# Concept and Implementation of Religious Character Education for Wiser Use of Technology

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## Abstract

The unwise utilization of Information and Technology (IT) has resulted in negative impacts within society. This, in turn, gradually contributes to the formation of highly dangerous negative characters that threaten the moral resilience of the nation. The purpose of this paper is to present the concept and implementation of Islamic religious character education as an effort to prevent the negative consequences of the misuse of IT. Through a literature review approach, the authors found that to avoid the adverse effects of unwise IT usage, it is necessary to alter the perspective of learners in line with the Islamic worldview, especially regarding core beliefs in Allah, angels, scriptures, prophets, the Day of Judgment, and predestination. Other essential content that learners should master includes ethical behavior towards Allah, fellow human beings, and oneself. The process of implementing religious character is carried out through ta'dīb and tazkiyatun nafs, involving the stages of takhliyah and taḥliyah. Thus, the objective of this religious character education process is to cultivate learners who are virtuous and wise in their use of IT.

**Keywords:** Noble Character; Technology usage; Ta'dīb; Tazkiyatun Nafs.

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## Abstrak

Pemanfaatan Informasi dan Teknologi (IT) secara tidak bijak telah menimbulkan dampak negatif di tengah masyarakat. Hal ini pun secara perlahan berdampak kepada pembentukan karakter negatif yang sangat berbahaya dan mengancam ketahanan moral bangsa. Tujuan tulisan ini adalah memaparkan konsep dan implementasi pendidikan karakter religius islami sebagai upaya pencegahan dampak negatif dari pennyalah gunaan IT yang tidak bijak. Dengan pendekatan studi pustaka, penulis menemukan bahwa untuk menghindari dampak negatif penggunaan IT secara tidak bijak perlu dilakukan dengan mengubah cara pandang peserta didik yang sesuai dengan worldview Islam, terutama terhadap pokok-pokok keyakinan terhadap Allah, malaikat, kitab, rasul, hari akhir dan takdir. Materi penting lainnya yang perlu dikuasai oleh para peserta didik adalah akhlak terhadap Allah, sesama manusia, dan diri sendiri. Proses penerapan karakter religius dilakukan dengan cara ta'dīb dan tazkiyatun nafs, yang terdiri dari proses takhliyah dan taḥ liyah. Sehingga tujuan dari proses pendidikan karakter religius ini adalah membentuk peserta didik yang baik dan bijak dalam menggunakan IT.

**Kata Kunci:** Akhlak Mulia; Pengunaan Teknologi; Ta'dīb; Tazkiyatun Nafs.

## Introduction

*I*n today's digital era, many countries are actively striving to advance their fields of science, information, and technology (IT) in order to drive their national progress.[1] IT plays a vital role in sustaining a nation's economy.[2] Research has unveiled a positive correlation between the growth rate of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and the IT utilization index. Furthermore, various studies have demonstrated that the impact of IT utilization on economic growth is more pronounced among high-income populations compared to other groups.[3] Notably, the tourism

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[1] Mario Coccia, "Why Do Nations Produce Science Advances and New Technology?" *Technology in Society* 59 (November 2019): 101124, https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0160791X18303300.

[2] Robert Ayres, "Technology, Progress and Economic Growth," *European Management Journal* 14, no. 6 (December 1, 1996): 562–575; Yusuff Jelili Amuda, "Enhancing National Progress and Sustainable Economic Development among Al-Majiri Children in Northern Nigeria," *Heliyon* 7, no. 9 (2021): e08066, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e08066; Elena Toader et al., "Impact of Information and Communication Technology Infrastructure on Economic Growth: An Empirical Assessment for the EU Countries," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 10, no. 10 (2018): 1–22.

[3] Maryam Farhadi, Rahmah Ismail, and Masood Fooladi, "Information and Communication Technology Use and Economic Growth," *PLOS ONE* 7, no. 11

industry employs IT to enhance its services,[4] and within the realm of education, the adoption of IT has had a substantial and beneficial influence on elevating academic performance.[5]

Numerous favorable effects brought about by the integration of IT into our lives have also garnered widespread recognition. Information Technology (IT) has simplified the management of daily tasks and boosted productivity. This includes the efficient handling of everyday schedules, online payments, the Internet of Things, virtual shopping malls, mobile banking, and the advent of artificial intelligence. Communication and social interactions have become increasingly accessible in the virtual realm, offering cost-effective and faster alternatives. The quest for information sharing has been expedited through search engines and a variety of continually expanding applications. Entertainment options, such as gaming, music playback, video streaming, movie-watching, as well as reading newspapers, books, and magazines, are all readily accessible in the palm of your hand, typically via smartphones. Moreover, the field of education continues to evolve, benefiting from interactive multimedia, e-learning, online resources, virtual classrooms, simulated laboratories, and virtual reality.

