

Strengthening Islamic Character Education Management through Digital Literacy

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received May 20, 2026

Revised June 05, 2026

Accepted June 20, 2026

Available online June 30, 2026

Kata Kunci :

Digital Literacy, Islamic Character Education, Higher Education, Educational Management, Digital Ethics

Keywords:

Digital Literacy, Islamic Character Education, Higher Education, Educational Management, Digital Ethics

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ABSTRAK

Perkembangan teknologi digital menghadirkan peluang sekaligus tantangan dalam pembentukan karakter mahasiswa di perguruan tinggi. Kondisi tersebut menuntut penguatan manajemen pendidikan karakter Islami yang mampu mengintegrasikan literasi digital dengan nilai-nilai keislaman secara sistematis. Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan meningkatkan pemahaman mahasiswa tentang etika digital Islami, memperkuat kompetensi literasi digital, serta menginternalisasikan nilai-nilai karakter Islami melalui program pendidikan berbasis digital di Universitas Esa Unggul Jakarta. Program dilaksanakan melalui pelatihan, pendampingan, diskusi interaktif, studi kasus, praktik pemanfaatan media digital, dan evaluasi menggunakan pre-test, post-test, observasi partisipasi, serta refleksi peserta untuk mengukur peningkatan pengetahuan, keterampilan, dan sikap. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan peningkatan pemahaman mahasiswa mengenai etika digital Islami, kemampuan mengakses, mengevaluasi, dan memanfaatkan informasi digital secara bertanggung jawab, serta penguatan karakter kejujuran, disiplin, tanggung jawab, empati, dan sikap saling menghormati. Keberuan program ini terletak pada penerapan model penguatan manajemen pendidikan karakter Islami yang mengintegrasikan literasi digital, pembiasaan etika bermedia, praktik pembelajaran digital, dan evaluasi berkelanjutan dalam satu desain pemberdayaan mahasiswa. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan integratif tersebut efektif dalam membangun karakter mahasiswa yang beretika, adaptif, dan memiliki tanggung jawab digital sehingga layak direplikasi pada perguruan tinggi lainnya.

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of digital technology has created both opportunities and challenges for strengthening students' character in higher education. This condition requires Islamic character education management that systematically integrates digital literacy with Islamic values. This community service program aimed to enhance students' understanding of Islamic digital ethics, strengthen their digital literacy competencies, and foster Islamic character values through a digital-based educational program at Universitas Esa Unggul, Jakarta. The program was implemented through training sessions, mentoring, interactive discussions, case-based learning, digital media practice, and evaluation using pre-tests, post-tests, participant observations, and reflective assessments to measure improvements in participants' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The results demonstrated increased understanding of Islamic digital ethics, improved ability to access, evaluate, and utilize digital information responsibly, and strengthened character values, including honesty, discipline, responsibility, empathy, and mutual respect. The novelty of this program lies in the implementation of an integrated Islamic character education management model that combines digital literacy, ethical digital practices, experiential learning, and

continuous evaluation within a single student empowerment framework. These findings indicate that the integrative approach effectively develops ethical, adaptive, and digitally responsible students and has strong potential for replication in other higher education institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed various aspects of human life, including education. Digital literacy has become one of the essential competencies required by students to navigate the challenges of the twenty-first century. In higher education, digital technology not only serves as a medium for accessing information but also influences students' behavior, communication patterns, and character development. However, the increasing intensity of digital media use has raised concerns regarding ethical behavior, misinformation, cyberbullying, and the weakening of moral values among young people. Consequently, educational institutions are expected to strengthen character education while simultaneously improving students' digital literacy skills to ensure that technological advancement contributes positively to their personal and academic development (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022; Bimantoro et al., 2021).

Islamic character education plays a strategic role in fostering moral values, responsibility, discipline, honesty, and ethical conduct among students. In the context of the digital era, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is expected to equip learners with the ability to apply Islamic principles when interacting in digital environments. The integration of Islamic values into digital literacy programs is increasingly important because digital spaces have become influential environments that shape attitudes, beliefs, and social interactions. Therefore, strengthening Islamic character education through digital literacy initiatives is essential for preparing students to become responsible digital citizens while maintaining their religious identity and moral integrity (Afif & Ningrum, 2024; Zain et al., 2024).

