

The Challenge of Islamic Character Education in the Midst of Educational Technology Disruption

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of digital technology has brought fundamental changes in the order of life, including the world of education. In the midst of this wave of digital disruption, Islamic character education faces increasingly complex challenges. This research aims to identify and analyze the challenges faced by Islamic character education in the era of digital technology disruption, as well as formulate alternative solutions based on Islamic digital literacy. The method used is library research with a descriptive qualitative approach, derived from SINTA-accredited national journals and Scopus indexed international journals published between 2015 and 2025. The results of the study show that the main challenges include four dimensions: (1) moral degradation due to exposure to negative content on social media; (2) weakening of the authority of teachers and parents as sources of Islamic values; (3) the gap between the textual PAI curriculum and the reality of students' digital lives; and (4) the lack of digital competence of educators in integrating Islamic values into technology-based learning. The solutions that can be offered include the development of Islamic digital literacy, collaboration between families and schools, and PAI curriculum reforms that are adaptive to technological developments without sacrificing the core values of Islam. The conclusion of this study confirms that Islamic character education can survive and be relevant in the digital era if it is supported by cross-stakeholder synergy and the wise use of technology in accordance with Islamic values.

Keywords: technological disruption; Islamic character; digital literacy; Islamic education; educational technology

ABSTRAK

Perkembangan pesat teknologi digital telah membawa perubahan mendasar dalam tatanan kehidupan, termasuk dunia pendidikan. Di tengah gelombang disrupsi digital ini, pendidikan karakter Islam menghadapi tantangan yang semakin kompleks. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis tantangan yang dihadapi pendidikan karakter Islam di era gangguan teknologi digital, serta merumuskan solusi alternatif berdasarkan literasi digital Islam.

Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian perpustakaan dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, yang diambil dari jurnal nasional terakreditasi SINTA dan jurnal internasional berindeks Scopus yang diterbitkan antara 2015 dan 2025. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa tantangan utama meliputi empat dimensi: (1) degradasi moral akibat paparan konten negatif di media sosial; (2) pelemahan otoritas guru dan orang tua sebagai sumber nilai-nilai Islam; (3) kesenjangan antara kurikulum PAI teks dan realitas kehidupan digital siswa; dan (4) kurangnya kompetensi digital pendidik dalam mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam pembelajaran berbasis teknologi. Solusi yang dapat ditawarkan meliputi pengembangan literasi digital Islam, kolaborasi antara keluarga dan sekolah, serta reformasi kurikulum PAI yang adaptif dengan perkembangan teknologi tanpa mengorbankan nilai-nilai inti Islam. Kesimpulan studi ini menegaskan bahwa pendidikan karakter Islam dapat bertahan dan relevan di era digital jika didukung oleh sinergi lintas pemangku kepentingan dan penggunaan teknologi yang bijaksana sesuai dengan nilai-nilai Islam.

Kata Kunci: gangguan teknologi; karakter Islam; literasi digital; Pendidikan Islam; teknologi pendidikan

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has changed almost all dimensions of modern society's life, including the education sector. The phenomenon called technological disruption refers to the fundamental changes resulting from technological innovations in established systems, institutions, and practices. In the realm of education, the disruption of digital technology has given birth to a new learning paradigm that places students in a very different learning environment from previous generations (Manshur & Isroani, 2023).

Character education from an Islamic perspective is one of the main foundations of the Islamic education system which aims to form individuals with noble personalities (*Akhlaql al-karimah*) based on the guidance of the Qur'an and Hadith. In contrast to the approach that only emphasizes the cognitive aspect or technical skills, Islamic character education is more oriented towards the formation of a holistic personality, including the dimensions of faith, worship, morals, and muamalah. As stated in Q.S. Luqman verses 12–19, the values contained in it include gratitude, monotheism, *birrul walidain* (devotion to both parents), patience, and *Immortal is not dead*. In today's digital age, these noble values face great challenges due to the rapid flow of digital information that is often not in harmony with Islamic principles (Aziz et al. 2023).

