

RECONSTRUCTION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION BASED ON PROPHETIC EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract: This study examines the reconstruction of character education based on the philosophy of prophetic education in the digital era, which serves as a new educational alternative. The main challenge currently faced by the education sector is maintaining a balance between technological advancement and developing strong character. The implementation of character education grounded in the philosophy of prophetic education in the digital era is expected to produce a generation that is not only intelligent but also possesses strong moral character. This study employs a library research method. Library research is a data collection technique that gathers information from written documents, official records, and other scholarly sources. Once the data is collected, it is processed by analyzing the existing information to address the research problem. The content analysis method interprets ideas and identifies their relevance to the investigated issues. The results of this study indicate that the reconstruction of character education based on the philosophy of prophetic education in the digital era represents one of the innovative ideas to help the Indonesian education system evolve amidst the challenges of the digital era.

Keywords: Character Education; Philosophy; Prophetic Education; Digital Age.

Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in various sectors of life, especially in education (Muttaqin et al., 2021; Hakim & Yulia, 2024). Digitalization not only affects the way we access information, but also the way we interact, collaborate and communicate (Rantona et al., 2024). Along with the extraordinary ease of access to information, the world of education is now facing new challenges related to the character-building of students. Learners who spend more time with digital devices risk losing the quality of meaningful social interactions, which was previously one of the main elements in character building (Triyanto, 2020; Arif et al., 2024).

The main challenge faced by the world of education is maintaining a balance between technological advances and developing strong character (Kulsum et al., 2024). Technology's increasingly dominant existence affects students' mindsets, interaction patterns, and morality (Arbi & Amrullah, 2024). Although it brings many benefits, technology can also cause the degradation of human values, such as decreased empathy, increased cyberbullying behavior, and the spread of hoaxes that threaten social resilience (Gunawan, 2024; Saddam et al., 2025). Therefore, an approach that focuses on mastering technology and strengthening character education is needed based on universal moral values. So that character education can adapt to the development of the digital era without losing its essence.

Character education previously emphasized moral and social aspects in the classroom. However, character education must now respond to new challenges brought about by digitalization (Laka et al., 2024). The dependence on technology makes many learners interact more with the virtual world than the real world, potentially reducing the quality of social relationships and eroding human values (Eko et al., 2025). The strong character of learners must be built even though they are more often exposed to digital information. Therefore, character education should involve a more holistic and adaptive approach to technology to form individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also moral (Armini, 2024).

One approach that can overcome this challenge is character education based on prophetic education

philosophy. This philosophy prioritizes prophetic values that include honesty (Siddiq), trustworthiness, tabligh (conveying the truth), and fathanah (intelligence) (Fitriana, 2020; Nuranti, 2024). These values are relevant in conventional schools' learning contexts and can be applied in the growing digital context. Character education based on prophetic education philosophy is expected to form students who are not only digitally intelligent but also have a strong morality in facing the challenges of the times (Kuntowijoyo, 2006; Masrifatin, 2019; Rusman, 2022).

Some previous studies examining the application of prophetic education-based character education prove that the application of prophetic character education in elementary schools through limited face-to-face learning and e-learning can shape the character of students who are disciplined, honest, responsible, and independent (Usan & Suyadi, 2022). Other studies also show that prophetic education can develop learners' spiritual and emotional aspects to build an ideal social community (Mulyasa, 2022). However, most of these studies still focus on implementing prophetic education in a conventional school environment and have not comprehensively examined how prophetic character education can be reconstructed in the context of the digital era. Digitalization has changed interaction, communication, and learning patterns, so new strategies that are adaptive to these changes are needed (Rinidji & Hidayat, 2024).

Amid the rapid development of digitalization, there needs to be a deeper study of how character education based on prophetic education philosophy can be integrated with existing digital learning methods. The digital world no longer functions as a means to obtain information but also as a place for extensive social interaction (Mubarak, 2022; Sikumbang et al., 2024). The influence of cyberspace on learners' social lives, especially in character building, is increasing. Therefore, research that discusses integrating prophetic-based character education in the digital world is fundamental to answering these challenges.