Another significant aspect to consider is that IT exerts a favorable influence on environmental conservation through its initiatives to reduce paper usage, aligning with the principles of preserving the planet and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). It also contributes to the acquisition of practical life skills by offering instructional video tutorials covering a wide range of topics, including health-related information and online counseling services. Information Technology empowers individuals to efficiently complete tasks, cut down on transportation expenses, enhance communication, bolster healthcare provisions, and swiftly

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(November 12, 2012): e48903, accessed April 30, 2022, https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0048903.

[4] Julio Navío-Marco, Luis Manuel Ruiz-Gómez, and Claudia Sevilla-Sevilla, "Progress in Information Technology and Tourism Management: 30 Years on and 20 Years after the Internet - Revisiting Buhalis & Law's Landmark Study about tourism," *Tourism Management* 69 (December 1, 2018): 460–470.

[5] Mohammed T. Al-Hariri and Abdulghani A. Al-Hattami, "Impact of Students' Use of Technology on Their Learning Achievements in Physiology Courses at the University of Dammam," *Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences* 12, no. 1 (February 2017): 82–85, https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S1658361216300683.

access information from various global sources at a cost-effective rate.[6] While IT stands as a pivotal driver of national progress, its substantial positive impacts largely hinge on human interactions with it. The more effectively and responsibly individuals utilize IT, the greater the benefits it can bestow.[7]

Regrettably, the advent of IT has resulted in its misuse, which has had detrimental effects on the attitudes of the younger generation. Imprudent IT usage has induced alterations in the behavior of young individuals, rendering them more individualistic, undermining their interpersonal relationships, promoting selfishness, intensifying their attachment to gadgets, fostering internet addiction, and engendering problematic behaviors such as cybersexual addiction, cyber-relationship addiction, net compulsions, information overload, and computer addiction. Extensive research literature has also exposed further negative consequences, including the cultivation of irresponsible behaviors marked by the creation and dissemination of hoaxes, incitement, the spread of misleading information, and engaging in cyberbullying.[8]

On the flip side of these adverse effects, studies have identified a noteworthy correlation between internet addiction and emotional well-being. Specifically, internet addiction appears to simultaneously heighten negative emotional states while diminishing positive emotional states. [9] Another investigation underscored that the

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[6] Priscillia Diane Joy Joseph and Fredik Melkias Boiliu, "Peran Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dalam Penggunaan Teknologi Pada Anak," *EDUKATIF : JURNAL ILMU PENDIDIKAN* 3, no. 4 (August 2, 2021): 2037–2045, https://edukatif.org/index.php/edukatif/article/view/1115; Muhamad Rajab, "Komunikasi Sosial Di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0.," in *Prosiding Pembangunan Dan Media*, 2020, 7–21; Irma Budiana, "Peran Pendidikan Karakter Dan Kreativitas Siswa Dalam Menghadapi Era Revolusi Industri 4.0," *Jurnal Madani,* 2, no. 2 (2019): 331–341; H. Wahyono, "Pemanfaatan Teknologi Informasi Dalam Penilaian Hasil Belajar Pada Generasi Milineal Di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0," in *Proceeding Of Biology Education, 3(1),* 2019, 3(1), 192–201.

[7] Mark Coeckelbergh, "Technology and the Good Society: A Polemical Essay on Social Ontology, Political Principles, and Responsibility for Technology," *Technology in Society* 52 (February 2018): 4–9, https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0160791X16301191.

[8] Niko Sangaji, Vincent Hadi Wiyono, and Tri Mulyaningsi, "Pengaruh Revolusi Industri 4.0 Pada Kewirausahaan Untuk Kemandirian Ekonomi," in *Seminar Nasional & Call For Paper Seminar Bisnis Magister Manajemen*, 2019, 226–232.; Yuli Salis Hijriyani and Ria Astuti, "Penggunaan Gadget Oleh Anak Usia Dini Pada Era Revolusi Industri," *Jurnal Thufula* 8, no. 1 (2020): 16–28.

[9] Phil Longstreet, Stoney Brooks, and Ester S. Gonzalez, "Internet Addiction: When the Positive Emotions Are Not so Positive," *Technology in Society* 57 (May 2019): 76–85, https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0160791X18300290.

integration of technology into online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic has given rise to undesirable traits, notably a surge in cheating and dishonest behavior among students, particularly when it comes to attendance and examinations.[10] To mitigate these unfavorable repercussions, it is imperative to incorporate positive character education as a means of reinforcing the responsible use of IT.[11]

Under the purview of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the government has actively promoted a character-enhancement initiative aimed at mitigating adverse attitudes and behaviors in society through educational means. Education is perceived as the focal point for nurturing the younger generation into catalysts for national transformation. The Indonesian government firmly holds that equipping the youth is the singular path to achieving a more advanced nation by the year 2045, marking a century since its declaration of independence. As part of this endeavor, the government has formulated five fundamental character values, drawn from the principles of Pancasila. These five core values encompass religion, nationalism, integrity, liberty, and collaboration.[12]

Religious character stands as a vital attribute that the younger generation can embrace to shield themselves from the detrimental consequences of IT misuse. This spiritual character can also play a role in shaping an individual's disposition.[13] Numerous research efforts have explored the significance of cultivating a virtuous character in Indonesia. Certain studies propose strategic approaches and

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[10] Nona Kumala Sari et al., "Strategi Penanaman Karakter Islami Pada Siswa MTS Swasta Al Manar Medan Johor (Studi Kasus Selama Pembelajaran Daring)," *Al-Ulum: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* (June 24, 2020), https://www.ejurnalilmiah.com/index.php/Al-Ulum/article/view/54.

