

Construction of Social Education Theory from 'Ulwan's Perspective to Respond to Social Problems in the Digital Era/Society 5.0: A Qualitative Content Analysis Study

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study formulates the construction of a social education theory from 'Ulwan's perspective as a basis for responding to social problems of the digital era/Society 5.0 (device addiction, disinformation, erosion of empathy).

Design/methods/approach – A document-based qualitative study within a post-positivist paradigm. Primary source: Tarbiyat al-Aulād fī al-Islām ('Ulwan). Secondary sources were selected according to relevance, authority, traceability, and conceptual contribution. Mayring's qualitative content analysis was used for unitizing, deductive–inductive categorization, constant comparison, and theoretical synthesis; rigor was maintained through triangulation, an audit trail, and peer debriefing.

Findings – 'Ulwan's four pillars—(1) the instillation of a noble soul (piety, brotherhood, īsār, courage); (2) safeguarding others' rights (parents, relatives, neighbors, teachers); (3) ethics of social life (greeting, speaking, joking); (4) social oversight—critique (amar ma'ruf nahi munkar) —are coherently mapped onto the digital context. The model operates through the chain: value internalization (hablumminallāh-hablumminannās) to self-discipline & digital literacy (mediator) to ethical online behavior; moderated by family parenting patterns, school/madrasah culture, and platform design. Four propositions ready for empirical testing are advanced along that pathway.

Research implications – The implementation package includes active family mediation and a “digital adab contract”; Islamic Netiquette modules in schools/madrasahs; community anti-hoax programs grounded in ukhuwah; as well as platform nudges (greeting reminders, friction before mass forwarding, user-friendly reporting channels).

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1. Introduction

The digital era is an era in which the majority of society extensively involves digital technology in daily activities (Rahayu, 2019), whether in activities related to education, health, trade, information sharing, social networking, or other activities.

In general, as we all experience, the digital era can generate two impacts in human life, namely positive impacts and negative impacts. The positive impact is that it can make various things easier for us, including facilitating access to various kinds of information (by using internet technology), whereas the negative impact is that it can generate various problems, one of which is social problems as raised by the researcher as the topic of this study.

As stated in Cholil, the disruption era has dimmed several Islamic values within a person, among others the loss of trustworthiness among individuals in society, abandoning religious obligations, being



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indifferent to children's religious education, committing corruption, neglecting moral or ethical values, being egoistic, and lacking empathy toward those who are deprived (Cholil, 2019).

In addition, in Abada et al. it is also stated that, in this digital era, there are many very concerning events committed by Muslims, such as deliberately abandoning prayer, not fasting in the month of Ramadan, committing immorality, and denigrating other ethnicities, religions, races, and groups. These things occur because of the abundance of watching uneducative content on online social media, and the minimal knowledge of how to use that online social media (Abada et al., 2023).

In terms of case facts, at the end of 2019, one prominent online mass media outlet in a province in Indonesia reported that the psychiatric hospital (RSJ) there had treated several patients diagnosed with mental disorders due to gadget addiction; in that online mass media it was stated that there were seven people who experienced mental disorders due to gadget addiction, their ages varied, but all could be said to still be young, namely from 13 to 17 years old.

Regarding the condition of the patients, YS as a psychiatrist at the RSJ there divided these gadget-addicted patients into two categories, first, the category of patients with severe addiction, and second, the category of patients with mild addiction. Furthermore, YS explained that patients in the severe addiction category are patients who show a change in behavior beyond normal limits, such as frequently raging and hallucinating by following the styles of characters in the games they often play, whereas patients in the mild addiction category are patients who show symptoms of mental disorders, such as feeling anxious if not using gadgets, difficulty sleeping, and difficulty concentrating (Zakaria, 2024).

It is truly ironic; technological advances in the digital era, if not addressed wisely, will have negative impacts on various aspects including the social aspect within an individual's soul, the social aspect will be damaged so that one will tend to engage in deviant behaviors from both human norms and existing Islamic norms.