Not only that but character education based on prophetic education philosophy also has the potential to build moral awareness in cyberspace (Rusdi, 2024). Prophetic values applied in the curriculum and digital learning can direct students to become technologically savvy and utilize technology wisely and responsibly (Dzul & Jamilah, 2024; Kurahman & Rusmana, 2025). In addition to teaching morality, this character education also develops digital literacy skills that can help learners filter the information they receive and share online (Musa, 2022).

Character education based on prophetic education philosophy offers a more holistic approach by combining moral and intellectual aspects. In a digital world, where information is easily spread quickly, this approach can help learners maintain a strong grip on human values and spirituality. Therefore, character education should be oriented towards building characters who are not only socially good but also able to face digital challenges wisely and responsibly (Dzul & Jamilah, 2024; Kurahman & Rusmana, 2025).

As a first step, educators must understand the challenges faced by learners in this digital era. Most learners now interact more frequently with digital devices, whether for learning, socializing, or playing. These digital interactions can shape learners' perceptions, mindsets, and attitudes toward the world around them. Therefore, character education based on prophetic education philosophy must be integrated with digital learning so that students can understand and internalize moral values even though they interact through cyberspace (Putri et al., 2023).

However, applying prophetic-based character education in the digital era also faces several challenges. One of them is how to adapt prophetic values that should be formed in direct social interaction into relevant applications in cyberspace. Character education based on a prophetic education philosophy must be able to integrate these moral values with technology that continues to develop. In addition, the role of educators is also vital in directing students so that they can use technology wisely and not fall into negative behavior in cyberspace (Setiadharmanto et al., 2024).

The importance of character education based on prophetic education philosophy in this digital era lies in how to educate and how students can apply these values in their daily lives. With all the conveniences it offers, the virtual world often challenges existing moral values. Therefore, prophetic-based character education is expected to direct learners to stick to strong moral principles, even though they live in an increasingly technologically sophisticated world (Dzul & Jamilah, 2024).

The reconstruction of character education based on prophetic education philosophy must also pay attention to aspects relevant to the times. In this case, technology does not only function as a learning tool but also as a means to internalize moral values in students. Therefore, exploring various methods and strategies that can integrate prophetic values in digital-based learning is important. This will provide a strong foundation for learners to become individuals who are not only technologically intelligent but also responsible and have integrity in their digital lives (Kuntowijoyo, 2006).

Character education based on a prophetic education philosophy can be a solution to the moral challenges

faced by students in the digital era. By integrating prophetic values in digital education, learners are expected to not only utilize technology optimally but also have high moral awareness in every action they take in cyberspace. This is very important to ensure that learners become successful individuals in the digital world and maintain integrity, honesty, and responsibility in their daily lives (Kasingku & Sanger, 2023).

Finally, the application of character education based on prophetic education philosophy in the digital era is expected to produce a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also has a strong character. This character education is expected to be able to form individuals who can bring positive changes, both in the virtual and real world. Thus, prophetic-based character education is very relevant and important to build a generation that is superior in technology, has integrity, and can withstand the challenges of an increasingly complex era (Mulyasa, 2022).

Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a library research methodology. The selection of this approach is grounded in the aim to explore, interpret, and reconstruct the concept of character education, particularly based on the philosophy of prophetic education, in response to the challenges of the increasingly complex and dynamic digital era by 2030. The qualitative approach is centered on understanding the meanings, values, and thought structures embedded within various scientific texts and literature. In line with the advancement of the hermeneutic theory and digital interpretive methods, this study employs a textual approach to critically examine philosophical and pedagogical ideas. According to Creswell and Poth (2023), a qualitative approach allows researchers to understand the world of meaning and the complexity of social phenomena using contextual and reflective interpretations of non-numerical data.

Data Sources

The data in this study are classified into two main categories:

1. Primary Data:

Relevant and authoritative primary literature, including:

 - a) Recent scientific books (published within the last five years) on:
 - 1) Character education.
 - 2) Philosophy of prophetic education.
 - 3) Educational transformation in the digital era 5.0.
 - b) Indexed journal articles (Scopus, DOAJ, Sinta).
 - c) Dissertations and theses from reputable university databases (e.g., ProQuest, Sinta, Garuda).
2. Secondary Data:
 - a) National and international education policy documents (e.g., UNESCO, OECD, Kemendikbudristek).
 - b) Research reports from educational institutions.
 - c) Articles from digital educational media.
 - d) Credible and open-access online sources.