[11] Farideh Hamidi et al., "Information Technology in Education," in *Procedia Computer Science*, vol. 3 (Elsevier, 2011), 369–373, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2010.12.062.

[12] Kemendikbud, "Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Jadi Pintu Masuk Pembenahan Pendidikan Nasional," *Kementerian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*, last modified 2017, accessed May 10, 2022, https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/blog/2017/07/penguatan-pendidikan-karakter-jadi-pintu-masuk-pembenahan-pendidikan-nasional; Fathur Rokhman et al., "Character Education for Golden Generation 2045 (National Character Building for Indonesian Golden Years)," in *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 141 (Elsevier, 2014), 1161–1165, accessed May 10, 2022, https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S1877042814036210.

[13] Rahmi Fahmy et al., "Measuring Student Perceptions to Personal Characters Building in Education: An Indonesian Case in Implementing New Curriculum in High School," in *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 211, 2015, 851–858, https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S187704281505452X.

instructional models that educators can employ to instill religious character, whether in formal educational settings or informal learning environments.[14]

Additional research highlights various challenges in nurturing a spiritual disposition amid the COVID-19 pandemic.[15] Studies

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[14] Intan Mayang et al., "Upaya Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Menanamkan Nilai Karakter Religius," *An-Nuha* 1, no. 4 (November 30, 2021): 573–583, accessed May 10, 2022, http://annuha.ppj.unp.ac.id/index.php/annuha/article/view/135; Lyna Dwi, Muya Syaroh, and Zeni Murtafiati Mizani, "Membentuk Karakter Religius Dengan Pembiasaan Perilaku Religi Di Sekolah: Studi Di SMA Negeri 3 Ponorogo," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies (IJIES)* 3, no. 1 (August 15, 2020): 63–82, accessed May 10, 2022, https://www.ejournal.iai-tribakti.ac.id/index.php/ijies/article/view/1224; Pasmah Chandra, Nelly Marhayati, and Iain Bengkulu, "Pendidikan Karakter Religius Dan Toleransi Pada Santri Pondok Pesantren Al Hasanah Bengkulu," *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 1 (May 25, 2020): 111–132, accessed May 10, 2022, http://103.88.229.8/index.php/tadzkiyyah/article/view/6345; Dari Ansulat Esmael and Nafiah Nafiah, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Religius Di Sekolah Dasar Khadijah Surabaya," *EduStream: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar* 2, no. 1 (2018): 16–34, accessed May 10, 2022, https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jpd/article/view/4161; Khusnul Khotimah, "Model Manajemen Pendidikan Karakter Religius Di SDIT Qurrota A'yun Ponorogo," *Muslim Heritage* 1, no. 2 (October 20, 2016): 371–388, accessed May 10, 2022, https://jurnal.iainponorogo.ac.id/index.php/muslimheritage/article/view/605; Asep Abdillah and Isop Syafe'i, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Religius Di SMP Hikmah Teladan Bandung," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 17, no. 1 (June 30, 2020): 17–30, accessed May 10, 2022, http://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/tarbiyah/jpai/article/view/2939; Ahmad Hariandi and Yanda Irawan, "Peran Guru Dalam Penanaman Nilai Karakter Religius Di Lingkungan Sekolah Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Gentala Pendidikan Dasar* 1, no. 1 (June 10, 2016): 176–189, accessed May 10, 2022, https://online-journal.unja.ac.id/gentala/article/view/7097; Muhammad Mushfi El Iq Bali and Nurul Fadilah, "Internalisasi Karakter Religius Di Sekolah Menengah Pertama Nurul Jadid," *Jurnal MUDARRISUNA: Media Kajian Pendidikan Agama Islam* 9, no. 1 (June 30, 2019): 1–25, accessed May 10, 2022, https://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/mudarrisuna/article/view/4125; Muh. Hambali and Eva Yulianti, "Ekstrakurikuler Keagamaan Terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Religius Peserta Didik Di Kota Majapahit," *PEDAGOGIK: Jurnal Pendidikan* 5, no. 2 (December 17, 2018): 193–208, accessed May 10, 2022, https://www.ejournal.unuja.ac.id/index.php/pedagogik/article/view/380; Moh Ahsanulkhaq and Bae Kudus, "Membentuk Karakter Religius Peserta Didik Melalui Metode Pembiasaan," *Jurnal Prakarsa Paedagogia* 2, no. 1 (July 1, 2019): 21–33, accessed May 10, 2022, https://jurnal.umk.ac.id/index.php/JKP/article/view/4312; Heri Cahyono, "Pendidikan Karakter: Strategi Pendidikan Nilai Dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius," *Riayah: Jurnal Sosial dan Keagamaan* 1, no. 2 (2016): 230–240, accessed May 10, 2022, https://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/index.php/riayah/article/view/pendidikan-karakter%3A-strategi-pendidikan-nilai-dalam-membentuk-karakter-religius.

