration among schools, families, and traditional leaders (the fourth strategy) works at the level of the social environment that sustains the other four. They are interdependent: materials without exemplarity remain rote knowledge, habituation without collaboration stays confined to school hours, and literacy without internalized values yields

technically skilled but morally unguided users. This combination is also supported by the policy framework, since Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 calls for cooperation among schools, families, and communities in shaping students' character (Peraturan Presiden, 2017).

The strategies also differ in how readily they can be implemented. Developing teaching materials and adding reflective case discussion are within the direct control of PAI teachers, whereas collaboration with families and traditional leaders requires institutional arrangements and sustained relationships. A realistic implementation therefore begins with the strategies that teachers control and extends outward to the community. Because the PAI curriculum in madrasah is regulated through Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 183 of 2019 (Agama RI, 2019), local wisdom is most feasibly introduced as a contextual enrichment of existing learning objectives rather than as an additional subject.

3.5. A Synthesis of Siri', Metawe', and Contextual Akhlak: A Tiered Conceptual Framework

Building on the synthesis of findings from the preceding sections, this article proposes a tiered conceptual framework of Siri'-Metawe' Contextual Akhlak as a framework for connecting Mandar local wisdom values with PAI-based moral education in the digital era. This framework places three pillars in a graduated order: first, siri' as the foundation of internal self-control that functions to restrain students from reprehensible acts, both in the real world and in digital spaces; second, metawe' or metabe' as a manifestation of respectful behavior practiced in social interaction, including how students greet, comment on, and respond to others' posts on social media; and third, contextual akhlak as the culmination of these two values, namely students' ability to translate shame and respect into concrete ethical decisions when confronted with problematic digital content, such as hoaxes, hate speech, or indecent material.

These three pillars do not stand in parallel, but move in a graduated sequence from internal to external, and from value to action. Siri' functions as the most basic layer, working internally before students act, much like an inner brake restraining the impulse to upload or share something that would compromise one's honor. Metawe' functions as the second layer, working at the relational level, namely how this value of respect manifests in patterns of communication with others in digital spaces. Contextual akhlak, meanwhile, is the topmost, applicative layer, the meeting point between inner awareness and relational sensitivity manifested in concrete decisions: refraining from spreading information whose truth is not yet clear, choosing courteous diction when opinions differ, or deciding not to be drawn into cyberbullying even when provoked. It is this tiered structure that distinguishes this framework from a mere list of noble values standing independently of one another, since each pillar has a causal function that supports the next.

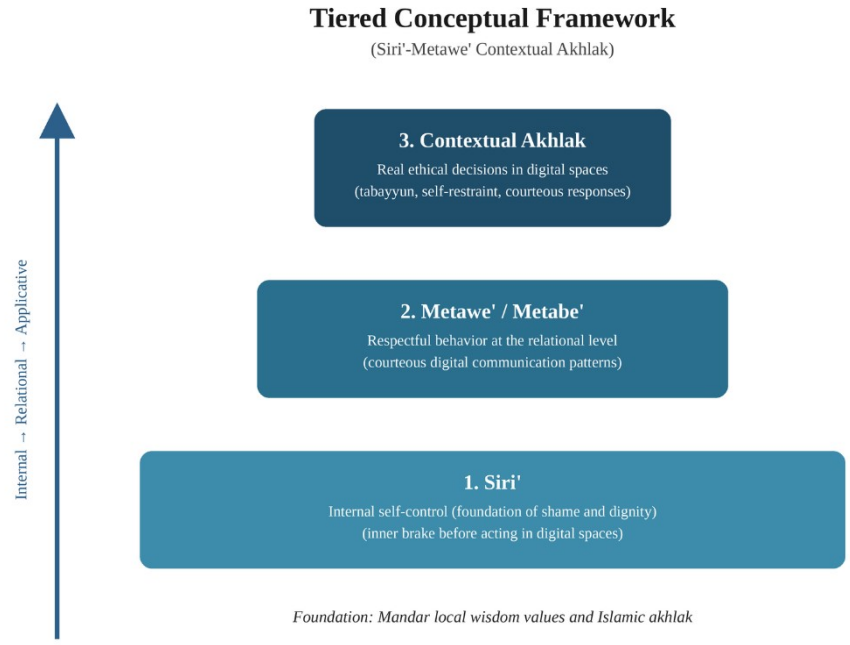


Figure 1. Tiered Structure of the Siri'-Metawe' Contextual Akhlak Conceptual Framework in PAI-Based Moral Education in the Digital Era

