

Integration of Islamic Values in Character Education in the Digital Age: Approaches and Implications

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ABSTRACT: *The digital era brings easy access to information and challenges developing students' character. This research aims to understand the problematic character of students in the digital era through qualitative field studies. This research was conducted at Al Rifai Islamic Boarding School using qualitative methods of observation, interviews and field studies. Data were analysed using the thematic analysis method. The results of the research show that there are several problems with the character of students in the digital era, namely: 1) Exposure to Negative Content, 2) Lack of Face-to-Face Social Interaction, 3) Weak Cultivation of Noble Character in the Family and School Environment 4) Influence of Popular Culture and Globalization 5) Lack of Regulation and Education in the Digital World. This research recommends several efforts to develop a character based on Islamic values in the digital era, such as instilling faith and piety, strengthening moral education, utilising information and communication technology, and building cooperation with parents and the community. Hopefully, this paper can be useful for religion, nation and society in instilling noble character based on Islamic values in the digital era.*

Era digital membawa kemudahan akses informasi, namun juga menghadirkan tantangan dalam pembinaan karakter peserta didik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami problematika karakter peserta didik di era digital melalui studi kualitatif lapangan. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Al Rifai Islamic Boarding School dengan metode kualitatif observasi, wawancara, dan studi lapangan. Data dianalisis dengan metode analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat beberapa problematika karakter peserta didik di era digital, yaitu: 1) paparan konten negatif 2) kurangnya interaksi sosial tatap muka 3) lemahnya penanaman karakter mulia di lingkungan keluarga dan sekolah 4) pengaruh budaya populer dan globalisasi 5) kurangnya regulasi dan edukasi di dunia digital. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan beberapa upaya pembinaan karakter berbasis nilai-nilai Islam di era digital, seperti menanamkan keimanan dan ketakwaan, memperkuat pendidikan akhlak, memanfaatkan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi, serta membangun kerjasama dengan orang tua dan masyarakat. Harapan dari karya tulis ini dapat bermanfaat bagi agama, bangsa, dan masyarakat dalam menanamkan karakter mulia berbasis nilai-nilai Islam di era digital.

Keywords: *Educator, Character, Islam*

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I. INTRODUCTION

As the world moves towards the digital age, new events occur in society. Today, machine power and electronics are replacing almost all human manual labour. According to (Akpen et al., 2024), people will be more active online in 2020. This is because people need to adapt to the current times, which have entered the digital era. If people are unwilling to adapt to the digital era, there will be a lag in the face of the advancement of the current digital technology industry. In addition, the development of this digital era impacts everything, including the economy, industry and education. Many people, including adults, children, parents, merchants, office workers, and teachers, experience the impact of this digital use. Digital technologies include computers, cell phones, game tools, and the internet (Almira & Marheni, 2021). With technological advances, humans must optimise their brains' cognitive and moral functions. The digital era in education produces education that can use technology well. To use current digital developments as an educational tool by teachers, parents, and students.

Globalisation has changed many things, especially in character education (Wadi, 2021). We are now in the twenty-first century, in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, also referred to as the millennial generation. One of the things that marks the birth of the millennial generation is the presence of gadgets (Ardi & Putri, 2020). The life of modern society is inseparable from information technology because gadgets are considered high-tech equipment. This shows that these various high-tech equipment have become an important part of the lives of modern people. The emergence of this technology is considered to enable humans to further optimise their brain function. Therefore, the field of education can help optimise human brain function. In playing an important role in the changes in this millennial era, education must change. This change is essential to prepare students to live with respect and dignity in the future. Educational technology can help the interaction between teachers and students.

Technology has influenced education because communication and information flow so quickly that everyone can access them without knowing where they come from (Timotheou et al., 2023). Therefore, gadgets have both positive and negative impacts. The positive impact is that they can be used as learning media in learners' learning process, helping them learn more, make new friends, and find new ways to learn. The negative impact is that children misuse devices to play games continuously, which makes them addicted.

