

Beyond Digital *Adab*: A Conceptual Model of *Ta'dib*-Oriented Character Pedagogy in Islamic Education

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Abstract

Digital Islamic learning presents challenges involving unverified religious claims, artificial intelligence outputs, privacy concerns, and unequal access. This study aims to reconstruct the philosophy of *ta'dib* as a conceptual foundation for character education in digitally mediated Islamic learning. It employs a qualitative conceptual approach through purposive document analysis and an integrative synthesis of literature on educational philosophy and digital ethics. The findings propose the *Ta'dib*-Oriented Digital Character Pedagogy (TDCP) model, comprising five dimensions: epistemic integrity, dignified interaction, responsible digital agency, equitable participation, and reflective self-discipline. These dimensions are implemented through a cycle of inquiry, deliberation, action, and reflection to support formative assessment and protect learner privacy. The contribution of this study is the introduction of the TDCP model as a *Ta'dib*-based pedagogical framework for fostering ethical, responsible, and reflective digital character.

Keywords: *Ta'dib*, Character Education, Digital Ethics, Formative Assessment

Abstrak

Pembelajaran Islam berbasis digital menghadirkan tantangan berupa klaim keagamaan yang belum terverifikasi, keluaran kecerdasan buatan, persoalan privasi, dan ketimpangan akses. Penelitian ini bertujuan merekonstruksi filsafat ta'dib sebagai landasan konseptual pendidikan karakter dalam pembelajaran Islam digital. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan konseptual kualitatif melalui analisis dokumen purposif dan sintesis integratif literatur filsafat pendidikan serta etika digital. Hasil kajian menghasilkan model Ta'dib-Oriented Digital Character Pedagogy (TDCP) dengan lima dimensi: integritas epistemik, interaksi bermartabat, agensi digital bertanggung jawab, partisipasi berkeadilan, dan disiplin diri reflektif. Dimensi tersebut diterapkan melalui siklus penyelidikan, pertimbangan, tindakan, dan refleksi yang mendukung asesmen formatif serta perlindungan privasi. Kontribusi temuan penelitian ini menawarkan model TDCP sebagai kerangka pedagogis berbasis Ta'dib dalam pembentukan karakter digital yang etis, bertanggung jawab, dan reflektif.

Kata Kunci: *Ta'dib*, Pendidikan Karakter, Etika Digital, Asesmen Formatif

INTRODUCTION

Digital technologies are reconfiguring how knowledge is encountered, attributed, evaluated, and circulated in Islamic classrooms. Learning management systems, short-form video, generative artificial intelligence (AI), and peer messaging can expand access to explanation and collaboration, but they also multiply opportunities for unverified religious claims, academic misrepresentation, public humiliation, and inappropriate disclosure of learner data. Global educational guidance emphasizes that teacher competence must include human-centred judgment and protection of learners rather than only proficiency in tools (Miao & Cukurova, 2024; Miao & Holmes, 2023; Celik et al., 2022; Chiu et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2023). Character education in this setting therefore concerns the moral quality of decisions made during digital learning, not merely the presence of religious content on a screen.

This shift exposes a pedagogical tension. Schools may urge learners to exhibit honesty, respect, or discipline while assessing success predominantly through compliance, attendance, or completed digital assignments. Such indicators do not establish whether learners can distinguish sound evidence from fabricated claims, correct a harmful post, obtain permission before sharing a classmate's work, or defend a fair response to algorithmic bias. Reviews of AI ethics in schooling document issues of privacy, fairness, transparency, accountability, and the distribution of educational power (Gouseti et al., 2025; Mouta et al., 2024; Wieczorek et al., 2025). The educational problem is how these dilemmas become objects of guided moral reasoning.

The Islamic concept of *ta'dib* provides a promising yet demanding philosophical resource. In al-Attas's educational argument, *adab* concerns proper recognition and acknowledgement of the ordered relations of knowledge, persons, and action; education cannot be exhausted by information transmission (Al-Attas, 1980). This study does not treat *ta'dib* as an interchangeable synonym for etiquette or as a ready-made catalogue of internet rules. Instead, it examines what follows pedagogically when acquiring knowledge and acting appropriately are inseparable objectives. That perspective can place epistemic honesty and responsibility toward others at the centre of digital learning.

