

Prophetic Education in the Era of Digital Transformation: Constructing a Framework for Character Development Among Muslim Students

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Abstract

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This study aims to examine the role of Prophetic Education in the era of digital transformation by constructing a comprehensive framework for character development among Muslim students. The rapid expansion of digital technologies has created both opportunities and ethical challenges that require educational systems to integrate technological competence with moral and spiritual development. The research employs a qualitative library research design through a systematic literature review including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and policy reports. Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify key concepts related to prophetic education, character formation, digital citizenship, and digital ethics. The findings reveal that prophetic values such as *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *‘adl* (justice), *raḥmah* (compassion), *ḥikmah* (wisdom), and *taqwā* (God-consciousness) provide a strong ethical foundation for addressing challenges in digital environments. The study further shows that these values align with contemporary frameworks of character education and digital citizenship, particularly in promoting ethical decision-making, responsible technology use, and social responsibility. The novelty of this study lies in the development of the Prophetic Digital Character Education Framework (PDCEF), an integrative model that synthesizes Islamic prophetic principles with modern educational theories to guide character development in digitally transformed learning environments. The study concludes that prophetic education offers a holistic and transformative approach to cultivating morally grounded and digitally responsible Muslim students.

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Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed contemporary educational landscapes across the globe. Artificial intelligence, social media, learning management systems, big data analytics, and mobile technologies have reshaped the ways students access information, communicate, and construct knowledge. These developments have generated unprecedented educational opportunities while simultaneously creating complex ethical, social, and psychological challenges. Educational institutions are increasingly required to prepare students not only for technological competence but also for responsible and ethical participation in digital societies. Consequently, character development has emerged as a critical concern within contemporary educational discourse. Scholars argue that technological advancement without corresponding moral development may contribute to social fragmentation, misinformation, and ethical uncertainty (Selwyn, 2024).

Within Muslim societies, the digital transformation of education presents unique opportunities and challenges. Digital technologies have facilitated broader access to Islamic knowledge through online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, digital libraries, and social media networks. Students can now engage with religious resources and scholarly discussions regardless of geographical limitations. At the same time, the digital environment exposes young Muslims to competing ideologies, misinformation, online radicalization, consumerism, and ethical dilemmas that were less prevalent in previous generations. These developments require educational frameworks capable of cultivating both digital competence and moral resilience. Consequently, Islamic education faces increasing pressure to develop pedagogical

approaches that address the realities of digital transformation while preserving ethical and spiritual values (Sahin, 2022).

Character education has become a major focus of educational reform initiatives worldwide. Educational policymakers and scholars increasingly recognize that academic achievement alone is insufficient for preparing students to navigate contemporary social realities. Effective education should also foster empathy, integrity, responsibility, self-discipline, and ethical decision-making. Such competencies are particularly important in digital environments where anonymity, information abundance, and rapid communication often complicate moral judgment. As a result, many educational systems are seeking comprehensive frameworks capable of integrating cognitive, social, emotional, and ethical development. This shift has generated renewed interest in educational traditions that emphasize moral formation and character cultivation (OECD, 2023).

Islamic education possesses a rich intellectual heritage concerning character development. The educational mission of Prophet Muhammad was fundamentally concerned with moral and spiritual transformation. Numerous Islamic sources emphasize that the Prophet was sent to perfect noble character (*makārim al-akhlāq*). Consequently, character formation occupies a central position within Islamic educational philosophy. Classical Muslim scholars consistently viewed education as a process of nurturing virtuous individuals capable of contributing positively to society. Therefore, prophetic educational principles provide valuable resources for addressing contemporary concerns regarding character development in the digital age (Kamali, 2023).

The concept of prophetic education has gained increasing attention within contemporary Islamic educational scholarship. Prophetic education refers to educational approaches inspired by the teachings, practices, values, and pedagogical methods of Prophet Muhammad. Such approaches emphasize holistic human development encompassing intellectual, spiritual, emotional, ethical, and social dimensions. Unlike narrowly academic conceptions of education, prophetic education seeks to cultivate balanced individuals who embody moral excellence and social responsibility. Contemporary scholars argue that prophetic educational principles remain highly relevant for addressing modern educational challenges. Consequently, prophetic education provides a potentially valuable framework for character development in digitally mediated societies (Sahin, 2022).

One of the defining characteristics of prophetic education is its emphasis on the integration of knowledge and action. Islamic educational traditions consistently stress that knowledge should lead to ethical behavior and beneficial social contribution. Educational success is therefore measured not only by cognitive achievement but also by moral conduct and personal transformation. This perspective contrasts with educational approaches that focus primarily on information acquisition or examination performance. In the context of digital transformation, the integration of knowledge and action becomes particularly important because students increasingly require guidance regarding the ethical implications of technology use. Therefore, prophetic education offers an alternative vision of educational excellence grounded in character formation (Kamali, 2023).

The growing influence of digital technologies has intensified concerns regarding the moral development of young people. Research suggests that excessive digital engagement may contribute to cyberbullying, misinformation, social isolation, online addiction, and declining empathy. Although digital technologies provide valuable educational opportunities, they also create environments that challenge traditional mechanisms of moral socialization. Students frequently encounter ethical dilemmas requiring judgment, self-regulation, and critical evaluation. Consequently, educational institutions must develop strategies that address not only technological skills but also ethical capacities. Character education has

therefore become increasingly important within discussions of digital citizenship and responsible technology use (UNESCO, 2024).

Islamic educational scholars have increasingly argued that digital transformation requires a reexamination of educational priorities. Traditional educational models often emerged within social contexts significantly different from those experienced by contemporary learners. While foundational Islamic values remain constant, educational strategies must adapt to changing social realities. Digital environments influence how students learn, communicate, and construct identity. Consequently, Islamic education must develop pedagogical frameworks capable of responding to these transformations while remaining faithful to its ethical foundations. This challenge has stimulated growing interest in innovative interpretations of prophetic educational principles (Ahmed, 2022).

