




Internalization of Islamic Religious Education Values in Forming Students' Self-Control Towards Online Game Use in Grade IV Students

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ABSTRACT

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The use of online games among elementary school students has the potential to affect students' behavior and self-control if not properly managed. Islamic Religious Education plays an important role in shaping students' character and self-regulation through the internalization of religious values. This study aims to describe the internalization of Islamic Religious Education values in shaping students' self-control toward the use of online games among fourth-grade students at SDI Hidayatul Ummah, Pakuniran District, Probolinggo. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Research informants included Islamic Religious Education teachers, the school principal, students, and parents as supporting informants. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with data validity ensured through source triangulation. The findings indicate that the internalization of Islamic Religious Education values is implemented through contextual learning, role modeling, and habituation of religious behavior. Values of discipline and responsibility contribute to students' ability to control their use of online games. The internalization of Islamic Religious Education values contributes to strengthening students' character and self-control in facing the influence of digital technology development.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology in the era of globalization has brought significant changes to various aspects of human life, including the education sector. Advances associated with the Industrial Revolution 4.0 have transformed learning environments and patterns at both elementary and secondary education levels, particularly through the integration of digital media and internet-based technologies (Dito & Pujiastuti, 2021). Today, elementary school students grow up in an environment closely connected to digital devices and online access. One form of digital technology that is highly attractive to

children is online gaming, which offers entertainment and enjoyment but also presents potential risks when used excessively and without proper supervision (Kristanti et al., 2025).

The phenomenon of excessive online game use among elementary school students has begun to show serious consequences. Several studies indicate that uncontrolled online gaming can reduce learning concentration, weaken discipline, and disrupt social interactions among students (Hasan et al., 2021; Kristanti et al., 2025). At this developmental stage, students have not yet fully developed the ability to distinguish between obligations and leisure activities. As a result, online gaming activities are often prioritized over studying, religious practices, and social engagement within the family and school environment. This condition suggests that the primary issue does not lie in online games themselves, but rather in students' limited self-control in regulating their use.

Self-control is a critical capacity that allows individuals to regulate impulses, manage time effectively, and behave responsibly. In the context of digital technology, weak self-control has been identified as a key factor contributing to problematic online game use among students (Ilyasa & Nurhayat, 2025). For elementary school students, self-control is still developing and therefore requires consistent guidance from educational institutions and families. Without appropriate value-based education, children are vulnerable to excessive digital engagement that may negatively affect their academic achievement and character development. From the perspective of Islamic education, character building and self-regulation are fundamental goals that must be instilled from an early age. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a strategic role in shaping students' personalities through the internalization of faith-based, moral, and ethical values (Kamila, 2023). Values such as discipline, responsibility, patience, self-restraint, and wise time management are central teachings in Islam and are highly relevant in guiding students to respond appropriately to the challenges of the digital era, including the use of online games (Zainuddin et al., 2024).

However, in school practice, the internalization of Islamic Religious Education values often remains focused on cognitive aspects and theoretical understanding. Several studies note that Islamic education learning tends to emphasize knowledge transmission rather than contextual application in students' daily lives (Furoidah, 2025; Hatamudin et al., 2025). As a result, religious values are not fully transformed into attitudes and behaviors, creating a gap between students' religious knowledge and its practical implementation. This gap becomes particularly evident in students' difficulties in controlling their online gaming behavior.

Islamic elementary schools, as basic educational institutions with a religious orientation, play an important role in establishing students' character foundations. This condition is also observed at SDI Hidayatul Ummah, Pakuniran District, Probolinggo, where some fourth-grade students are accustomed to using digital devices for online gaming outside school hours. Preliminary observations indicate that this habit has led to disciplinary issues such as delayed task completion, decreased learning focus, and difficulties in balancing study time, play, and religious obligations. Although Islamic Religious Education at the school incorporates moral and self-control values, these values have not yet been fully contextualized in relation to students' real-life online gaming habits

Therefore, a focused study is required to examine the internalization of Islamic Religious Education values in shaping students' self-control toward online game use, particularly among fourth-grade students at SDI Hidayatul Ummah, Pakuniran District, Probolinggo. This study aims to explore how the process of internalizing Islamic values within learning activities contributes to students' ability to use online games wisely and responsibly. Through this approach, Islamic Religious Education is expected not only to function as a medium for delivering religious knowledge but also as an effective educational solution for addressing students' behavioral challenges in the digital era.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative research design. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of internalizing Islamic Religious Education values in shaping students' self-control toward the use of online games. Qualitative research enables the exploration of phenomena in their natural settings and provides a comprehensive and contextual description of participants' experiences. The study was conducted at SDI Hidayatul Ummah, Pakuniran District, Probolinggo Regency, selected due to its status as an Islamic elementary school with a strong emphasis on character education and the observed phenomenon of online game use among fourth-grade students. The research participants included Islamic Religious Education teachers, the school principal, and fourth-grade students, who were selected purposively based on their relevance to and understanding of the research focus. Participant selection was conducted progressively until the data obtained were considered sufficient and saturated.