[15] Unsa Sabrina, Sekar Dwi Ardianti, and Diana Ermawati, "Kendala Dalam Menumbuhkan Karakter Religius Anak Usia Sekolah Dasar Selama Pandemi Covid 19," *EDUKATIF : JURNAL ILMU PENDIDIKAN* 3, no. 5 (August 14, 2021): 3079–3089, accessed May 10, 2022, https://edukatif.org/index.php/edukatif/article/view/1233; Khoirur Roziqin et al., "Analisis Karakter Religius Siswa Dalam Belajar Dari Rumah Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dasar : Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan dan Hasil Penelitian* 7, no. 1 (2021): 1–6, accessed May 10, 2022, https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/

examining the educational aspects of religious character values, particularly within Islamic teachings, concerning the prudent and wise utilization of IT, have been lacking. The erosion of students' religious values is attributed, in part, to the influence of electronic and social media.[16]

Hence, the primary objective of this study is to develop a framework for religious character education geared towards fostering a discerning and knowledgeable individual in the context of IT usage.

## Research Methodology

In this study, the research methodology employed by the authors is a bibliographic investigation, characterized by the examination and interpretation of written materials within their respective contexts. The research process commences with the selection of a specific research topic, followed by the exploration of relevant information, ultimately culminating in the establishment of the research focus. Subsequently, the authors gather data sources related to the subject of religious character education, particularly from studies published in scholarly journals and books associated with the research's thematic domain. Once the data is compiled, the authors undertake a comprehensive review of the gathered information, assessing its completeness, lucidity, and coherence of meaning. Additionally, the authors structure the acquired data according to a predefined framework. A subsequent analysis of the organized data is conducted, utilizing established rules, theories, and methodologies, with the objective of deriving conclusions aligned with the research goals.[17]

## Results and Discussion

The global discourse surrounding Information Technology has brought about significant transformations in various aspects of life, spanning both Eastern and Western societies. Luciano Floridi highlights

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PD/article/view/12150.

[16] Marzuki Marzuki and Pratiwi Istifany Haq, "Penanaman Nilai-Nilai Karakter Religius Dan Karakter Kebangsaan Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Al Falah Jatinangor Sumedang," *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter* 9, no. 1 (April 5, 2018), accessed May 10, 2022, https://journal.uny.ac.id/index.php/jpka/article/view/21677.

[17] Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014).

that IT has wrought a profound and pervasive impact on the ethical fabric of Western culture, giving rise to profound ethical deliberations. This is primarily because IT has permeated into multifaceted issues encompassing privacy, accuracy, intellectual property, accessibility, information integrity, ownership rights, piracy, the digital divide, research ethics, security, dependability, the credibility of intricate systems, cyber threats like viruses, hacking, and digital vandalism, freedom of expression, censorship, pornography, surveillance, security, and confidentiality. Additionally, it has touched on concerns such as propaganda, identity theft, self-identity construction, the ethical status of artificial entities, electronic conflicts, the reshuffling of values and virtues, and a spectrum of other ethical considerations.[18]

Floridi portrays the global scenario affected by the advancement of information technology as a race involving three participants. The leading runner is the technology itself and its myriad applications, far outpacing the second runner, which symbolizes national and international legal systems and regulations. Trailing behind is the third runner, representing the conceptual comprehension of society.

Another analogy he seeks to convey is that the progression of IT not only bestows substantial advantages and opportunities but also significantly outpaces society's grasp of its essence and the conceptual ramifications it entails. Simultaneously, it introduces challenges of ever-increasing complexity and worldwide scope, progressively growing more severe. The technology resembles a tree with branches that extend much farther and more swiftly than its foundational conceptual, ethical, and cultural underpinnings. However, these foundations are relatively feeble and fragile, leading to imbalances. This is a reality faced daily by countless individuals contending with ethical dilemmas related to information.[19]

Floridi has brought to light that among the most recognizable constructivist approaches is virtue ethics. According to this perspective, the primary ethical objective is to lead a fulfilling life by evolving into a self-assured individual. Constructivist inclinations manifest in the aspiration to mold oneself, a goal attained through the adoption or enhancement of certain qualities while curtailing or managing others. The fundamental philosophy behind this approach is rooted

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[18] Luciano Floridi, ed., *The Cambridge Handbook of Information and Computer Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
[19] Ibid.

in the assumption that it is uncontroversial to desire a fulfilling life by striving to become the best version of oneself. A degree of personal adaptability and the capacity for making critical choices are additional crucial prerequisites.