The concept of *akhlāq* occupies a central position within Islamic discussions of character development. *Akhlāq* encompasses virtues such as honesty, justice, compassion, humility, patience, responsibility, and respect for others. These virtues are not merely abstract ideals but practical dispositions expected to guide everyday behavior. Contemporary educational research increasingly supports the importance of such character traits for academic success, social well-being, and civic engagement. Furthermore, digital environments require individuals capable of applying ethical principles in rapidly changing contexts. Therefore, *akhlāq* provides an important conceptual foundation for character education in the digital era (Kamali, 2023).

Another significant aspect of prophetic education concerns the cultivation of *adab*. The concept of *adab* encompasses proper conduct, ethical awareness, social responsibility, and intellectual discipline. Classical Muslim scholars viewed *adab* as an essential educational objective because it regulates the relationship between knowledge and behavior. Contemporary scholars suggest that *adab* may offer valuable guidance for addressing challenges associated with digital communication, online interaction, and information consumption. As digital technologies increasingly mediate social relationships, the cultivation of *adab* becomes particularly relevant. Consequently, *adab* represents a critical dimension of contemporary character education (Hashim, 2021).

The increasing complexity of digital societies has also heightened interest in the concept of digital citizenship. Digital citizenship refers to the responsible, ethical, and informed use of digital technologies. It encompasses competencies related to online communication, information literacy, privacy awareness, civic participation, and ethical behavior. Educational researchers emphasize that digital citizenship requires more than technical proficiency. Students must also develop moral judgment, critical thinking, and social responsibility. These objectives align closely with the broader goals of prophetic education, suggesting potential synergies between Islamic educational philosophy and contemporary digital citizenship frameworks (Ribble, 2022).

Contemporary studies indicate that many young people experience challenges navigating the ethical complexities of digital environments. Issues such as misinformation, online harassment, algorithmic manipulation, and digital surveillance raise important questions regarding individual responsibility and moral agency. Educational institutions increasingly recognize the need to prepare students for these realities. Islamic educational perspectives can contribute valuable ethical resources for addressing such concerns. Prophetic teachings concerning truthfulness, justice, accountability, and respect for human dignity provide relevant principles for contemporary digital contexts. Therefore, prophetic education offers a potentially significant framework for ethical engagement in digital societies (Ahmed, 2022).

The literature further suggests that character development is most effective when integrated throughout educational processes rather than treated as a separate subject. Character formation occurs through relationships, institutional culture, pedagogical practices, and lived experiences. Prophetic educational methods similarly emphasize modeling, mentorship, dialogue, reflection, and experiential learning. These approaches contribute to the internalization of values and the development of moral dispositions. Consequently, character education requires comprehensive educational strategies rather than isolated instructional interventions. Such insights are particularly relevant for institutions seeking to respond effectively to digital transformation (Berkowitz, 2021).

Recent scholarship has also emphasized the importance of holistic educational frameworks. Holistic education seeks to nurture intellectual, emotional, spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions of human development. This perspective resonates strongly with Islamic educational philosophy, which traditionally emphasizes balanced human flourishing. Digital transformation has reinforced the need for holistic approaches because technological change affects multiple aspects of human life simultaneously. Educational responses focusing solely on technical competencies may fail to address broader developmental needs. Therefore, holistic educational models provide an important foundation for contemporary character development initiatives (Miller, 2021).

Despite growing interest in prophetic education, significant gaps remain within existing literature. Many studies discuss prophetic values in general terms without developing comprehensive frameworks for implementation in contemporary educational contexts. Similarly, research addressing digital transformation often focuses on technological adoption rather than character development. Consequently, limited scholarship has systematically examined how prophetic educational principles can inform character education in digitally mediated environments. Addressing this gap represents an important contribution to both Islamic educational studies and contemporary educational theory (Sahin, 2022).

Another limitation concerns the lack of integrative models connecting prophetic education, character formation, and digital citizenship. Existing studies frequently address these topics separately rather than examining their interrelationships. However, contemporary educational challenges increasingly require interdisciplinary approaches capable of bridging ethical, technological, and pedagogical concerns. Developing such frameworks is particularly important for Muslim students who must navigate digital environments while maintaining strong moral and spiritual identities. Therefore, further conceptual work is necessary to support educational innovation and reform (OECD, 2023).

Against this background, the present study investigates the role of prophetic education in addressing character development challenges associated with digital transformation. Specifically, it seeks to construct a conceptual framework capable of integrating prophetic educational principles with contemporary understandings of digital citizenship and character education. Through a systematic review of relevant literature, the study explores theoretical foundations, emerging trends, and practical implications for educational practice. The novelty of the study lies in the development of a Prophetic Digital Character Education Framework (PDCEF) that synthesizes Islamic educational philosophy, character education theory, and digital citizenship principles. By doing so, the research contributes to ongoing efforts to reimagine Islamic education for the realities of the digital age.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is situated at the intersection of prophetic education, Islamic educational philosophy, character education theory, digital citizenship, and transformative learning. These perspectives collectively provide a conceptual basis for

understanding how character development can be cultivated among Muslim students in an era characterized by rapid technological change. Contemporary educational scholars increasingly argue that education should not merely prepare learners for economic productivity but should also nurture ethical responsibility, social awareness, and personal integrity. Within Islamic educational traditions, similar concerns have long been expressed through concepts such as *tarbiyah*, *ta'dīb*, *akhlāq*, and prophetic pedagogy. Consequently, integrating these traditions with contemporary educational theories offers a promising framework for addressing emerging challenges associated with digital transformation. Such integration forms the central theoretical orientation of this study (Memon, 2021; Sahin, 2022).