Generation Z and Alpha who grew up in the digital technology ecosystem are increasingly familiar with social media as part of their daily lives. Social media is not only a means of communication and entertainment, but also influences the formation of values and behaviors of the younger generation. Exposure to negative content and superficial entertainment can trigger disorientation of values and hinder the formation of morals, especially without the support of digital literacy and parental supervision (Khairunnisa, 2025).

A number of previous studies have discussed the challenges of Islamic character education in dealing with the development of digital technology, but each still focuses on certain aspects. Aziz et al., (2023) for example, highlighting the moral degradation of Muslim youth in the digital age as an urgent issue, but not yet linking it in an integrated way to aspects of the curriculum, digital competence of educators, and the role of the family. Meanwhile, Syifa & Ridwan, (2024) examine the relevance of Imam Al-Ghazali's thoughts on *Tazkiyatun nafs* as the foundation of Islamic character education, but emphasizes more on the conceptual-spiritual dimension and has not specifically mapped the challenges of character education that

arise from the digital environment. On the other hand, Manshur & Isroani, (2023) shows that there is a gap between the PAI curriculum and technological developments, but has not integrated these problems with changes in student interaction patterns, the role of parents and teachers, and educators' digital competence.

Based on these studies, it can be seen that there is a research gap, in the form of a comprehensive mapping of the relationship between the various dimensions of the challenges of Islamic character education in the era of technological disruption. Previous research tends to examine the problem separately, both in terms of moral degradation, spiritual foundation, the PAI curriculum, and the role of educators. In fact, the development of digital technology raises interrelated problems: exposure to digital content can affect the moral formation of students, changes in interaction patterns can affect the authority of teachers and parents, while curriculum gaps and limitations in educators' digital competencies can hinder efforts to educate character education that is adaptive to the digital environment. This gap is the focus of this research, which is to integrate these four dimensions in one framework of Islamic character education analysis in the midst of technological disruption.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the four dimensions of the challenges of Islamic character education, namely (1) moral degradation due to exposure to digital content, (2) changes and weakening of the authority of teachers and parents, (3) the gap between the PAI curriculum and the reality of students' digital lives, and (4) the limitations of educators' digital competence. The four dimensions were analyzed in an integrated manner to formulate an Islamic digital literacy strategy that includes strengthening the PAI curriculum, improving teachers' digital competence, strengthening collaboration between families and schools, and utilizing technology as a medium of character education. With this approach, this study not only describes the challenges faced by Islamic character education, but also offers a response framework that integrates Islamic values with educational needs in the digital era.

Based on these problems, this study aims to: (1) identify and map various challenges of Islamic character education in the midst of digital technology disruption; (2) analyze the relationship between moral degradation, changes in the role of teachers and parents, gaps in the PAI curriculum, and digital competence of educators; and (3) formulate Islamic digital literacy strategies in response to these challenges. The results of the research are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic character education studies and practical contributions for educators, parents, policymakers, and Islamic educational institutions in responding to the development of digital technology.

METHODS

This study applied a literature study method (*Library Research*) with a descriptive qualitative approach. This method was chosen because this study aims to examine, analyze, and synthesize various literature sources relevant to the topic of the challenge of Islamic character education in the midst of digital technology disruption. The literature approach allows researchers to dive deeply into the concepts, theories, and empirical findings that have been developed by previous researchers (Sholihah & Maulida, 2020).

The main data sources in this study are scientific articles published in national journals accredited by SINTA and international journals indexed by Scopus in the range of 2015–2025.

The selection of articles is based on relevance to the research topic, credibility of the source, year of publication, and its relevance to Islamic character education, digital literacy, and the development of educational technology.