The central question, "What kind of person should I strive to become?" is regarded as both rational and justifiable. This question forms the basis for inquiries such as, "What kind of life should I lead?" and naturally progresses to, "What kind of character should I develop? What virtues should I nurture, and what vices should I avoid?" Implicit in this framework is the idea that each individual pursues these objectives on a personal level, with only incidental consideration for the broader community.

The presence of moral quandaries within Western society concerning the evolution of IT highlights the vulnerability of the moral principles that underpin it. Floridi has underscored that the transformative impact of IT on Western culture, precipitating ethical concerns, necessitates a reevaluation of the foundational principles on which ethical frameworks are methodologically constructed.[20] The moral values embedded in Western society revolve around secularism, where the culture has emancipated itself from religious influence.[21] Western civilization serves as an exemplar of secular morality, one not reliant on divine authority to address ethical dilemmas. As IT continues to advance in the Western world, secular morality has evolved into a shared moral conscience cultivated through societal discourse, with the aim of enhancing the common welfare and fostering a better society.

The ethical challenges that surface from human use of IT are closely intertwined, and addressing them necessitates the cultivation of virtuous individuals. Creating these virtuous individuals is imperative in order to avert the negative consequences associated with IT use. Achieving this goal through a purely secular paradigm is implausible. Instead, it can be realized through a character education process rooted in religious values. Why religious values? Because religious values are founded on absolute truths derived from divine revelation. Thus, it is incumbent upon the Indonesian nation to foster virtuous individuals grounded in religious principles. In their book Religion

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[20] Luciano Floridi, *Information: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[21] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islām Dan Sekularisme* (Bandung: Institut Pemikiran Islam dan Pembangunan Insan, 2011).

and the *Technological Future*, Mercer and Trothen assert that technology has brought about transformative changes in humanity. Technology possesses the capacity to bolster human potential for both benevolence and malevolence. Consequently, the significant role of religion cannot be dismissed and warrants a more profound and earnest exploration.[22] Of course, instilling the potential for goodness in individuals must be achieved through education.

## Religious Character Education

Through the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, the Indonesian government has instituted the Character Education Strengthening Movement, known as KDP. This program places emphasis on five primary values within the framework of PPK priority characters: faith, honesty, cooperation, patriotism, and self-reliance.

1. The religious character underscores a deep-seated belief in the Almighty.
2. The integrity character strives to establish oneself as someone others can consistently trust in both words and deeds.
3. The gotong-royong character signifies the appreciation of a cooperative spirit, promoting collaborative efforts to address shared challenges.
4. The nationalist character prioritizes the welfare of the nation and state above personal and group interests.
5. The independent character embodies self-reliance, emphasizing the use of personal energy, intellect, and time to realize aspirations, dreams, and ideals.

The concept of religious character education, as articulated by the Indonesian government, embodies a profound faith in the Almighty and finds expression in the way individuals adhere to religious teachings and beliefs. This is evident in their respect for religious diversity, their adoption of a tolerant attitude towards the practices of other faiths and beliefs, and their commitment to coexisting harmoniously and peacefully with followers of different religions. This value of religious character encompasses three interconnected dimensions of relationships: (1) The relationship between individuals and God, (2)

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[22] Calvin Mercer and Tracy J. Trothen, *Religion, and the Technological Future, Springer International Publishing* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021).

The interaction between individuals, and (3) The connection between individuals and the environment or universe. Demonstrating care for and preserving the integrity of creation is a reflection of this religious character value.

Sub-values associated with religious character education encompass elements such as unwavering faith and devoutness, adherence to worship rituals, a commitment to peace and love, a spirit of tolerance, reverence for religious diversity and beliefs, unwavering resolve, self-assurance, fostering cooperation among followers of various religions and beliefs, opposition to bullying and violence, cultivating friendships, practicing sincerity, refraining from imposing one's will on others, safeguarding the rights of the vulnerable and marginalized, cherishing and protecting the environment, maintaining cleanliness, and practicing responsible environmental stewardship. Strengthening religious character education holds significant importance in the context of educational institutions, given the formidable challenges posed by the rapid advancements in technology, which can have adverse and detrimental impacts on the development of students' character. These adverse effects stem from the improper use of IT in everyday life.

**Table 1. Negative impact of IT misuse.**

| Physical Development | Psychic Development | Social Development |
|---|---|---|
| Eye disorders | Internet and *gaming* addiction: *Cybersexual Addiction, Cyber-Relationship Addiction, Net compulsions, Information Overload, Computer Addiction* | *Bullying* |
| Causes of poor posture | Selfish | *Hate speech* |
| Sleep disturbance | Depression and anxiety | Cheating and dishonesty |
| Decreased physical activity | Individualism/ aloofness | Creation and dissemination of false news (*hoax*) |
| Changes in brain structure | Impaired communication skills | Reduced and damaged social relationships |

| Physical Development | Psychic Development | Social Development |
|---|---|---|
| Obesity and fertility decline | Imitation of negative and harmful behaviors | Fraud and Spread of negative content |

The incorporation of religious character education into IT instruction serves to mitigate the adverse consequences of imprudent IT usage and promotes a more discerning approach. It endeavors to mold positive student characters, empowering them to employ IT for their personal benefit, the well-being of their peers, their families, the broader society, and the nation. This, in turn, fosters beneficial outcomes in every instance of IT utilization by students within the country.