Several recent studies have highlighted the importance of character education and digital literacy in Islamic education. Afif and Ningrum (2024) emphasized the strategic role of Islamic Religious Education in developing moral and religious awareness among students in the digital era. Rohana and Rahmi (2023) demonstrated that digital literacy-based learning models in PAI can improve students' engagement and learning effectiveness. Similarly, Ardiansyah (2025) developed digital literacy-based PAI learning tools that successfully increased students' awareness of responsible social media use. Furthermore, Mujab et al. (2025) found that integrating digital literacy into the Islamic education curriculum contributes to students' critical thinking and ethical digital behavior. Sukring (2025) also reported that strengthening digital literacy among university students can support the development of positive attitudes and adaptive competencies in the era of Industrial Revolution 5.0 (Rohana & Rahmi, 2023; Ardiansyah, 2025; M. Mujab et al., 2025; Sukring, 2025).

Despite these valuable contributions, previous studies have predominantly focused on classroom learning, curriculum development, and theoretical discussions concerning digital literacy and Islamic education. Limited attention has been given to community service programs that directly empower university students through practical training and mentoring activities aimed at strengthening Islamic character education management through digital literacy. Moreover, most existing studies evaluate learning outcomes rather than examining how digital literacy initiatives can be systematically implemented as a character-building strategy within higher education environments. This gap indicates the need for community-based educational interventions that combine digital literacy competencies with Islamic character development in a

practical and sustainable manner (Nurhabibi et al., 2025; Dede Pitri et al., 2025; Yulastri et al., 2025).

The novelty of this community service program lies in the integration of digital literacy training, Islamic digital ethics, and character education management within a higher education setting. Unlike previous programs that primarily emphasize technological skills, this initiative promotes a holistic approach by combining digital competencies with Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, and ethical communication. The program also introduces practical mentoring activities that encourage students to create positive digital content and apply Islamic principles in their online interactions. This integrated approach is expected to strengthen both digital literacy and character formation simultaneously, thereby contributing to the development of a healthy digital academic culture among university students (Susilo et al., 2025; Hidayati et al., 2025; Muslim et al., 2024).

This community service program aims to strengthen Islamic character education management through digital literacy among students at Universitas Esa Unggul Jakarta. Specifically, the program seeks to enhance students' understanding of digital literacy, improve awareness of Islamic digital ethics, and develop their capacity to utilize digital technology responsibly in academic, social, and religious activities. Through these efforts, the program is expected to contribute to the formation of digitally literate students who possess strong Islamic character and are capable of responding wisely to the challenges of the contemporary digital environment.

METHOD

This community service program was conducted at Universitas Esa Unggul, Jakarta, involving 35 undergraduate students who voluntarily participated in the program as the primary beneficiaries. The participants were selected using a purposive approach based on their willingness to participate and their involvement in academic activities requiring digital technology utilization. The program aimed to strengthen Islamic character education management through digital literacy by improving students' understanding of responsible digital technology use and the integration of Islamic values into digital practices. A participatory training and mentoring approach was adopted to encourage active engagement, collaborative learning, and practical application throughout the program.

The implementation consisted of four sequential stages. The first stage was a needs assessment conducted through preliminary observations and informal discussions with participants to identify challenges related to digital literacy, online behavior, and the implementation of Islamic values in digital environments. The findings provided the basis for designing relevant learning materials and training activities tailored to participants' needs.

The second stage involved educational sessions focusing on digital literacy and Islamic character education. The materials included digital literacy competencies, information verification, digital ethics, responsible social media use, cybersecurity awareness, and the integration of Islamic values—including honesty, discipline, responsibility, mutual respect, and ethical communication—into digital interactions. Learning activities were delivered through lectures, interactive discussions, and case-based learning to promote critical thinking and participant engagement.

The third stage consisted of practical training and mentoring. Participants practiced evaluating digital information, identifying misinformation, applying ethical principles in online communication, and developing positive digital content reflecting Islamic values. Facilitators

provided continuous guidance and constructive feedback to reinforce participants' understanding and practical competencies.