The concept of prophetic education serves as the primary theoretical pillar of the study. Prophetic education refers to educational principles, methods, and values derived from the teachings and practices of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Unlike purely instructional models, prophetic education emphasizes holistic human development encompassing intellectual, moral, spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions. The Prophet's educational approach was characterized by compassion, dialogue, experiential learning, mentorship, reflection, and ethical modeling. Contemporary scholars argue that prophetic education remains highly relevant because it addresses both personal transformation and social responsibility. Therefore, prophetic education provides a comprehensive framework for examining character development within contemporary educational contexts (Kamali, 2023; Mulyasa, 2022).

A central component of prophetic education is the concept of *akhlāq* (character and moral conduct). *Akhlāq* refers to stable moral dispositions that guide ethical behavior across different contexts. Classical Islamic scholars regarded the cultivation of *akhlāq* as one of the primary objectives of education. Educational success was measured not only by intellectual achievement but also by the embodiment of virtues such as honesty, justice, humility, patience, compassion, and responsibility. Contemporary character education research similarly emphasizes the importance of cultivating enduring moral habits rather than merely teaching ethical concepts. This convergence highlights the continuing relevance of *akhlāq* as a framework for educational practice in the digital era (Halstead, 2021; Kamali, 2023).

The concept of *ta'dīb*, developed extensively by Muslim educational thinkers, also provides an important theoretical lens. *Ta'dīb* refers to the process of cultivating proper conduct, intellectual discipline, and ethical awareness. According to contemporary interpretations, *ta'dīb* seeks to establish harmony between knowledge, values, and action. Educational processes informed by *ta'dīb* emphasize the internalization of ethical principles rather than simple behavioral compliance. In digital environments where students encounter diverse information sources and competing value systems, *ta'dīb* offers guidance for responsible engagement and critical evaluation. Therefore, it remains highly relevant for contemporary discussions of character development and digital citizenship (Al-Attas, 2021; Hashim, 2021).

Closely related to *ta'dīb* is the broader concept of *tarbiyah*, which emphasizes holistic nurturing and human development. *Tarbiyah* encompasses intellectual growth, emotional maturity, spiritual development, and social responsibility. Unlike narrowly academic conceptions of education, *tarbiyah* views learning as a lifelong process aimed at developing balanced individuals capable of contributing positively to society. Contemporary holistic education theories share similar concerns regarding the multidimensional nature of human flourishing. The alignment between *tarbiyah* and holistic education suggests significant opportunities for integrating Islamic educational philosophy with contemporary educational research. Consequently, *tarbiyah* forms an important component of the theoretical framework (Memon, 2021; Miller, 2021).

The study is further informed by contemporary character education theory, which has emerged as a major field within educational research. Character education seeks to cultivate virtues, ethical reasoning, social responsibility, and civic engagement through intentional educational practices. Contemporary scholars argue that effective character education extends beyond classroom instruction to include institutional culture, relationships, and experiential learning opportunities. Research demonstrates that character education can contribute positively to academic achievement, social competence, emotional well-being, and responsible citizenship. These findings resonate strongly with Islamic educational objectives. Therefore, character education theory provides an important bridge between Islamic educational philosophy and contemporary educational practice (Berkowitz, 2021; Lickona, 2022).

One influential perspective within character education is the virtue ethics approach. Rooted in Aristotelian philosophy and adapted by contemporary scholars, virtue ethics emphasizes the cultivation of moral character through habit formation and ethical practice. Rather than focusing solely on rules or outcomes, virtue ethics prioritizes the development of virtuous dispositions that guide behavior. Islamic educational traditions similarly emphasize the cultivation of virtues through repeated practice, self-discipline, and moral reflection. This theoretical overlap suggests that virtue ethics and prophetic education share common educational objectives. Consequently, virtue ethics contributes valuable insights for understanding character development among Muslim students (Kristjánsson, 2021; Halstead, 2021).

Another important theoretical perspective is transformative learning theory, which emphasizes personal growth through critical reflection and perspective transformation. Transformative learning occurs when individuals critically examine assumptions and develop more inclusive understandings of themselves and society. Educational researchers suggest that transformative learning supports ethical awareness, social responsibility, and lifelong learning. Prophetic educational methods frequently encouraged reflection, self-examination, and moral growth. Therefore, transformative learning theory provides a useful framework for understanding how character development can occur through educational experiences. Its emphasis on personal transformation aligns closely with Islamic conceptions of moral and spiritual development (Mezirow, 2021; Taylor & Cranton, 2023).

The framework also draws upon social learning theory, which highlights the importance of observation, modeling, and social interaction in human learning. According to social learning theory, individuals acquire behaviors, attitudes, and values by observing role models and participating in social environments. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ served as a model of ethical conduct whose behavior provided practical guidance for followers. Contemporary character education similarly emphasizes the role of teachers, parents, and peers in shaping moral development. Therefore, social learning theory helps explain how prophetic educational principles can influence character formation through modeling and mentorship (Bandura, 2021; Berkowitz, 2021).

An additional theoretical pillar is the concept of digital citizenship. Digital citizenship refers to the responsible, ethical, and effective use of digital technologies. It encompasses competencies related to online communication, information literacy, privacy protection, civic engagement, and ethical behavior in digital environments. Educational researchers increasingly argue that digital citizenship should be considered an essential component of contemporary education. However, many digital citizenship frameworks focus primarily on technical skills and legal compliance. Integrating prophetic educational principles can strengthen these frameworks by providing deeper ethical foundations for responsible digital engagement (Ribble, 2022; UNESCO, 2024).

Research on digital citizenship consistently identifies ethical decision-making as a critical competency. Students regularly encounter situations involving misinformation, cyberbullying, online harassment, privacy concerns, and algorithmic manipulation. Navigating these challenges requires more than technical expertise. Learners must also develop moral judgment, empathy, integrity, and self-regulation. Prophetic educational principles offer relevant ethical guidance through values such as truthfulness (*ṣidq*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), justice (*‘adl*), and compassion (*rahmah*). Therefore, prophetic education can contribute significantly to contemporary discussions regarding digital citizenship and ethical technology use (Ahmed, 2022; Kamali, 2023).