The tiered logic of the framework is consistent with the classical theories of akhlak discussed in Section 1.1. If akhlak is an ingrained state of the soul that gives rise to spontaneous action (Al-Ghazali) and is formed through continuous habituation and education (Ibn Miskawayh), then the three pillars can be read as stages of that formation: siri' as the inner disposition that must be cultivated first, metawe' as the habituated practice through which the disposition is expressed toward others, and contextual akhlak as the stage at which disposition and practice have become sufficiently ingrained to guide spontaneous yet reasoned decisions in new situations. This reading explains why the order of the pillars matters and why the framework cannot be reduced to a list of values taught in parallel. It also agrees with the view that noble character can only be formed through a consistent and graduated process (Ilallah et al., 2022).

Table 2 sets out the framework in operational form, showing for each pillar its Mandar source and Islamic counterpart, the digital behavior expected, the corresponding PAI domain, and the instructional step in which it is developed.

Table 2. Operational Structure of the Siri'-Metawe' Contextual Akhlak Framework

Pillar	Mandar value and Islamic counterpart	Observable digital indicator	PAI domain	Instructional step
Siri' (tier 1: internal self-control)	Siri' (sense of shame and dignity); haya'	Reluctance to upload content that would embarrass oneself or one's family	Affective	Step 1: self-reflection on how family and respected figures would react to a post
Metawe' or metabe' (tier 2: relational respect)	Metawe' or metabe' (courtesy toward elders); respect toward parents and others	Courteous digital communication, including greetings, diction, and responses to provocative comments, even when opinions differ	Psychomotor	Step 2: simulation of digital interaction
Contextual akhlak (tier 3: ethical decision)	Integration of both values with Islamic moral guidance (tabayyun, guarding one's speech)	Independently practicing tabayyun before reacting; refusing to spread unverified information or join cyberbullying	Cognitive and applied	Step 3: case analysis of problematic content

The advantage of this framework compared with general approaches to moral education lies in its tiered and observable nature. Moral education has generally emphasized the normative instilling of values, but adding more concrete behavioral benchmarks can enrich this approach, making its everyday application easier to observe. This framework offers more concrete behavioral indicators: students who have successfully internalized siri' will show reluctance to upload content that would embarrass themselves or their families; students who have internalized metawe' will display courteous digital communication patterns even when opinions differ; while students who reach the stage of contextual akhlak will be able to independently practice tabayyun before reacting to information circulating on social media (Juminem, 2019). These three indicators can serve as an initial foundation for PAI teachers in West Sulawesi to design more contextual digital-morality evaluation instruments, while also opening opportunities for empirical testing in future research.

In terms of application, this framework can be translated by PAI teachers into three sequential instructional steps. The first step is instilling siri' awareness through self-reflection, for example by inviting students to imagine the reaction of family and community if a digital post were seen by people they respect, so that a sense of shame functions as a self-control mechanism before acting. The second step is habituating metawe' through simulations of digital interaction, for example through exercises in responding to provocative comments with courteous language, in the manner of the metawe' etiquette practiced when passing an

elder. The third step is forming contextual akhlak through real case studies, namely inviting students to analyze screenshots of problematic content circulating on social media, then discussing the tabayyun process and the response that should be taken based on Islamic moral guidance. These three steps make this conceptual framework not merely a theoretical construct, but a learning sequence ready to be adapted into PAI lesson plans (RPP).

