



Strengthening Islamic Character Education among Students in the Era of Digital Disruption

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Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed social life and educational practices, creating both opportunities and challenges for strengthening Islamic character education. Digital disruption has led to various issues, including moral degradation, weakening internalization of Islamic values, and exposure to unfiltered information, particularly among the younger generation. This study aims to examine strategies for strengthening Islamic character education in the context of digital disruption. This research employs a qualitative approach using content analysis of relevant sources, including books, scholarly articles, and prior studies. The findings reveal that strengthening Islamic character requires integrative strategies, including the internalization of Quranic and Sunnah values, role modeling by educators, the utilization of digital technology as a medium for moral education, and collaboration among educational institutions, families, and communities. This study contributes by proposing a conceptual framework for Islamic character education that is adaptive to digital transformation while maintaining its spiritual and moral foundations.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has brought fundamental transformations across various dimensions of human life, including education and character formation. Contemporary society is characterized by the intensive use of the internet, social media, and various digital devices that not only reshape communication patterns but also influence ways of thinking, attitudes, and value systems, particularly among younger generations (Fikri et al., 2025; Nurhabibah et al., 2025). Digitalization offers convenience in accessing information, accelerates knowledge dissemination, and fosters innovation in learning processes (Ani et al., 2025; Lutfiah et al., 2025). However, it also presents complex challenges, such as value shifts, moral decline, and the weakening of spiritual identity.

In this context, Islamic character education faces increasingly complex and multidimensional challenges. Fundamentally, Islamic character education aims to develop individuals who are faithful, pious, and moral upright by grounding their

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lives in the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah (Juanda et al., 2025; Muis et al., 2024; Mukhid, 2016). Values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, simplicity, tolerance, and social awareness constitute essential elements that are expected to be internalized by learners.

However, in practice, the values of Islamic character education do not always align with the dynamics of digital development. The reality shows that digital culture often promotes values that contradict Islamic principles. The proliferation of negative content, hedonistic lifestyles, instant culture, and individualistic attitudes poses serious challenges to the internalization of Islamic values. Digital disruption not only affects individual behavior but also transforms educational systems, where direct interaction between teachers and students is increasingly shifting to virtual spaces with limited role modeling and affective engagement. In contrast, Islamic character education relies heavily on habituation, exemplary conduct, and meaningful interaction. Low levels of digital literacy and supervision further exacerbate this condition, resulting in a gap between the Islamic values taught in schools and students' everyday behavior. Therefore, Islamic character education cannot be delivered merely in a normative manner; it requires contextual and adaptive strategies in response to digital developments (Akbar & Alkhadafi, 2025; Amin, 2024; Arminah & Romelah, 2025).

Conceptually, Islamic character education integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects to ensure that values are not only understood but also internalized and practiced. In the digital era, educational strategies need to be reconstructed by utilizing technology as a medium for value internalization and moral reinforcement, rather than merely as a tool for information transfer (Mujahid & Madum, 2025; Yusra et al., 2025). However, in practice, such integration remains limited, as many institutions prioritize academic achievement and technological literacy over ethical and spiritual development. Without a strong character foundation, technology may instead accelerate moral degradation.

Based on these conditions, there is an urgent and strategic need to reconstruct and strengthen Islamic character education to ensure its relevance in a digitally driven society. This study conceptually examines the impact of digital disruption on character formation and proposes adaptive strategies grounded in Islamic values. It aims to offer a strategic approach that integrates spiritual values with digital realities. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Islamic education discourse in the digital era, while practically serving as a reference for educators and policymakers in designing contextual, sustainable, and value-based character education capable of nurturing morally upright generations in modern society.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using content analysis of relevant literature to examine in depth the strengthening of Islamic character education in the context of digital disruption (Selvi, 2019). The study focuses on the analysis of meanings, concepts, and theoretical constructions rather than numerical measurement. The data consist entirely of secondary sources, including scholarly books, reputable journal articles, prior research findings, and academic documents related to Islamic character education and digital society (Engkizar et al., 2026; Kassymova, Engkizar, et al., 2025; Masani & Fabanjo, 2026).

The primary research instrument is the researcher (*human instrument*), supported by several technical tools: (1) a literature analysis matrix to map key aspects, including Islamic character concepts (indicators: faith, morality, responsibility, discipline, and social awareness), characteristics of digital disruption (indicators: changes in interaction patterns, instant culture, individualism, digital literacy), and strengthening strategies (indicators: curriculum integration, digital role modeling, and the use of technology as a medium for value internalization); (2) coding and thematic

categorization formats to organize ideas, theories, and findings; and (3) a source relevance checklist to assess credibility, timeliness, and contribution of the literature to the conceptual framework. Data were collected through systematic searches in journal databases, institutional repositories, and credible academic sources using focused keywords (Lindgren et al., 2020).