Seeing the various quite serious problems as mentioned above, the researcher feels that we all agree that there needs to be special attention from various parties including academics, in various respects and from various angles, so that these various problems can be resolved properly and do not recur in the future.

In terms of scientific research, the above phenomenon can be used as a research problem (empirical gap) in a study, because the phenomenon meets the three criteria of a good research problem as mentioned by Borg and Gall in Sugiyono, namely Significant, Feasible, and Beneficial (Sugiyono, 2019).

Significant, important to study so that the various cases of social problems above do not recur; Feasible, there are supporting resources if studied, such as the availability of literature on sociality, technology, and library methods; and Beneficial, the results of the research conducted are beneficial for all, such as being used as a reference base for the community to avoid the various existing social problems, especially in the digital era society 5.0 as we are currently living through.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design and Rationale

This study is a document-based qualitative study (documentary research) within a post-positivist paradigm, employing a qualitative approach. Post-positivism views knowledge as a theoretical construction that can be sharpened through critical examination of textual evidence, aligning with the study's aim to develop a construction of social education theory from 'Ulwan's perspective as a foundation for responding to social problems in the digital era/Society 5.0 (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hamzah, 2022). This rationale is consistent with the urgency outlined

in the Introduction regarding the social impacts of the digital era—from ease of access to information to increased social deviance (Abada et al., 2023; Cholil, 2019; Rahayu, 2019; Sugiyono, 2019).

2.2. Data Sources and Selection Criteria

The primary source is the book *Tarbiyatu al-Aulād fī al-Islām* by Dr. Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan; the object of inquiry is focused on the social education theory contained therein (Amruddin et al., 2022).

Secondary sources include literature that relates 'Ulwan's ideas to the phenomena of the digital era or Society 5.0 and to textual analysis methodology, including works on the subject, media case reports, methodological references, writings on Society 5.0, and guidelines for establishing research problems (Abada et al., 2023; Cholil, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hamzah, 2022; Mayring, 2014; Rahayu, 2019; Salgues, 2018; M. Sari & Asmendri, 2020; Sugiyono, 2019; Zakaria, 2024).

Inclusion criteria: (1) thematic relevance to sociality, digitality, and social problems of the digital era; (2) the author's authority/academic track record; (3) bibliographic traceability; (4) contribution to conceptual construction. Exclusion criteria: substantive duplication, unverifiable references, or sources not directly related to the research question/objectives.

2.3. Data Collection Procedures and Instruments

The data collection technique employed document analysis with the following stages: systematic searching (library catalogs, digital repositories, scholarly databases), compilation, verification, classification, citation, cross-checking, and grouping of meaning units from primary and secondary sources (M. Sari & Asmendri, 2020).

The instrument used was a data extraction protocol (worksheet) containing bibliographic data, discursive context, keywords (e.g., *hablumminallāh*, *hablumminannās*), relevant quotations, and the researcher's notes on the relations of concepts to digital-era phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher acted as the key instrument who directed the focus, assessed relevance, and ensured procedural consistency.

2.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Analysis was conducted through qualitative content analysis à la Mayring with the following steps (Mayring, 2014):

- a. Corpus delimitation: sections of *Tarbiyatu al-Aulād fī al-Islām* that contain principles of sociality, supplemented by secondary literature on the digital era/Society 5.0 (Abada et al., 2023; Cholil, 2019; Rahayu, 2019; Salgues, 2018; Zakaria, 2024).
- b. Unitizing and data reduction: identification and condensation of meaning units (verses, paragraphs, themes) related to the initial (deductive) categories from 'Ulwan: *hablumminallāh* (piety) and *hablumminannās* (ukhuwah, compassion, *tīsār*, forgiveness, safeguarding the rights of parents, teachers, neighbors, and elders).
- c. Categorization and code development: inductive enrichment of categories from the data (e.g., digital discipline, ethics of online interaction, prevention of deviant behavior) until conceptual saturation is reached.
- d. Category quality checks: constant comparison across primary–secondary sources to ensure internal coherence and inter-category discriminability.
- e. Theoretical synthesis: mapping 'Ulwan's categories onto phenomena of social problems in the digital era (e.g., gadget addiction, disinformation, erosion of empathy) to form an

integrated theoretical construction as a basis for problem-solving (Mayring, 2014; M. Sari & Asmendri, 2020).