The final stage involved evaluation and reflection. Program effectiveness was assessed using standardized pre-test and post-test instruments administered before and after the intervention to measure changes in participants' knowledge of digital literacy and Islamic digital ethics. Additional data were collected through observation sheets and participant reflection forms to assess improvements in attitudes, awareness, and digital behavior. Quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using descriptive statistics by comparing participants' scores before and after the intervention, while qualitative feedback from observations and reflections was analyzed descriptively to support the interpretation of program outcomes. The evaluation findings were used to determine program effectiveness and formulate recommendations for implementing sustainable Islamic character education and digital literacy initiatives in higher education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Improvement of Students' Understanding of Islamic Digital Ethics

The implementation of the digital literacy training program demonstrated a significant improvement in students' understanding of Islamic digital ethics. Prior to the program, many participants viewed digital literacy primarily as the ability to access information and operate digital platforms. However, during the training sessions, students began to recognize that digital literacy also encompasses ethical responsibilities, critical information evaluation, and adherence to Islamic values when interacting in online environments. Through interactive discussions and case studies, participants developed a broader understanding of how Islamic principles can guide digital communication, information sharing, and online behavior. The post-training evaluation indicated that students became more aware of the importance of honesty, accountability, respect, and self-control when engaging with digital media.

This finding reflects the growing importance of integrating Islamic values into digital literacy education. Digital technology provides extensive opportunities for learning and communication, yet it also exposes users to ethical challenges such as misinformation, cyberbullying, and irresponsible online conduct. Islamic education plays a strategic role in addressing these challenges by instilling moral values that guide students' behavior in both physical and virtual environments. The strengthening of ethical awareness observed in this program supports the argument that digital literacy should not be limited to technical competencies but should also promote character development and religious values (Afif & Ningrum, 2024; Bimantoro et al., 2021; Zain et al., 2024).

During the mentoring activities, students were encouraged to analyze various examples of online interactions and evaluate them from the perspective of Islamic ethics. Participants demonstrated an increased ability to distinguish between ethical and unethical digital behavior, particularly regarding the dissemination of information through social media. They showed greater awareness of the consequences of sharing unverified content and recognized the importance of *tabayyun*, or information verification, before forwarding messages to others. Furthermore, participants expressed stronger commitments to maintaining respectful communication and avoiding harmful online practices that could negatively affect individuals or communities.

The improvement in students' critical awareness can be attributed to the integration of digital literacy and Islamic educational principles. Previous studies have emphasized that digital literacy-based learning encourages learners to evaluate information critically and make responsible decisions when using technology. When combined with Islamic teachings, digital literacy becomes an effective instrument for cultivating ethical behavior and strengthening moral responsibility. The results of this program are consistent with studies highlighting the positive impact of digital literacy integration in Islamic education on students' social media awareness and ethical conduct (Ardiansyah, 2025; M. Mujab et al., 2025; Rohana & Rahmi, 2023).

Another notable outcome was the increased understanding of digital communication etiquette among participants. Before participating in the program, some students considered online communication to be less formal and therefore less regulated by ethical norms. After the training, however, participants demonstrated a clearer understanding that Islamic values such as politeness, respect, honesty, and empathy remain applicable regardless of whether communication occurs face-to-face or through digital platforms. Students acknowledged the importance of avoiding offensive language, hate speech, and disrespectful comments in social media interactions. They also recognized that maintaining ethical communication contributes to creating a positive digital environment that benefits both individuals and society.

This result aligns with the broader objective of character education in Islamic educational institutions. Character formation is not only concerned with academic achievement but also with developing responsible and morally conscious individuals. Islamic educational values provide a strong foundation for fostering ethical behavior and social responsibility in the digital era. Several studies have demonstrated that character education programs grounded in Islamic principles contribute significantly to strengthening discipline, responsibility, respect, and positive social interactions among learners. Therefore, the enhancement of digital communication ethics observed in this program represents an important contribution to the development of students' character in contemporary educational settings (Aji, 2025; Kholifah et al., 2022; Naufal, 2023; Suhendi, 2025).