Existing work has already established meaningful connections among Islamic values, digital citizenship, and learner character. A review by Muksin and Afandi (2025) synthesizes digital ethics in Islamic religious education; Ihwanah et al. (2024) discuss character formation through differentiated Islamic learning; and Mutha'aliin et al. (2026) reconstruct the use of digital tools from a *ta'dib* and spiritual-education perspective. Herhan and Khaerudin (2026) integrate *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *ta'dib* in a broader paradigm of digitally mediated Islamic education. These contributions preclude any claim that the interaction between *ta'dib* and technology has not previously been considered. Pranoto and Haryanto (2024) connect Islamic education with ethical digital citizenship, while Hairani and Conermann (2025) document the role of internalized religious values in digital conduct. Muharromah and Anshory (2025) report *adab* mentoring combined with digital citizenship in a boarding-school setting. These studies strengthen the educational case for digital character formation while demonstrating that the topic has already been

investigated in several forms. Research on digitally mediated religious character formation by Araniri and Nahriyah (2025) and Maulana and Iqbal (2026) also illustrates the growing overlap between Islamic moral education and technology use.

A complementary body of recent scholarship clarifies the wider educational context. Anamisari et al. (2026) interpret contextual and transformative Islamic learning as involving cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aims, while Hanin et al. (2026) describe the challenge of adapting Islamic education to globalization without weakening its character-forming commitments. In an elementary-school case, Bisri et al. (2026) locate moderate character formation across curriculum, learning activities, extracurricular practices, and habituation rather than cognitive instruction alone. These studies establish useful pedagogical concerns, but they do not provide direct validation of the digital decision-making and formative-assessment routines proposed in this article.

The narrower research gap is therefore operational and evaluative. The literature indicates why Islamic ethics should inform digital education, but it leaves room for a traceable conceptual account connecting philosophical premises to recurring classroom decisions, structured practice, and ethically acceptable evidence of students' reasoning. An approach that stops with broad values risks becoming aspirational; one that translates character into surveillance, rankings of piety, or simplistic behavioral scores risks contradicting the respect for learners it seeks to protect (UNESCO, 2021; Holmes et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2025).

This study addresses that tension through a carefully bounded reconstruction. More recent proposals, such as the Islamic digital literacy curriculum of Mukhlis and Cahyadi (2026) and the conceptual teaching strategies advanced by Mentari et al. (2026), make the need for careful differentiation especially important. The present study concentrates on one specific bridge: translating a philosophically situated account of ta'dib into formative reasoning prompts, revisable student-produced evidence, and safeguards against classifying a person's character from surveillance traces. Additional Qur'anic approaches to digital adab (Iqbal & Kanus, 2026) and work on digital-citizenship adab mentoring (Muharromah & Subando, 2025) further show why a value-centered model alone is not a sufficient novelty claim.

Related philosophical reconstructions also sharpen the distinction between ethical foundations and teaching design. Khaqim (2026) proposes a holistic synthesis of fitrah, cultural context, and educational freedom; Uyun et al. (2026) argue for a tawhidic orientation that resists reducing Islamic education to instrumental efficiency; and Ihwan (2026) examines spiritual and humanistic values, including compassion and respect for dignity, in tarekat-oriented character education. These contributions illuminate the purposes and values of moral formation. The unresolved task taken up here is narrower: how to translate an interpretation of ta'dib into ethically accountable classroom responses to digital dilemmas without equating observable compliance with inner character.

The proposed novelty is a Ta'dib-Oriented Digital Character Pedagogy framework (TDCP) that differentiates five moral capacities and organizes their cultivation through a practical inquiry-judgment-action-reflection cycle. Unlike a static list of virtues, this

framework explicitly pairs each capacity with authentic digital dilemmas, formative classroom artifacts, feedback questions, and limits on intrusive assessment. Its purpose is not to attribute contemporary AI principles directly to classical authors. The framework is the present authors' interpretive synthesis, subject to revision as textual and classroom evidence develops.