2.5. Validity and Rigor

To ensure credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, the following were applied:

- a. Source triangulation between the primary text and secondary literature related to the context of the digital era/Society 5.0 (Abada et al., 2023; Cholil, 2019; Rahayu, 2019; Salgues, 2018; Zakaria, 2024).
- b. An audit trail of analytical decisions, code scheme revisions, and category changes throughout the process (Mayring, 2014).
- c. Peer validation (peer debriefing) of the coding framework and conceptual synthesis to minimize researcher bias (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).
- d. Traceability of citations and confirmation of terms—concepts to remain faithful to the intent of the original text (M. Sari & Asmendri, 2020).

2.6. Research Ethics

Because it does not involve human participants, this study did not require clinical ethical approval; however, ethical principles were maintained through: (a) compliance with copyright and proper attribution; (b) academic honesty—without fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism; (c) respect for religious texts (accuracy in translation/interpretation); and (d) methodological transparency through procedural documentation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). If required by the institution, notification to the ethics committee was nevertheless carried out as a practice of good research governance.

2.7. Alignment with the Formulation of the Research Question and Objectives

The above methodological design was formulated to answer the question: how can the construction of social education theory from 'Ulwan's perspective serve as a conceptual foundation for responding to social problems in the digital era/Society 5.0. Through systematic document analysis, Mayring's qualitative content analysis, and critical synthesis grounded in *hablumminallah* and *hablumminannās*, the intended output is a coherent and applicable theoretical model for social practices in both offline and online spaces (Amruddin et al., 2022; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hamzah, 2022; Mayring, 2014; M. Sari & Asmendri, 2020; Sugiyono, 2019).

3. Findings

According to Abdullah Nashih 'Ulwan, social education is education concerning social adab and the foundations of a noble soul, grounded in the Islamic creed, carried out by educators toward students, with the aim that the students may appear and interact in society with good adab, justice, mature thinking, and wisdom ('Ulwan, 2017).

Broadly, there are four matters that must be transmitted by educators to their students when educating the social aspect, namely the instillation of the foundations of a noble soul, safeguarding others' rights, the obligation to practice social ethics, and social oversight and critique ('Ulwan, 2017). The explanations of each of these matters are as follows.

3.1. *Instilling the Foundations of a Noble Soul*

A noble soul is the soul that must be made the primary foundation in implementing social education, because with a noble soul the Islamic personality of an individual can be fully formed ('Ulwan, 2017).

'Ulwan states that, in Islam, at least four principles need to be instilled so that a person possesses a noble soul, namely being pious to Allah Swt., upholding the value of brotherhood, *īṣār*, and courage to uphold the truth.

3.1.1. *Piety*

According to 'Ulwan, piety is a value born as a consequence of the depth of a person's faith in Allah Swt., a faith that senses that one is always observed by Allah and ever yearns for His forgiveness and reward. Still in 'Ulwan, according to some scholars, piety is to do all His commands (righteous deeds) and to avoid all that He forbids (blameworthy acts) both in private and openly ('Ulwan, 2017).

Piety, besides nurturing faith in Allah, is also the primary source that fertilizes a person's social values, because through piety a person can avoid corruption, evil, and sin ('Ulwan, 2017).

The following is an example of a child's good behavior formed as a result of the strong value of piety to Allah within, mentioned in the book *Tarbiyat al-Aulād fī al-Islām*.