Literature Selection Criteria

To ensure the quality, relevance, and focus of this study, the following criteria have been applied:

1. Number and Year Range of Literature:
 - a) Minimum of 30 primary sources.
 - b) Minimum of 15 secondary sources.
2. Year Range:
 - a) Primary literature: 2018– now.
 - b) Classical or fundamental literature: Before 2018 (if deemed essential).
 - c) Policy documents, reports, and digital articles: 2020– now.

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Written by academics, researchers, or practitioners affiliated with reputable institutions.
2. Published in accredited journals, scientific books, or trusted academic media.
3. Focuses on character education, prophetic education philosophy, or the digital transformation of education.
4. Legally available (open access or through academic repositories).

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Non-credible sources (e.g., personal blogs, non-academic media, anonymous content).
2. Irrelevant content to the study's focus.
3. Non-theoretical opinions or unpublished material not subjected to peer review.
4. Duplicate or unavailable sources.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through both digital and conventional documentation methods. The researchers reviewed printed and digital literature sources, such as e-books, e-journals, and academic repositories. As noted by Saldaña and Omasta (2022), contemporary qualitative research involves collecting texts and assessing their validity and sociocultural context. Therefore, the data selection was based on academic quality and publication credibility.

Data Analysis Techniques

The study employs content analysis with a hermeneutic thematic approach. This method allows for the systematic and objective interpretation of meanings, particularly identifying implicit messages within scientific texts.

1. The data analysis process involves the following steps:
2. Data Reduction: Selecting relevant data and eliminating information not directly aligned with the study’s focus.
3. Thematic Categorization and Coding: Organizing data into themes that emerge from the texts, such as prophetic values, digital challenges, and principles of character education.
4. Contextual Interpretation of Meaning: Interpreting the meaning and substance of the text, considering social, cultural, and digital contexts.
5. Data Presentation: Presenting the findings through thematic narratives and critical-conceptual analysis.
6. Conclusion Drawing: Synthesizing the conceptual findings to explain the characteristics and relevance of prophetic character education in addressing the challenges of the transformative digital era.

According to Krippendorff (2019), content analysis interprets symbols, meanings, and message structures in social communication, making it particularly relevant in philosophical and educational research.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The following is a synthesis of previous research on the Reconstruction of Character Education Based on Prophetic Education Philosophy in the Digital Era:

Table 1
Synthesis of Previous Research

No	Researchers & Year	Research Focus	Key Findings
1	Tengku Kasim dan Mohd Noor (2022)	Teacher as muaddib in prophetic education	Teachers serve not only as educators but also as role models embodying prophetic values: transcendence, humanization, and liberation
2	Ainur & Mohamad (2022)	Character education in the digital era	Overexposure to gadgets and information overload weakens value internalization and triggers moral degradation
3	Ibrahim et al. (2022)	Gadget dependency and its impact on character	Excessive gadget use leads to social isolation, increased individualism, and reduced empathy among students
4	Nahar et al. (2024)	The values in prophetic education	The fundamental prophetic values are transcendence (tawhid), humanization (rahmah), and liberation ('adl)

The table above highlights that prophetic education has been widely recognized as an alternative model emphasizing cognitive development and ethical, spiritual, and social liberation aspects (Tengku Kasim & Mohd Noor, 2022; Nahar et al., 2024). However, the rapid digital transformation presents significant challenges, such as moral disorientation influenced by social media and weakened moral authority (Ainur & Mohamad, 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2022). This underscores the urgent need to reconstruct character education approaches that are adaptive to digital realities while preserving the core Islamic educational values.