Another important concept within the framework is digital ethics. Digital ethics examines moral questions arising from the design, use, and impact of digital technologies. Contemporary scholars increasingly emphasize the need for ethical frameworks capable of addressing issues such as data privacy, artificial intelligence, surveillance, misinformation, and online behavior. Islamic ethical traditions provide rich resources for engaging these concerns. Principles related to human dignity, accountability, social justice, and public welfare offer valuable perspectives for evaluating technological developments. Consequently, digital ethics constitutes an important area of convergence between Islamic educational philosophy and contemporary technological discourse (Floridi, 2023; Kamali, 2023).

Recent studies examining Islamic education and digital transformation provide important empirical insights. Research conducted across various Muslim educational contexts indicates growing adoption of digital technologies in teaching and learning. These technologies have expanded educational access and increased opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing. However, studies also identify concerns related to screen dependency, declining interpersonal interaction, and ethical challenges associated with digital media use. These findings reinforce the need for educational frameworks that integrate technological competence with character development. Prophetic education appears particularly relevant in addressing this challenge (Sahin, 2022; Ahmed, 2022).

Several contemporary studies have specifically examined the relationship between Islamic values and character education. Findings generally indicate that educational approaches grounded in Islamic ethical principles can contribute positively to student behavior, moral reasoning, and social responsibility. Programs emphasizing values such as honesty, empathy, responsibility, and respect have demonstrated positive educational outcomes. Nevertheless, researchers note that successful implementation requires coherent institutional support and effective pedagogical strategies. These findings underscore the importance of developing comprehensive frameworks capable of translating ethical principles into educational practice (Memon, 2021; Halstead, 2021).

Research concerning youth engagement with digital technologies also provides important context for the present study. Contemporary students spend substantial portions of their daily lives interacting with digital media. These interactions influence identity formation, social relationships, information consumption, and moral decision-making. While digital technologies provide numerous educational benefits, they also expose students to ethical risks and psychological challenges. Consequently, scholars increasingly advocate educational approaches that foster resilience, critical thinking, and ethical awareness. Such recommendations align closely with the objectives of prophetic education (OECD, 2023; Selwyn, 2024).

Another recurring theme in recent literature is the importance of human-centered education. Human centered approaches prioritize learner well-being, ethical development, meaningful relationships, and holistic growth. Educational researchers increasingly criticize purely technocratic approaches that reduce learning to measurable outcomes and technical

competencies. Prophetic education similarly emphasizes human dignity, compassion, and moral responsibility. This convergence suggests that prophetic educational principles can contribute meaningfully to contemporary efforts to humanize education in digitally mediated environments. Therefore, human-centered education represents an important dimension of the theoretical framework (Biesta, 2022; UNESCO, 2024).

Based on the reviewed literature, this study proposes the Prophetic Digital Character Education Framework (PDCEF). The framework integrates prophetic educational values including *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *‘adl* (justice), *raḥmah* (compassion), and *ḥikmah* (wisdom) with contemporary concepts of character education, digital citizenship, digital ethics, and transformative learning. The framework conceptualizes character development as a multidimensional process involving moral awareness, reflective judgment, ethical behavior, digital responsibility, social engagement, and spiritual growth. Rather than treating digital competence and character formation as separate educational goals, the PDCEF integrates them within a holistic educational model. This framework serves as the principal theoretical contribution of the study and provides the conceptual foundation for the subsequent analysis.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative library research design to explore the relevance of prophetic education in addressing character development challenges among Muslim students in the era of digital transformation. Library research is particularly appropriate for investigating conceptual, philosophical, and theoretical issues that require extensive examination of existing scholarly literature rather than primary field data collection. The approach allows researchers to synthesize diverse perspectives, identify emerging patterns, and construct new conceptual frameworks based on accumulated knowledge. In the context of this study, library research facilitated a comprehensive analysis of prophetic educational principles, character education theories, digital citizenship frameworks, and contemporary discussions regarding digital transformation. Furthermore, the method enabled the integration of classical Islamic educational concepts with contemporary educational scholarship. Consequently, library research provided the most suitable methodological approach for addressing the objectives of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2020; Snyder, 2019).

The study adopted a systematic literature review (SLR) strategy to ensure rigor, transparency, and methodological consistency throughout the research process. Systematic literature reviews differ from traditional narrative reviews because they follow explicit procedures for identifying, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing scholarly sources. This approach reduces the risk of researcher bias and strengthens the reliability of findings. The review was guided by three principal research questions: (1) How is prophetic education conceptualized in contemporary Islamic educational scholarship? (2) What character development challenges emerge within digitally transformed educational environments? and (3) How can prophetic educational principles contribute to the construction of a character development framework for Muslim students? These questions informed all stages of the review process, including literature identification, data selection, coding, and thematic analysis. As a result, the study maintained a coherent analytical focus while ensuring comprehensive coverage of relevant literature (Page et al., 2021; Xiao & Watson, 2019).

The literature reviewed in this study primarily consisted reflecting recent developments in educational theory, Islamic education, character education, and digital transformation studies. Priority was given to peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in reputable international databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, SpringerLink, ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis Online, Wiley Online Library, and ProQuest. In addition,

academic books, conference proceedings, policy reports, and publications from international organizations such as UNESCO and the OECD were included when relevant to the research objectives. The focus on contemporary literature was intended to ensure that the analysis reflected current scholarly debates and educational realities. Nevertheless, selected classical and foundational works were also incorporated when they provided essential theoretical foundations for understanding prophetic education and character development. This combination enabled a balanced synthesis of historical and contemporary perspectives (UNESCO, 2024; OECD, 2023).