Furthermore, participants showed increased motivation to utilize digital platforms for productive and beneficial purposes. Rather than viewing social media solely as a space for entertainment, students began to recognize its potential as a medium for learning, collaboration, and the dissemination of positive messages. Several participants expressed interest in creating educational and religious content that could contribute to promoting Islamic values within digital communities. This shift in perspective illustrates that digital literacy programs can encourage students to become active contributors to positive digital culture rather than passive consumers of online content.

The findings support previous community-based educational initiatives that emphasize the effectiveness of participatory learning approaches in improving awareness, attitudes, and behavioral outcomes. Educational interventions that combine knowledge development with practical engagement tend to produce more sustainable impacts on participants' understanding and conduct. In the context of higher education, strengthening Islamic digital ethics through digital literacy programs can contribute to the formation of responsible digital citizens who possess both technological competence and strong moral character. Consequently, this program demonstrates the potential of integrating digital literacy and Islamic character education as a comprehensive strategy for addressing ethical challenges in the contemporary digital environment.

Strengthening Students' Digital Literacy Competencies in Academic and Religious Activities

The implementation of the digital literacy training program significantly strengthened students' competencies in utilizing digital technologies for academic and religious purposes. At the beginning of the program, many participants primarily used digital platforms for communication, entertainment, and social networking. Their use of technology for academic learning and religious development was relatively limited. Following the training sessions, students demonstrated greater proficiency in accessing credible academic resources, utilizing digital learning platforms, and managing online information effectively. Participants became more capable of identifying reliable sources, organizing digital learning materials, and applying digital tools to support their academic activities. This improvement indicates that the program successfully expanded students' understanding of digital technology as a productive educational resource rather than merely a medium for social interaction.

The enhancement of students' digital literacy competencies reflects the increasing importance of digital skills in contemporary education. Digital literacy encompasses not only technical abilities but also the capacity to access, evaluate, manage, and utilize information effectively in various contexts. Educational institutions are expected to prepare students to become competent digital learners who can adapt to rapidly changing technological environments. Previous studies have shown that digital literacy contributes significantly to learning effectiveness, critical thinking development, and academic achievement. Therefore, the positive outcomes observed in this program support the notion that digital literacy training should become an integral component of higher education development initiatives (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022; Handayani, 2023; Sukring, 2025).

Another notable outcome was the improvement of students' abilities to utilize digital platforms in religious learning activities. Participants became increasingly familiar with accessing digital Islamic resources, including online lectures, digital libraries, scholarly articles, and educational videos related to Islamic studies. Students reported that the training encouraged them to explore various digital learning opportunities that could enhance their religious knowledge beyond conventional classroom settings. Furthermore, participants learned how to evaluate the credibility of religious information available on the internet and became more selective in choosing trustworthy sources. This competence is particularly important in the digital era, where religious information can easily be disseminated without adequate verification.

The findings demonstrate that digital literacy can serve as a strategic instrument for strengthening Islamic education. The integration of digital technology into religious learning enables students to access broader educational resources while simultaneously developing critical evaluation skills. Several studies have emphasized that digital-based Islamic learning contributes to the improvement of students' religious understanding, digital awareness, and learning engagement. Moreover, the ability to assess the validity of online religious information is essential for preventing misconceptions and promoting moderate religious perspectives. These results are consistent with previous research highlighting the effectiveness of digital literacy integration in Islamic Religious Education learning environments (Ramlan, 2021; Rohana & Rahmi, 2023; M. Mujaab et al., 2025; Hadi et al., 2010).

The mentoring sessions also enhanced students' competencies in producing positive digital content for academic and religious purposes. Participants were trained to create educational messages, reflective content, and informative materials that incorporated Islamic values. During practical activities, students demonstrated increased confidence in utilizing digital

media to share beneficial knowledge and promote ethical online engagement. Several participants developed digital content addressing topics such as academic integrity, responsible social media use, and Islamic perspectives on digital citizenship. This outcome indicates that students not only improved their information consumption skills but also strengthened their capacity to become active contributors within digital communities.

This finding aligns with contemporary perspectives that position students as creators rather than merely consumers of digital information. Effective digital literacy programs should empower learners to produce meaningful and responsible content that contributes positively to society. The integration of Islamic values into content creation activities further strengthens students' moral awareness and social responsibility. Previous studies have demonstrated that character-based educational approaches can encourage students to utilize technology constructively while maintaining ethical standards. Consequently, digital literacy initiatives that emphasize both technical competencies and value-based content creation can generate more comprehensive educational outcomes (Afif & Ningrum, 2024; Astutik & Supratno, 2024; Yulastri et al., 2025).