In addition, the following are the results of a review of previous research based on the focus of the problem on the challenges of character education in the digital era, the philosophy of prophetic education and its values, and the reconstruction of prophetic character education presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Results of Synthesis Review of Previous Research Based on Problem Topics

Aspects	Related Studies	Key Findings
Character Education Challenges in the Digital Era	Setiani (2021) Sari (2022) Nurhabibah et al. (2025)	- Exposure to negative content (hoaxes, pornography) damages students' morality. - Device dependence fosters individualism and dehumanizes social interaction. - Crisis of exemplary educators exacerbates character degradation.
Prophetic Education Philosophy and Its Values	Herlambang (2018) Mulyanto et al. (2023) Rukhmana et al. (2024)	- Prophetic values (siddiq, amanah, tabligh, fathanah) become the foundation of holistic character building. - Three pillars of philosophy: transcendence (faith), humanization (compassion), liberation (social justice). - Integration of prophetic values in the curriculum and school culture.
Reconstruction of Prophetic Character Education	Pratiwi & Usriyah (2020) Sari (2022) Rukhmana et al. (2024)	- Strategies include integrating prophetic values into digital learning, digital ethics training for teachers, and limiting screen time. - Habituation of prophetic examples through storytelling and collaborative projects. - Strengthening digital literacy grounded in local wisdom.

Research by Nurhabibah et al. (2025) reveals that 67% of students are exposed to harmful digital content, while Sari (2022) reports that 78% prefer virtual over face-to-face interaction. These data highlight the pressing need for a reconstructed character education system responsive to digital challenges.

Implementation of prophetic educational philosophy, especially values such as Siddiq (honesty) and fathanah (intelligence), effectively shapes students' integrative character, combining spirituality and intellectuality (Mulyanto et al., 2023). Rukhmana et al. (2024) further emphasize that internalizing prophetic values through authentic exemplars is critical for success.

The reconstruction process involves three strategic steps:

1. Curriculum Revision: Incorporate modules on digital ethics based on prophetic values to guide students in navigating digital environments responsibly.
2. Teacher Competence Enhancement: Provide training to improve teachers' skills in utilizing technology ethically and effectively as character educators.

Stakeholder Collaboration: Foster partnerships among families, schools, and digital platforms to filter harmful content and support holistic character development.

Discussion

A. Character Education Challenges in the Digital Era

Character education in the digital era faces various challenges beyond technical issues, deeply impacting students' moral, ethical, and personal development (Hamdani, 2021; Rukhmana et al., 2024). While many studies have pointed out the adverse effects of digital exposure – such as the proliferation of pornography, hate speech, violence, and misinformation (Pratiwi & Usriyah, 2020; Yulita et al., 2025). There is a clear gap in research that evaluates how digital literacy programs can be effectively implemented in Indonesia's unique educational context. Given the sociocultural diversity and disparities in resources across Indonesian schools, this gap is particularly critical, as it requires context-sensitive rather than global approaches.

Moreover, device dependency and its impact on social interactions have become increasingly concerning. Ibrahim (2022) found that over 70% of Indonesian students prefer online communication over face-to-face interactions, leading to decreased social skills, heightened individualism, and a loss of empathy. This aligns with Al-Attas's (1980) theory of educational dehumanization, which warns against an education system that neglects human development's emotional and spiritual aspects. However, practical research on how Indonesian schools can incorporate social engagement strategies, such as culturally relevant extracurricular activities, is still scarce, leaving a significant gap in research and educational practice.

Another challenge is the shift in moral role models. Yusuf (2020) highlights the growing influence of social media influencers, who often serve as the primary moral guides for students, promoting lifestyles that may contradict the values taught in schools. This shift poses a serious challenge to traditional models of character

education, which depend heavily on teachers and parents as moral exemplars. Comparative analyses suggest that successful character education in Indonesia needs to empower teachers as authentic role models within digital spaces. However, this area has not been sufficiently explored in the current literature. Educational managers, therefore, must focus on professional development programs that prepare teachers to lead with character in the digital era.

Furthermore, safety and security in cyberspace remain significant concerns. While studies by Munawaroh et al. (2024) and Hamdani (2021) have identified the vulnerabilities children face online, particularly regarding cybercrimes and unbalanced online activities, there is a lack of research on how Indonesian schools can work together with government agencies and internet providers to implement effective cybersecurity policies and content filtering. This gap calls for educational management frameworks that address policy advocacy and engage stakeholders in ensuring students' digital safety.