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations focused on Islamic Religious Education learning activities and students' behaviors related to self-control and online game use. In-depth interviews were conducted with Islamic Religious Education teachers and fourth-grade students to explore the process of value internalization and

students' experiences in regulating their gaming behavior, while documentation served as supporting data in the form of instructional materials and relevant school records. Data analysis was carried out continuously throughout the research process using the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data credibility, source triangulation and technique triangulation were applied by comparing information obtained from different participants and data collection methods. Overall, this methodological approach was designed to generate accurate and contextual insights into how Islamic Religious Education contributes to strengthening students' discipline, responsibility, and self-control in the digital era.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this study were obtained through a series of data collection processes, including direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation conducted at SDI Hidayatul Ummah, Pakuniran District, Probolinggo Regency. This study was grounded in the phenomenon of increasing online game use among elementary school students, which has the potential to influence students' behavior, discipline, and self-control. In this context, Islamic Religious Education was identified as having a strategic role in shaping students' character and self-regulation through the internalization of religious values. Data were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively, emphasizing an in-depth interpretation of phenomena observed in the field. The research findings are presented based on the main focus areas of the study, as outlined below.

Internalization of Islamic Religious Education Values in Learning Activities

The internalization of Islamic Religious Education values in shaping students' self-control toward online game use among fourth-grade students at SDI Hidayatul Ummah was implemented as part of the school's character development efforts. This process was directed at instilling values of discipline, responsibility, and self-awareness to enable students to regulate their behavior in using digital technology, particularly online games. Islamic Religious Education learning was not positioned merely as a means of transferring religious knowledge, but also as a medium for shaping students' attitudes and behaviors in their daily lives.

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the internalization of Islamic Religious Education values at SDI Hidayatul Ummah was carried out through planned stages involving the active roles of Islamic Religious Education teachers, the school principal, students, and parental support. The internalization process was not implemented instantaneously, but rather through continuous habituation within classroom learning and religious activities at school. This approach became a key strategy for addressing the growing use of online games among elementary school students.

At the planning stage, Islamic Religious Education teachers conducted an analysis of students' characteristics and the problems they faced. Initial

observations revealed that some fourth-grade students had a relatively high intensity of online game use, which potentially disrupted their study time and religious practices. In response, teachers designed Islamic Religious Education lessons that emphasized strengthening values of discipline, responsibility, and self-control through moral education, worship practices, and exemplification of the Prophet Muhammad's character. These values were integrated into learning activities so that students could relate Islamic teachings to their everyday experiences.

An Islamic Religious Education teacher, Pak Dulla, stated during an interview that religious value formation must be carried out consistently and adapted to students' conditions. He explained: *"Children today cannot be separated from online games, so our task as Islamic Religious Education teachers is not to prohibit them completely, but to guide them. I always emphasize the importance of time discipline, responsibility, and learning intention because these are part of Islamic teachings."*

During the implementation stage, value internalization was carried out through classroom learning, habituation of religious activities, and teacher role modeling. Teachers linked Islamic Religious Education materials to students' behavior in using gadgets and online games. Throughout the learning process, teachers provided concrete examples of time management, such as prioritizing study and worship before playing. Classroom interactions were dialogical, allowing students to share their experiences related to online gaming habits.

Observational data showed that students began to demonstrate awareness in managing their time between studying, playing, and worship. Some students appeared more disciplined in participating in learning activities and religious programs. One student, Deby, shared the following experience: *"Now when I play games, I don't play for too long because the teacher said we have to know our time. If I haven't studied or prayed, I stop playing first."*

From the school management perspective, the principal of SDI Hidayatul Ummah, Mrs. Airin, emphasized that Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in shaping students' character. She stated: *"We strongly emphasize character education in this school. Islamic Religious Education is not just theoretical; it must be applied in students' attitudes and behavior, including how they use online games."*

At the evaluation stage, teachers conducted reflections with students regarding their online gaming behavior. Students were encouraged to share perceived changes after receiving Islamic Religious Education that emphasized discipline and responsibility. Teachers also observed behavioral changes through attendance, learning participation, and discipline in religious activities. The evaluation results indicated that students began to understand limits in online game use and recognized the importance of self-control.

Students' Self-Control Toward Online Game Use

Students' self-control toward online game use among fourth-grade students at SDI Hidayatul Ummah emerged as a central focus of this study. Self-control was understood as students' ability to regulate behavior, restrain desires,

and make conscious decisions regarding online gaming so that it does not interfere with learning obligations, worship, and daily activities. At the elementary school level, particularly in fourth grade, self-control is still developing and requires intensive guidance from teachers, schools, and parents.

