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Digital Spiritual Resilience: A Structural Analysis of Al-Ghazali's Tazkiyah al-Nafs as a Framework for Addressing Digital Identity Disruption Among Students

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the concept of *tazkiyah* Al-Ghazali as a strategy for reconstructing the character of students in the face of digital identity disruption, with a focus on analyzing the mechanism of internalization of spiritual values and its implications for the formation of digital generation character. The research method used a qualitative approach through library research with document and literature analysis techniques, examining Al-Ghazali's works, contemporary literature on digital identity, and related academic sources. The research found that Al-Ghazali's concept of *tazkiyah* offers a comprehensive framework for shaping the character of learners in the digital era through four fundamental stages: *muraqabah* (self-surveillance), *muhasabah* (introspection), *mu'ahadah* (self-promise), and *riyadhah* (spiritual practice). The results revealed that this multidimensional approach is able to transform the challenges of digital identity disruption into opportunities for spiritual character development by providing effective psychological defense mechanisms in the face of virtual identity fragmentation. The research proves that Al-Ghazali's classical spiritual concept has contemporary significance, offering an integrative solution to shape an authentic, meaningful, and characterful digital generation through the internalization of sustainable spiritual values, thus bridging the Islamic intellectual tradition with the dynamics of modern technology.

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INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasingly complex digital transformation, young people face fundamental challenges in the formation of their personal identity and character (Aldi et al., 2023; Vuong et al., 2021; Arroisi & Dzunnurrain, 2023). The massive development of information technology has created a virtual space that not only affects the way of communication but also fundamentally reshapes the psychological and social construction of millennials and Generation Z (Arroisi & Dzunnurrain, 2023). Data from the BPS national survey results in 2022 noted that internet users in Indonesia reached 210 million people, with 66.48% of them being young people aged 15-35 years who are almost entirely active on social media and digital platforms (Ummah, 2019). This digital transformation has resulted in a new paradigm of social interaction, where geographical, cultural, and personal boundaries are increasingly fluid and redefined through complex digital networks. This phenomenon is not merely a technological change but represents a fundamental shift in the way individuals understand, construct, and express their identities (Vuong et al., 2021).

The phenomenon of digital disruption does not just change interaction patterns but fundamentally overhauls the structure of personal identity formation. Social media, digital communication platforms, and virtual spaces have become the main arena for self-image formation and authenticity crises. Research from Gajah Mada University by Amirah Ellyza Wahdi in collaboration with the University of Queensland, Australia, and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the United States shows that 2.45 million adolescents experience psychological disorders due to the pressure of creating idealized digital representations, which do not fully reflect the reality of their true selves (Erskine et al., 2023). The construction of digital identities has created an artificial self-image formation mechanism, wherein individuals are frequently trapped in cycles of social comparison and cultivate online personas that diverge substantially from their true personal characteristics. This process generates a disconnection between virtual and personal identities, potentially precipitating psychological crises and disrupting authentic character formation (Uyun, 2019).

The complexity of digital identity issues raises the urgent need for comprehensive and meaningful character reconstruction. The conventional approach to character development is no longer considered effective in dealing with the ever-changing digital dynamics. A new paradigm is needed that is able to integrate spiritual, psychological, and technological dimensions in the process of building students' character. This challenge requires a conceptual framework that is not merely reactive but proactive in addressing digital transformation. Character construction in the digital era requires a multidimensional approach that is able to accommodate the complexity of virtual experiences and offer a mechanism for forming meaningful, authentic, and characterful identities. This requires a comprehensive integration of spiritual, psychological, and technological approaches to guide the younger generation in navigating the complexities of digital identity (Sardar, 2017).

In the Islamic context, the concept of *tazkiyah* holds strategic relevance in addressing the challenges of digital identity disruption. Al-Ghazali, as a preeminent Islamic thinker, developed a comprehensive and profound concept of soul purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs).* Al-Ghazali's spiritual approach is not merely normative but offers a methodological framework that can be reconstructed for the contemporary context. Al-Ghazali's concept of *tazkiyah* encompasses philosophical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions that have significant potential in shaping a whole and meaningful individual character. Through this approach, individuals are not merely objects of guidance but subjects who possess the spiritual potential to continuously develop and purify their souls from negative influences. Al-Ghazali's methodological framework offers a holistic perspective on character building that transcends conventional behavioristic or cognitive approaches (Suhaimi, 2019). Character reconstruction, as employed in this study, refers specifically to the process by which an individual's interior dispositions, patterns of desire, attention, and emotional response are systematically reformed through the four *tazkiyah* stages (muraqabah, muḥāsabah, muʾāhadah, riyadhah), resulting in authentic, stable, and spiritually grounded character that resists fragmentation under the pressures of digital identity disruption. This is not merely behavioral adjustment but a transformation of the *nafs* at the level of motivation and intention (Bahri, 2021; Hasan et al., 2022; Muzakir & Susanto, 2023).

The urgency of this research lies in its effort to transform Al-Ghazali's *tazkiyah* concept into a dynamic digital context. This approach is not merely theoretical but is intended to produce a practical model of character reconstruction that is responsive to technological change. This research seeks to bridge the tradition of classical Islamic thought with the epistemological challenges of contemporary times. This conceptual transformation requires a methodological framework that is able to translate spiritual concepts into concrete and applicable character-building instruments. This is not merely a mechanical adaptation but a creative reconstruction that maintains the essence of spirituality while accommodating

the dynamics of digital technology. This approach requires critical, hermeneutical, and transformative analysis in understanding the relevance of classical concepts to the contemporary context. Unlike previous studies that examine *tazkiyah al-nafs* either in classical theological contexts (Noordin & Rahman, 2017) or general character education (Rizki et al., 2021), this research distinctively integrates Al-Ghazali's framework with the contemporary phenomenon of digital identity disruption, offering a novel model of digital spiritual resilience that has not been previously proposed in the existing literature.

The research problem is focused on two fundamental questions: first, how can Al-Ghazali's concept of *tazkiyah* be operationalized as a framework for addressing digital identity disruption among students? Second, what strategies can be developed to reconstruct learners' characters through this comprehensive spiritual approach in digital learning contexts? These two research questions are designed to explore the conceptual and practical dimensions of the integration of Islamic spiritual thought with the epistemological challenges of a digital society. The formulation of these problems requires a methodological approach that is able to translate classical spiritual concepts into a dynamic and responsive contemporary analytical framework. This research does not merely intend to conduct conceptual identification but to produce a methodological framework that can be implemented in educational practice. The complexity of the problem formulation requires interdisciplinary research that integrates philosophical, psychological, theological, and technological perspectives

The purpose of this research is to analyze Al-Ghazali's concept of *tazkiyah* in depth and find a relevant character reconstruction model in the digital era. The research will explore the spiritual, psychological, and methodological dimensions of the concept of *tazkiyah* and transform it into a framework for building learners' character that is adaptive to technological change. This comprehensive objective includes a systematic effort to deconstruct and reconstruct the Islamic spiritual concept in a contemporary epistemological context. The research does not simply intend to conduct a textual reproduction of Al-Ghazali's thoughts but rather to carry out a creative transformation that maintains the essence of spirituality while accommodating the dynamics of digital technology. This approach requires a hermeneutical-critical methodological framework, capable of rereading classical texts with a dynamic and responsive contemporary perspective (Suhaimi, 2019; Hasan et al., 2022).