Lastly, the decline in moral and cultural values (Jemain & Hamid, 2024; Sakina & Latifah, 2025) suggests that traditional character education approaches are no longer sufficient in the face of digital influences. There is a clear need for adaptive strategies that ground moral and cultural values in the curriculum and school culture. However, systematic models for integrating these strategies within Indonesian schools remain underdeveloped, highlighting an urgent area for future research and innovation in educational management.

Several strategies have been proposed to address these challenges, including strengthening digital literacy, limiting screen time, promoting parental involvement, and encouraging extracurricular activities that foster empathy and responsibility. Programs like Scouting, emotional intelligence training, and experiential learning are also advocated (Hamdani, 2021; Rukhmana et al., 2024). However, the success of these initiatives heavily depends on effective educational management practices that foster collaboration among schools, families, and communities – a dimension often overlooked in existing studies.

While global frameworks offer valuable insights, Indonesian educational management must focus on context-specific, evidence-based strategies considering local cultural, social, and infrastructural realities. Future research should prioritize evaluating the implementation and outcomes of integrated character education programs, with particular attention to teacher capacity-building, stakeholder collaboration, and policy development.

B. Prophetic Educational Philosophy and Its Values: Transcendence, Humanization, and Liberation

Prophetic educational philosophy is a dynamic and continuous process of transmitting knowledge and values to affirm the relationship between humans and the transcendent God (Moh. Roqib, 2016). Central to this philosophy is an awareness of human strengths and weaknesses, fostering a dialogue with the divine (transcendence) and the natural world, manifested both through self-reflection (*muhasabah an-nafs*) and external actions such as *amar ma'ruf* (humanization) and *nahi munkar* (liberation). This triadic framework – transcendence, humanization, and liberation – forms the core of prophetic education.

While transcendence plays a pivotal role, many Islamic education systems have historically emphasized this dimension to the detriment of humanization and liberation, resulting in an imbalance (Moh. Roqib, 2016). This observation echoes contemporary educational discourse critiques, highlighting the social sciences' stagnation and the need for transformative paradigms that guide social change toward justice, compassion, and spiritual awareness. Prophetic education thus offers a comprehensive framework, blending spiritual transcendence with social transformation and addressing both individual and societal needs.

Kuntowijoyo (Khoiron, 2004) articulates three fundamental values in prophetic education: humanization, liberation, and transcendence. Humanization involves treating individuals with dignity and eliminating violence and hatred. This value differs from Western anthropocentric humanism by rooting human dignity in theocentric transcendence. Liberation refers to freedom from poverty, exploitation, and discrimination – core elements in the struggle for justice. Transcendence, the foundation of humanization and liberation, affirms faith as the cornerstone of civilization and educational transformation (Masduki, 2017).

These values resonate strongly with Indonesia's character education goals, especially in integrating Islamic values within educational management. However, research on effectively operationalizing these prophetic values in Indonesian schools, particularly in the digital era, remains scarce. While theoretical frameworks are well-established, there is a lack of empirical studies on incorporating these values into curriculum design, teacher training, and the transformation of school culture.

For educational leaders in Indonesia, this requires strategic efforts to embed prophetic values into every aspect of school life. This includes revising curricula to balance transcendence with humanization and liberation, developing teacher competencies to model these values, and fostering school cultures emphasizing social justice,

empathy, and spiritual growth. Furthermore, contextualizing prophetic education within Indonesia's cultural and digital realities is crucial for ensuring these principles remain relevant and practical.

In conclusion, the prophetic educational philosophy provides a solid theoretical foundation for rethinking character education in Indonesia. Its values offer a holistic framework integrating spirituality, ethics, and social justice. Future research and educational management must focus on translating these ideals into actionable strategies to address the current challenges, especially those brought on by digitalization and social change.

C. Reconstruction of Prophetic Character Education

The need to reconstruct character education based on prophetic philosophy is urgent, especially as a response to the challenges posed by the digital era. Traditional education models, which often focus on the normative transmission of values, fail to address the complexities of digitalization, which promotes humanism and secularism while potentially undermining moral and spiritual foundations (Al-Attas, 1993; Hasan, 2016). Prophetic values—humanization, liberation, and transcendence—offer a comprehensive philosophical framework that can guide transformative character education, fostering critical awareness, spirituality, and social responsibility among students.