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-analytical technique based on content analysis in three stages. First, data reduction involved selecting relevant literature, filtering key information, coding main themes, and eliminating irrelevant data. Second, data were presented in the form of conceptual matrices and structured narrative descriptions to illustrate the relationships among Islamic character education, digital dynamics, and strengthening strategies. Third, conclusions were drawn through conceptual synthesis by identifying patterns, relationships among conceptual variables, and their theoretical and practical implications for Islamic education in the digital era (Assarroudi et al., 2018).

Data validity was ensured through systematic source triangulation by: (1) comparing perspectives across authors and studies; (2) confirming conceptual consistency between classical and contemporary literature; and (3) examining the relevance of theories within the socio-cultural context of digital society. This process was conducted through cross-checking findings across references before formulating the final synthesis (Renz et al., 2018). Through these steps, the study produces a conceptual framework that is argumentative, contextual, and applicable in strengthening Islamic character education in the era of digital disruption (Az-Zahra et al., 2025; Kassymova, Talgatov, et al., 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This discussion critically examines the research findings on strengthening Islamic character education in the context of digital disruption by referring to theories of Islamic education, character education, and the dynamics of modern society. Digital disruption should not merely be understood as technological advancement, but rather as a socio-cultural transformation that influences value systems, interaction patterns, and personality formation (Annisa et al., 2024; Utami et al., 2025). Therefore, strengthening Islamic character education must be positioned within an adaptive framework grounded in Islamic teachings.

The findings indicate that digital disruption has contributed to the weakening of the internalization of Islamic character, particularly in terms of morality and moral awareness. The digital environment, as a new social space, introduces values such as instant culture, superficial self-representation, and moral relativism, which often contradict Islamic principles. This condition leads to value disorientation among students, reflected in the confusion between Islamic norms they learn and the digital realities they experience. This suggests that the environment plays a significant role in character formation.

Furthermore, the weakness of Islamic character education in the digital era lies in its insufficiently contextual approach. Character education is often delivered normatively and has not fully addressed the process of continuous internalization integrated with students' digital experiences (Ansyah, 2022; Busral et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2023, 2026; Muslimin, 2024). In fact, Islamic education emphasizes the unity of knowledge, faith, and practice (Masnila & Sassi, 2025; Siregar & Siregar, 2018). Without such integration, Islamic values risk losing their transformative power, thus requiring a reconstruction of paradigms that are more responsive to contemporary realities.

The role of educators as moral exemplars becomes increasingly important in this context. Technology cannot replace the function of role modeling, which in Islamic tradition is known as *uswah hasanah*. When educators demonstrate digital ethics, responsibility, and wisdom in utilizing technology, the process of character formation becomes more effective (Baihaki & Solechan, 2025; Devi et al., 2025).

Therefore, educators' competencies must encompass pedagogical skills, digital literacy, as well as moral and spiritual integrity.

The use of technology as a medium for strengthening character also becomes a crucial concern. Technology is inherently ambivalent and can have both positive and negative impacts, depending on how it is used. In the Islamic perspective, technology is a *wasilah* (means), not an end. When used creatively and educationally to disseminate Islamic values, technology can expand the reach of character education (Arizal & Husniyah, 2025; Bahri, 2025; Yulianto, 2024). This requires strengthening Islamic digital literacy grounded in ethics, responsibility, and spiritual awareness.

Synergy among schools, families, and communities is also a key factor. Character formation is holistic and cannot be assigned to a single institution. Families play a role in supervising and guiding digital activities, while communities serve as social spaces that reinforce value consistency. A lack of synergy among these elements may lead to inconsistency in students' character.

Overall, strengthening Islamic character education in contemporary society requires an integrative and transformative approach. Integrative refers to the alignment of Islamic values, educational systems, and technological developments, while transformative emphasizes shifting educational orientation from mere knowledge transfer toward the development of moral and spiritual awareness. Digital disruption is not a threat to be avoided, but a reality that must be managed wisely. Through the adaptive internalization of Islamic values in digital spaces, Islamic character education remains relevant and plays a strategic role in shaping morally upright, digitally literate, and Islamic-minded generations.

CONCLUSION

Based on research findings, digital disruption is an inseparable reality of contemporary society and has a significant impact on the character development of students. The rapid flow of information and the dominance of virtual culture influence the value systems and behavior of the younger generation. In this context, Islamic character education faces serious challenges if it is not developed in an adaptive and contextual manner. Strengthening Islamic character education cannot be done merely through normative approaches; rather, it requires an integrative approach that combines the values of the Quran and Sunnah with the ethical use of digital technology. The exemplary conduct of educators, Islamic digital literacy, and the use of digital media as a means of internalizing values are key factors in addressing dynamic social changes.

Furthermore, sustained synergy between schools, families, and the community is required to ensure the character-building process proceeds harmoniously in both physical and digital spaces. Islamic educational institutions are advised to develop character education models responsive to technological advancements without neglecting spiritual and moral dimensions. Further research needs to empirically test the effectiveness of digital-based Islamic character education models by involving educators, students, and parents. This effort is expected to strengthen the contribution of Islamic character education in shaping a generation with noble character and competitiveness in the digital age.

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