The data analysis process is carried out through three stages: (1) identifying and selecting literature that meets the criteria of scientific relevance and quality; (2) grouping findings based on the various dimensions of the identified challenges; and (3) synthesizing and interpreting the data to formulate a complete and logical pattern of findings. The validity of the data is maintained by binding the source, i.e. comparing findings from various literature to ensure consistency and depth of analysis, (Fajri & Nasution, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Concept of Islamic Character Education

Conceptually, Islamic character education refers to the process of forming human personality based on the values of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet PBUH. In contrast to the concept of character education in the Western tradition which tends to be secular and anthropocentric, Islamic character education places obedience to Allah SWT (theocentric) as the main foundation in character formation. In the Islamic perspective, noble morals (*Akhlakul Karimah*) is a manifestation of solid faith, not simply the result of the process of forming behavior through the social environment (Muis et al., 2024). Thus, Islamic character education is not only oriented to the formation of good behavior, but also to strengthening students' spiritual relationship with Allah SWT as the basis for controlling behavior in daily life.

Classical scholars, such as Imam Al-Ghazali, have formulated the concept of Islamic character education systematically. In the book *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Al-Ghazali affirms that morality is a quality that is embedded in the soul (*Malacca*) which gives birth to acts spontaneously without the need for a long thought process and consideration. In line with this thought, Syifa & Ridwan (2024) stated that Al-Ghazali's thoughts on *Tazkiyatun nafs*, that is, purification of the soul through *mushroomhāSabah* (self-introspection), *murāqabah* (awareness of Allah's supervision), and *mujāhadah* (seriousness against lust), is relevant to form a strong Islamic character in the midst of digital culture. This approach teaches students to have self-control and spiritual awareness so that they are not easily influenced by the negative currents of digitalization. This condition shows that the formation of Islamic character in the digital era is not enough only through the delivery of religious knowledge, but needs to be accompanied by strengthening students' ability to control themselves and filter various influences from the digital environment. Thus, the concept *Tazkiyatun nafs* can be an important foundation in developing character education that is responsive to technological challenges.

In the context of education, the dimension of Islamic character that needs to be developed includes four main aspects. First, the dimension of faith (*akidah*), which is a firm belief in Allah SWT, angels, the books of Allah, the apostles, the last days, as well as *qada* and *qadar*. Second, the dimension of worship, which is obedience in carrying out the pillars of Islam and various *sunnah* practices. Third, the dimension of morality, which includes honesty, trust, discipline, empathy, and mutual respect. Fourth, the dimension of *muamalah*, which is the ability to interact and collaborate in an Islamic manner in

community life (Jaelani, 2022); Furqon, 2024). The four dimensions are interrelated and form a complete character. In the digital context, faith and worship can be the spiritual foundation, morals become a guideline in using technology and interacting in the digital space, while muamalah directs students to build social relationships in accordance with Islamic values. Therefore, these four dimensions can be the basis for formulating an Islamic character education strategy that is adaptive to the development of digital technology.

B. Technological Disruption in the Context of Education

The concept of technological disruption (*technology disruption*) developed through disruptive innovation theory (*disruptive innovation*) proposed by Clayton Christensen. In the realm of education, technological disruption refers to fundamental changes in the learning process due to the presence of various new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (*artificial intelligence*) online learning platforms, social media, and various other digital applications. The development of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 has further strengthened these changes so that they present challenges as well as opportunities for the world of Islamic education (Son, 2019).

Hajri (2023) shows that technological disruption has a number of characteristics that can affect Islamic character education, namely increasingly open access to information, dominance of visual and entertainment culture, and social media algorithms that have the potential to create *echo chamber*, as well as the emergence of phenomena *Fear of Missing Out* (FOMO) among Muslim adolescents. This condition shows that the ease of access to technology is not always followed by the ability of students to filter information based on Islamic values. Thus, the challenge of Islamic character education is not only related to the amount of information available, but also to the ability of students to select, assess, and use digital information responsibly.

On the other hand, digital technology also opens opportunities for the development of Islamic education. Various digital platforms can be used to disseminate educational materials and da'wah content more widely. Efendi et al. (2023) shows that social media can be an effective means of da'wah for young da'is in conveying Islamic values to the digital generation. If the findings Hajri (2023) showing the existence of risks from the openness of digital space, findings Efendi et al., (2023) shows that the same space can also be used as a medium of education and da'wah. Therefore, technology cannot be positioned solely as a threat to Islamic character education, but as a medium whose impact is highly dependent on how it is used. The use of technology directed based on Islamic values can turn the challenge of digital disruption into an opportunity for strengthening character education.