Educators are an important part of the education process. Educator comes from the word "educate", which means "to nurture and provide training (teaching, guidance, and leadership) regarding the morals and intelligence of the mind. Then, the prefix "pe" is added, creating "educator", which means a person who educates (Wardani et al., 2024). So, an educator is a person who provides training and direction both on morals and science to others. Educators are also responsible for supervising and directing the process and guiding students' development and growth. Educators are Islamic-minded servants of Allah who have grown spiritually and physically and understand students' developmental and growth needs for their future lives (Haris et al., 2022).

The word character in Indonesian means innate traits that influence behaviour, character, character, and temperament. "Karter" means having personality,

behaviour, nature, character, and disposition (Zalsabella P et al., 2023). A person of good and excellent character strives to do the best in his/her relationship with God Almighty, fellow human beings, the environment, and his/her nation. This relationship is shown in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions such as religion, law, manners, culture, and customs. A noble character is an embedded trait in the soul that allows good and commendable deeds quickly without consideration and consideration (Arifuddin et al., 2024). Good or noble character does not contradict religious norms, customs, or laws adopted by society. These noble characteristics include taking responsibility for all that is said or done, possessing truth and goodness, giving advice to one another, being patient, and being charitable. Everyone can apply many noble characteristics; these are actions and behaviours that enhance the dignity and dignity of a glorified human being (Siregar, 2021).

According to (Wadi, 2021), the Industrial Revolution 4.0 has changed how people think, work and live. Over time, this 4.0 industrial revolution has affected the world of Indonesian education and its young generation. The start of digitisation of the education system marks a development that allows each education component to adjust to changes (Madarcos et al., 2024). An in-class learning system that uses internet access is one example that allows students to explore cyberspace to find some information related to the material learned in class.

The development of science and technology and students' increased use of gadgets impact their character directly or indirectly (Anwar et al., 2024). Various educational issues in Indonesia demonstrate this. Overall, three main problems relating to education are outlined above. According to (Almira & Marheni, 2021), the three cardinal sins in education are bullying, sexual violence, and intolerance. Elaborating on bullying will be the main focus in this case. At the elementary school level, acts of verbal bullying committed by adults are often dismissed as mere jokes, even though it is already included in the bullying category.

In the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, which is full of challenges, strengthening character is important (Wardani et al., 2024). Among the social challenges are the unlimited amount of information that often contains hoaxes and hate speech, the threatened future of manual and conventional workers (layoffs) due to digitalisation and automation, the increasingly severe damage to nature due to massive industrial exploitation, and the inevitable damage to the morality of the millennial generation, such as the rampant alcohol and drug parties, free sex, and criminal acts (Iddris, 2021). Efforts to improve character. The program includes various activities that improve students' creative and critical skills; the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Program (P5), which aims to achieve the Pancasila Student Profile in six dimensions through the application of PBL and PjBl learning models in the classroom; and various positive habituation activities at school.

II. METHOD

This research uses qualitative field study, and data collection is done through interviews, observations, and documentation. The research was conducted at Al Rifai Islamic Boarding School. This research aims to produce descriptive data showing the importance of the role of educators in building noble character based on Islamic values in the digital era researched by students of Al Rifai Islamic Boarding School Junior High

School. In terms of descriptive, the first stage of this research method is orientation or description. Thus, the writer tells what is seen, heard, felt, and asked. After that, the author concentrates on a particular problem, especially educators and students, and their role in building the nation's character. After analysing the data, the author finds a new knowledge-building hypothesis or science (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