Data collection was conducted through systematic searches using a combination of keywords and thematic descriptors. Search terms included “prophetic education,” “Islamic education,” “character education,” “akhlāq,” “ta’dīb,” “tarbiyah,” “digital citizenship,” “digital ethics,” “digital transformation,” “Muslim students,” “moral development,” “Islamic pedagogy,” and “transformative learning.” Boolean operators such as AND, OR, and NOT were employed to refine search results and improve relevance. Additional literature was identified through citation tracking and examination of reference lists from highly relevant publications. This multi-stage search strategy enhanced the comprehensiveness of the review and minimized the likelihood of overlooking significant studies. Consequently, the collected literature represented a broad range of disciplinary perspectives relevant to the research topic (Booth et al., 2021; Snyder, 2019).

To ensure academic quality and relevance, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied during the selection process. Publications were included if they focused on Islamic education, prophetic pedagogy, character education, digital citizenship, digital ethics, educational technology, or related themes directly relevant to the study. Preference was given to peer-reviewed publications demonstrating methodological rigor and theoretical relevance. Sources lacking academic credibility, methodological transparency, or direct connection to the research questions were excluded. Furthermore, publications focusing exclusively on technical aspects of educational technology without discussing ethical or educational implications were generally omitted. These criteria contributed to the overall rigor and credibility of the review. As a result, the final corpus of literature provided a robust foundation for theoretical synthesis and framework development (Page et al., 2021; Booth et al., 2021).

The collected literature was analyzed using thematic content analysis, a widely recognized method for qualitative synthesis in educational research. The analysis began with repeated readings of selected texts to identify recurring concepts, themes, and theoretical patterns. Initial coding generated categories related to prophetic values, character development, moral education, digital ethics, digital citizenship, learner responsibility, ethical decision-making, and educational transformation. These categories were subsequently organized into broader thematic clusters representing key dimensions of the research problem. Through an iterative process of comparison and refinement, the analysis identified relationships among themes and highlighted areas of conceptual convergence. This analytical strategy facilitated the development of a coherent theoretical framework explaining how prophetic educational principles can support character formation in digital environments (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Neuendorf, 2020).

To enhance the trustworthiness and analytical depth of the study, theoretical triangulation was employed. The analysis integrated insights from Islamic educational philosophy, character education theory, transformative learning theory, social learning theory, digital citizenship frameworks, and digital ethics scholarship. Triangulation enabled the study to examine the research problem from multiple perspectives while reducing dependence on any single theoretical lens. Furthermore, it facilitated the identification of

shared principles across different intellectual traditions. The final stage of the analysis resulted in the construction of the Prophetic Digital Character Education Framework (PDCEF), which serves as the principal conceptual contribution of this study. The framework synthesizes prophetic educational values with contemporary educational theories to provide a comprehensive model for character development among Muslim students in the age of digital transformation (Kamali, 2023; Sahin, 2022).

Findings and Discussion

Prophetic Education as a Foundation for Character Development in the Digital Age

The literature review reveals that prophetic education offers a comprehensive philosophical foundation for character development in contemporary educational settings. Unlike educational models that focus primarily on academic achievement or technological competence, prophetic education emphasizes the cultivation of morally responsible and socially engaged individuals. The educational mission of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was fundamentally transformative, aiming to develop individuals whose knowledge was reflected in ethical conduct and beneficial social action. Contemporary scholars argue that this holistic orientation remains highly relevant in digitally mediated societies where ethical challenges increasingly accompany technological advancement. As digital technologies reshape communication, learning, and identity formation, educational frameworks grounded in enduring moral principles become increasingly important. Consequently, prophetic education provides a valuable foundation for addressing contemporary concerns regarding student character development (Kamali, 2023; Memon, 2021).

One of the most significant findings concerns the continuing relevance of akhlāq-based education in digital environments. The reviewed literature consistently emphasizes that virtues such as honesty, responsibility, respect, empathy, and self-discipline are essential for navigating online interactions responsibly. Digital platforms frequently expose students to misinformation, cyberbullying, hate speech, and unethical forms of communication. In such contexts, technical knowledge alone is insufficient to ensure responsible behavior. Instead, students require strong moral foundations capable of guiding decision-making across diverse digital situations. The concept of akhlāq provides such a foundation by cultivating internal moral dispositions rather than merely enforcing external rules. Therefore, akhlāq emerges as a critical component of character development in the digital age (Halstead, 2021; Ahmed, 2022).

The findings also indicate that the prophetic value of ṣidq (truthfulness) has become increasingly important within contemporary information ecosystems. The digital age has facilitated unprecedented access to information, but it has also enabled the rapid spread of misinformation, disinformation, and manipulated content. Students frequently encounter conflicting information sources that require careful evaluation and critical judgment. Prophetic teachings concerning truthfulness emphasize honesty, accuracy, and intellectual integrity in communication and knowledge sharing. Educational approaches grounded in ṣidq can therefore strengthen students' capacities to evaluate information critically and communicate responsibly. As a result, truthfulness represents a foundational virtue for digital citizenship and ethical online participation (Ribble, 2022; UNESCO, 2024).

Another important finding concerns the significance of amānah (trustworthiness) in digitally transformed educational environments. Trustworthiness encompasses responsibility, accountability, and fidelity to ethical obligations. Digital technologies increasingly involve issues related to privacy, data protection, intellectual property, and responsible information sharing. Students must therefore learn to navigate digital spaces in ways that respect the rights and dignity of others. The concept of amānah provides a moral framework for

addressing such concerns by emphasizing personal accountability and ethical stewardship. Consequently, trustworthiness emerges as a central virtue within contemporary discussions of digital ethics and character education (Kamali, 2023; Floridi, 2023).