In a certain land, there was a mother and her child who worked as milk sellers, and on one occasion the mother said to her child, "O my child, mix our milk for sale with water so that we can gain more profit, my child." But the child refused, "No, mother, I fear being punished by the Amirul Mukminin." Then the mother said again, "Do not worry, my child, the Amirul Mukminin does not see us." The child then replied with a startling answer, "Even if he (the Amirul Mukminin) does not see us, the Lord (Allah), the One worshiped by the Amirul Mukminin, surely sees us, my mother" ('Ulwan, 2017).

3.1.2. *Brotherhood*

In 'Ulwan it is stated that brotherhood is a very deep bond of hearts between one Muslim and another, which can give rise to gentleness, love, and respect among them ('Ulwan, 2017).

At least two *dalīl* (Qur'anic verse and Hadith of the Messenger of Allah) are mentioned by 'Ulwan ('Ulwan, 2017) regarding the discussion of brotherhood, namely Q.S. Al-Ḥujurāt verse ten and the hadith of the Messenger of Allah saw. narrated by Sunan An-Nasa'i hadith no. 4,930. The texts of the two *dalīl* are as follows.

"Indeed, the believers are but brothers; so reconcile between your two brothers and fear Allah that you may receive mercy." Q.S. Al-Ḥujurāt verse 10 ('Ulwan, 2017)

"It has been reported to us by Ishaq bin Ibrahim; he said: An-Nadhr narrated to us; he said: Shu'bah narrated to us; [and] Humaid bin Mas'adah informed and narrated to us; he said: Bishr narrated to us; he said: Shu'bah narrated to us from Qatadah; he said: 'I heard Anas say: The Messenger of Allah saw. said.' And Humaid bin Mas'adah said in his hadith: 'Indeed the Prophet saw. said: "None of you has perfected faith until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."' (Hadits Nasai No. 4930 | Tanda Iman, 2024).

3.1.3. *Īṣār (Preferring Others)*

Īṣār is a form of attitude that prioritizes others' interests over personal interests in matters of goodness. Īṣār is a commendable attitude as long as it is practiced in pursuit of Allah Swt.'s pleasure.

The following is a *dalīl* mentioned by 'Ulwan in relation to the attitude of *īṣār*.

"And those who had settled in the city (Madinah) and had believed before them (the Muhajirun), they love those who emigrated to them (the Muhajirun), and they find no desire in their hearts for what

they [the Muhajirun] have been given, and they give [them] preference over themselves even though they are in hardship. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul—those are the successful.” Q.S. Al-Ḥasyr verse 9 ([’Ulwan, 2017](#)).

3.1.4. Courage

According to ’Ulwan, courage is an extraordinary strength found in the soul of a believer that grows as a result of the strength of his faith and conviction in Allah, the One. This trait will continue to dwell within a believer as long as he continues to believe in Allah, uphold the truth, place his trust in Allah, assume responsibility for the trust given, and always uphold education ([’Ulwan, 2017](#)).

This courageous attitude was once demonstrated by one of the Companions of the Prophet saw., namely Abu Bakar Aṣ-Ṣiddīq, when he was left by the death of the Prophet Muhammad Saw, while he had to continue the Prophet’s struggle to dispatch Usamah bin Zaid’s army to Sham.

At that time, the Prophet Muhammad Saw had prepared the army (Usamah bin Zaid) to be sent to Sham, but after preparing the army, he (the Prophet Muhammad Saw) fell ill and eventually passed away. After the Prophet Muhammad Saw passed away, the Muslims asked Abu Bakar to cancel the dispatch of Usamah bin Zaid’s army, on the grounds that they feared various undesirable events might occur. However, Abu Bakar answered with full courage and firmness, “By the One in whose Hand my soul rests, if I knew that a wild beast would attack me, I would still dispatch the army that had been prepared and commanded by the Messenger of Allah Saw. And if in a settlement there were no one else but me, indeed I would still carry out that command.” ([’Ulwan, 2017](#)).