Furthermore, participants demonstrated increased awareness regarding the ethical and responsible use of emerging technologies in educational settings. Discussions concerning artificial intelligence, information verification, digital security, and online privacy enabled students to understand the opportunities and risks associated with technological advancements. Students became more conscious of the need to use digital technologies responsibly, particularly when employing AI-based tools for academic purposes. They recognized that technological competence should be accompanied by ethical considerations to ensure that digital innovation contributes positively to learning and personal development.

The development of responsible technology use is an essential aspect of twenty-first-century education. While digital technologies provide significant benefits, their misuse may lead to ethical, academic, and social challenges. Therefore, educational interventions should equip students with both technical skills and moral frameworks for decision-making in digital environments. Research has indicated that digital literacy programs are more effective when combined with character education and ethical awareness development. In this regard, the present program successfully integrated technological competence with Islamic values, enabling students to develop balanced perspectives toward digital innovation and its application in academic and religious contexts (Bimantoro et al., 2021; Susilo et al., 2025; Teguh Prasetyo Utomo, 2021).

The community service program contributed substantially to strengthening students' digital literacy competencies across academic and religious activities. Participants demonstrated improved abilities in accessing information, evaluating digital content, utilizing educational technologies, engaging in religious learning, and producing positive digital materials. More importantly, these competencies were developed alongside the cultivation of ethical awareness and Islamic values, ensuring that digital literacy was not merely understood as a technical skill but also as a means of promoting responsible and meaningful engagement in the digital era. Such outcomes illustrate the potential of integrated digital literacy programs to support the holistic development of university students in contemporary higher education environments.

The positive impact observed in this program supports findings from previous community-based educational initiatives that emphasize the effectiveness of participatory training and mentoring approaches. Programs that actively involve participants in practical activities tend to produce sustainable improvements in knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Therefore, strengthening digital literacy competencies through community service activities can serve as an effective strategy for enhancing students' academic capabilities, religious understanding, and character development simultaneously. These outcomes reinforce the importance of integrating digital literacy and Islamic character education as complementary components of higher education development programs.

Enhancement of Islamic Character Values through Digital-Based Educational Activities

One of the most significant outcomes of the community service program was the enhancement of students' Islamic character values through digital-based educational activities. Throughout the training and mentoring sessions, participants demonstrated increased awareness of fundamental Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, and self-control in their daily digital interactions. Prior to the program, many students perceived digital platforms primarily as spaces for communication and entertainment. However, after participating in the activities, students increasingly recognized that online environments also require ethical behavior and moral accountability. Participants showed greater commitment to applying Islamic principles when interacting through social media, online learning platforms, and digital communication channels. This transformation was reflected in their willingness to verify information before sharing it, avoid harmful content, and communicate respectfully with others.

The improvement in students' moral awareness confirms the important role of Islamic education in shaping character within contemporary digital environments. Character formation is not solely achieved through theoretical instruction but also through practical experiences that encourage individuals to internalize ethical values in everyday situations. Islamic Religious Education provides a comprehensive framework for developing moral conduct that remains relevant despite rapid technological changes. Previous studies have highlighted that Islamic educational values contribute significantly to strengthening students' ethical awareness and social responsibility, particularly when integrated into learning activities that address contemporary challenges (Afif & Ningrum, 2024; Astutik & Supratno, 2024; Zain et al., 2024).

Another positive outcome observed during the program was the strengthening of students' sense of responsibility in utilizing digital technology. During mentoring sessions, participants were encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their online behavior and to evaluate how their digital activities might affect other individuals and communities. As a result, students became more aware of their responsibilities as digital citizens and demonstrated greater caution when posting comments, sharing information, and engaging in online discussions. Participants acknowledged that irresponsible digital behavior could contribute to misinformation, conflict, and social harm. Consequently, they expressed stronger commitments to promoting positive and constructive interactions within digital spaces.