## Source of Religious Character

Thomas Lickona, as proposed in his book, outlines that a strong character comprises the ability to discern the right course of action, the genuine desire to pursue what is virtuous, and the consistent practice of virtuous habits in one's thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Good character encompasses the knowledge of what is morally upright, the inner inclination to wholeheartedly embrace virtuous ideals, and the concrete manifestation of these virtues through habits of the mind, heart, and conduct. All three aspects are indispensable for leading a morally upright life, collectively constituting moral maturity. When contemplating the kind of character we wish for our children, it becomes evident that we aspire for them to possess the capacity to make ethical judgments, exhibit profound concern for what is virtuous, and demonstrate the courage to act in accordance with their convictions even when confronted with external pressures and internal temptations.[23]

The fundamental question we must address pertains to the source of the valuable character education values. Indonesia, being the nation with the world's largest Muslim population, predominantly comprises Muslim citizens. Therefore, it is entirely practical to establish the foundational values of religious character education based on Islamic teachings. If you examine the country's educational objectives, you will observe that religious values serve as a fundamental reference

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[23] Thomas Lickona, *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*, *Bantam Books* (New York, 2009).

in every educational goal. According to Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System, the national education system is designed to foster abilities and mold the character and culture of an honorable nation, with the aim of nurturing individuals who are devout, possess commendable character, are physically fit, knowledgeable, skilled, innovative, self-reliant, and who evolve into democratic and responsible citizens.[24] Furthermore, the values of faith and piety, which constitute the bedrock of these educational objectives, are woven into the fabric of every subject taught in every educational institution.

The origin of religious character values should be firmly rooted in religious teachings. In conjunction with the National Education System Law of 2003, it's important to note that the foundation of the Indonesian state is Pancasila, where the belief in God is the primary principle. Furthermore, the other tenets of Pancasila incorporate religious terminology, particularly from Islam. For instance, the second tenet of Pancasila employs phrases such as "fairness" and "adab." Within Islam, terms like "adab," "fairness," "representation," and "deliberation" hold essential significance, forming part of the core vocabulary in Islamic teachings. These terms are intricately tied to the fundamental concepts in Islamic instruction.[25]

The three dimensions articulated by Licona, which encompass understanding what is good, desiring goodness, and embodying virtuous habits within the realms of cognition, emotions, and actions, must integrate aspects of knowledge (cognitive), emotions (feeling), and conduct (action). Within the domain of Islamic religious character education, the cognitive component should delve into the fundamental religious concepts, particularly those of faith in Allah, angels, messengers, divine scriptures, the Day of Judgment, and predestination. A genuine understanding of these concepts of faith should guide an individual to act conscientiously and exercise prudence in their use of IT.

For example, a person who holds unwavering faith in Allah and the Day of Judgment is unlikely to fabricate or disseminate false information (hoaxes) because Islamic faith posits that Allah possesses

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[24] Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia, *Sistem Pendidikan Nasional* (Jakarta: Direktorat Pendidikan Menengah Umum, 2003).

[25] Adian Husaini, "Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Ta'dîb," *TSAQAFAH* 9, no. 2 (November 30, 2013): 371, http://ejournal.unida.gontor.ac.id/index.php/tsaqafah/article/view/58.

omniscience, and there are divine consequences and rewards in the hereafter for those who knowingly invent and spread false information within society. Another instance is an individual who firmly believes in the existence of angels; they are unlikely to engage in bullying, as they are cognizant of the belief that Allah has assigned two angels to each person, who continually observe their actions and meticulously record every deed they perform.

Accurate comprehension of the fundamental tenets of faith has the potential to transform an individual's perspective on life. With the illumination provided by divine revelation and Islamic guidance, one can gain insight into the truth, enabling them to utilize their life's journey to attain a more prosperous afterlife. Proficiency in understanding Islamic teachings and the acquisition of knowledge and competencies in utilizing IT can effectively mitigate the adverse consequences associated with IT usage.[26]