Originality is not simply understood as conceptual novelties, but rather the ability to reread intellectual traditions with a critical and transformative perspective. This research proposes that classical spiritual concepts have fundamental relevance in answering contemporary epistemological challenges, especially in the context of fostering the character of students in the digital era. This reconstructive effort requires a methodological approach that is able to transcend the traditional-modern dichotomy by presenting a dynamic and responsive analytical framework (Burhanuddin, 2020; Kirabaev, 2023).

The significance of the research lies in its theoretical and practical contributions to the development of Islamic education thought. Theoretically, this research will enrich the study of Islamic education epistemology by presenting a new perspective on the implementation of *tazkiyah* in the digital era. Practically, this research is expected to produce a concrete model of integrative learner character development. The academic contribution of this research includes efforts to reconstruct classical spiritual concepts into a contemporary analytical framework, which is able to bridge the Islamic intellectual tradition with the epistemological challenges of digital society. This approach is not merely historical-descriptive but critical-analytical in transforming intellectual heritage into a dynamic and responsive character-building instrument. This research proposes that Al-Ghazali's concept of *tazkiyah* has a fundamental relevance in shaping the character of learners who are resilient, authentic, and meaningful amid the complexity of the digital space. The title "Digital Spiritual Resilience: Reconstructing Student Character Through Al-Ghazali's

Tazkiyah al-Nafs in the Age of Digital Disruption" directly reflects the learning objectives of this research: students are the central subjects whose character learning and formation process is shaped through the internalization of *tazkiyah* values. The concept of digital spiritual resilience is essentially a learning outcome, the capacity developed through an educational process that integrates classical Islamic spiritual wisdom with contemporary digital literacy skills (Yusuf et al., 2024; Setiawan & Haris, 2024).

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative library research design with a descriptive-analytical approach. The hermeneutical framework applied is Islamic thematic hermeneutics (al-tafsīr al-mawdūʿī), which reads classical texts in light of contemporary problems, supplemented by Ricoeur's (1981) concept of productive distinction, the principle that a text's meaning is not frozen in its original context but can be legitimately extended to new horizons of application. This dual hermeneutical movement allows the study to honor Al-Ghazali's original framework while disclosing its constructive relevance to digital identity disruption. Source selection followed explicit inclusion criteria: (1) primary texts by Al-Ghazali, prioritizing the Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn and Mīzān al-ʿAmal; (2) peer-reviewed secondary literature (2015–2024) addressing digital identity, Islamic character education, or spiritual psychology indexed in Scopus or Web of Science; (3) seminal theoretical works on digital disruption regardless of publication date. Sources that cited Al-Ghazali only in passing without substantive engagement were excluded. Thematic analysis proceeded through five iterative coding stages: (1) open reading and initial annotation of primary sources; (2) open coding to identify conceptual units within *tazkiyah*; (3) axial coding to map relationships between each *tazkiyah* stage and specific digital identity pathologies; (4) selective coding to generate overarching theoretical categories; and (5) theoretical synthesis into the Digital Spiritual Resilience model (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Data were collected through systematic documentation: recording, classifying, and cross-referencing primary and secondary sources against the inclusion criteria stated above. Primary data derive from Al-Ghazali's foundational works; secondary data encompass peer-reviewed literature on digital identity, developmental psychology, and character education. Analysis used hermeneutical-critical content analysis proceeding through the five stages above. Literature searches were conducted in Scopus, and Web of Science databases using the following keyword combinations: "*tazkiyah al-nafs*," "Al-Ghazali character education," "digital identity disruption," "Islamic character formation digital," "spiritual resilience students," and "digital well-being Islamic education." In total, 14 primary sources were used (Al-Ghazali's foundational works and classical commentaries) and 28 supplementary sources (peer-reviewed articles and book chapters meeting the inclusion criteria), yielding 42 references in total. The analytical procedure comprised: (1) close reading of all primary texts with annotation of passages relevant to soul purification and character formation; (2) systematic extraction of conceptual categories using the five-stage coding procedure described above; (3) mapping each derived *tazkiyah* category against documented digital identity disruption phenomena in secondary sources; and (4) synthesis of the mapped correspondences into the Digital Spiritual Resilience framework (Endang, 2021). The analytical process is circular and iterative, enabling sustained conceptual reflection. Validity was established through three forms of triangulation specific to library research: (1) cross-textual source triangulation, comparing Al-Ghazali's formulations across multiple primary texts and across classical commentators (*al-Subkī, al-Zabīdī*); (2) multi-author interpretive triangulation, examining convergence and divergence across at least three independent researchers' contemporary readings of *tazkiyah* in educational contexts (Noordin & Rahman, 2017; Suhaimi, 2019; Hasan et al., 2022); and (3) conceptual cross-validation, testing whether themes derived from *tazkiyah* literature coherently address phenomena documented in the digital identity disruption literature

(Uyun, 2019; Mohd Farihan & Abd Rahim Nurhikmah, 2022). These procedures collectively ensure interpretive credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the findings (Mekarisce, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of Al-Ghazali's primary texts, particularly the Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn and Mīzān al-ʿAmal, alongside the secondary literature on digital identity disruption, yielded four principal findings. First, Al-Ghazali's *tazkiyah al-nafs* framework comprises four operationally distinct stages that are not merely sequential but functionally interdependent: *muraqabah* (continuous interior self-surveillance), *muḥāsabah* (structured self-accounting), *muʾāhadah* (self-covenanting), and *riyadhah* (disciplined spiritual practice). Second, each of these stages corresponds structurally to a specific pathology of digital identity disruption documented in contemporary empirical literature, suggesting that Al-Ghazali's framework addresses the same interior dynamics that digital environments exploit. Third, the mechanism of character reconstruction in this framework operates at the level of the *nafs*, targeting the interior structure of motivation, desire, and attention from which all external behavior flows, rather than regulating behavior directly (Noordin & Rahman, 2017; Zaini & Sa'ari, 2016). Fourth, the synthesis of these correspondences produces a novel framework, designated Digital Spiritual Resilience, which constitutes a proactive and constitutive approach to character formation, distinct from reactive digital well-being models (Uyun, 2019; Ismail & Hamjah, 2017). These four findings are summarized systematically in Table 1, which maps each *tazkiyah* stage against its definition in Al-Ghazali, the digital identity pathology it addresses, its specific role in character reconstruction, and its applicable practice in digital educational contexts.

Table 1 Al-Ghazali's *Tazkiyah Al-Nafs:* Stages, definitions, digital identity pathologies, and character reconstruction roles

Stage (Arabic)	Definition in Al-Ghazali	Digital Identity Pathology Addressed	Role in Character Reconstruction	Applicable Practice (Digital Context)
Muraqabah (self-surveillance)	Continuous awareness that all actions are witnessed by God; cultivation of interior watchfulness over intention and desire.	Compulsive self-presentation and riyāʾ (ostentation), performing idealized self for social approval on digital platforms	Redirects locus of self-evaluation from external audience to interior spiritual standard; forms the foundational interior witness	Pause-and-inquire before each digital post: "What is the intention behind this action?"
Muḥāsabah (self-accounting)	Daily structured review of one's actions, emotional states, and intentions against spiritual standards; honest interior audit	Chronic social comparison and ḥasad (envy), benchmarking against others' curated digital highlights producing anxiety and inadequacy	Recalibrates sense of adequacy against stable spiritual standard rather than algorithmically curated social mirror; stabilizes self-worth	Daily evening digital review: "Were my online interactions today driven by authentic values or by envy/comparison?"