C. The First Challenge: Moral Degradation due to Exposure to Digital Content

One of the real challenges faced by Islamic character education in the digital era is the moral degradation of students due to exposure to negative content on social media and various digital platforms. Syahputra et al. (2023) indicates that exposure to pornographic content, violence, false information (*Hoax*), and radicalism in digital media can have an impact on the behavior and morality of Muslim adolescents. This condition is even more complex when parental supervision of children's digital activities is still low and the cultivation of digital ethics in the educational environment is not optimal.

From the perspective of Islamic character education, this condition shows the importance of strengthening students' self-control and spiritual awareness in dealing with various digital influences. Syifa & Ridwan, (2024) explains the relevance of Al-Ghazali's thoughts on *Tazkiyatun nafs*, that is, the purification of the soul through *mushroomhāSabah*, *murāqabah*, and *mujāhadah*, as an effort to form a strong Islamic character. This concept is relevant in the digital context because learners not only need the knowledge to recognize negative content, but also the ability to control themselves and consider Islamic values before receiving or disseminating information.

In addition to exposure to negative content, cyberbullying behavior is also a problem in the educational environment. Rahmatiwi et al. (2022) shows that a number of students in Islamic schools engage in cyberbullying behavior, both as perpetrators and victims. These findings suggest that the internalization of Islamic moral values has not been fully reflected in the behavior of students in the digital space. Thus, character education is not enough to simply instill values conceptually, but needs to lead to their application in daily digital interactions.

If the findings Syahputra et al. (2023) and Rahmatiwi et al. (2022) Compared, both show that the main problem is not solely the existence of digital technology, but how students respond and use it. Exposure to negative content and cyberbullying can develop when the ability to filter information, self-control, and assistance from the educational and family environment is inadequate. Therefore, Islamic character education needs to be expanded from the formation of morals in daily life to the formation of ethics, self-control, and student responsibility in the digital space.

D. The Second Challenge: Weakening the Authority of Educators and Parents

The disruption of digital technology has changed the position of teachers and parents as authority holders in the inheritance of values and knowledge. In the pre-digital era, teachers play the role of one of the main sources of knowledge, while parents are the main role models for children in shaping behavior. In the digital era, students can access knowledge and information from various sources outside the school and family environment. This condition encourages Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to transform from mere conveyors of information to facilitators of learning that are still based on Islamic values (Kasnuri, 2025).

These changes are increasingly visible when teachers' digital skills are not fully able to keep up with technological developments. Research on the digital competence of PAI teachers shows that some teachers still have limitations in utilizing technology optimally in learning. As a result, there is a gap between the digital environment that is familiar to students and PAI learning that still uses conventional approaches. This condition can make Islamic character education materials less interesting and less relevant for some students in the digital era (Gusmira et al., 2025).

From the family side, the development of digital technology also affects the pattern of relationships between parents and children. Providing access to gadgets from an early age without adequate assistance can affect children's religious behavior and social interaction. Hasniati et al. (2025) revealed that the use of gadgets can have a negative impact on children's religious behavior, especially in compliance with worship and social interaction.

This shows that reduced direct interaction between children and parents can be one of the obstacles in the process of instilling Islamic values in the family environment.

If these three findings are related, the weakening of the authority of teachers and parents is not solely caused by the increasing use of technology, but also by changes in the pattern of knowledge access and interaction of students. Teachers and parents are no longer the only sources of information, so both need to strengthen their roles as guides, facilitators, and role models in the use of technology. Thus, strengthening Islamic character education in the digital era requires a mentoring pattern that combines exemplary, communication, supervision, and digital literacy based on Islamic values.

E. Third Challenge: The Gap of the PAI Curriculum with Digital Reality

The PAI curriculum still faces challenges in adjusting to the reality of students' digital lives. Manshur & Isroani, (2023) explained that the approach in the PAI curriculum still tends to be textual and normative so that it is less able to respond to the context of the digital life of the younger generation. As a result, materials related to morals, muamalah, and Islamic life have the potential to be seen as less relevant to the reality of students' increasingly digitized lives.