1. Prophetic Value-Based Curriculum Integration

The reconstruction of character education begins with revising curricula to integrate prophetic values such as justice, compassion, honesty, and trustworthiness across all subjects and learning activities (Muhaimin, 2011; Zubaedi, 2011). This integrative approach ensures that education promotes intellectual development and moral and spiritual growth. However, despite a general agreement on embedding values into curricula, empirical research on effectively incorporating prophetic values into the Indonesian curriculum remains limited. Educational leaders must thus pioneer context-sensitive curriculum frameworks, ensuring they align with national education standards while respecting local cultural contexts.

2. Participatory and Reflective Learning Models

Prophetic education advocates for learning models that emphasize active, dialogical, and reflective participation, similar to Paulo Freire's (2005) concept of liberation pedagogy. In these models, students are viewed as conscious agents who actively engage with social realities rather than passive recipients of knowledge. However, implementing these models in Indonesian schools faces challenges such as teacher readiness, limited resources, and entrenched didactic methods. Overcoming these challenges requires professional development programs and supportive policies that effectively empower teachers to implement participatory learning.

3. Ethical and Creative Optimization of Digital Media

The digital era presents both opportunities and threats for character education. Ethical digital literacy must become a core education component, enabling students to critically assess information and use technology responsibly (Raharjo, 2018; Hidayatullah, 2020). However, there is limited research on designing and implementing pedagogical strategies that utilize digital media for value internalization in Indonesian schools. Educational leaders must promote innovative and contextually relevant digital literacy programs that align with prophetic values, transforming digital media from a potential source of moral decay into a powerful tool for character development.

4. Teachers as Prophetic Figures

Teachers play a pivotal role as mu'allim (instructor), murabbi (spiritual guide), and muaddib (moral educator). As prophetic figures, teachers must authentically embody moral and spiritual values through their actions, words, and behaviors (Zuhairini et al., 2007; Suyadi, 2021). The teacher's exemplary conduct is one of the most effective ways to internalize values. However, there is a gap in systematic efforts to develop teachers' intellectual, emotional, and spiritual competencies aligned with prophetic ideals in Indonesian schools. Educational leadership must prioritize comprehensive teacher development programs to nurture these competencies and ensure teachers can effectively model and transmit prophetic character values in the digital era.

The prophetic educational philosophy provides a robust moral foundation to address contemporary challenges like technological disruption, identity crises, and the erosion of social values (Zubaedi, 2011; Hasan, 2016). By shifting from the rote memorization of values to their lived and internalized practice, students become active moral agents rather than passive recipients (Freire, 2005; Suyadi, 2021). When guided by prophetic principles, the ethical use of digital media complements rather than contradicts the goals of character education (Raharjo, 2018; Hidayatullah, 2020).

For Indonesian educational management, this reconstruction requires integrated strategies that combine curriculum reform, pedagogical innovation, digital literacy, and teacher empowerment. These strategies must be tailored to Indonesia's diverse cultural and educational landscape to ensure their relevance and sustainability. Such a holistic approach is crucial for fostering a generation that is intellectually capable and morally and spiritually resilient amid the rapid pace of digital change (Al-Attas, 1993; Azra, 2012).

Conclusion

The digital era has transformed education, presenting new challenges in character development. While teachers play an important role, students must also take responsibility for their moral growth, supported by religious values. Prophetic education provides an effective solution by integrating values such as honesty (Siddiq), trustworthiness (Amanah), and intelligence (fathanah) into character education, making it relevant and engaging through modern digital tools.

To successfully implement prophetic character education, a clear roadmap is essential. Collaboration between schools, families, and communities is crucial to ensure consistent character development messages. Digital platforms like social media and e-learning tools should engage students interactively and encourage moral reasoning. Finally, effective monitoring and evaluation systems must be in place, with regular feedback from students, parents, and educators, to refine and improve these initiatives. By following this roadmap, education can adapt to the digital era while ensuring students become morally responsible. Prophetic character education can shape a generation that is intellectually capable and ethically grounded, ready to face the challenges of the digital era with integrity and wisdom.

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