Theoretically, this framework offers an original contribution in the form of a conceptual bridge between classical moral theory, rooted in the thought of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh, and the realities of character education in the digital era, which demand more measurable behavioral indicators. This framework also affirms that local wisdom need not be positioned as a cosmetic supplement in PAI instruction, but can function as an analytical framework with explanatory power over the digital moral phenomena students currently face. This conceptual framework thus has the potential to become a conceptual contribution that can be tested, developed, or even replicated using the local wisdom of other regions in Indonesia that hold similar values, such as sipakatau among the Bugis-Makassar community or pamali among various indigenous communities across the Indonesian archipelago.

3.6. Positioning, Implications, and Limitations of the Framework

Compared with earlier studies, the framework occupies a position that the reviewed literature had left empty. Studies on digital ethics in PAI (Novita, 2023) establish the urgency of the topic but do not draw on regional cultural resources, while studies on local wisdom in PAI (Umam & Husain, 2024), including the Mandar-based study by Khatimah (Khatimah, 2024), focus on religious character in general. The present analysis adds two things to these strands. First, it identifies the mechanism through which local wisdom can matter for digital morality, namely its capacity to supply internal and relational regulators when external supervision weakens. Second, it translates this mechanism into observable indicators and a learning sequence, which the earlier studies did not provide. These contributions remain conceptual, and the claim of novelty is limited to the literature accessed for this study.

For practice, the framework suggests that PAI teachers in West Sulawesi do not necessarily need to add a new subject; they can reframe existing akhlak material through the three instructional steps and use the indicators to observe students' digital conduct. For policy and curriculum design, the framework can be read as consistent with the aim of harmonizing heart, feeling, thought, and physical cultivation stated in Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 (Peraturan Presiden, 2017), because it connects inner awareness (siri'), relational feeling (metawe'), and reasoned judgment (contextual akhlak). For future research, the indicators can be developed into observation or self-report instruments, and the framework can be tested by comparing learning with and without a local-wisdom component.

Several limitations should be noted. First, as library research, the study relies on secondary sources and has not observed students' actual behavior, so the proposed indicators are not yet validated. Second, the Mandar literature

reviewed is limited in volume and mostly descriptive, which restricts how far claims about the living strength of siri' and metawe' among today's digital-native students can be generalized. Third, shame-based approaches carry the risk that students comply to avoid embarrassment rather than out of conviction; the framework tries to address this by grounding siri' in Islamic God-consciousness, but whether this works in practice is an empirical question. Fourth, the framework is built on Mandar values, and its transfer to other regions would require a separate analysis of what the local values mean and where they differ. Classroom action research, mixed-methods studies, and comparative case studies would be suitable ways to address these limitations.

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine conceptually how moral education can be strengthened through PAI in the digital era by integrating Mandar local wisdom. The analysis leads to three main conclusions. First, students' digital moral challenges stem from the weakening of external social control in digital spaces, so PAI teachers, families, and community figures must act together as role models and facilitators of value-based digital literacy, with moral education directed at internal regulators and everyday habits rather than at normative knowledge alone. Second, the Mandar values of siri' and metawe' or metabe' correspond with the Islamic concepts of haya' and respect toward elders and parents, and can supply internal and relational anchors of conduct, provided that siri' is grounded in religious awareness and metawe' is translated into digital forms of courtesy. Third, these values can be arranged into the tiered Siri'-Metawe' Contextual Akhlak framework, which links siri', metawe', and contextual akhlak with observable behavioral indicators and a three-step learning sequence, thereby bridging classical moral theory with the need for measurable character education in the digital era.

Because this study is conceptual and based on secondary sources, the framework should be treated as a proposition to be tested. Further empirical research is recommended to examine its effectiveness in schools across West Sulawesi, for example through classroom trials of the learning sequence, the development and validation of instruments based on the behavioral indicators, and comparative studies with the local wisdom of other regions. In the meantime, PAI teachers and school leaders can use the framework as a starting point for designing contextual learning and digital-morality evaluation.

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