The gap can be seen in several aspects, namely: (1) the absence of learning materials that explicitly discuss the ethics of using social media based on an Islamic perspective; (2) the limited guidance on the ideal behavior of a Muslim in the digital realm; (3) the lack of standardized Islamic digital literacy competencies as part of the PAI learning outcomes; and (4) the dominance of one-way learning that has not optimized digital technology as an interactive and interesting learning medium (Salsabila et al. 2024). These aspects show that the challenge of the PAI curriculum does not only lie in the content of the material, but also in the ability of the curriculum to connect Islamic values with students' experiences in the digital space.

Manshur & Isroani, (2023) shows that the PAI curriculum still tends to be textual, Salsabila et al. (2024) shows that the integration of technology in PAI learning still faces various obstacles. The two findings show that there is a gap between normative PAI material and the needs of students in facing the problems of digital life. Therefore, it is not enough to reform the PAI curriculum just by adding technology as a learning medium, but also needs to integrate ethical competencies and digital literacy as part of the formation of Islamic character.

In line with this, Nurjannah (2022) emphasized that comprehensive curriculum reform is needed to answer the challenges of the digital era. The PAI curriculum needs to be adaptive to technological developments while still being based on Islamic values. Within this framework, an integrative PAI curriculum that combines Islamic materials with digital competencies and 21st century skills can be an alternative to reduce the gap between PAI learning and the reality of students' lives.

One approach that can support such integration is the TPACK framework (*Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge*). This framework emphasizes the integration of three teacher competencies, namely mastery of Islamic material (*content knowledge*), pedagogical skills (*pedagogical knowledge*), and mastery of technology (*technological knowledge*). Ajizah & Huda (2020) shows that the integration of the three competencies is

needed so that PAI teachers are able to design learning that is relevant, interesting, and supports the formation of students' Islamic character in the digital era. Thus, curriculum reform and strengthening teacher competencies need to run simultaneously so that the integration of Islamic values and technology does not stop at material changes, but can be applied in the learning process.

F. Fourth Challenge: Digital Divide and Teacher Competence

The digital divide is one of the challenges that affect the quality of Islamic character education in the era of technological disruption. This gap is not only related to access to technological infrastructure, but also the ability of educators to utilize technology effectively, critically, and responsibly. Zulfa & Henry (2021) shows that age and educational background factors affect the level of teachers' digital competence. These findings show that the availability of technology alone is not enough to support digital learning if it is not accompanied by the ability of educators to use it appropriately.

Educators with good digital competencies are able to create a more meaningful and contextual learning experience for students. On the other hand, the limitations of digital competence can lead to the use of monotonous learning methods that are less responsive to the needs of the digital generation (Fahrozi et al., 2024). Thus, the digital competence of teachers is one of the important factors in determining the ability of Islamic character education to adapt to changes in the learning environment of students.

In line with these findings, Salsabila et al. (2024) shows that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in PAI learning still faces technical and pedagogical obstacles in integrating technology. Although the curriculum provides space for digital learning innovation, the limitations of teacher competence and infrastructure support are still obstacles. If these three findings are related, the digital gap in PAI education is not only related to the issue of facilities, but also the readiness of human resources. Therefore, strengthening teachers' digital competence needs to go hand in hand with the provision of infrastructure support so that technology can be optimally utilized to support learning and the formation of Islamic character.

G. Solution: Islamic Digital Literacy as a Strategic Response

Islamic digital literacy can be one of the strategic responses to the challenges of technological disruption in Islamic character education. This concept refers to the ability to use, understand, and evaluate digital content critically and responsibly based on Islamic values. Fajri & Nasution (2023) explained that Islamic digital literacy is an integration between digital literacy competencies, spiritual awareness, and Islamic ethics. Thus, Islamic digital literacy not only emphasizes the ability to use technology, but also the ability to direct its use in accordance with Islamic values and principles.