The development of responsibility as a character value aligns closely with the objectives of character education within Islamic educational institutions. Responsibility is considered one of the core virtues that enable individuals to contribute positively to society while maintaining accountability for their actions. Previous studies have shown that educational programs emphasizing discipline, responsibility, and moral awareness can significantly influence students' attitudes and behavioral patterns. Community-based educational interventions are particularly effective because they provide opportunities for participants to directly apply ethical principles in practical contexts. Therefore, the increased sense of responsibility observed in this program represents an important indicator of successful character development (Aji, 2025; Makmur et al., 2026; Suhendi, 2025).

The digital-based educational activities also contributed to strengthening students' discipline and self-regulation. During the program, participants were introduced to strategies for managing screen time, organizing digital learning activities, and prioritizing productive uses of technology. Students reported becoming more conscious of how excessive and unproductive digital engagement could negatively affect their academic performance and personal well-being. Consequently, many participants adopted more structured approaches to technology use by allocating specific periods for learning, information seeking, and recreational activities. This increased level of self-discipline reflects the ability of students to regulate their behavior in accordance with personal and religious values.

The enhancement of discipline through digital literacy activities is consistent with findings from previous studies on Islamic character education. Discipline is widely recognized as a fundamental characteristic that supports academic success, personal growth, and social responsibility. Islamic educational traditions emphasize the importance of self-control, consistency, and accountability as essential aspects of character formation. Studies conducted in Islamic educational settings have demonstrated that structured educational programs can effectively cultivate disciplinary behavior among learners. Therefore, integrating digital literacy with character-building activities offers a valuable approach for fostering discipline in contemporary educational environments (Naufal, 2023; Kholifah et al., 2022; Ningsih, 2019).

Furthermore, participants demonstrated increased respect and empathy during online interactions and collaborative learning activities. Through case studies and reflective discussions, students were encouraged to consider diverse perspectives and to practice respectful communication when expressing opinions in digital environments. As the program progressed, participants became more aware of the importance of maintaining politeness, tolerance, and mutual respect despite differences in viewpoints. Several students indicated that they had become more careful in responding to controversial issues online and more willing to engage in constructive dialogue rather than confrontational exchanges. These developments illustrate the potential of digital-based educational programs to promote social harmony and ethical communication.

The strengthening of respect and empathy is closely related to broader character education objectives within Islamic education. Islamic teachings emphasize compassion, tolerance, and respect for others as essential values that contribute to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Educational initiatives that encourage reflective learning and meaningful interaction can facilitate the development of these values among students. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of integrating multicultural perspectives, local wisdom, and Islamic principles into character education programs to foster tolerance and mutual understanding. The outcomes of this program therefore support existing evidence regarding the effectiveness of value-based educational interventions in promoting positive social behavior (Nurhasanah, 2021; Asbarin et al., 2024; Khoiriyah et al., 2025).

In addition, the program encouraged students to utilize digital media as instruments for promoting positive values and religious awareness. Participants were invited to create educational content containing messages related to honesty, discipline, responsibility, and ethical behavior from Islamic perspectives. The resulting content reflected students' growing understanding that digital platforms can function as channels for da'wah, education, and social contribution. Several participants expressed motivation to continue producing beneficial content after the completion of the program, demonstrating that the activities had stimulated a long-term commitment toward positive digital engagement. This shift from passive media consumption to

active value-based participation represents an important achievement in the context of character development.

This outcome supports contemporary perspectives on digital citizenship that emphasize active participation, ethical engagement, and social contribution. Digital literacy initiatives become more meaningful when they encourage learners not only to consume information but also to produce content that benefits others. Integrating Islamic values into digital content creation further strengthens students' moral identity and reinforces the relevance of religious teachings in contemporary life. Previous studies have reported that digital literacy programs integrated with Islamic education can effectively reduce negative social media influences while promoting positive character development among young people. Therefore, the findings of this program demonstrate the potential of digital-based educational activities to serve as powerful instruments for strengthening Islamic character values among university students (Ardiansyah, 2025; Yulastri et al., 2025; Nurhabibi et al., 2025).