Stage (Arabic)	Definition in Al-Ghazali	Digital Identity Pathology Addressed	Role in Character Reconstruction	Applicable Practice (Digital Context)
Muʾāhadah (self-covenant)	Making and regularly renewing explicit interior commitments (ʿahd/covenant) with oneself and God; stabilises self-continuity across contexts (Mīzān al-ʿAmal)	Digital identity fragmentation, multiple inconsistent online personas; absence of interior ʿahd (stable commitment) across fluid digital contexts	Provides identity anchors that persist across platform-switching; integrates fragmented digital selves into a coherent, value-consistent character	Weekly written self-covenant: explicit values statement governing all digital behavior, reviewed and renewed regularly
Riyadhah (spiritual training)	Sustained, embodied spiritual discipline through repeated practice (ṣalāt, fasting, dhikr); character is formed through bodily habit, not intention alone.	Spiritual dissociation, progressive disconnection between digitally performing self and spiritually grounded self; addictive digital habits displacing interior spiritual formation	Establishes alternative habitual formations that maintain a spiritual centre of gravity independent of digital engagement; counter-formation to addictive platform architectures	Regular digital fasting (social media sabbath); deliberate embodied spiritual practices maintained independently of digital context

Source: Compiled from Al-Ghazali's Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn and Mīzān al-ʿAmal; digital pathology analysis based on Uyun (2019), Mohd Farihan & Abd Rahim Nurhikmah (2022), and Sardar (2017)

Al-Ghazali's *Tazkiyah* Concept in Character Building and Digital Identity Dynamics

The concept of *tazkiyah* in Al-Ghazali's thought is a deep epistemological construction of cleansing and developing human character, which has fundamental relevance in facing the complexity of contemporary digital identity challenges. In his framework, Al-Ghazali views *tazkiyah* as a holistic process of spiritual transformation that not only cleanses the soul of moral filth, but also as a comprehensive effort to develop optimal human potential (Kirabaev, 2023). This concept has a very strategic significance in the context of the digital era, where individuals, especially the younger generation, face complex and multidimensional identity fragmentation. The *tazkiyah* process formulated by Al-Ghazali does not only focus on the normative aspects of religion, but also pays attention to the psychological, social, and epistemological dimensions of humans. In Al-Ghazali's perspective, *tazkiyah* is a fundamental mechanism to build a complete self-integrity, capable of responding to various environmental challenges with deep spiritual and intellectual awareness (Noordin & Rahman, 2017).

Al-Ghazali's concept of *Tazkiyah Al- Nafs* becomes a fundamental foundation in the theoretical framework of this research, offering a comprehensive approach to character building that includes spiritual, psychological, and methodological dimensions. The Digital Identity Disruption Theory in this study provides a contemporary perspective on how

digital technology fundamentally changes the construction of personal identity and character of the younger generation (Skog, 2018). Digital transformation has reshaped not only modes of communication but the very architecture of personal identity construction. Social media platforms incentivize the performance of idealized selves, creating a structural disconnect between authentic identity and virtual self-presentation. This mechanism traps individuals in cycles of social comparison that erode psychological stability and authentic character formation (Uyun, 2019).

The character development model synthesized in this research distinguishes itself from prevailing digital well-being approaches in two important respects. First, unlike "digital detox" interventions that position technology as inherently harmful, this model treats digital engagement as a site of spiritual *mūjāhadah*, disciplined striving, where the very pressures of online life become occasions for practicing interior virtues. Second, unlike "digital literacy" programs that focus on competency acquisition, this model operates at the level of the *nafs*: targeting the interior structure of motivation, desire, and attachment from which all external behavior flows. This distinction has practical significance: digital literacy programs are necessarily remedial, addressing behavior after harm occurs, while *tazkiyah*-based formation is preventive and constitutive, developing the interior architecture from which authentic digital behavior naturally emerges (Jusoh et al., 2020). This approach is substantively different from Western positive psychology models of digital well-being, which tend to frame spiritual values as optional coping resources. In Al-Ghazali's framework, the cultivation of the *nafs* is not supplementary to identity formation but constitutive of it: authentic selfhood is not discovered but constructed through the disciplined practice of self-purification. This makes *tazkiyah* a uniquely foundational framework for addressing digital identity disruption, which is precisely a disruption of the constitutive processes of selfhood (Suhaimi, 2019).

The integration of the three theoretical frameworks results in a comprehensive and adaptive digital- spiritual character-building model. This model transforms the challenges of digital identity disruption into opportunities for spiritual character development through sustainable internalization of values. This approach does not simply respond reactively to technological challenges, but proactively shapes digital spaces that support the development of authentic spiritual awareness. This integration process requires interdisciplinary collaboration between spiritual practitioners, educators, psychologists and technologists in designing a holistic and transformative character-building model. The resulting theoretical framework (see figure 1) is able to bridge the Islamic intellectual tradition with the dynamics of modern technology, creating an integrative solution to shape an authentic, meaningful and characterful digital generation through the continuous internalization of spiritual values.

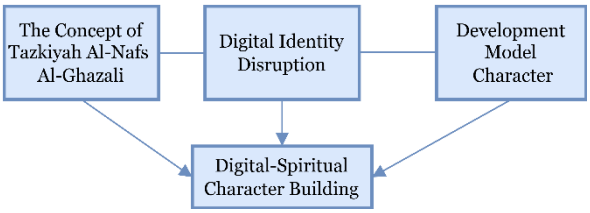

Figure 1 Theoretical framework of digital spiritual character building

This theoretical framework constructs an interrelation of three fundamental dimensions that contribute to digital-spiritual character building. The first-dimension rests on the conception of *Tazkiyah* Al-Nafs developed by Al-Ghazali, which emphasizes the process of purifying the soul and moral cultivation as the foundation of character building. This perspective offers a solid philosophical foundation in understanding individual spiritual transformation. The second dimension explores the phenomenon of digital identity

disruption as a consequence of the acceleration of information technology. This phenomenon manifests various contemporary challenges to the construction of individual identity and moral integrity in the digital landscape. This complexity requires an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of interaction between technology and identity formation. The third dimension integrates a character development model that provides an operational framework for shaping a personality aligned with ethical and moral values. This model serves as a conceptual bridge that connects theoretical aspects with practical implementation in the context of character building. The three dimensions converge to form a digital- spiritual character construct that harmonizes spiritual values with the reality of the digital era. This framework emphasizes the urgency of an equilibrium between technological advancement and spirituality-based character cultivation as an adaptive response to contemporary sociocultural transformation (Yusuf et al., 2024).