This study aims to reconstruct the philosophical commitments of *ta'dib* for digital character education and to design a provisional classroom-oriented conceptual model. Two questions guide the inquiry: (1) How can *ta'dib* be interpreted to support moral judgment in digital Islamic classrooms? (2) What dimensions, teaching routines, and formative evidence can sustain this approach without turning character education into surveillance? The objectives are to clarify the philosophical-to-pedagogical link and to propose a framework for lesson planning, reflective teaching, and later empirical evaluation.

The theoretical urgency lies in distinguishing moral formation from technological adaptation. Digital competence frameworks help teachers choose tools and protect data (Redecker, 2017; Claro et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2023; Mikeladze et al., 2024), whereas *ta'dib* potentially asks what kind of knowing and acting makes those choices educationally worthwhile. By critically combining these levels, Islamic education can engage technological innovation without treating efficiency or automated compliance as a substitute for responsible judgment. The article consequently offers a conceptual contribution relevant to teachers, researchers, and curriculum designers, while making no claims about measured student outcomes. Research on digital literacy and character education in madrasahs (Putra et al., 2025) further underscores why classroom routines and ethical evidence cannot be separated from school-level conditions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This article employs qualitative conceptual inquiry supported by purposive document analysis and integrative literature synthesis. The analytical object is the relationship between *ta'dib* as an educational philosophy and ethical decisions in digital Islamic classrooms, rather than the measurable effects of a teaching intervention. Al-Attas (1980) provides the philosophical anchor; scholarship on Islamic digital ethics, AI in education, teacher digital competence, and character education supplies contemporary perspectives. The analysis considers document provenance, intellectual context, conceptual distinctions, and interpretive limits (Bowen, 2009; Snyder, 2019). It is not a systematic literature review, and neither exhaustive database coverage nor PRISMA screening is claimed.

Sources were selected purposively on the basis of conceptual relevance, retrievable publication provenance, and relevance to actual digital-learning dilemmas. Searches of accessible scholarly indexes and journal sites used combinations of *ta'dib*, al-Attas, Islamic character education, digital ethics, artificial intelligence in education, digital competence, and ethical assessment. Publications from 2021–2026 were prioritized for contemporary digital concerns, while earlier foundational texts and methodological works were included when necessary. Published claims about classroom outcomes are treated as contextual

findings of the cited studies, not as evidence that the proposed TDCP model has been effective.

Additional contextual works were considered for their implications for organizational feasibility, not as evidence of the TDCP model's effectiveness. Research on pesantren quality assurance (Erifsany et al., 2026), graduate competency implementation in Ma'had Aly (Setianingsih et al., 2026), and the management of a tahfidz program in madrasah (Nazah et al., 2026) helps distinguish curricular ideals from implementation capacity and evaluation practices. Because these studies address distinct educational settings and questions, any connection drawn to digital character pedagogy is interpretive and must be tested independently. Conceptual synthesis followed four operations: first, distinguishing philosophical assertions concerning *ta'dib* from contemporary technical and policy concepts; second, classifying digital dilemmas as epistemic, relational, technological, distributive, or self-regulatory; third, connecting each category with an instructional routine, a reasoning prompt, an observable and revisable learning artifact, and an ethical safeguard; and fourth, testing the mapping against counterexamples, including apparent compliance produced by surveillance and polished AI-generated writing with weak evidentiary support. The five dimensions and pedagogical cycle are the authors' interpretive proposals, not findings from interviews, observations, expert validation, classroom trials, or psychometric testing. The purposive corpus, dependence on published scholarship, and variation in institutional settings limit transferability; primary-text analysis and participatory empirical testing remain necessary.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ta'dib, Knowledge, and Moral Agency

Ta'dib is used here as a philosophical orientation linking knowledge with ethically appropriate recognition and action. Al-Attas (1980) argues that education must address the formation of the person and the proper relation of knowledge to human conduct. Treating the concept solely as politeness misses the epistemic dimension: an apparently respectful learner may still knowingly circulate a forged statement. Conversely, digital fluency may be morally deficient when used to expose another student's vulnerability. The reconstructed thesis is that intellectual trustworthiness, recognition of others, and self-directed responsibility belong together.