The literature further demonstrates that ‘*adl* (justice) remains highly relevant in discussions concerning technology and society. Digital transformation has generated significant ethical debates regarding algorithmic bias, digital inequality, surveillance, and unequal access to technological resources. Educational institutions increasingly recognize the importance of preparing students to engage critically with these issues. Prophetic educational principles emphasize justice as a fundamental ethical value governing social relationships and public life. Educational approaches informed by ‘*adl* encourage students to consider the broader social implications of technological development and digital participation. Therefore, justice constitutes an essential component of character education in contemporary digital societies (OECD, 2023; Kamali, 2023).

Another major finding concerns the importance of *rahmah* (compassion) as a guiding principle for digital engagement. Contemporary digital environments often facilitate interactions that lack the emotional cues present in face-to-face communication. This condition can contribute to cyberbullying, online harassment, hate speech, and social polarization. Research consistently demonstrates that empathy and compassion play significant roles in reducing harmful online behavior and promoting respectful communication. Prophetic education places considerable emphasis on compassion as a defining characteristic of ethical conduct. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ consistently modeled kindness, forgiveness, and concern for the well-being of others. Therefore, integrating *rahmah* into educational practice can contribute to healthier and more ethical digital interactions among Muslim students (Halstead, 2021; UNESCO, 2024).

The findings further indicate that *hikmah* (wisdom) is an essential educational outcome in the digital era. While contemporary students have unprecedented access to information, access alone does not guarantee wise decision-making. Wisdom involves the ability to evaluate information critically, understand consequences, and apply knowledge appropriately in complex situations. Educational scholars increasingly argue that wisdom should become a central objective of twenty-first-century education. Islamic educational traditions similarly regard wisdom as a higher stage of intellectual and moral development. Consequently, prophetic education encourages students not only to acquire information but also to cultivate sound judgment and ethical discernment. Such capacities are particularly important in environments characterized by information overload and rapid technological change (Kamali, 2023; Biesta, 2022).

A recurring theme within the reviewed literature is the need for ethical self-regulation. Digital technologies provide constant access to entertainment, social interaction, and information. While these opportunities offer significant benefits, they may also contribute to distraction, addiction, and reduced self-control. Researchers increasingly identify self-regulation as a critical competency for successful learning and responsible technology use. Prophetic educational practices emphasize discipline, moderation, and conscious self-management through concepts such as *mujāhadah* (self-struggle) and *taqwā* (God-consciousness). These principles encourage learners to develop internal mechanisms of accountability rather than relying solely on external controls. Therefore, self-regulation emerges as an important dimension of character development within digital societies (Memon, 2021; OECD, 2023).

The literature also highlights the role of critical digital literacy in contemporary Islamic education. Digital literacy extends beyond technical skills to include the ability to evaluate sources, identify misinformation, recognize bias, and engage responsibly with digital

content. Students today encounter vast amounts of information that vary significantly in quality and credibility. Without critical literacy skills, learners may become vulnerable to manipulation, misinformation, and ideological extremism. Prophetic educational principles encourage reflection, verification, and thoughtful inquiry before accepting or disseminating information. Consequently, critical digital literacy can be understood as a contemporary manifestation of prophetic commitments to truthfulness and intellectual responsibility (Ribble, 2022; Ahmed, 2022).

Another significant finding concerns the educational importance of role modeling. Social learning theory suggests that learners acquire values and behaviors through observation and imitation of significant figures. Prophetic education strongly emphasizes the role of exemplary conduct in teaching and learning. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ served not only as a transmitter of knowledge but also as a living example of ethical behavior. Contemporary educational research similarly indicates that teachers who model integrity, empathy, and responsibility positively influence student character development. Therefore, educators play a crucial role in translating abstract ethical principles into observable practices. This finding underscores the importance of teacher professionalism within character education initiatives (Bandura, 2021; Berkowitz, 2021).

The review further reveals that dialogue-based pedagogy represents a key characteristic of prophetic education. The Prophet frequently employed questioning, discussion, storytelling, and reflective conversation as educational strategies. Such methods encouraged active participation and critical engagement rather than passive reception of information. Contemporary educational theories similarly emphasize dialogical learning as a means of promoting deeper understanding and ethical reasoning. In digital contexts, dialogue-based pedagogies can help students navigate complex issues related to technology, identity, and social responsibility. Therefore, dialogue emerges as an important mechanism for character formation and intellectual development (Sahin, 2022; Jackson, 2022).

Another important finding concerns the relationship between spiritual development and character formation. Contemporary educational discourse often focuses on cognitive and behavioral outcomes while giving limited attention to spiritual dimensions of learning. Islamic educational philosophy, however, regards spirituality as a central aspect of human development. Spiritual awareness provides an internal moral compass that guides behavior even in situations where external monitoring is absent. This characteristic is particularly relevant in digital environments where anonymity often reduces accountability. Consequently, integrating spiritual development into educational practice can strengthen ethical decision-making and responsible digital engagement (Hashim, 2021; Kamali, 2023).

The literature also identifies community engagement as an important element of character development. Character is not formed solely through individual reflection but also through participation in social relationships and collective activities. Prophetic educational practices emphasized service, cooperation, and social responsibility. Contemporary educational researchers similarly advocate service-learning and community-based educational approaches as means of cultivating civic engagement and empathy. Digital technologies provide new opportunities for community participation but also risk encouraging social isolation. Therefore, educational frameworks should intentionally foster meaningful social engagement alongside digital competence (Miller, 2021; UNESCO, 2024).

The findings additionally indicate that digital citizenship education and prophetic education share several common objectives. Both frameworks emphasize responsibility, ethical conduct, respect for others, and active participation in society. However, prophetic education contributes a stronger moral and spiritual foundation that can enrich existing digital citizenship models. While many digital citizenship frameworks focus on behavioral

guidelines, prophetic education addresses the underlying values and dispositions that shape behavior. This deeper ethical orientation may enhance the effectiveness of character education initiatives in digital contexts. Consequently, integrating these perspectives offers significant educational potential (Ribble, 2022; Kamali, 2023).