The fundamental elements of *tazkiyah*, according to Al-Ghazali, include the process of cleansing the soul (*tazkiyah al-nafs*), developing spiritual awareness, and internalizing transcendental values in daily life. This concept is built on a deep understanding of the psychological structure of humans who have spiritual and intellectual potential that requires continuous development. Al-Ghazali identified that each individual has a complex internal dimension, consisting of spiritual, rational, and lustful forces that require a process of guidance and control. In the context of digital identity, these elements of *tazkiyah* become very relevant to build the psychological and spiritual resilience of the younger generation. The process of internalizing spiritual values formulated by Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, continuous reflection, and internal transformation as the main mechanisms in facing various external challenges, including the complexity of the digital space full of various influences and temptations (Bahri, 2021).

The mechanism of internalization of spiritual values in Al-Ghazali's *tazkiyah* concept involves a series of systematic and comprehensive transformation stages. First, the stage of awareness (*ma'rifah*), where individuals begin to recognize themselves, their spiritual potential, and internal dimensions. Second, the cleansing stage (*tasfiyah*), which is the process of purifying the soul from various spiritual impurities, negative prejudices, and destructive tendencies. Third, the development stage (*tanmiyah*), where individuals actively develop their spiritual and intellectual potential through reflective practices, worship, and in-depth study. Fourth, the stage of integration (*tauhid),* which is the process of achieving complete spiritual and intellectual unity, where every action and thought is based on transcendental awareness (Munawaroh & Sholihuddin, 2021). In the context of digital identity, this mechanism is crucial for building an internal filter that is able to distinguish between constructive and destructive information, as well as building psychological resilience in facing various virtual challenges.

The stages of soul cleansing in Al-Ghazali's thought are a dialectical process between spiritual awareness, intellectual reflection, and continuous moral practice. Al-Ghazali identifies that the process of *tazkiyah* is not just a formal ritual, but a systematic transformation that involves psychological, epistemological, and spiritual dimensions in an integrated manner. In the context of digital identity, this stage becomes very relevant to building a comprehensive self-defense mechanism. Through the process of soul cleansing, individuals are trained to develop critical awareness, reflective abilities, and internal filters in dealing with various information and influences spread in the digital space. Each stage of soul cleansing involves a process of awareness, control of passions, development of spiritual intelligence, and building solid moral integrity. Al-Ghazali emphasized that soul cleansing is an ongoing practice that requires sincerity, consistency, and active involvement of the individual in the process of self-transformation (Rahman et al., 2023).

The complex characteristics of digital identity disruption demand a comprehensive approach in building the psychological and spiritual resilience of the younger generation. The fragmentation of identity that occurs due to the penetration of digital technology has

created a virtual space that shapes identity construction that is fluid, dynamic, and often separated from the context of concrete social reality. The digital generation faces very complex psychological challenges, where the boundaries of personal identity are becoming increasingly blurred, and the process of identity formation takes place in a rapidly changing environment full of unfiltered information (Mohd Farihan, Abd Rahim Nurhikmah, 2022). In this context, Al-Ghazali's concept of *tazkiyah* offers a theoretical and practical framework that enables individuals to build internal resilience, spiritual awareness, and adaptive capabilities in the face of digital identity dynamics. Through the process of internalizing spiritual values, individuals can develop a self-defense mechanism that is not merely reactive, but proactive in constructing a complete, meaningful and characterful identity.

The complexity of digital identity challenges requires an integrative character reconstruction strategy, which is able to synergize the spiritual, intellectual, and psychological dimensions within the framework of forming a whole and dignified individual. Al-Ghazali's *tazkiyah* concept offers a holistic approach that not only focuses on the normative aspects of religion but also pays attention to the psychological and epistemological dynamics of individuals in facing various external challenges (Hasan et al., 2022). In the context of digital disruption, this approach becomes very strategic to build a young generation that has spiritual resilience, critical intelligence, and high adaptive ability. The process of character reconstruction is not simply understood as an effort to prevent negative digital influences, but as a positive process to develop the optimal potential of individuals in facing the complexity of the times. Through the internalization of comprehensive spiritual values, the younger generation can construct a digital identity that is meaningful, authentic, and has positive social significance

Reconstructing Al-Ghazali's *Tazkiyah* Character Development Model in the Contemporary Digital Landscape

The central argument of this discussion is that Al-Ghazali's four *tazkiyah* stages correspond structurally, not merely analogically, to the four principal pathologies of digital identity disruption documented in the contemporary literature. This structural correspondence is the core theoretical contribution of this research and grounds the claim that *tazkiyah* is not simply a historical Islamic practice being retrofitted for modernity but a framework whose internal logic addresses precisely the mechanisms through which digital environments erode authentic character formation. The first pathology is compulsive self-presentation: the structural incentive of social media platforms to perform an idealized self in order to accumulate social approval. In Al-Ghazali's moral psychology, this corresponds to *riyāʾ* (ostentation), the desire to be seen doing good rather than actually being good. The stage of *muraqabah* (continuous self-surveillance) addresses this directly by redirecting attention from the external audience to the interior intention: the practice of asking, before each online action, "from what desire does this arise?" This interior question is precisely the mechanism needed to interrupt the compulsive performance loop that social media reinforces. The second pathology is chronic social comparison: the documented psychological harm arising from constant benchmarking against others' curated digital highlights, which produces anxiety, inadequacy, and low self-worth (Uyun, 2019). In Al-Ghazali's framework, this corresponds to *ḥasad* (envy), identified in the Iḥyāʾ as one of the most destructive diseases of the heart. The corrective is *muḥāsabah* (daily self-accounting): the practice of subjecting each emotional response to an honest interior audit, recalibrating one's sense of adequacy against a stable spiritual standard rather than the unstable, algorithmically curated social mirror. The third pathology is digital identity fragmentation: the tendency of online environments to produce multiple, context-specific identities that are internally inconsistent and difficult to integrate into a coherent self-concept (Mohd Farihan & Abd Nurhikmah, 2022). This corresponds to the absence of *ʿahd* (covenant) in

Al-Ghazali's ethics, the stable interior commitment that makes the self-continuous across contexts. The stage of *muʾāhadah* (self-covenanting) addresses this by establishing explicit interior pledges that function as identity anchors: commitments that persist across the fluid, context-shifting demands of digital engagement. The fourth pathology is spiritual dissociation: the progressive disconnection between the digitally performing self and the spiritually grounded self, which Sardar (2017) identifies as a defining feature of the epistemological crisis of postmodern digital culture. Al-Ghazali's *riyadhah* (sustained spiritual practice) addresses this by maintaining embodied, regular practices, prayer, reflection, and fasting that continuously reconnect the individual to a stable ontological ground independent of digital context. The significance of this four-way correspondence is that it transforms *tazkiyah* from a culturally specific historical practice into a generalizable structural model for digital-age character formation (Azaman & Badaruddin, 2015).