3.2. Safeguarding Others’ Rights

The matter of safeguarding others’ rights can be said to be part of the foundations of a noble psyche; in other words, safeguarding others’ rights may be regarded as a noble disposition within a person’s soul. In ’Ulwan it is stated that safeguarding others’ rights is closely related to the foundations of a noble psyche—so closely that this is expressed in a clear formulation: if the foundations of a noble psyche constitute a meaning, then safeguarding others’ rights is its manifestation. In another expression, if the foundations of a noble psyche are a soul/life, then safeguarding others’ rights is the body/physique ([’Ulwan, 2017](#)).

According to ’Ulwan, there are at least four social rights of others that are important to safeguard, which we need to instill in our children as early as possible so that they may grow into noble persons accustomed to safeguarding those rights. The six rights are as follows.

3.2.1. Parents’ Rights

Safeguarding parents’ rights, according to ’Ulwan, is the first and at once the most important right that must be safeguarded and conveyed to a child from an early age so that the child becomes accustomed to doing so until adulthood ([’Ulwan, 2017](#)).

There are six counsels of the Messenger of Allah Saw concerning dutifulness to both parents, namely: seeking the pleasure of both parents; doing good to them is prioritized over jihad in the way of Allah; praying for them after their passing and honoring their close friends; giving precedence to devotion to the mother and then to the father; observing adab toward both; and never being undutiful to them ([’Ulwan, 2017](#)).

3.2.2. Relatives' Rights

The next right of others that must be safeguarded is the right of relatives. Relatives here refers to those who have kinship or lineage ties, such as father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts from both the father's and the mother's side, nephews and nieces from brothers and sisters, and so on ('Ulwan, 2017).

There are several rights that a relative must safeguard toward another relative, namely doing good and showing compassion, honoring elders, loving the young, bringing happiness in times of sorrow, and helping those more in need ('Ulwan, 2017).

In addition, in 'Ulwan it is also stated that maintaining the bonds of kinship among relatives must be given attention, because the Prophet Muhammad Saw once mentioned seven merits that a person will obtain when maintaining kinship ties, namely: strengthening faith in Allah and the Last Day; prolonging lifespan and expanding provision; avoiding *sū'u al-khātimah*; making the land prosperous and increasing wealth; erasing sins and errors; facilitating the reckoning of deeds in the Hereafter and being able to enter Paradise; and raising our rank to a lofty rank on the Last Day ('Ulwan, 2017).

3.2.3. Neighbors' Rights

A neighbor is a person who lives around us from the closest to the farthest from our house; the closest is next door to our house, whereas the farthest is that which is at a distance of forty houses from our home in every direction ('Ulwan, 2017).

Anyone designated as a neighbor (meeting the criteria mentioned above) thus has several rights over another neighbor. In 'Ulwan it is stated that, broadly, there are four rights that must be safeguarded by one neighbor toward another, namely: not causing harm; protecting from wrongdoers; doing good in times of hardship as well as ease; and shouldering the neighbor's difficulties ('Ulwan, 2017).

3.2.4. Teachers' Rights

Fulfilling a teacher's rights is one of the important matters that must be taught to a child from an early age so that the child may grow into a person who is courteous and of noble character toward the teacher—especially when the teacher is righteous, pious, and of noble character ('Ulwan, 2017).

Imam Ahmad, al-Ṭabarānī, and al-Ḥākim narrated from 'Ubādah bin Shāmit that the Messenger of Allah Saw said: "He is not of my community who does not honor the elder, does not show mercy to the younger, and does not fulfill the rights due to our scholars" ('Ulwan, 2017).