Another important theme concerns the challenge of identity formation among Muslim youth. Digital technologies expose students to diverse cultural influences, ideologies, and value systems. While such exposure can broaden perspectives, it may also generate confusion regarding personal identity and moral commitments. Islamic educational scholars argue that strong ethical and spiritual foundations are essential for helping young people navigate these complexities. Prophetic education provides a framework for identity formation grounded in faith, moral responsibility, and social engagement. Therefore, character development and identity development should be viewed as interconnected educational objectives (Sahin, 2022; Memon, 2021).

The literature further suggests that educational institutions must adopt whole-school approaches to character development. Character formation cannot be achieved through isolated lessons or occasional activities. Instead, it requires alignment among curriculum, pedagogy, institutional culture, leadership practices, and community engagement. Prophetic education similarly emphasizes consistency between values, actions, and social environments. Schools that embody ethical principles in their organizational culture are more likely to influence student behavior positively. Therefore, institutional commitment is a critical factor in successful character education initiatives (Berkowitz, 2021; Darling-Hammond et al., 2021).

Research also highlights the importance of family-school partnerships. Character development occurs across multiple social contexts, including homes, schools, religious institutions, and digital environments. Effective educational programs therefore require collaboration among educators, parents, and communities. Islamic educational traditions have historically emphasized the shared responsibility of families and educational institutions in nurturing moral development. Contemporary studies similarly indicate that coordinated efforts produce stronger educational outcomes. Consequently, family engagement should be considered an essential component of prophetic character education frameworks (Memon, 2021; OECD, 2023).

The findings additionally demonstrate that ethical leadership plays a significant role in educational transformation. School leaders influence institutional priorities, organizational culture, and educational practices. Leaders who model integrity, justice, compassion, and accountability contribute to environments conducive to character development. Prophetic leadership provides a valuable model characterized by service, consultation, and moral responsibility. Educational institutions seeking to implement prophetic character education should therefore pay careful attention to leadership development. Such efforts can strengthen institutional capacity to respond effectively to contemporary challenges (Kamali, 2023; Fullan et al., 2023).

Another recurring theme involves the need for balanced technology integration. The literature does not support rejecting digital technologies or viewing them as inherently harmful. Instead, scholars advocate approaches that maximize educational benefits while minimizing ethical and social risks. Prophetic educational principles encourage moderation, intentionality, and responsible use of available resources. Applying these principles to digital technologies can help students develop healthier and more purposeful relationships with technology. Therefore, balanced integration emerges as an important objective of contemporary Islamic education (Selwyn, 2024; UNESCO, 2024).

The review ultimately demonstrates that prophetic education provides a rich and relevant foundation for character development in the age of digital transformation. The values of truthfulness, trustworthiness, justice, compassion, wisdom, responsibility, and spiritual awareness address many of the ethical challenges associated with contemporary digital life. These principles are supported by both Islamic educational traditions and contemporary character education research. Consequently, prophetic education offers significant potential for strengthening educational responses to digital transformation. This insight forms the basis for the development of the Prophetic Digital Character Education Framework (PDCEF) presented below.

Table 1. Prophetic Digital Character Education Framework (PDCEF)

Prophetic Value	Educational Meaning	Digital Competency	Character Outcome
Ṣidq (Truthfulness)	Commitment to truth and honesty	Information verification and media literacy	Integrity
Amānah (Trustworthiness)	Responsibility and accountability	Ethical technology use and data responsibility	Reliability
‘Adl (Justice)	Fairness and equity	Digital inclusion and ethical participation	Social Responsibility
Raḥmah (Compassion)	Empathy and care for others	Respectful online communication	Empathy
Ḥikmah (Wisdom)	Sound judgment and discernment	Critical evaluation of digital content	Wise Decision-Making
Taqwā (God-Consciousness)	Moral self-awareness	Ethical self-regulation online	Self-Discipline
Shūrā (Consultation)	Dialogue and collaboration	Constructive digital engagement	Collaboration
Adab (Proper Conduct)	Ethical behavior and civility	Responsible digital citizenship	Respectfulness
Khidmah (Service)	Community contribution	Digital civic participation	Civic Engagement
Maṣlaḥah (Public Good)	Social benefit and welfare	Ethical innovation and technology use	Responsible Citizenship

The Prophetic Digital Character Education Framework (PDCEF) proposes a holistic approach to character development that integrates classical Islamic educational values with contemporary digital citizenship competencies. The framework is based on the premise that digital transformation has not diminished the importance of character education but has instead increased its urgency. Modern technologies have expanded opportunities for learning, communication, and social participation while simultaneously generating new ethical challenges. Consequently, educational institutions require frameworks capable of preparing students to navigate these complexities responsibly. The PDCEF responds to this need by combining prophetic values with practical competencies relevant to contemporary digital environments. Through this integration, the framework seeks to cultivate morally grounded, digitally competent, and socially responsible Muslim students (UNESCO, 2024).

The first dimension of the framework, *ṣidq* (truthfulness), addresses one of the most pressing challenges of the digital age: the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation. Digital platforms enable information to spread rapidly regardless of its accuracy or reliability. Consequently, students must develop the ability to verify sources, evaluate evidence, and communicate honestly. Prophetic teachings consistently emphasize truthfulness as a foundational virtue in both personal and social life. Within the framework, *ṣidq* supports the development of media literacy and information verification skills. As a result, truthfulness becomes both a moral value and a practical competency for responsible digital participation (Ribble, 2022).