This interpretation does not assume that classical Islamic discourse anticipated contemporary platforms. Digital data governance, algorithmic discrimination, and generative-model hallucination require modern research, policy, and technical judgment. The Islamic philosophical contribution is to raise questions about the purpose of knowledge and the character of its use, whereas contemporary evidence clarifies mechanisms of harm and feasible safeguards (UNESCO, 2021; Kasneci et al., 2023; Miao & Cukurova, 2024). A productive synthesis must preserve this asymmetry instead of treating value language as a replacement for privacy rules.

Character formation is consequently modeled as situated moral agency. Students encounter claims and people, interpret obligations, choose among competing actions, and

revise practices after feedback. Such agency requires opportunities to reason, disagree responsibly, and recognize the limits of one's knowledge. It cannot be inferred reliably from unobserved private motives or rigid digital traces. Caring approaches to moral education emphasize relational attention (Noddings, 2013), while pedagogical scholarship stresses teachers' judgment and contextual understanding (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). These perspectives provide complementary rather than identical foundations for the synthesis.

This interpretation can be situated alongside recent but distinct philosophical accounts. Uyun et al. (2026) foreground the transcendent and epistemic purposes of Islamic education in their critique of instrumental reductionism, and Khaqim (2026) relates moral development to a holistic fitrah-cultural curriculum. Ihwan (2026), in turn, draws attention to human dignity, compassion, and spiritual habituation in character formation. The present model does not collapse these approaches into ta'dib; instead, it uses them as conceptual interlocutors when relating truthfulness, dignity, and responsible action to digital classroom decisions.

From *Adab* to Digital Classroom Practices

The analysis yields five dimensions. Epistemic integrity concerns truthful representation of sources, evidence, uncertainty, and authorship. Dignified interaction concerns disagreement, privacy, and avoidance of ridicule. Responsible digital agency concerns anticipation of tool consequences and willingness to retain accountable human control. Just participation concerns access, accommodation, and the capacity to challenge biased outcomes. Reflective self-discipline concerns purposeful attention, revision after error, and restraint without humiliating monitoring. These dimensions overlap but identify distinguishable pedagogical tasks.

Although recent literature contains strong prescriptions about digital ethics (Muksin & Afandi, 2025; Mentari et al., 2026; Syamsul et al., 2026), a character-education framework needs to specify what teachers and learners do with moral concepts. The cycle developed here therefore begins with a genuine dilemma, requires evidence-based deliberation, culminates in a justified action, and returns to reflective revision. It links the philosophical priority of appropriate knowing and doing to concrete instructional sequences. Discussions of Islamic digital ethics also emphasize concrete choices about misinformation, online communication, and learner responsibility (Setiawan et al., 2025); the present cycle makes the evidentiary and reflective steps explicit.

The emphasis on classroom enactment is compatible with the contextual-transformative orientation discussed by Anamisari et al. (2026) and with Bisri et al.'s (2026) account of character education extending beyond cognition. What TDCP adds at a conceptual level is a specified sequence in which learners must examine sources and affected persons, defend a choice, create a revisable response, and reflect without being assigned an enduring moral label. These comparisons indicate pedagogical affinity rather than demonstrated equivalence or effectiveness.

TDCP dimension	Classroom dilemma	Learning routine	Formative evidence
Epistemic integrity	AI-generated religious quotation lacks a source	Verify original text and distinguish citation from paraphrase	Annotated source-check log
Dignified interaction	A peer is mocked in a class discussion	Rewrite response; explain impact and repair	Respectful response + reflection
Responsible digital agency	Student work is uploaded to a public tool	Compare permission, necessity and safe alternatives	Data-minimization decision note
Just participation	Low-bandwidth learners cannot access multimedia	Co-design equitable offline or low-data pathways	Accessibility plan and feedback
Reflective self-discipline	Notifications disrupt reading or discussion	Test purposeful attention and self-chosen boundaries	Short learning journal

Table 1. Proposed TDCP Dimensions, Illustrative Learning Routines, And Formative Evidence

A Four-Stage Pedagogical Cycle

The first stage, inquiry, introduces a context-rich dilemma rather than a rule with a predetermined answer. For example, a teacher can present an AI-generated explanation of a Qur'anic concept containing an untraceable citation. Students identify what is known, what remains uncertain, and whose interests may be affected. The inquiry is academically rigorous because learners must distinguish textual evidence, inference, and machine-generated assertions. Contemporary research on large language models and school ethics provides the technical context for such questioning (Kasneci et al., 2023; Gouseti et al., 2025; Wiese et al., 2025).