Data analysis used method triangulation, which means that different data collection methods were used to obtain data from the same source. The qualitative data analysis process consists of four stages: (1) Examining data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation; (2) Performing data reduction, namely determining and selecting data that may be needed for additional analysis; (3) Arranging all data by order of the planned discussion; (4) Checking the validity of the data, continuing with the data interpretation stage, and then supervising the results of the analysis (Abidin, 2020).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings in the current digitalisation era have a huge impact on students, especially in the character between students and educators or students and students of Al Rifai Islamic Boarding School, which does not follow Islamic values in the digital era. Many of us see a student's character decline contrary to morality and Islamic religious principles. Educator debriefing is very important to determine goals and solutions. In achieving educational goals, students must always be given continuous guidance, coaching, and special attention. The goal of education should be to educate students and ensure that they maintain a character based on Islam's teachings. This is because a person with good character can be considered knowledgeable and vice versa. This method of education is expected to bring students in a better direction after they receive various knowledge in the learning process.

Education at school is educated by a teacher or educator who acts as the second parent of his child. Because they act as parents, teachers must consider their children as their children, under the objectives of education, which state that learning activities must involve affective and psychomotor aspects in addition to cognitive changes in behaviour that must occur during the learning process as evidence of the realisation of learning objectives. The implementation of learning can have a positive impact on students. Various parties continue to concentrate on character problems that do not follow Islamic teachings' values in digital era students. In this case, the role of parents, the community environment, and the world of education are all related. The three components above are very important to shape a person's morals. They must support each other and work well together by religious values. These values include courtesy, discipline, humility, high learning spirit, responsibility, tolerance, principle, honesty, and wisdom.

Developing a noble character based on Islamic values means educating children to have good norms in interacting and acting according to what the Prophet taught (Marjuni, 2020). It also means they can follow these norms wherever and whenever. Islam teaches us to do good to all creatures, including the living and the dead. That is the importance of building a noble character under the values of Islamic teachings in the digital era (Salisah et al., 2024). Noble character development aims to protect students from various desires that have blinded them and prevent them from doing things that deviate

from education, religion, society, and the state. Today, noble character development is an integral part of the education system.

In this research conducted at Al Rifai Islamic Boarding School Junior High School, the researcher found several causes of the lack of morals among students. Various factors can cause moral decay in students. The following are some of the main causes of students' lack of noble character and the discovery of symptoms in the field during the research: a). Exposure to Negative Content: Social media, especially among young people, can lead to negative content such as pornography, cyberbullying, and violence, which influences their thoughts and actions, normalises moral behaviour, and potentially causes harm. b). Lack of Face-to-Face Social Interaction: Advanced gadgets can significantly reduce social interactions, crucial for learning and moral development, thereby improving interpersonal, emotional, and social-emotional health. c). Weak Cultivation of Noble Character in the Family and School Environment: Parents and teachers play an important role in fostering moral values in children, which can help them develop their character. d). Influence of Popular Culture and Globalization: Popular culture, sometimes movies, music, and video games promotes moral values, especially in teenagers, encourages them to follow trends that are not in line with social norms and globalisation and can open up access to cultures and values from different countries. e). Lack of Regulation and Education in the Digital World: Regulation and enforcement of internet content and social media can easily spread negative content, prevent children from reading morally questionable content and promote education about internet use and online behaviour, thereby reducing cyberbullying.

Related factors, such as exposure to negative content, lack of face-to-face social interaction, weak noble cultivation in families and schools, the influence of popular culture and globalisation, and the lack of regulation and education in the digital world cause the lack of noble character in the digital era. Efforts to overcome this problem are carried out comprehensively and involve various related parties.

The role of educators in building noble character based on Islamic values at Al Rifai Islamic Boarding School, observation, interviews, and documentation analysis were used to collect research data. The research findings show a problem with the lack of cultivation of noble character based on Islamic values, as well as efforts made by educators to overcome this problem. In Arabic, the word "educator" means "teacher", "trainer", "mudarras", "guru", "murabbi", "mu'addib", "guru", and "ustadz". In English, "teacher", the word "educator" means "teacher" or "trainer". In Islam, an educator is anyone responsible for students' development (Ali, 2023). In Islam, educators are parents, but it will eventually change to teachers as the role of educators because it is more efficient. The educator is also someone responsible for implementing learning and helping students reach maturity (Abror et al., 2022).