The construct of Digital Spiritual Resilience proposed in this study requires clear differentiation from "digital resilience" as used in the positive psychology and digital well-being literature. Psychological resilience, as conventionally defined, is a recovery capacity: the ability to bounce back from adversity through cognitive reappraisal, emotion regulation, and social support. This is a reactive model; it activates after the harm is done. Digital Spiritual Resilience, by contrast, is a constitutive capacity: it shapes the interior architecture through which the individual engages with digital environments before harm occurs. This constitutive function derives from the practice of muraqabah, which cultivates a continuous interior witness, the capacity to observe one's own intentions, desires, and emotional responses in real time. Unlike cognitive reappraisal, which is a deliberate and periodic intervention, muraqabah is a habitual state of interior alertness that functions continuously across all contexts, including digital ones. This distinction has direct implications for Islamic character education: programs that target digital resilience after harm are remedial; programs grounded in muraqabah are preventive and generative, developing the interior infrastructure from which resilient and authentic digital behavior naturally flows (Apipudin, 2016).

The practical significance of this framework becomes clearer when set against existing Islamic character education models in Indonesia. Research by Setiawan & Haris (2024) on Islamic character-building at SMA Pribadi Bandung and by Rizki et al. (2021) on general Islamic character education reveals that prevailing models transmit moral content, the what of Islamic ethics, effectively, but offer limited scaffolding for the interior psychological processes through which moral content is actually internalized. Students may memorize Islamic behavioral norms while remaining psychologically susceptible to the identity-distorting pressures of social media, because the deeper question of why those norms matter, rooted in the individual's relationship with their own *nafs*, has not been cultivated. Al-Ghazali's *tazkiyah* addresses precisely this interiority gap. His detailed phenomenology of the nafs in the Iḥyāʾ identifies the specific interior movements, desire, fear, pride, envy, attachment, that constitute the psychological substrate of moral behavior, and pairs each with specific contemplative-behavioral practices designed to regulate it. Applied to the digital context, this means identifying which of these interior movements digital environments tend to amplify (approval-seeking, envy, anxiety about status) and systematically cultivating their corresponding spiritual antidotes through the four *tazkiyah* stages. This is not an import of mysticism into a secular educational context; it is the recovery of a sophisticated Islamic psychology of character that existing approaches have largely set aside *tazkiyah* (Istiyani & Wibowo, 2020) (Setiawan & Haris, 2024).

The operationalization of muraqabah in digital contexts requires careful specification. In Al-Ghazali's original framework, muraqabah is the continuous awareness that one's every action is witnessed by God, producing an interior watchfulness that regulates behavior without the need for external enforcement. Translated to the digital context, muraqabah does not mean digital surveillance or parental monitoring, these are external

mechanisms that produce compliance without interior transformation. Rather, muraqabah as a digital practice means cultivating the habit of pausing before each significant digital action (a post, a message, a content choice) to inquire into the interior motivation driving it. Is this post driven by genuine desire to benefit others, or by the desire for social approval? Is this content choice driven by authentic curiosity, or by anxiety about missing information? This microsecond of interior inquiry, consistently practiced, gradually restructures the interior landscape of digital engagement, shifting the locus of evaluation from the external audience to the interior standard. The educational implication is concrete: character education programs grounded in *tazkiyah* should include explicit training in this interior inquiry practice, adapted to the specific affordances of the digital platforms that students use (Jusoh et al., 2018). This complexity necessitates an epistemological reconstruction of classical concepts of spirituality, where the process of *tazkiyah* is no longer understood as an isolated individual practice, but rather as a complex system that constantly negotiates with the various layers of digital reality that are interactive and dynamic.

The construction of a *tazkiyah*-based character development model for the digital era also requires careful operationalization of the stages of *muʾāhadah* and *riyadhah* in relation to digital behavior. *Muʾāhadah*, the practice of making and renewing explicit interior covenants with oneself and with God, provides a mechanism for what contemporary developmental psychology calls identity consolidation: the formation of stable, internally consistent self-commitments that persist across varied social contexts. In the digital environment, where the algorithmic architecture of social platforms continuously incentivizes identity malleability, adapting one's presentation to whatever maximizes engagement, *muʾāhadah* functions as a counter-formation practice: a regular, deliberate act of re-affirming who one actually is, independent of platform feedback. *Riyadhah*, in Al-Ghazali's framework, means sustained, embodied spiritual discipline, specifically, practices of the body (ṣalāt, fasting, dhikr) that create habitual patterns of behavior through which the *nafs* is gradually reformed. The relevance of *riyadhah* to digital identity formation lies in the principle that character is not formed by intention or knowledge alone but by repetition. The addictive architectures of social media exploit this principle by creating habitual patterns of checking, scrolling, and responding that gradually reshape the attention, desire, and emotional patterns of users. *Riyadhah*-based character education proposes to counter this with deliberate alternative habitual formations: regular practices of digital fasting (sabbath from social media), intentional limitation of notification-driven behavior, and daily embodied spiritual practices that maintain a center of gravity independent of the digital environment (Munawaroh & Sholihuddin, 2021). This approach necessitates a reinterpretation of Al-Ghazali's classical concepts of soul purity, where the process of *tazkiyah* is no longer understood as an isolated individual practice, but rather as a complex system that continuously negotiates with various layers of interactive and dynamic digital reality. This complexity necessitates the development of an epistemological model capable of capturing the dynamics of interaction between internal spirituality and the ever-changing digital ecosystem.

This study's findings are in productive dialogue with, but also challenge, the conclusions of existing empirical research on digital character education. Munawaroh & Sholihuddin (2021), in their case study of *tazkiyah al-nafs*-based character formation at MA Ihyaul Ulum Dukun Gresik, demonstrate that the integration of *tazkiyah* values into school activities significantly supports the formation of religious character. However, their study focuses on a madrasah environment where *tazkiyah* practices are embedded in a structured institutional context and reinforced by teacher modeling and collective ritual observance. The present study extends this finding by addressing a structural gap that madrasah-based studies cannot: the digital environment, which operates outside institutional walls and continuously exerts counter-formative pressure on students' identity

construction. The implication is that *tazkiyah*-based character formation must be conceived not only as institutional programming but as a lifelong interior practice that students can sustain independently in digital environments that offer no institutional support for spiritual formation. This extension from institutional to autonomous practice is the key pedagogical contribution of the Digital Spiritual Resilience framework (Rizki et al., 2021). This epistemological deconstruction opens up space to understand how digital technology not only influences but fundamentally alters the structure of spiritual consciousness, reshaping the way individuals understand themselves, their communities, and the transcendental dimensions of human existence.

This study's analysis of digital identity disruption converges with Zaini & Sa'ari's (2016) finding that muraqabah is the most operationally significant of Al-Ghazali's spiritual practices for contemporary psychological application, while extending their analysis to the digital sphere. The identity crisis in the digital ecosystem is not primarily a crisis of information; individuals are not confused about digital identity because they lack information but because of a crisis of interior formation: the interior witness who can evaluate and integrate digital experience from a stable spiritual standpoint has not been developed. Al-Ghazali's concept of spiritual awareness (*muraqabah*) becomes a critical instrument in forming internal filtering mechanisms that enable individuals to critically and selectively interact with various digital narratives that have the potential to distort the structure of authentic personality (Zaini & Sa'ari, 2016). The complexity of the identity crisis in the digital ecosystem is not merely related to the issue of information overload but is fundamentally tied to the process of forming authentic spiritual awareness.