The community service program successfully enhanced Islamic character values through a combination of digital literacy training, ethical reflection, and practical engagement activities. Participants demonstrated improvements in honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, empathy, and positive digital participation. More importantly, these values were not merely understood conceptually but were translated into observable attitudes and behaviors during academic and social interactions. The integration of Islamic character education with digital literacy therefore offers a comprehensive and sustainable strategy for preparing students to navigate contemporary digital challenges while maintaining strong moral and religious foundations.

The positive impact achieved through this program further confirms that community-based educational interventions can contribute significantly to character development when implemented through participatory and experiential approaches. By combining technological competencies with Islamic values, educational institutions can create learning environments that support both intellectual growth and moral formation. Consequently, digital-based educational activities should be considered an important component of future character education initiatives within higher education settings, particularly in response to the ethical and social challenges emerging in the digital era.

Discussion

The Role of Digital Literacy in Strengthening Islamic Character Education Management in Higher Education

The findings of this community service program demonstrate that digital literacy plays a strategic role in strengthening Islamic character education management within higher education institutions. The results indicate that digital literacy is not merely a technical competency associated with the use of information technology but also serves as a medium for cultivating ethical awareness, moral responsibility, and positive behavioral transformation among students. In the context of higher education, where students are continuously exposed to diverse digital information and communication platforms, the integration of digital literacy and Islamic character education becomes increasingly important. Universities are therefore challenged to develop educational strategies that equip students with both technological competencies and strong moral foundations to navigate the complexities of contemporary digital society (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022).

The enhancement of students' understanding of Islamic digital ethics observed in this program confirms that character education remains highly relevant in the digital era. Rapid

technological development has transformed the ways individuals access information, communicate, and construct knowledge. However, technological advancement is often accompanied by ethical challenges such as misinformation, cyberbullying, digital intolerance, and irresponsible online behavior. Consequently, higher education institutions must not limit their educational mission to knowledge transfer alone but must also foster ethical and responsible digital citizenship. The present findings support the view that Islamic Religious Education can serve as an effective mechanism for embedding moral values within students' digital activities and promoting ethical engagement across virtual environments (Dede Pitri et al., 2025; Afif & Ningrum, 2024; Zain et al., 2024).

Another important aspect emerging from the findings is the role of digital literacy as a catalyst for strengthening students' critical thinking and information evaluation skills. Participants demonstrated improved abilities to identify credible information sources, verify online content, and make responsible decisions regarding digital communication. These competencies are essential in contemporary societies characterized by information abundance and increasing exposure to misleading content. Digital literacy enables students to become active and reflective users of technology rather than passive recipients of information. This finding reinforces previous studies emphasizing that digital literacy should be understood as a multidimensional competence involving technical, cognitive, and ethical dimensions simultaneously (Teguh Prasetyo Utomo, 2021; Bimantoro et al., 2021).

From a management perspective, the integration of digital literacy into character education initiatives reflects the importance of adopting holistic educational approaches within higher education institutions. Effective character education management requires systematic planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement processes. The success of this program suggests that digital literacy activities can be strategically incorporated into institutional efforts to strengthen students' moral development. Educational managers and university leaders should therefore consider digital literacy not only as an academic competency but also as a character-building instrument that contributes to the achievement of broader educational objectives. Leadership support and institutional commitment remain critical factors in ensuring the sustainability of such initiatives (Muslim et al., 2024; Hidayati et al., 2025).

The findings also highlight the relevance of integrating Islamic values into digital learning environments. Modern students spend considerable amounts of time engaging with digital platforms, making these environments influential spaces for character formation. As a result, educational institutions must develop innovative strategies that transform digital spaces into environments that encourage ethical behavior, spiritual growth, and social responsibility. The integration of Islamic teachings into digital literacy programs provides students with practical guidance for applying religious values within contemporary contexts. Such integration contributes to the formation of balanced individuals who possess both intellectual competence and moral integrity (Hadi et al., 2010; Ramlan, 2021; Rohana & Rahmi, 2023).

Furthermore, the program demonstrated that digital literacy can strengthen students' active participation in educational and religious activities. Participants increasingly utilized digital resources to support academic learning, access religious knowledge, and create positive educational content. This transformation reflects a shift from passive digital consumption toward active and productive digital engagement. Such developments are particularly important in higher education, where students are expected to become independent learners capable of utilizing technology for knowledge creation and social contribution. Previous studies have similarly emphasized that digital literacy initiatives can enhance learning motivation, student engagement,

and educational outcomes when implemented through participatory approaches (Handayani, 2023; Susilo, 2025; Sukring, 2025).