According to the perspective of Islamic education, an educator is an adult responsible for developing all students' potential (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) to achieve growth and development towards the spiritual and physical maturity stage. Educators are also responsible as servants of Allah Swt who can fulfil their obligations as social beings and themselves. Chapter XI, Article 40, Paragraph 2b of the 2003 National Education System Law indicates that professionals must be committed to improving the quality of education (Haris et al., 2022).

In addition to the two terms above, the Prophet used *ta'dib* to cultivate *adab*, and the culprit is *mu'addib*. The term *ta'dib* as a term that refers to the meaning of educators in

Islam is based on two Prophetic Hadiths: "God has educated me (*addabani rabbi*) with the best of educators (*fa ah sana ta'dibi*) and "If you take care of a child, then give it a good education (*fa ah sana ta'dibaha*)." Hence, in the Prophetic traditions, educators are also called *mu'addib*.

For students, teachers can be referred to as spiritual fathers because they impart knowledge to them, nurture them, foster good morals, and change bad behaviour into good. As a result, the position of teachers in Islam is given a higher degree. In Islam, the teacher's degree is equivalent to the degree of the apostle, as mentioned in the poem Al Syawki, "Stand up and respect the teacher and give appreciation. A teacher is almost an apostle". This opinion is based on the Prophetic hadith, which states that: "The ink of a scholar (who becomes a teacher) is more precious than the blood of a martyr" (Wardiah et al., 2022).

In Islamic education, teachers play a very important role, have authority, and can determine the level of education. Islam encourages and rewards those who have knowledge and are willing to become teachers. Islam encourages teachers to teach others who do not have knowledge and are not teachers. Surah Al Mujadalah verse 11 says, "Allah will raise those who have knowledge among you by several degrees." If a teacher has knowledge and is willing to teach it to others, he should be mentored by elders and children, such as fishermen and fisherwomen, to ensure his safety and dignity. This aligns with the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) (Nashihin & Musbikhin, 2021).

Based on the above, an educator can be defined as someone more mature and professional who consistently provides information and knowledge to their students, whether at home, school, college, or other communities (Khoiruddin et al., 2023). As the ultimate teacher or educator, Allah told the Prophets the good news to share with everyone. In verse 31 of Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah says, "And He taught Adam the names of all things, then presented them to the angels, saying, 'Name them to Me if you are truly righteous.'" In the previous verse, Allah indicates in writing that He taught Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), but in another verse, He teaches mankind through a written instrument read: "Ar Surat al-'Alaq 96:5". Allah, as the creator of the universe and its merciful educator, imparts knowledge to man. As an educator, Allah has revealed the verses of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to teach to his people. These lessons are given in the same way He taught or encouraged the Prophet to preach (Q.S. Al-Muddatstsir: 74) and in the form of *imtitsal* given to the Prophet to share with others (Irawati et al., 2022).

The second characteristic of educators, as Surah al-Baqarah verse 151, is the Prophet and Messenger. Several other verses indicate that the Prophets and Messengers were assigned to recite the verses of Allah, purify the human soul, and teach the Book, Wisdom, and Knowledge (*yu'allimukum al-kitab, al-hikmah and ma lam taku'nu ta'lamun*) (Choirin, 2024). As surah al-Ahzab verse 21 mentions, the Prophet and the Messenger even become an example for all humans (*uswah al-hasanah*). Therefore, Prophets and Messengers become examples for humans. It is clear that they are *murabbi*, *mu'allim*, and *mu'addib* for humans, and they received their position thanks to their perfection as humans. Therefore, Allah SWT directly taught them to be educators.