The following are several rights that a student must fulfill toward the teacher, quoted from various counsels once conveyed by the Messenger of Allah Saw as mentioned in 'Ulwan. First, a student should be humble toward the teacher and not find fault with either opinions or directions; second, a student should regard the teacher with full respect and be convinced that the teacher possesses a perfect standing; third, a student must know the obligations owed to the teacher and not forget the teacher's services; fourth, a student must be patient with the teacher's sternness or harshness, and not make the teacher's stern or harsh manner a barrier to obtaining beneficial knowledge from the teacher; fifth, a student should be decorous—calm, humble, and full of respect—when sitting before the teacher; sixth, a student may not enter the teacher's private room except with permission; and seventh, a student should listen attentively when the teacher cites a *dalil* of a ruling, mentions something beneficial, narrates a story, or recites memorized verse ('Ulwan, 2017).

3.3. *Obligation to Practice Social Ethics*

In matters of social life, in Islam there is a principle that is very good to instill in children from an early age so that when they reach adulthood, they can socialize with gentleness, compassion toward others, and noble character. That principle is the consistent observance of the general ethics that exist in society ('Ulwan, 2017).

In 'Ulwan it is mentioned that there are at least three ethics that can be applied in everyday life when engaging in social life: the etiquette of giving salām, the etiquette of speaking, and the etiquette of joking ('Ulwan, 2017). The explanations of each of these ethics are as follows.

3.3.1. *Etiquette of Giving Salām*

The Prophet Muhammad Saw also provided an example to his community to spread salām among fellow believers, because spreading salām among fellow believers can be a cause for a believer to enter Paradise. The text of the hadith is as follows.

“A person will not enter Paradise before he believes. He is not called a believer until they love one another (fellow believers). Shall I not show you something which, if you do it, you will love one another? Spread salām among you.” HR. Muslim ('Ulwan, 2017).

3.3.2. *Etiquette of Speaking*

The next Islamic social ethic mentioned in 'Ulwan is the etiquette of speaking. In addition to the Islamic social ethics above, the etiquette of speaking is also an ethic that is important to observe when socializing in society. An individual needs to learn language and the basics of conversation so that when speaking in the midst of society, one becomes both a good speaker and a good listener ('Ulwan, 2017).

In 'Ulwan it is mentioned that there are several speaking etiquettes that can serve as guidelines when conversing with others in society, including speaking in eloquent Arabic, speaking slowly, not chattering and not forcing oneself to speak at length about unimportant matters (aš-šarsarah wa at-tasyadduq), tailoring speech to the interlocutor's cognitive capacity, speaking as needed, paying attention to the interlocutor, facing the audience while speaking, and speaking with a smile ('Ulwan, 2017).

3.3.3. *Etiquette of Joking*

In 'Ulwan it is stated that among the aims of Islamic teachings is to form individuals who are compassionate, cheerful, of good manners, and of noble character, both in terms of action and in social interaction with others ('Ulwan, 2017).

Furthermore, how beautiful it is if a Muslim can convey something that is ḥaqq to others by combining serious (earnest) speech with joking, so that one can convey the point of the ḥaqq being conveyed ('Ulwan, 2017).

There are several social etiquettes taught in Islam so that when we convey something that is ḥaqq with joking, we do not depart from the Sharī'ah. These etiquettes are to joke without excess, to joke in ways that do not hurt others' feelings, and to avoid false and frivolous speech in joking ('Ulwan, 2017).

With regard to excessive joking, it is explained that excessive joking is the kind of joking that causes a person to forget their obligations to Allah, namely forgetting to worship Allah, forgetting to uphold Allah's laws, and forgetting the goal of forming a good society in accordance with Allah's commands ('Ulwan, 2017).

3.4. Social Oversight and Critique

The fourth or final matter that must be made the primary foundation in educating a person's social values in 'Ulwan is social oversight and critique. As with the other three matters explained above, this matter is also important to instill in a person's soul from an early age so that one may later become an individual who can oversee and rectify those around them who deviate from religious teachings toward actions in accordance with religious teachings or prevailing social norms ('Ulwan, 2017).

The following is a formulation of the methodology mentioned in 'Ulwan—grounded in various Islamic dalil—that can be applied to oversee and critique both the immediate social sphere and society in general. The explanations are as follows.