Initial observations revealed that some students habitually played online games for extended periods, especially after school and during leisure time at home. This habit resulted in reduced study time, decreased concentration during classroom learning, and less optimal engagement in worship. However, some students began to show awareness in limiting their gaming duration after receiving reinforcement of religious values through Islamic Religious Education learning at school.

An interview with Pak Dulla indicated that students' self-control could not be developed instantly but required a continuous process of habituation and consistent value reinforcement. He stated: *"Children actually know that playing games too long is not good, but they still struggle to control themselves. That is why in Islamic Religious Education lessons, I always relate the material to time discipline, responsibility, and religious obligations."*

This statement illustrates that Islamic Religious Education functioned not only as religious instruction but also as a means of behavioral development. Teachers aimed to instill students' awareness that self-control is an essential part of Islamic moral conduct. The principal, Mrs. Airin, expressed a similar view, emphasizing the school's role in helping students build self-control in response to digital influences. She stated: *"We do not forbid children from playing games, but we emphasize how they can manage their time. Islamic Religious Education is directed to shape students' character so they can be self-controlled and responsible."*

From the students' perspective, interviews revealed changes in awareness regarding online gaming habits. Deby stated: *"Now I don't play games for too long, because if it's too much, I forget to study. The teacher often reminds us to manage our time."* This finding was reinforced by an interview with Deby's parent, who observed behavioral changes at home: *"Before, Deby was difficult to stop when playing games. Now he can be reminded more easily. He said he learned about discipline and responsibility at school, so at home he listens more."*

These statements indicate a connection between Islamic Religious Education learning at school and students' behavior in the family environment. The internalization of religious values at school was reflected not only in classroom behavior but also in students' daily lives at home. Documentation data further supported these findings. Visual documentation showed fourth-grade students actively participating in Islamic Religious Education learning as part of the process of developing self-control toward online game use.



Figure 1: Students' Activities in Islamic Religious Education Learning

Based on documentation and continuous observation, students gradually demonstrated improved self-control, as indicated by reduced gaming intensity, increased learning focus, and greater compliance with religious activities at school. Although students' self-control was still developing, consistent reinforcement of Islamic Religious Education values—supported by school policies and parental involvement—helped students build awareness in regulating their behavior.

Internalization of Islamic Religious Education Values in Shaping Students' Self-Control

The internalization of Islamic Religious Education values emerged as a crucial process in shaping students' self-control toward online game use among fourth-grade students at SDI Hidayatul Ummah. Value internalization was understood as a sustained effort to instill religious values so that they are not only cognitively understood but also manifested in students' attitudes and behaviors. In the context of digital technology development, religious value internalization served as a foundation that helped students distinguish between needs and desires and regulate behaviors that could negatively affect learning and worship.

Field observations indicated that internalization was not limited to classroom instruction but was implemented through religious habituation, teacher role modeling, and value reinforcement across various school activities. Teachers consistently linked Islamic Religious Education materials with students' real-life experiences, including online game use, guiding students to understand self-control as an integral part of Islamic teachings.

Teachers frequently provided concrete examples of discipline and responsibility, such as organizing study time, prioritizing worship, and limiting gadget use. These practices were repeated continuously to ensure that religious values were gradually embedded within students. This process was particularly important given the developmental stage of elementary school students, who require intensive guidance in developing self-control.

Mr. Dulla emphasized in an interview that value internalization requires consistency and time: *"Religious values are not enough to be taught in class. They must be practiced every day. When children are accustomed to discipline and responsibility, they will eventually be able to control themselves, including in playing games."* Similarly, the school principal highlighted the school's strategic role in character formation through religious value internalization. She stated: *"We try to instill religious values from an early stage. When children have a strong religious foundation, it becomes easier for them to control themselves, including in using online games."*

From the students' perspective, interviews indicated that Islamic

Religious Education learning contributed to increased self-awareness. Deby expressed: *"The teacher often says that discipline is part of faith. Now I think first before playing games because I'm afraid of forgetting to study or pray."* Documentation and observation also showed behavioral changes related to self-control. Students appeared more disciplined in learning, more responsible in completing assignments, and more compliant with school rules. Although not all students showed identical changes, there was a tendency for students who actively engaged in Islamic Religious Education learning to exhibit more developed self-control in online game use.

Implications of Islamic Religious Education Value Internalization for Character and Self-Control Development

The internalization of Islamic Religious Education values in fourth-grade learning at SDI Hidayatul Ummah had tangible implications for students' character formation and self-control. These implications were evident not only in students' religious understanding but also in their attitudes, behaviors, and daily habit management, particularly regarding online game use. Islamic Religious Education functioned as a character-building medium that instilled religious values as the basis for decision-making and behavior.