## The Process of Cultivating Religious Character

The process of instilling religious character remains closely tied to the previous two elements, namely knowledge (cognitive) and emotions (feeling). This stage entails action, specifically how to cultivate religious character when utilizing IT wisely. The pivotal aspect in inculcating religious character is the educational process. A highly suitable concept for this character development is the concept of "Ta'dīb." Ta'dīb is an educational framework introduced by Syed Mohammad Naquib Al-Attas. Within the educational process, the aim of ta'dīb is to mold individuals into civilized and virtuous beings. Adian Husaini explains that the term 'adab' essentially forms part of the fundamental Islamic vocabulary and concepts, many of which were adopted by the founders of the Indonesian Nation and incorporated into the state's foundational principles in Pancasila. Given its Islamic origins, the term adab necessitates an understanding grounded in Islamic perspectives. According to Al-Attas, adab represents the recognition and acknowledgment of the proper order of things and a person's place within the hierarchical structure of dignity and status, which is a fundamental essence woven into the fabric of the

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[26] Wendi Zarman, *INSISTS Saturday Forum-Adab Terhadap Informasi: Kerangka Pikir Menghadapi Luapan Informasi Digital* (Jakarta, 2021), accessed July 28, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cn-iBsMpTUE.

universe. Recognition equates to knowledge; recognition signifies benevolence. Consequently, recognition without knowledge is akin to knowledge without benevolence, and recognition without benevolence is analogous to benevolence devoid of knowledge. Both are futile because one implies denial and arrogance, while the other implies obliviousness and ignorance.[27]
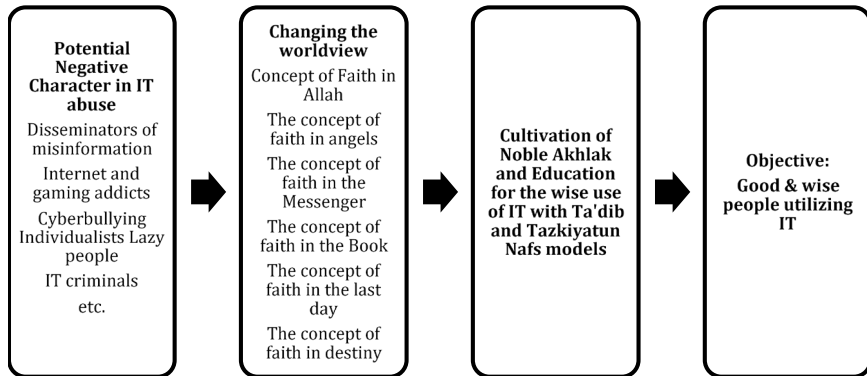


**Picture 1. The flow of the concept of religious character education**

The *ta'dīb* process is primarily focused on instilling virtuous ethics, which encompass noble conduct towards God, fellow humans, and oneself. Noble conduct towards Allah involves genuine repentance, enduring patience, expressing gratitude, placing trust, nurturing hope, and fearing only Allah. Noble conduct towards fellow human beings includes maintaining harmonious relationships, speaking truthfully, refraining from diminishing others, harboring positive thoughts (*ḥusnuzzann*), seeking clarification, displaying compassion, practicing politeness, offering assistance, exhibiting generosity, extending forgiveness, fostering a sense of brotherhood (*ukhuwwah*), and upholding promises. Noble conduct towards oneself entails maintaining purity and self-esteem, embracing contentment with Allah's blessings (*qanā'ah*), demonstrating patience in times of His provisions, placing reliance (*tawakkal*) in Him, and cultivating humility. These concepts of noble conduct have been extensively discussed by numerous scholars, referencing the source of revelation, namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Additionally, in tandem with the cultivation of noble ethics through the *ta'dīb* process, another avenue that warrants pursuit is the

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[27] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Konsep Pendidikan Dalam Islam: Suatu Rangka Pikir Pembinaan Filsafat Pendidikan Islam*, Cetakan IV. (Bandung: Mizan, 1992).

process of *tazkiyatun nafs*, or soul purification. This involves two distinct procedures employed in purifying students' souls: *takhliyah* and *taḥliyah*. *Takhliyah* involves the cleansing of the heart from ignoble qualities, whereas *taḥliyah* entails the enrichment of the soul by adorning it with commendable virtues.[28] In this context, the teacher plays a pivotal role in guiding their students to persistently engage in *tazkiyatun nafs*, ultimately shaping a religious character. This is instrumental in realizing the ultimate objective of religious character education, which is the cultivation of virtuous and discerning individuals in their use of IT.

## Implementation of Religious Character Education

The Indonesian government has initiated the Character Education Strengthening (CES) movement, which is founded on the pillars of classroom, school culture, and community. The classroom-based component of the CES movement involves the integration of character education within the classroom setting through the incorporation of character-related content into subject matter, both thematically and holistically. This approach also entails reinforcing classroom management techniques and selecting appropriate teaching methods and assessment strategies. The school culture-based aspect of the CES movement focuses on customizing the curriculum to meet regional needs, instilling values in the daily life of the school, setting an example through the conduct of adults in the educational environment, engaging the broader school ecosystem, offering ample opportunities for students to explore their potential through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and empowering school management. The community-based element of the CES movement is implemented by taking into account local norms, leveraging the potential of the environment as a learning resource, involving individuals such as arts and culture enthusiasts, community leaders, business professionals, and industry experts. Additionally, it emphasizes the alignment of character education with various existing programs encompassing academic institutions, education advocates, non-governmental organizations, and fosters the synchronization of programs and activities through collaboration with local governments, communities, and parents of students.