3.4.1. Safeguarding Public Opinion

The first step in overseeing and critiquing society is safeguarding public opinion. The public opinion to be safeguarded here is as commanded by Islam, namely amar ma'rūf nahi munkar. This command applies to all Muslims without exception—men, women, elders, children, judges, scholars, and so forth—according to each person's domain and capacity. Allah Swt. says in Sūrah Āli-'Imrān, verse one hundred and ten, the text of which is as follows.

“You are the best nation produced for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah ...” Q.S. Ali-Imran verse 110 ('Ulwan, 2017).

In a ṣaḥīḥ hadith narrated by Imam Muslim, the Messenger of Allah Saw said:

“Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; if he is not able, then with his tongue; and if he is not able, then with his heart—and that is the weakest of faith.” HR. Muslim ('Ulwan, 2017).

In 'Ulwan it is explained that the exegesis of preventing evil “with the hand” is the duty of leaders, “with the tongue” for scholars, and “with the heart” for common people. Meanwhile, the wording “whoever” above is universal in meaning, not restricted to any rank or particular social status; whoever one is, so long as one is able, one is among those tasked to transform evil into good ('Ulwan, 2017).

3.4.2. Constantly Reminding through the Conduct of the Salaf

The final step in social oversight and critique mentioned in 'Ulwan is to constantly remind by the conduct of the salaf (as-salafu aṣ-ṣāliḥ), namely the courage to change evil and rectify deviations that occur.

In 'Ulwan it is stated that there are several courageous stances of the salaf (as-salafu aṣ-ṣāliḥ) that can serve as exemplars, especially for the younger generation, in changing evil or rectifying deviations—such as the stance shown by Abu Ghayyats az-Zāhid in opposing the conduct of a ruler who kept company with singers/entertainers, then by a learned mufti, 'Alauddin, who advised the caliph not to execute negligent workers, and so forth ('Ulwan, 2017).

4. Discussion

This discussion section affirms the study's objective to construct a social education theory from 'Ulwan's perspective as a basis for responding to social problems in the digital era/Society 5.0. The results show that the four core matters—instilling the foundations of a noble soul, safeguarding others' rights, social ethics, and social oversight and critique ('Ulwan, 2017)—if mapped onto the digital context, function as a value–norm mechanism that restrains deviations such as gadget addiction, disinformation, and erosion of empathy, while simultaneously strengthening civil social practices in both offline and online spaces (Abada et al., 2023; Cholil, 2019; Rahayu, 2019; Salgues, 2018; Zakaria, 2024).

When examined from a theoretical perspective, these four matters do not stop at a list of adab but form an integrated chain of mechanisms. The dimension of a noble basic soul—which includes piety, brotherhood, *t̄s̄ār*, and courage—fosters the emergence of self-control, empathy, and moral courage in social interaction. The dimension of safeguarding others’ rights—toward parents, relatives, neighbors, and teachers—directs relational responsibility relevant to both physical and digital communities. Social ethics—covering *salām*, ways of speaking, and ways of joking—turn into concrete “netiquette” guidelines: polite greetings, accurate and proportional communication, and humor that does not wound. Meanwhile, social oversight and critique—through *amar ma’rūf nahi munkar* and the exemplarity of the *salaf*—provide a foundation for community governance based on participation and role modeling. Thus, *’Ulwan* is not merely prescriptive; it offers a conceptual apparatus in which the internalization of values (*hablumminallāh–hablumminannās*) mediates individual behavior and makes public opinion healthier.

From a foundational standpoint, *’Ulwan’s* emphasis on piety as a prerequisite before interhuman relations affirms the logical order of social education: transcendent awareness gives rise to moral regularity that then guides the consistency of social behavior. In the digital ecosystem, awareness of Divine oversight (*murāqabah*) becomes a brake on impulses to disseminate unethical content or unverified information, while *ukhuwah* and *t̄s̄ār* cultivate responsible, welfare-oriented sharing practices ([’Ulwan, 2017](#)).

