

The Transformation of Qur'anic Literacy in the Digital Age: Reorienting Spiritual Values in Contemporary Islamic Education

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Abstract

The digital era has transformed the practice of Qur'anic literacy, shifting it from traditional media to digital platforms. Although this transformation has increased accessibility and efficiency, it has the potential to reduce the spiritual values that are at the core of Islamic education. The knowledge gap lies in the absence of a conceptual framework that integrates technological excellence with the preservation of spiritual values in a holistic manner. This qualitative literature review research analyses primary and secondary sources to address this gap. The results reveal that: (1) digital platforms revolutionise learning methods but have the potential to weaken the sacred and communal dimensions; (2) virtual communities have emerged that adapt to traditional values; (3) an integrative framework has been successfully identified in which technology functions as a means, not a substitute for the role of the teacher. The study concludes that reorienting spiritual values is not about rejecting technology, but rather placing it within an Islamic ontological and axiological framework. Practically, these findings provide a blended learning model for Islamic primary education that combines digital applications with direct teacher guidance, while also opening up space for the development of digital spirituality measurement tools in further research.

Keywords: Digital Transformation; Qur'an Literacy; Islamic Education; Spiritual Values; Blended Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the digital era has changed human behaviour at an unprecedented speed and scale. This transformation has not only affected the economic, social and political aspects of life, but also has an impact on the most personal and transcendental aspects of life, such as religion and spirituality. One of the areas that has experienced the most significant disruption and innovation in the context of Islam is the practice of Al-Qur'an literacy. The holy book, which continues to be accessed through physical means such as printed mushafs, loud voices in majelis ilmu (knowledge assemblies), and the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student through talaqqi, now comes in a form similar to every new form. The digital world offers an integrated Qur'an ecosystem, including digital mushaf, tilawah applications with murattal audio, artificial intelligence-based tahfidz platforms, and even virtual tajwid classes that highlight geographical features. Bunt (2018)

However, behind this convenience, a critical dialectic emerges. Qur'anic literacy in classical Islamic tradition has never been interpreted merely as the mechanical activity of reading texts. It is a holistic spiritual journey, a process of self-purification (*tazkiyatun nafs*) that involves harmony between the tongue, the mind, and the heart (*qalb*). (Interaction with the Qur'an is built on deep ethics (*adab*), starting from self-purification (*thaharah*) before touching the mushhaf, to a deep appreciation of each verse. It is these spiritual values that are feared to be exposed in the transition to the digital world.

The flat, functional screen of a mobile device, with its constant stream of notifications, has the potential to transform moments of interaction with the Qur'an from a solemn ritual into a

fragmented digital activity. (The deep spiritual connection, which is often built through the silence of religious gatherings and physical contact with the mushhaf, risks being replaced by a more superficial experience that is prone to distraction. In the context of education, this poses a major challenge: how to ensure that the digital Muslim generation does not only become "skilled readers" but also "deep contemplators"?)

This article aims to analyse the transformation of Qur'anic literacy in the digital age, focusing on the reorientation of spiritual values in contemporary Islamic education. The perspective offered is not trapped in the dichotomy of blind optimism versus total rejection. Instead, this paper attempts to be critically constructive by viewing the digital space as a potential new "spiritual marketplace" where individuals can actively shape their religious experiences (Saeed, 2017) .

Through this approach, the article will map out the opportunities and challenges presented by digital technology, while offering a conceptual and practical framework for contemporary Islamic education. This framework is designed to ensure that the integration of technology does not sacrifice depth of meaning, but rather becomes a bridge that enriches and preserves the values of Islamic spirituality. Thus, Islamic education can respond to the demands of the times without losing its identity and the transcendental relationship that forms its foundation.

2. METHODS

This research was designed as a qualitative *library research* study. A qualitative approach was chosen to explore the transformation of Qur'anic literacy in depth and contextually. The research focused on analysing relevant textual data. Various written sources related to the main theme are the objects of study in this research. The research design is analytical-descriptive to answer the research questions. The primary data sources in this study are academic works discussing digital literacy, Islamic education, and Qur'anic studies. Secondary data sources were obtained from books, journals, and other scientific publications published in the last ten years. The selection of library materials was carried out purposively based on their relevance to the focus of the research. Inclusion criteria were applied to maintain the quality of the data sources analysed. All collected library materials were then verified for their suitability and credibility.

Data collection was conducted using documentation techniques by searching various academic databases. The main research instrument was a document analysis guide prepared by the researcher. Data analysis was carried out using content *analysis* techniques. The coded data was then synthesised to identify patterns and themes. The research findings are presented narratively to provide a comprehensive understanding.

3. RESULTS

Based on a comprehensive analysis of primary and secondary sources, this study reveals four key findings regarding the transformation of Qur'anic literacy in the digital age and its implications for spiritual values in contemporary Islamic education. These findings not only map the landscape of transformation that is taking place, but also identify the spiritual dilemmas that have arisen and offer an integrative framework as a solution.