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[28] Akhmad Alim, *Pendidikan Jiwa Dalam Perspektif Ibn Jauzi* (Bogor: Pustaka Al-Bustan, 2013).

In the implementation of religious character education, it is a collective responsibility that extends to all teachers, not limited to religious educators. Every teacher bears the obligation to instill religious character values. For instance, teachers specializing in informatics can seamlessly integrate Islamic religious character values into their Informatics subjects. This integration is exemplified in the Junior High School Grade VII Informatics package book, published by the Center for Curriculum and Book Development, Research and Development, and Bookkeeping Agency of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The book delves into the societal ramifications of informatics, covering topics such as the evolution of information and communication technology, the effects of ICT on people's lives, both the positive and negative impacts of information and communication technology, collaboration in cyberspace, social media, personal information, and privacy law. These subjects encompass discussions on privacy laws, informed consent, and an exploration of social media classification and its impact.[29] Likewise, in the Informatics book for Junior High School Class VIII, there is an examination of social media, including its classification and impact. This is accompanied by a critical evaluation of social media information, focusing on the development of critical thinking, source verification, scrutiny of information credibility, and the application of common sense. Cyberbullying is also addressed, with detailed sections on addressing cyberbullying, addressing common questions and concerns about cyberbullying, recognizing the signs of cyberbullying, understanding the potential impacts, and ways to combat cyberbullying without disconnecting from the internet. Additionally, guidance is provided on safeguarding personal information from misuse or embarrassment on social media.

All of the aforementioned discussions, along with teaching using data sources from the field of informatics, offer the opportunity to infuse faith-based values into each subtopic. This is possible because Islam is a comprehensive religion that can offer solutions to a wide range of challenges faced by humanity in any era. For instance, when delving into the subject of scrutinizing information sources, a teacher can draw upon verse 6 of Surah Al-Ḥujurāt from the Qur'an. In this

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[29] Sumiati Maresha Caroline Wijanto, Irya Wisnubhadra, Vania Natali, Wahyono, Sri Mulyati, Ari Wardhani, Sutardi, Heni Pratiwi, Budiman Saputra, Kurnia Astiani, *Informatika Untuk SMP Kelas VII* (Jakarta: Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan dan Perbukuan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2021).

verse, Allah urges believers to authenticate the accuracy of information relayed by individuals with questionable intentions. This admonition is intended to prevent community disruptions stemming from negligence in verifying the sources of information. By integrating faith-based values, a student not only becomes more cautious when receiving information but also draws closer to the Quran, using it as a guiding source in his life.

The process of school culture-based religious character education can be effectively carried out by instilling certain practices and habits, including congregational prayers, reciting short verses before commencing learning, engaging in acts of charity, reciting Asma'ul Husna, offering greetings, sharing smiles, engaging in prayers, specifically ḍuḥā prayers, maintaining polite speech, adhering to modest dress codes, ensuring appropriate covering of one's ʿawrat, monitoring and ensuring the completion of the five daily prayers through attendance records, promoting cleanliness and healthy living, fostering the habit of reading Asma'ul Husna and daily prayers, nurturing honesty, instilling a sense of responsibility, and promoting discipline. Additionally, the school can display wise words from scholars on slogan boards, emphasizing noble morals.[30] Regarding the community's role as a supporter of religious character education, various strategies can be employed, such as imparting moral knowledge grounded in Islamic values, setting an example through personal conduct, facilitating the integration of virtuous behaviors within the community, enforcing appropriate consequences and reprimands when deviations from religious values are observed.

## Conclusion

The urgent implementation of religious character education is crucial to mitigate the adverse effects of unwise IT usage. This educational process can be realized through three fundamental pillars: the classroom, school culture, and the broader society. Students should acquire a strong grasp of essential topics, including faith in Allah,

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[30] Mayang et al., "Upaya Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Menanamkan Nilai Karakter Religius"; Hariandi and Irawan, "Peran Guru Dalam Penanaman Nilai Karakter Religius Di Lingkungan Sekolah Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar"; Esmael and Nafiah, "Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Religius Di Sekolah Dasar Khadijah Surabaya"; Dwi, Syaroh, and Mizani, "Membentuk Karakter Religius Dengan Pembiasaan Perilaku Religi Di Sekolah: Studi Di SMA Negeri 3 Ponorogo."

angels, books, messengers, the last day, and destiny, as these serve as the foundation for knowledge and the cultivation of their worldview. Equally important is the inculcation of noble morals, encompassing conduct toward Allah, fellow human beings, and oneself. The educational process is executed by employing two key methods: ta'dīb and tazkiyatun nafs. This entails takhliyah, which involves purging the heart of undesirable morals, and taḥliyah, which focuses on enriching the soul with commendable qualities.

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