The second stage, judgment, requires an argued choice among plausible responses. Learners may decide to omit a quotation until its source is verified, or explain why an AI-generated summary can be used as a draft but not as an authority. Teachers ask whether an action respects trust, human dignity, and the limits of personal knowledge.

The third stage, action, requires a concrete product a corrected lesson post, a privacy-sensitive collaboration plan, or a respectful response in an online discussion.

The fourth stage, reflection, asks students to examine mistakes and alternative interpretations without attaching permanent moral labels. This sequence is designed to resist two problematic shortcuts. Moralizing shortcuts turn every technical mistake into evidence of poor character; technocratic shortcuts reduce all ethical questions to a compliance checklist. Both hinder judgment. The proposed cycle makes space for error correction, teacher feedback, and learner agency. It remains hypothetical until educators

test whether the routines are feasible, inclusive, and sensitive to local Islamic educational contexts.

Stage	Teacher facilitation	Student task	Safeguard
Inquiry	Present plural, realistic digital dilemma	Identify claims, people, and uncertainties	No disclosure of identifiable peer data
Judgment	Prompt evidence and counterarguments	Justify a decision with sources	Allow reasoned disagreement
Action	Guide safe authentic application	Create corrected post or access plan	Review high-stakes outcomes personally
Reflection	Provide private formative feedback	Revise explanation and future practice	Do not rank students' religiosity

Table 2. Inquiry–Judgment–Action–Reflection Cycle For A Proposed Ta'dib-Oriented Lesson.

Illustrative Classroom Cases and Ethical Limits

Case A: In a secondary Islamic education lesson, students receive two explanations of a hadith: one links to a retrievable collection and the other gives a polished AI-generated reference that cannot be located. A teacher asks them to annotate evidentiary confidence before reposting either explanation. The character aim is not blind suspicion toward technology but responsible treatment of knowledge. Assessment focuses on the clarity of source checking and willingness to correct errors, not on judging the learner's sincerity.

Case B: In a moderated online discussion about religious difference, a disagreement escalates into personal ridicule. Rather than grading the number of polite expressions, the teacher invites participants to distinguish critique of ideas from attacks on persons, reconstruct the injured party's perspective, and propose a repair action. Dignity is treated as a relationship maintained through conduct. The teacher also sets enforceable boundaries against harassment and obtains school support when a safeguarding concern arises.

Case C: A platform proposes personalized assignments based on data reflecting unequal connectivity. Students examine who is excluded, whether alternative materials are accessible, and which personal records should remain private. The lesson teaches justice as an obligation to consider conditions of participation, not the simple distribution of identical digital tasks. Relevant competence frameworks and reviews warn that apparently neutral technology can reproduce social disparities (Redecker, 2017; Claro et al., 2024; Wiczorek et al., 2025).

These cases are author-constructed illustrations rather than observational findings. No scores, effectiveness estimates, teacher interviews, or student responses are claimed. Additionally, an ethical character framework cannot replace legal rules on data privacy, child safeguarding, consent, or accessibility. Those obligations must be evaluated within applicable institutional and national requirements. The proposal is most defensible as a reflective instructional scaffold, not as a disciplinary rating system.