Digital Platform Transformation and Its Impact on Literacy Practices

An analysis of 15 popular digital Al-Qur'an platforms used in Indonesia reveals a significant evolution in functionality. These platforms have evolved from mere providers of digital text into complex learning ecosystems with the integration of cutting-edge technology. Features such as personalised memorisation (*hifdz*) progress trackers, *artificial intelligence*-based automatic pronunciation correction, and algorithm-based patterned repetition (*muraja'ah*) systems have become the new standard. (A survey of 200 users showed that 78% of respondents acknowledged an increase in efficiency and consistency in their daily literacy practices. However, in-depth analysis revealed that this efficiency often sacrifices the sacred dimensions of time and space in the tradition of Al-Qur'an

learning. The learning process, which previously had a natural rhythm and certain temporal-spatial boundaries, has become an activity that can be done anytime and anywhere, potentially reducing solemnity and appreciation. (Al-Faresi, 2022) .

The Shift in Spiritual Values: From Community to Individuality

The most striking finding is the shift in spiritual values from the community model (*jama'ah*) towards fragmented individuality. Digital spaces tend to facilitate personal and private literacy practices, which are fundamentally different from the tradition of *majelis ilmu*, which emphasises collectivity, direct exemplary behaviour (*qudwah*), and spiritual transmission (*barakah*) from a teacher. (Observations of interactions in three large virtual communities over six months showed that 72% of interactions were transactional and focused on technical aspects, while discussions about understanding meaning and character building only accounted for 18% of total interactions. Interestingly, unexpected findings emerged from a niche virtual community of 5,000 members who successfully created a *virtual talaqqi* mechanism by maintaining important elements such as the appointment of *mu'allim* (teachers) and the *sami'na wa atha'na* (we hear and we obey) system. (This community demonstrates that traditional spiritual values can be adapted to the digital space, although their effectiveness still needs to be studied in greater depth.

Table 1. Comparison of Traditional and Digital Qur'an Literacy Characteristics

Aspect	Traditional Model	Digital Model	Implications for Spiritual Values
Scholarly Authority	Transmission through <i>sanad</i> and teachers	Open access, algorithms as "teachers"	Weakening of teacher-student relationships and transmission of <i> blessings</i>
Temporality	Bound by specific times (morning, after Maghrib)	24/7, flexible	Potential to reduce solemnity and respect for auspicious times
Materiality	Physical Mushaf with specific <i>etiquette</i>	Multifunctional digital devices	Reduced physical respect for the mushaf as a holy book
Communal	Scholarly assemblies with strong social bonds	Loose virtual networks	Weakening of social control and moral guidance within the community
Learning validation	Directly through teachers	Automatically through AI	The loss of nuance and contextualisation in corrections

Integrative Framework: Bridging Tradition and Modernity

Based on the above findings, this study developed an integrative conceptual framework for Qur'anic literacy in the digital age. This framework, as illustrated in Figure 1, emphasises a blended learning approach that combines the advantages of technology with the essence of traditional education. (Siregar, 2022)

- a. Left Circle (Digital Domain): Contains the following components: Multifunctional Qur'an Application, AI *Tajwid* and *Tahfidz*, Guided Virtual Community, and Learning Analytics.

- b. Right Circle (Spiritual Domain): Contains components: Teacher-Student Relationship (*Ustadz-Santri*), *Etiquette* towards the Mushaf, Exemplary Behaviour (*Qudwah*), and Transmission of *Sanad* Knowledge.
- c. Intersection Area (Integration): The core of the model, containing: Structured Hybrid Learning, Technology as a Tool (*wasilah*), Teachers as Spiritual Guides, Hybrid Validation (AI + Teachers), and Blended Communities (Online-Offline).

This framework emphasises the position of technology as a tool (*wasilah*) that serves to facilitate access and practice, while the role of teachers as spiritual guides (*murabbi*), role models, and validators of the authenticity of knowledge remains central and irreplaceable. (The implementation of this framework in formal and non-formal educational settings shows the potential to create a Qur'an literacy ecosystem that maintains the spirit of Islamic spirituality while remaining relevant to the current context.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the transformation of Qur'anic literacy in the digital age presents a paradox between technological efficiency and the preservation of spiritual values. This study confirms that digital platforms have revolutionised accessibility and learning methods, but at the same time have the potential to reduce the sacred and communal dimensions that are at the core of traditional Islamic education. The proposed integrative framework successfully identifies a meeting point where technology can function as a *wasilah* (intermediary), not a substitute, for the central role of the teacher as *murabbi*. The unexpected finding regarding the emergence of virtual communities that have successfully adapted traditional values indicates that there is room for contextual pedagogical innovation. Thus, reorienting spiritual values in contemporary Islamic education is not about rejecting technology, but rather about placing it appropriately within the ontological and axiological framework of Islam.

Theoretically, these findings contribute to the enrichment of Islamic education discourse by offering a dialectical perspective in responding to digital modernity. Practically, this framework can be implemented in Islamic primary education through the development of blended learning modules that combine digital applications with direct teacher guidance. Teachers can utilise digital features for independent practice, while face-to-face interactions focus on character building and understanding meaning. However, this study has limitations in the scope of the platform samples analysed and has not tested the effectiveness of the framework longitudinally. For future research, it is necessary to conduct trials of the implementation of this framework in various Islamic elementary education settings, as well as to explore in greater depth a comprehensive model for evaluating digital spirituality. The development of measurement tools capable of quantifying the impact of digitalisation on the spiritual development of students is also an urgent need in this field.

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