The practice of *muḥāsabah*, when applied to the digital context, requires adaptation to the specific temporal rhythms and emotional affordances of digital platforms. Al-Ghazali prescribes a daily *muḥāsabah* practice: a structured period of evening reflection in which one reviews the day's actions against one's intentions and values. In the digital context, this practice can be extended to include a daily review of one's digital engagements: What did I post today, and why? What emotional state drove my interactions online? Did my digital behavior today align with who I intend to be? This structured digital self-accounting is fundamentally different from either digital abstinence or unreflective digital engagement; it represents a middle path in which digital life is brought under the governance of the same interior standards that Islamic ethics applies to all other domains of life. Ismail & Hamjah (2017) demonstrate the psychological efficacy of *muḥāsabah*-based practices in Islamic counseling contexts, showing measurable improvements in self-regulation and identity coherence among participants. The Digital Spiritual Resilience model proposes that these documented counseling effects can be translated into preventive character education by embedding *muḥāsabah* practice in the daily routines of students as a regular, unremarkable habit rather than a therapeutic intervention (Ismail & Hamjah, 2017). The operationalization of these practices in digital character education requires educators and curriculum designers to understand muraqabah not as a religious obligation to be observed in formal worship, but as a transferable interior discipline applicable to any domain of human action, including digital action. This demands the systematic incorporation of interior inquiry practices into existing Islamic studies and character education curricula, embedding prompts for muraqabah-style reflection into the rhythms of digital literacy education rather than treating spiritual formation as a separate domain.

The theoretical framework constructed in this study has a significant limitation that must be acknowledged: it is grounded entirely in library research and has not been empirically tested. The structural correspondences between *tazkiyah* stages and digital identity pathologies, while theoretically coherent and supported by separate bodies of literature, require empirical validation through experimental or quasi-experimental designs in Indonesian educational contexts. In particular, two empirical questions remain open: first, whether students trained in muraqabah and *muḥāsabah* practices demonstrate measurable

reductions in the psychological effects of social comparison and compulsive self-presentation; and second, whether *muʾāhadah* and *riyadhah* practices demonstrably improve identity coherence and reduce digital fragmentation as measured by established psychometric instruments. Future research should address these questions through field-based intervention studies that operationalize the four *tazkiyah* stages as teachable practices and measure outcomes using both Islamic-psychological frameworks and internationally validated scales for digital well-being and identity development.

The findings of this study also have implications for the understanding of Al-Ghazali's continuing relevance as an intellectual resource for Islamic education in Indonesia. Kirabaev (2023) argues that Al-Ghazali's philosophical contribution lies precisely in his integration of rational analysis and spiritual phenomenology, a combination that makes his framework unusually adaptable to new contexts without loss of its essential character. The present study demonstrates this adaptability in a concrete domain: by mapping the internal logic of *tazkiyah* onto the structural dynamics of digital identity disruption, it shows that the framework's relevance to contemporary conditions is not merely an artifact of rhetorical appeal to Islamic tradition but is grounded in a genuine structural fit between what *tazkiyah* addresses, the pathological movements of the *nafs*, and what digital environments tend to amplify. This finding supports the broader claim that classical Islamic scholarship, when read hermeneutically rather than archaeologically, possesses genuinely contemporary relevance for addressing the distinctive challenges of modernity.

A further theoretical contribution of this study is its reconceptualization of the relationship between Islamic spiritual tradition and contemporary secular frameworks for digital well-being. Rather than treating these as competing or mutually exclusive paradigms, one requiring religious commitment, the other secular and universally applicable, the Digital Spiritual Resilience model proposes that *tazkiyah* provides a substantively richer framework for character formation in digital contexts precisely because it addresses the interior architecture of motivation and desire rather than managing external behavior. The practical implication is that Islamic character education programs in Indonesia need not choose between engagement with Western positive psychology frameworks and fidelity to Islamic tradition; instead, they can draw on the structural insights of *tazkiyah* as the primary framework while incorporating empirically validated elements of digital well-being research as complementary evidence for the effectiveness of its constituent practices.

Transformation of *Tazkiyah* in the Digital Ecosystem

The relevance of *tazkiyah* in addressing digital challenges opens new epistemological spaces in understanding the complexity of spiritual character formation in the information era. Al-Ghazali's spiritual concept is not merely a static intellectual legacy, but a dynamic framework capable of adapting to fundamental transformations in the structure of human experience due to the penetration of digital technology (Jusoh et al., 2020). The conceptual implications of integrating *tazkiyah* with the digital ecosystem necessitate an epistemological deconstruction of the traditional understanding of spirituality, where the process of purifying the soul is no longer seen as a closed individual practice, but rather as a complex system that continuously interacts with various technological mediums. This complexity presents a fundamental challenge in understanding how spirituality can maintain its autonomy and depth of meaning amidst the massive and fragmented flow of information. This conceptual transformation opens up space to understand *tazkiyah* as an adaptive mechanism capable of responding to the dynamics of digital technology, not merely surviving, but actively reshaping spiritual experiences within an ever-evolving epistemological context.

The model of character education intervention based on spirituality requires a systematic reconstruction that integrates classical spiritual insights with contemporary

digital pedagogical mechanisms. The complexity of this intervention goes beyond mere technological adaptation; it is fundamentally about the epistemological transformation in understanding the character formation process (Burhanuddin, 2020). This approach demands the development of pedagogical strategies capable of capturing the interactive dynamics between the internal spiritual dimension and the ever-changing digital ecosystem. The practical implications of this intervention model include the development of educational protocols that not only transfer knowledge but also empower individuals to develop critical awareness and spiritual resilience mechanisms when interacting with various digital narratives. This necessitates the deconstruction of traditional educational methods, where the process of character formation is no longer understood as a linear and closed practice, but rather as a dynamic system that continuously negotiates with the complexities of the digital environment.

The transformation of Al-Ghazali's concepts in the information age presents profound epistemological challenges in understanding the relationship between spirituality and technology. This transformation process is not merely related to conceptual adaptation, but fundamentally to the reconstruction of how humans understand themselves, their communities, and the transcendental dimensions of existence. The conceptual implications of this transformation include the development of a new theoretical framework capable of explaining the complex mechanisms of interaction between internal spirituality and the continuously evolving digital ecosystem (Mohd Azaman & Badaruddin, 2016). This demands an epistemological deconstruction of traditional concepts of spirituality, where *tazkiyah* is no longer understood as an exclusive and isolated practice, but rather as a dynamic system integrated with various technological mediums. This conceptual transformation opens up space to understand how digital technology not only influences but fundamentally alters the structure of spiritual consciousness, reshaping the way individuals comprehend themselves and the transcendental dimensions of human existence. A comprehensive approach to integrating spirituality with digital technology necessitates the development of an epistemological model capable of capturing the complexity of interactions between the internal and external dimensions of human experience.

A comprehensive approach to integrating spirituality with digital technology requires the development of an epistemological model capable of capturing the complexity of the interaction between the internal and external dimensions of human experience. The practical implications of this approach include the development of strategies that enable individuals to cultivate critical awareness and spiritual defense mechanisms in facing the challenges of digital transformation (Hasan et al., 2022). The complexity of this integration goes beyond merely combining technology and spirituality; it is fundamental to the reconstruction of how humans understand themselves, their communities, and the transcendental dimensions of existence. This demands the development of a referential framework that can empower individuals to actively shape and be shaped by the digital environment without losing their authentic spiritual essence. This comprehensive approach is not merely adaptive but transformative, where digital technology is understood as a potential field for the development of deeper and more complex spiritual awareness.