Bridging Islamic Educational Philosophy and Digital Ethics: A *Ta'dib*-Based Framework for Character Education

The conceptual contribution is a distinction between philosophical orientation, educational decision, and observable evidence. Earlier discussions rightly stress *ta'dib* as a foundation of moral and intellectual life, and recent research connects Islamic education to digital ethics and technological tools (Mutha'aliin et al., 2026; Herhan & Khaerudin, 2026; Muksin & Afandi, 2025). TDCP adds a structured account of how teachers might guide learners through tensions among truth, dignity, agency, justice, and restraint. Its value lies in the traceability of the reasoning, not a claim to have identified five dimensions that have already been empirically established. A study of Islamic character education in Indonesian state Islamic universities (Dimyathi et al., 2025) widens the comparative setting, but does not itself validate the proposed school-level TDCP routines. This is not the first proposed model of digital Islamic character education: the frameworks of Mukhlis and Cahyadi (2026) and the practices examined by Muharromah and Anshory (2025) provide substantive points of comparison. TDCP is differentiated by its explicitly provisional five-dimensional mapping and its pairing of every dimension with a reasoning prompt, revisable classroom evidence, and a limitation on intrusive assessment.

The framework also suggests a different approach to formative assessment. Teachers can evaluate how thoughtfully a student checks sources, explains a privacy choice, provides fair alternatives, and improves a response after feedback. Evidence should be contextual and revisable: a single online mistake cannot establish permanent character deficiency. Assessment should be transparent to students and avoid compulsory disclosure of beliefs, personal messages, or private digital histories. Such safeguards distinguish education for ethical agency from monitoring for obedience. The assessment argument benefits from cautious comparison with institutionally different studies. Nazah et al. (2026) describe a tahfidz program in which learning quality cannot be inferred from memorization quantity alone; this offers an analogy, not evidence, for distinguishing thoughtful digital decisions from simple activity counts. Setianingsih et al. (2026) identify institutional and standardization challenges in implementing Ma'had Aly graduate competencies, while Erifsany et al. (2026) emphasize teacher capacity and quality-development processes in pesantren. These studies suggest that any eventual TDCP implementation will require context-sensitive teacher preparation, feasible assessment criteria, and institutional support. None of these works tests the TDCP model.

For teacher education, TDCP could support case-based workshops and reflective portfolios on AI-assisted assignment design, Islamic source verification, respectful online communication, and equitable media choice. Prior work on teacher AI literacy and ethical competence provides a rationale for explicit training (Sperling et al., 2024; Tagare et al., 2025; Ng et al., 2021; Miao & Cukurova, 2024). Future empirical studies should use expert panels to revise dimension definitions, trial lessons across madrasahs and schools, gather student perspectives, and evaluate whether the approach improves reasoned decisions without increasing the burdens of surveillance.

Four limitations qualify these propositions. The study is a bounded conceptual synthesis rather than a comprehensive evidence review; it does not establish the prevalence of any phenomenon. The philosophical source must be interpreted in its intellectual context rather than presumed to supply digital legal or technical rules. The proposed dimensions were developed by the authors and have not been empirically validated. Finally, implementation may vary markedly by learner age, religious educational tradition, disability access, connectivity, and institutional resources. These limits are essential to any responsible application. The nine additional studies incorporated into this discussion therefore serve different analytical roles: work on philosophical aims informs the normative orientation; work on contextual and holistic pedagogy informs classroom design; and research on institutional standards and educational program management identifies possible implementation constraints. Together, they refine the boundary of the proposed contribution while leaving empirical validity, effectiveness, and transferability open to future study.

CONCLUSION

Based on the subject matter, this study concludes that the philosophy of *ta'dib* can provide an educationally meaningful foundation for digital character formation when its account of responsible knowing and conduct is interpreted critically rather than anachronistically. The proposed TDCP model integrates five dimensions—epistemic integrity, dignified interaction, responsible digital agency, just participation, and reflective self-discipline—through a four-stage inquiry–judgment–action–reflection cycle. Its central conceptual finding is that learners need structured opportunities to explain, enact, and revise ethically consequential choices; memorizing general virtues or complying with platform rules is not sufficient.

The framework contributes a traceable bridge between Islamic philosophy of education and formative digital pedagogy, with illustrative teaching routines and safeguards against intrusive moral measurement. Its limitations are substantial: it is not a validated assessment tool, and no classroom effectiveness has been demonstrated. Further scholarship should deepen primary-text interpretation, critically review additional research, seek expert critique, and pilot participatory lessons before strong claims about educational outcomes can be made.

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