The enhancement of Islamic character values identified in this program further illustrates the potential of digital literacy as a medium for character development. Values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, empathy, and respect were strengthened through reflective discussions, practical activities, and digital content creation exercises. These findings support the argument that character education becomes more effective when students are provided with opportunities to apply ethical principles in authentic situations. Digital environments offer numerous opportunities for such practical applications, enabling learners to internalize moral values through real-life experiences rather than abstract theoretical instruction alone. Consequently, digital literacy initiatives can complement traditional character education approaches by providing meaningful contexts for ethical learning (Astutik & Supratno, 2024; Kholifah et al., 2022; Ningsih, 2019).

The findings also correspond with broader discussions regarding the role of educational institutions in preparing students for the challenges of Industrial Revolution 5.0 and Society 5.0. Contemporary graduates are expected to possess not only technical and professional competencies but also strong ethical awareness, adaptability, and social responsibility. Digital literacy programs integrated with Islamic character education can contribute significantly to achieving these goals. Through such programs, students develop the ability to utilize technology responsibly while maintaining their religious and moral identity. This balance is particularly important in an era where technological innovation often advances more rapidly than ethical awareness and social preparedness (Sukring, 2025; Bimantoro et al., 2021).

An additional implication of the findings concerns the importance of community-based educational approaches in supporting character development. The participatory nature of the program encouraged students to engage actively in discussions, reflections, and practical activities. Such approaches allow participants to construct knowledge collaboratively while simultaneously internalizing ethical values through experiential learning processes. Similar outcomes have been reported in community service programs that emphasize active participation, mentoring, and value-based educational interventions. Therefore, community engagement should be considered an important component of character education management within higher education settings (Abdullah Lawang et al., 2024; Makmur et al., 2026).

Moreover, the present findings align with studies emphasizing the significance of contextual and culturally relevant character education models. Islamic character education is most effective when connected to students' lived experiences and contemporary challenges. Integrating digital literacy into character education provides such relevance by addressing issues that students encounter daily in online environments. Likewise, incorporating local wisdom, religious traditions, and social values can further strengthen the effectiveness of character education initiatives. This perspective supports the notion that character formation should be approached as a dynamic and context-sensitive process rather than a purely theoretical educational objective (Asbarin et al., 2024; Khoiriyah et al., 2025; Nurhasanah, 2021).

Finally, the findings suggest that digital literacy should be recognized as a strategic component of Islamic character education management in higher education. The integration of digital literacy, ethical awareness, and Islamic values enables universities to respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges of digital transformation. Through comprehensive educational programs that combine technological competence with moral development, higher education institutions can contribute to the formation of graduates who are academically capable,

digitally literate, ethically responsible, and firmly grounded in Islamic values. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy initiatives within character education programs represents a sustainable and relevant strategy for enhancing the quality of higher education in the contemporary digital era.

CONCLUSION

This community service program successfully strengthened Islamic character education management through digital literacy activities among students at Universitas Esa Unggul Jakarta. The implementation of training, mentoring, reflective discussions, and digital-based learning activities contributed significantly to improving students' understanding of Islamic digital ethics, enhancing their digital literacy competencies, and reinforcing core Islamic character values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, respect, and empathy. The findings indicate that digital literacy can function not only as a technological competence but also as an effective educational instrument for fostering moral awareness and ethical behavior in digital environments. Students demonstrated greater ability to utilize digital technology responsibly while integrating Islamic values into their academic, social, and religious activities.

The program confirms that the integration of digital literacy and Islamic character education provides a relevant and sustainable approach to addressing the challenges of the digital era in higher education. Through well-managed educational interventions, universities can develop graduates who are digitally competent, ethically responsible, and firmly grounded in Islamic values. The positive outcomes achieved in this program highlight the importance of incorporating value-based digital literacy initiatives into institutional strategies for character development. Consequently, digital literacy should be recognized as a strategic component of Islamic character education management that supports both academic excellence and moral formation in higher education institutions.

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