The epistemological contribution of this research opens space for the development of an interdisciplinary knowledge structure that integrates Islamic spiritual studies, educational psychology, and digital media theory. The research findings give rise to a new conceptual framework on Digital Spiritual Resilience that explains the adaptation mechanism of spirituality in the information technology ecosystem. The proposed theoretical modifications include a re-conceptualization of character building as a dynamic and interactive process, which is not limited to a particular physical or temporal space. The conceptual implications of these findings open up new perspectives in understanding the dialectical relationship between spirituality, technology, and human identity formation in the contemporary digital era (Mutholingah, 2020). This research makes a significant

contribution in transforming the traditional understanding of spirituality, where *tazkiyah* is no longer understood as a static practice, but rather a dynamic system that continues to evolve in response to the complexity of the digital environment. This epistemological contribution necessitates the development of a theoretical framework capable of capturing the complex dynamics of the interaction between the internal spiritual dimension and the ever-changing technological ecosystem.

In the context of *tazkiyah* transformation in the digital ecosystem, it is important to understand that the changes that occur are not only technical, but also philosophical and spiritual in depth. *Tazkiyah*, which in Islamic tradition refers to the process of cleansing the soul and developing character, must now be understood in a broader framework, where digital technology plays a role as one of the determining factors in the formation of individual identity and spirituality. One of the main challenges in integrating *tazkiyah* with the digital ecosystem is how to maintain the authenticity and depth of spiritual experience amidst the rapid and often superficial flow of information. In the digital world, individuals are often exposed to various narratives and information that can affect the way they understand themselves and their relationship with the transcendental. Therefore, it is important to develop mechanisms that enable individuals to sort and select information that is relevant and beneficial to their *tazkiyah* process.

The proposed model of spiritually-based character education should be able to accommodate this need by creating space for individuals to interact with technology critically. This means that education focuses not only on knowledge transfer, but also on developing critical and reflective thinking skills. In this regard, technology can be utilized as a tool to deepen spiritual understanding, for example through the use of meditation apps, online learning platforms that offer courses on spirituality, or virtual communities that support spiritual growth. Furthermore, this approach should also consider the social aspects of *tazkiyah*. In the digital age, social interactions often take place through online platforms, which can affect the way individuals build relationships with others and with themselves. Therefore, it is important to develop strategies that encourage individuals to build communities that support their *tazkiyah* process, both online and offline. This community can serve as a space to share experiences, discuss challenges, and support each other in their respective spiritual journeys.

In this context, the concept of Digital Spiritual Resilience proposed in this study becomes very relevant. Spiritual resilience in the digital age includes not only the ability to survive the challenges faced, but also the ability to adapt and thrive in the face of change. This means that individuals need to be equipped with skills and knowledge that enable them to navigate the complexities of the digital world without losing their spiritual essence. One way to build this spiritual resilience is through the development of spiritual practices that are accessible and applicable in a digital context. For example, the practices of meditation, reflection and prayer can be integrated with technology, allowing individuals to do so anytime and anywhere. In addition, the use of social media to spread positive and inspiring messages can also contribute to the formation of a community that supports *tazkiyah*.

On the other hand, the challenges faced in integrating *tazkiyah* with the digital ecosystem also include the risk of alienation and losing connection with the deeper spiritual dimension. In an increasingly connected world, individuals may feel alienated from authentic spiritual experiences. Therefore, it is important to create spaces for individuals to experience stillness, reflection and contemplation, which are often lost in the cacophony of digital information. A comprehensive approach to integrating spirituality with digital technology should also consider ethical aspects. In the information age, individuals are faced with various choices that can affect their integrity and spiritual values. Therefore, it is important to develop an ethical framework that can guide individuals in making decisions that are in line with the principles of *tazkiyah*. This includes an understanding of how

technology can be used for good, as well as how to avoid pitfalls that can lead to the neglect of spiritual values.

Operationalization Strategy of Digital Spiritual-Based Character Development Model

The implementation of a digital spiritual-based character development model requires the development of a comprehensive and dynamic strategic framework, capable of transforming Al-Ghazali's spiritual concepts into intervention (Jusoh et al., 2020). This approach requires a systemic design that does not simply adapt spiritual concepts into a digital medium, but rather fundamentally reconstructs the mechanisms of character building through a dialectical integration between spiritual traditions and technological innovations. The implementation strategy must be able to develop a conceptual infrastructure that enables individuals to develop spiritual awareness in a sustainable manner through the various digital mediums available. This demands a multidimensional approach that captures the complexity of the interaction between internal spirituality and the evolving digital ecosystem. The implementation process cannot be understood as a mere mechanical transfer of spiritual concepts, but rather as a process of deep epistemological transformation in understanding the relationship between technology, spirituality and human character building.

The development of a digital spirituality-based character education intervention protocol requires innovative methodological constructs that are capable of integrating traditional spiritual reflection practices with cutting-edge technological mechanisms. This strategy should be able to create a digital space that facilitates a continuous process of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, where individuals can engage in spiritual reflection, self-awareness development and character building through various available technological mediums the intervention framework needs to be designed as a dynamic system that allows for continuous adaptation to changes in the digital ecosystem, taking into account the complexity of interactions between internal spirituality and different layers of digital representations (Siregar, 2020). This demands the development of a digital platform that does not merely function as an information medium, but as a space for spiritual transformation that has the potential to deeply shape individual consciousness. The implementation of this model requires an approach that overcomes the dichotomy between traditional spirituality and digital technology, by creating an interactive space that allows individuals to actively reconstruct spiritual experiences through various digital mediums.

In the context of digital spirituality-based character building, it is important to understand that the operationalization strategy focuses not only on the application of technology, but also on the development of deep spiritual awareness. This process requires a holistic and integrative approach, where technology serves as a tool to strengthen and deepen an individual's spiritual experience. In this case, technology is not only seen as a means of communication or information, but as a medium that can facilitate significant spiritual transformation. One of the first steps in implementing this strategy is to create a digital platform specifically designed to support the process of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, or purification of the soul. This platform should provide a variety of relevant content, such as articles, videos and discussion forums that encourage spiritual reflection. These contents should be composed with the spiritual values of the tradition in mind, such as those taught by Al-Ghazali, and presented in a format that is attractive and accessible to users. Thus, individuals can engage in a learning process that is not only informative, but also transformative.

Furthermore, it is important to develop interaction mechanisms that allow users to share their experiences and reflections. These interactive spaces can be in the form of discussion forums, study groups, or virtual mentoring sessions guided by spiritual practitioners. Through these interactions, individuals can support each other in their spiritual journey, as

well as build a community of mutual support. This will also help overcome the challenge of isolation often faced in the digital age, where individuals may feel disconnected from the wider spiritual community. Additionally, these interactive spaces can be equipped with features such as live Q&A sessions, where users can ask questions to experts or spiritual practitioners in real-time. With this feature, individuals not only get their questions answered, but also feel more connected to a community that shares similar goals and values. Sharing of experiences through videos or writings can also be organized, so that individuals have the opportunity to express their spiritual journey in greater depth. This will create an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding, where every voice counts. Thus, the interactions that take place in this digital space not only strengthen the bonds between community members, but also enrich each individual's spiritual experience.