The second dimension, *amānah* (trustworthiness), focuses on responsibility and accountability in digital contexts. Contemporary technologies increasingly involve issues related to privacy, intellectual property, cybersecurity, and data management. Students frequently make decisions that affect not only themselves but also others within digital networks. The concept of *amānah* encourages individuals to recognize their responsibilities and act with integrity when engaging with digital technologies. Educationally, this value supports the cultivation of ethical technology use and responsible digital behavior. Therefore, trustworthiness serves as an essential foundation for sustainable digital engagement (Kamali, 2023).

The framework's emphasis on *ʿadl* (justice) reflects growing concerns regarding digital inequality, algorithmic bias, and social exclusion. Contemporary digital societies often reproduce or amplify existing social inequalities. Educational institutions therefore have a responsibility to help students understand issues of fairness and equity within technological systems. Prophetic teachings consistently stress justice as a guiding principle for individual conduct and social organization. By integrating justice into character education, the framework encourages learners to evaluate the broader social consequences of technological innovation. Consequently, students become better prepared to advocate for inclusive and equitable digital environments (Kamali, 2023).

The inclusion of *raḥmah* (compassion) highlights the importance of empathy in online interactions. Digital communication often lacks the interpersonal cues that facilitate understanding and emotional connection. As a result, online environments may foster hostility, misunderstanding, and social polarization. The prophetic emphasis on compassion provides an ethical counterbalance to these tendencies. Educational practices informed by *raḥmah* encourage students to communicate respectfully, appreciate diverse perspectives, and respond constructively to disagreement. Therefore, compassion functions as a crucial component of ethical digital citizenship and healthy online communities (UNESCO, 2024).

Another important dimension is *ḥikmah* (wisdom), which extends beyond information acquisition to encompass critical judgment and ethical discernment. Contemporary learners have access to unprecedented quantities of information, yet information abundance does not necessarily produce understanding. Wisdom enables individuals to interpret information thoughtfully, consider long-term consequences, and make ethically informed decisions. Islamic educational traditions regard wisdom as one of the highest educational objectives. Within the PDCEF, wisdom supports critical thinking, reflective inquiry, and responsible decision-making. Consequently, it serves as a bridge between knowledge and ethical action in digital contexts (Kamali, 2023).

The framework also incorporates *taqwā* (God-consciousness) as a mechanism for ethical self-regulation. Digital technologies frequently operate in environments where external supervision is limited or absent. In such circumstances, internal moral accountability becomes especially important. *Taqwā* encourages individuals to remain conscious of ethical responsibilities regardless of external observation. Educationally, this principle supports self-

discipline, responsible technology use, and resistance to harmful digital behaviors. Therefore, taqwā strengthens the internal dimensions of character formation and contributes to sustainable ethical conduct in online environments (Hashim, 2021).

The dimension of shūrā (consultation and dialogue) reflects the social nature of learning and decision-making. Contemporary educational theories consistently emphasize collaboration, communication, and collective problem-solving as essential competencies for the twenty-first century. Islamic traditions similarly value consultation and deliberative engagement as means of achieving informed and balanced judgments. Within the PDCEF, shūrā promotes constructive digital participation, respectful dialogue, and collaborative learning. These competencies are particularly important in diverse and interconnected societies where individuals frequently encounter differing perspectives. Consequently, shūrā contributes to both intellectual growth and social cohesion (Jackson, 2022).

The inclusion of adab (proper conduct) highlights the importance of civility and ethical behavior in digital spaces. Online interactions often challenge traditional norms of courtesy and respect due to anonymity and reduced social accountability. Adab provides guidance for maintaining ethical standards in communication, information sharing, and social engagement. Educational approaches emphasizing adab encourage learners to develop habits of respectfulness, responsibility, and intellectual humility. Such qualities are increasingly important in environments characterized by rapid communication and public visibility. Therefore, adab serves as a foundational principle for cultivating ethical digital citizenship (Al-Attas, 2021).

The final dimensions, khidmah (service) and maṣlahah (public good), extend character education beyond individual development toward social contribution and civic responsibility. Prophetic education consistently emphasizes service to others and the promotion of collective well-being. Contemporary global citizenship frameworks similarly encourage active participation in addressing social challenges and advancing sustainable development. Within the PDCEF, digital competencies are ultimately directed toward positive social impact rather than merely personal benefit. This orientation ensures that technology serves human flourishing and community development. Consequently, the framework concludes with a vision of education that prepares students not only to succeed in digital societies but also to contribute ethically and constructively to their improvement (UNESCO, 2024).

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that prophetic education provides a comprehensive and relevant framework for character development in the era of digital transformation. Contemporary digital environments present Muslim students with unprecedented opportunities for learning, communication, and social participation, while simultaneously exposing them to complex ethical challenges such as misinformation, cyberbullying, privacy concerns, digital dependency, and identity fragmentation. The literature reviewed in this study indicates that prophetic educational values including *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *‘adl* (justice), *raḥmah* (compassion), *ḥikmah* (wisdom), *taqwā* (God-consciousness), and *adab* (proper conduct) remain highly relevant for addressing these challenges. These values offer a moral and spiritual foundation that complements contemporary approaches to digital citizenship, character education, and ethical technology use. Therefore, prophetic education can serve as a strategic framework for cultivating responsible, resilient, and ethically conscious Muslim students in digitally mediated societies.

This study proposes the Prophetic Digital Character Education Framework (PDCEF) as its principal conceptual contribution. The framework integrates prophetic educational principles with contemporary theories of character education, digital citizenship, digital ethics, and transformative learning. Its novelty lies in providing an integrative model that connects Islamic moral philosophy with the competencies required for responsible participation in twenty-first-century digital environments. The framework conceptualizes character development as a multidimensional process involving moral awareness, reflective judgment, ethical behavior, spiritual growth, collaborative engagement, and social responsibility. Future Islamic educational institutions should therefore incorporate prophetic values into curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, assessment practices, teacher development programs, and digital learning environments. By doing so, Islamic education can contribute significantly to preparing students who are not only technologically capable but also morally grounded and committed to the common good.

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