In the learning process, morality, or good parenting, must be instilled in the child's family or home. Parents play an important role as educators in determining how their children behave. One of the ways parents teach good parenting to their children is by

being a role model. Parents also play a role in their children's lives, teaching them reality, social interactions and moral values so that they behave according to universal values. This is especially important in certain societies, where understanding the age and condition of their children is crucial (Mitra & Adelia, 2021). Building strong student character is easy to incorporate into school culture. Students have to learn it, but not as a separate lesson. It is part of lessons, personal development and school culture. It is the application of character education, including environmental protection education. Students can do this daily activity to increase their concern for the environment. This activity is conducted as an elective class daily (Nurhaliza et al., 2023).

According to religious humanism, teachers are not allowed to see their students with one eye, not wholeheartedly, or even judge their abilities low. To achieve learning completeness, teachers must serve their students without favouritism. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the responsibilities of teachers so that the relationship between teachers and students remains. Islamic education experts agree that education is a very broad responsibility. Educating can be done by teaching, praising, punishing, modelling, familiarising, and other means. The Qur'an shows the role of the prophets and their followers in education and their main task in studying and applying divine knowledge. According to Ahmad Tafsir (1994: 79), in Islamic education literature, the duties of teachers are mixed with the requirements and characteristics of teachers. Here are some statements about the duties of teachers: a. Teachers must know the character of their students; b. Teachers must always try to improve their skills; and c. Teachers must practice their knowledge (Yani, 2021)

Character education is an earnest effort to understand, comprehend, and become insan kamil by applying character values in students. These values include knowledge, awareness, determination, and desire to apply these values towards God Almighty, fellow humans, the environment, and the nation (Muharram, 2024). Islamic education figures also talk about educational characters, such as Ibn Maskawaih, who unites educational characters with *akhlak* education. "*Akhlak* is a state of nature embedded in the soul from which actions arise easily, without requiring deep thought or consideration," according to Ibn Maskawaih. He defines morals as "the state of the soul that makes it perform actions without deep thought or consideration." As a result of the above opinions, the author highlights character education, which is the action or implementation of a carefully planned plan.

Hidayat said that character education is more important than moral education because character education is not only about right and wrong things but also about instilling good habits (habit) in one's life so that children and learners have a high awareness and understanding of good things and concern and commitment to implement well-being in everyday life (Hidayat & Subando, 2024). Therefore, it can be said that character is a person's nature in responding to situations morally. This character is manifested in real actions through good behaviour, honesty, responsibility, respect for others, and other moral values. From the Islamic perspective, the character is associated with faith and ikhsan. This aligns with Aristotle's statement that character is related to "habits", or habits that are practised and practised consistently (Sakinah & Djamdjuri, 2022).

Character education is intended to improve the quality of educational processes and outcomes. The result of this program is the formation of a complete, solid, and balanced character and noble character of students. The various characters can be presented in the table as follows:

Table 1. Common Character Types

No	Value	Description
1	Religious	Perspectives and actions that are obedient to the teachings of the religion they adhere to, tolerant of the worship of other religions, and live in harmony with people of other religions.
2	Honest	A fundamental moral value that is important for everyone to have.
3	Tolerance	Attitudes and actions that appreciate that other people have religions, ethnicities, opinions, attitudes, and actions that are different from their own.
4	Discipline	Actions that demonstrate regular behaviour and adherence to various rules and regulations
5	Hard Work	Behaviour that shows a hard effort to overcome various obstacles and learning tasks and complete the task as well as possible
6	Creative	Thinking and doing something to create new ways or results from something that already exists
7	Independent	Behaviour and perspectives that make it difficult to depend on others to complete tasks
8	Democratic	A way of thinking, thinking, and acting that considers everyone's rights and obligations equally.
9	Curiosity	Attitudes and actions always strive to gain a broader and deeper understanding of what he learns, sees, and hears.
10	Spirit Nationality	A way of thinking, acting, and having an outlook that prioritises the interests of the nation and state over personal and group interests.
11	Love Homeland	A way of thinking, being, and acting that shows loyalty, concern, and high appreciation for the country's language and physical, social, cultural, economic, and political environment.
12	Respect Achievement	Attitudes and actions that encourage him to do something beneficial to society and recognise and acknowledge the success of others.
13	Friendly /Communicative	Actions that demonstrate enjoyment of talking, getting along, and working together
14	Love Peace	Attitudes, words, and actions that make others happy and safe when he/she is around
15	Love to Read	Taking the time to read a variety of enjoyable reading
16	Caring Environment	Attitudes and actions that always try to prevent damage to the surrounding natural environment and repair damage that has occurred
17	Care Social	Attitudes and actions that always want to help other people and disadvantaged communities