Observational data indicated gradual behavioral changes among students following continuous reinforcement of Islamic Religious Education values. These changes included improved discipline in learning activities, increased compliance with school rules, and greater responsibility in completing tasks. Students also demonstrated improved ability to balance study, play, and worship time.

Interviews with Pak Dulla revealed that these behavioral changes resulted from consistent character-building efforts through Islamic Religious Education. He stated: *"When religious values start to take root, children become easier to guide. They become more aware of managing time and being responsible, including when playing games."* The school principal further emphasized that the impact of Islamic Religious Education extended beyond the school environment into students' family lives. She noted: *"We see changes in students' attitudes. They are more orderly and responsible. Parents also tell us that children can now be reminded at home, especially about managing game time."*

Students' interviews reinforced these findings, as Deby stated: *"Now I remind myself more often. If I've played games for too long, I stop because I remember I have to study or pray."* Documentation also showed increased student participation in religious activities and classroom learning. Teachers reported improvements in attendance, engagement, and rule compliance. Although changes varied among students, overall findings indicate that the internalization of Islamic Religious Education values contributed positively to students' character development and self-control.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that internalizing Islamic Religious Education values plays a significant role in shaping students' religious character and self-control toward online game use. Values of discipline, responsibility, and

self-awareness functioned as internal behavioral regulators, enabling students to respond more wisely and responsibly to the challenges of digital technology development.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the internalization of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) values plays a significant role in shaping elementary school students' self-control toward online game use. The results demonstrate that values such as discipline, responsibility, and self-awareness, when consistently embedded in learning activities, habituation practices, and teacher role modeling, contribute to students' ability to regulate their behavior in the digital context. These findings support previous studies which emphasize that character education grounded in religious values is essential in guiding students' behavior amid rapid technological development (Adiyono et al., 2024; Amin, 2025; Munawarsyah, 2023). Islamic Religious Education, therefore, functions not only as a cognitive learning subject but also as a moral and behavioral framework that supports students' self-regulation.

This study further reveals that students' self-control toward online games is not formed instantaneously, but rather through a gradual and continuous process of value reinforcement. Observational and interview data show that students initially experienced difficulties in limiting game use, particularly due to developmental factors at the elementary level. This finding is consistent with research highlighting that excessive online gaming among children is closely linked to weak self-control and immature decision-making abilities (Hasan et al., 2021; Kristanti et al., 2025). However, this study adds to existing literature by demonstrating that systematic integration of IRE values can mitigate these challenges and gradually strengthen students' awareness in managing their gaming behavior.

The role of teachers emerged as a central factor in the successful internalization of values. Teachers who contextualized religious teachings with students' daily experiences—particularly related to online games—were more effective in fostering behavioral change. This finding aligns with previous research which argues that Islamic education should move beyond theoretical instruction and be implemented through contextual learning, habituation, and exemplary conduct (Furoidah, 2025). In contrast to studies that report limited impact of religious instruction due to its cognitive focus, this study shows that when IRE is delivered contextually and practically, it becomes a powerful tool for character formation. Another important finding is the extension of value internalization effects beyond the school environment into students' family lives. Parents reported observable behavioral changes at home, particularly in students' ability to manage gaming time and respond to reminders. This supports earlier studies which emphasize that effective character education requires synergy between school, family, and social environments (Hatamudin et al., 2025). The findings suggest that internalized values function as internal

behavioral controls, reducing students' dependence on external supervision and increasing self-regulated behavior.

Overall, this study reinforces the view that Islamic Religious Education has strong potential to serve as an educational response to behavioral challenges arising from digital technology use. While some previous studies focus primarily on the negative impacts of online games on students' academic performance and social interaction (Kristanti et al., 2025), this research highlights a constructive pathway through value internalization rather than restriction or prohibition. By embedding religious values consistently and contextually, Islamic Religious Education can help students navigate digital challenges wisely and responsibly, contributing to sustainable character development in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the internalization of Islamic Religious Education values plays a significant role in shaping elementary school students' self-control toward online game use. Through contextual learning, continuous habituation, and teacher role modeling, values such as discipline, responsibility, and self-awareness were effectively embedded in students' daily behavior. The findings indicate that Islamic Religious Education functions not only as a medium for transmitting religious knowledge but also as an internal behavioral guide that helps students regulate their use of digital technology, particularly online games, in a more balanced and responsible manner.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that students' self-control develops gradually through consistent reinforcement of religious values supported by the collaboration of teachers, school leadership, and parents. The internalization of Islamic Religious Education values contributed to observable improvements in students' discipline, learning focus, and ability to manage time between study, play, and worship, both at school and at home. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening value-based and contextual Islamic Religious Education as a strategic approach to addressing behavioral challenges faced by students in the digital era and as a foundation for sustainable character development.

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