In the context of education, this strategy should include developing a curriculum that is flexible and responsive to the needs of learners. The curriculum should be designed to integrate spiritual experiences with academic learning, so that learners not only gain knowledge, but also skills to develop self-awareness and strong character. The pedagogical methods used should encourage active participation, critical reflection and collaboration among learners. For example, group-based projects that require learners to work together to create digital content that reflects spiritual values can be an effective way to internalize learning. It is also important to develop evaluation mechanisms that measure not only academic outcomes, but also individual character and spirituality development. This evaluation should include self-assessment, peer feedback, and deep reflection on the spiritual experiences one has gone through. In this way, individuals can see their progress in a broader context, as well as understand how their digital experiences contribute to their character formation.

In facing the challenge of identity crisis in the digital age, mitigation strategies should include developing strong spiritual resilience. This involves empowering individuals to develop effective internal filters in assessing the information and narratives they encounter in the digital world. Education on digital literacy that integrates spiritual and psychological insights is crucial in this context. Individuals need to be trained to recognize and respond to content that is potentially damaging to their spiritual dimension, as well as to build resilience to negative influences that may arise from their interactions with technology. In addition, interdisciplinary collaboration is also key in implementing this strategy. Spiritual practitioners, educators, psychologists, and technologists must work together to design a comprehensive and transformative model of character building. Each discipline has a unique perspective and expertise, which can complement each other in creating a more holistic approach. For example, psychologists can provide insights into character development and psychological defense mechanisms, while spiritual practitioners can offer guidance on the practice of reflection and purification of the soul.

Identity crisis mitigation strategies in the digital context require the development of comprehensive and adaptive spiritual resilience mechanisms (Ahmad, Zin, & Kuthi, 2020). This approach should be able to empower individuals to develop effective internal filters in interacting with various digital narratives that have the potential to degrade the spiritual dimension. The implementation of the spiritual resilience model requires the development of a pedagogical framework that integrates psychological, epistemological, and spiritual insights in building individuals' critical capabilities. This requires the design of interventions that do not simply focus on knowledge transfer but rather the establishment of internal defense mechanisms that enable individuals to actively and critically select, reflect, and reconstruct digital experiences. Mitigation strategies must be able to create digital spaces that encourage the development of critical consciousness, reflective abilities, and spiritual autonomy in the face of the complexity of identity transformation in the digital era.

The development of a digital spiritual-based character education model requires epistemological reconstruction of traditional concepts of education and character building (Muzakir & Susanto, 2023). The implementation strategy must be able to transform the educational paradigm from a static knowledge transfer model to a dynamic system that constantly negotiates with various layers of digital complexity. This requires flexible curriculum design and pedagogical methods that can accommodate the interactive dynamics between internal spirituality and the evolving digital ecosystem. The implementation of this model requires the development of a multidimensional approach that does not simply integrate technology into the educational process but fundamentally changes the way we understand the process of spiritual character formation. This strategy should create a learning ecosystem space that allows individuals to actively reconstruct spiritual experiences through the various digital mediums available.

The implementative contribution of the digital spiritual-based character-building model includes the development of theoretical and practical frameworks that open up new epistemological spaces in understanding the dialectical relationship between spirituality, technology, and human identity formation. Implementation recommendations do not simply focus on technological adaptation but rather on fundamental transformation in understanding the mechanisms of spiritual character formation in the digital era (Sulaiman et al., 2021). This demands a comprehensive approach that is able to capture the complexity of the interaction between the internal spiritual dimension and the ever-changing digital ecosystem. Implementation strategies must be able to develop intervention models that are not merely responsive to technological challenges but proactive in shaping digital spaces that support the development of authentic spiritual awareness. This process requires interdisciplinary collaboration between spiritual practitioners, educators, psychologists, and technologists in designing holistic and transformative character-building models.

Finally, it is important to create a digital space that not only serves as an information medium but also as a space for spiritual transformation. This means that digital platforms should be designed to encourage deep spiritual experiences, where individuals can engage in the practice of reflection, meditation, and *tazkiyah al-nafs*. By creating a supportive environment, individuals will be better able to develop authentic spiritual awareness and build a strong character to face the challenges of the digital world. Thus, the operationalization strategy of the digital spiritual-based character-building model should include various interrelated elements, ranging from the development of a supportive digital platform, a flexible curriculum, and a holistic evaluation mechanism to interdisciplinary collaboration. All of these aim to create an ecosystem that allows individuals to actively reconstruct their spiritual experiences so that they can grow and develop into a better person, both spiritually and in character. This discussion demonstrates the direct relevance of the research title to the learning dimension: the concept of "Digital Spiritual Resilience" is not an abstract ideal but a concrete educational outcome that can be cultivated through structured learning. Through the implementation of Al-Ghazali's *tazkiyah* stages in digital learning environments, students ("learners" in the title) can develop the spiritual and psychological competencies necessary to navigate digital disruption meaningfully (Jusoh et al., 2020; Mutholingah, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Al-Ghazali's concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs* provides a structurally coherent and practically applicable framework for addressing digital identity disruption among students. The four-stage model, *muraqabah* (spiritual self-surveillance), *muḥāsabah* (introspective self-accounting), *muʾāhadah* (spiritual self-commitment), and *riyadhah* (disciplined spiritual practice), corresponds structurally to the four principal pathologies of digital identity disruption: compulsive self-presentation (addressed by *muraqabah* through the redirection of attention from external approval to interior

intention), chronic social comparison (addressed by *muḥāsabah* through daily interior self-accounting against a stable spiritual standard), digital identity fragmentation (addressed by *muʾāhadah* through the cultivation of explicit interior covenants that anchor identity across fluid digital contexts), and spiritual dissociation (addressed by *riyadhah* through embodied spiritual practices that maintain a center of gravity independent of digital context). This structural correspondence, not merely an analogical or rhetorical connection, constitutes the primary theoretical contribution of this study. The strategy for reconstructing students' character in the digital era is therefore operationalized through *muraqabah*, *muḥāsabah*, *muʾāhadah*, and *riyadhah*, a sequence whose interior logic is not arbitrary but functionally mapped to the specific vulnerabilities of digital-age character formation.

Al-Ghazali offers a transformative framework that enables students to build authentic and meaningful representations of themselves. This study makes an important contribution to exploring the relevance of classical spiritual concepts in the modern digital context. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in mapping the mechanisms of spiritual value internalization in an era of disruption, while its practical contribution is to offer a comprehensive and adaptive character development model. However, this study has limitations because it still focuses on a qualitative approach based on literature review, so it has not empirically tested the effectiveness of the *tazkiyah*-based character reconstruction model in the context of formal and non-formal education implementation. Therefore, further research is needed using a field research approach and experimental design to test the relevance, validity, and effectiveness of this model in a more applicable manner in the digital era.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Conceptualization, KUA and UH; methodology, KUA; formal analysis, KUA; original draft writing, KUA; review writing and editing, UH and IFH. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript for publication.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors used Elicit-AI & Connected Paper tools during the preparation of this work for literature search purposes. After using the tool/service, the authors thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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