18	Responsibility	Perspectives and actions of a person in fulfilling his responsibilities and obligations towards himself, society, the environment (natural, social, and cultural), the state, and God Almighty
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Based on the above study, character education, a teacher must instil good character education. The character based on the values of Islamic teachings by the nature of Rasulullah is presented in the table as follows:

Table 2. Types of Character in the Perspective Islamic Religious Education

No	Value	Description
1	<i>Siddiq</i>	<i>Siddiq</i> is an act that is often referred to as an honest act involving careful planning, implementation, and execution of actions.
2	<i>Amanah</i>	<i>Amanah</i> is the behaviour of someone who can carry out and keep his promises and responsibilities, and can be interpreted as trust in realising something done with full commitment, competence, hard work and consistency.
3	<i>Tabligh</i>	<i>Tabligh</i> is a way for someone to convey a mandate or message to others and achieve certain goals through certain methods or approaches.
4	<i>Fathonah</i>	<i>Fathonah</i> is the nature of the Prophet, which means intelligence, proficiency, or mastery of a particular field, which includes wisdom, wisdom, high integrity, and proficiency.

The solution to pessimism and concerns about character education not succeeding in creating a pluralist and civilised golden generation is to consider the golden character. Religious education encourages and guarantees mastery and knowledge in various disciplines because it teaches important religious values so that the moral messages of each religion can be internalised in daily behaviour (Fadillah & Rizka, 2024). If the changes produced by advances in information technology are used negatively, globalisation can be considered a culprit that damages a person's character. This happens because of incompetence, ignorance, and lack of self-control, resulting in the misguided use of new technology. Suppose one sticks to honesty and has strong self-control to maintain a praiseworthy character and noble morals. In that case, they should have a firm stand to maintain a strong belief in the truth to face any eventuality. Praiseworthy and bad characters illustrate the differences in each person's character, meaning that not all humans have the same traits, character, or morals; a person's faith can be strong, weak, or lost. Someone with faith can't lie or behave despicably (Muhasim, 2020).

Therefore, in realising the expectations of students, they must be trained to deal with the impact of the globalisation era or the digital era. Character development can be done in several ways, such as fostering one's independence as a *khalifah* worldwide, providing examples as leaders in various social environments, and formal, non-formal, and informal education. Character development must be carried out in a programmed, structured, and sustainable manner, along with changes.

IV. CONCLUSION

The digital era brings challenges in fostering students' character, such as a lack of understanding of Islamic values, weak morals and morals, and a lack of discipline and responsibility. Educators have an important role in building noble character based on Islamic values in the digital era by instilling faith and piety, strengthening moral education, utilising information and communication technology, and building cooperation with parents and the community. Building a noble character based on Islamic values in the digital era is a shared responsibility and requires commitment from all parties. Character problems of students in the digital era can be overcome with the cooperation and commitment of educators, parents, communities, and the government. Educators must strengthen their understanding of religion and Islamic values, develop creative learning models, utilise ICT wisely, and be good role models. Parents need to instil faith and piety, set a good example, spend time, supervise the use of technology, and communicate openly. The community must organise positive activities, educate about the dangers of misusing technology, and create a conducive environment. The government needs to make policies that support character education, conduct training for educators, and provide quality educational media. Periodic evaluations need to be conducted to determine the efforts' effectiveness.

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