Its application can be done through the development of learning materials that integrate Islamic ethics in the use of digital media, such as guidelines for communicating online and the responsibility of disseminating information. Hasanah et al. (2024)

emphasizing the importance of digital literacy based on an Islamic perspective in shaping the character of the digital generation, including the ability to distinguish between right and wrong information. This is in line with the principle *Tabayyun* in Q.S. Al-Hujurat verse 6 which emphasizes the importance of checking the truth of information before believing or spreading it. The application of this principle can be a concrete form of Islamic character education in dealing with the problem of disinformation and hoaxes in the digital space.

In addition to equipping students with the ability to filter information, digital technology can also be used as a medium for da'wah and Islamic education. Efendi et al. (2023) shows that social media can be an effective means of da'wah for young da'is in spreading Islamic values to the digital generation. These findings show that Islamic digital literacy not only serves as a protection from the negative impact of technology, but also as an ability to utilize digital space productively in spreading Islamic values.

Strengthening Islamic digital literacy also requires collaboration between families, schools, and communities. According to Herawati et al. (2025) emphasizing the importance of cooperation between various elements of the educational environment in the success of character education, including parental involvement in assisting children in using technology. In line with the Fahrozi et al. (2024), the integration of local wisdom in digital literacy based on Islamic education can strengthen the character of students while remaining responsive to the demands of the 21st century. Thus, Islamic digital literacy needs to be applied in an integrated manner through strengthening the ability to filter information, the use of technology as an educational medium, and collaboration between schools, families, and the social environment.

H. The Role of Guuru PAI in the Era of Digital Disruption

Islamic Religious Education teachers have a strategic role in maintaining and strengthening Islamic character education in the era of technological disruption. However, changes in the digital learning environment require teachers to adjust their roles to remain relevant to the needs of students. Judrah et al. (2024) emphasized that PAI teachers in the digital era no longer only play a role as a source of knowledge, but also as mentors, facilitators, and role models in dealing with the digital environment. These changes show that the authority of teachers does not have to be lost due to the presence of technology, but needs to be built through the ability to guide students in understanding and using technology according to Islamic values.

In line with that, Squirting (2025) identify several competencies needed by PAI teachers in the digital era, namely digital pedagogical competence, Islamic digital content competence, digital guidance competence, and collaboration competence with parents and communities. These four competencies show that PAI teachers are not only required to be able to use technology in learning, but must also be able to direct its use to support the formation of students' character. Thus, digital competence and Islamic competence need to be developed simultaneously.

In addition to these competencies, the example (*uswah hasanah*) remains an important part of the formation of Islamic character. Safiqo & Ghofur (2022) shows that teachers who are able to provide examples of good Muslim behavior in the use of social media, information management, and online communication can have a stronger influence than

learning that is only theoretical. If these three findings are related, the role of PAI teachers in the digital era includes three complementary functions, namely as a guide in the use of technology, as an educator who has digital and Islamic competence, and as an example in applying Islamic ethics in the digital space.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully identified and analyzed four main dimensions of challenges faced by Islamic character education in the midst of digital technology disruption, namely: (1) moral degradation due to exposure to negative content in digital media; (2) weakening of the authority of teachers and parents as sources of Islamic values due to the shift of information centers to digital platforms; (3) the gap between the PAI curriculum which is still textual and the reality of students' digital lives; and (4) the low digital competence of some PAI educators which hinders the integration of Islamic values in technology-based learning.

The results of the synthesis show that the four challenges are interrelated and cannot be partially solved. The main problem does not lie in technology itself, but in the ability of students, educators, families, and educational institutions to direct the use of technology in accordance with Islamic values. Therefore, an approach that integrates character building with digital literacy skills is needed.

In response to these challenges, this study offers Islamic digital literacy as a strategy that includes the development of an adaptive and contextual PAI curriculum, improving the digital competence of PAI teachers, strengthening the role of the family, and the use of technology as a medium for learning and da'wah. The novelty of this research lies in the effort to integrate the four dimensions of Islamic character education challenges into one analytical framework that is linked to Islamic digital literacy strategies.

With a comprehensive approach and based on Islamic values, technology is not only seen as a source of threat to students' character, but can also be used as a means to strengthen faith, morals, and social responsibility in the digital era.

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