The strength of *’Ulwan’s* model is also evident in its simultaneous ontological and methodological dimensions. Beyond signifying values, *’Ulwan* teaches clear steps of application. For example, the ethics of speaking are formulated not merely as exhortation, but as skills: using eloquent language, delivering calmly, avoiding unnecessary chatter, tailoring speech to the interlocutor’s cognitive capacity, focusing on relevance, attending to the audience, facing the audience while speaking, and accompanying speech with a smile. These principles are readily operationalized as cross-space netiquette—face-to-face, social media, and online gaming—to prevent speech that demeans SARA and, at the same time, increase social acceptability ([’Ulwan, 2017](#)).

Compared with the literature, this discussion aligns with portrayals of the digital era’s paradox marked by ease of information access alongside value degradation ([Abada et al., 2023](#); [Cholil, 2019](#); [Rahayu, 2019](#); [Zakaria, 2024](#)). However, unlike studies that tend to be descriptive, *’Ulwan’s* construction presents a layered solution architecture from the level of the individual (values), relations (rights), communication (ethics), to the community (*amar ma’rūf*). These findings are also consistent with the vision of Society 5.0, which demands the integration of technology and humanity ([Salgues, 2018](#)), and are in line with adolescents’ activity patterns in cyberspace—especially information access and communication—which necessitate concrete ethical guidance ([A. P. Sari et al., 2017](#)). Secondary evidence from *Amaliati* further strengthens the relevance of *’Ulwan’s* teachings by showing their potential to overcome the shallowing of faith while shaping the character of the younger generation amid the swift currents of technology ([Amaliati, 2020](#)).

The study’s theoretical contributions emerge in three clusters. First, the mapping of Islamic social education competencies for the digital context, encompassing piety-based self-control, relational responsibility, ethical communication, and digital civic participation. Second, the formulation of a value–behavior model that positions internal values as drivers of discipline and digital literacy—two mediators that bridge values and online behavior—while recognizing the roles of parenting patterns, school culture, and platform design as moderators that strengthen or weaken the effects of values. Third, the formulation of propositions ready for empirical testing. More specifically, the internalization of piety is expected to be associated with reduced online deviant behavior through enhanced self-control; *ukhuwah* and *t̄s̄ār* are expected to increase digital prosocial behavior through strengthened empathy; adherence to the ethics of speaking is expected to reduce the spread of disinformation through

improved communicative accuracy; and engagement in amar ma'rūf nahi munkar practices is expected to strengthen community collective efficacy.

Practical implications flow directly from this construction. In families, active mediation and a “digital adab contract” that links the habits of salutation, courteous speech, and decorous humor with device rules can be integrated with “digital sabbath” practices as training in self-control. In schools or madrasahs, Islamic Netiquette modules in PAI/BK subjects can be designed through role-play in polite admonition, simple fact-checking, and attitude rubrics that link the rights of teachers and peers with indicators of online behavior. At the community and mosque level, ukhuwah-based anti-hoax digital literacy programs that combine peer mentoring, community reporting mechanisms, and recognition of exemplarity or moral courage have the potential to strengthen a culture of mutual reminder. On the platform and public policy side, behavioral nudges in the form of greeting or salutation reminders, friction before mass forwarding, and user-friendly reporting channels can serve as vehicles for translating values into practice.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations. The document-based qualitative design constrains causal validity and the scope of generalization (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The focus on a single primary text ('Ulwan) opens the possibility of canonical bias, and the translation of concepts from classical texts to modern platform ecosystems may generate misalignments of meaning. The selection of secondary literature followed strict criteria but may still have missed contrary evidence. These limitations require caution in extrapolating the results to diverse populations, contexts, and platforms.

The research agenda going forward is therefore clear. The operationalization of constructs—such as a piety–digital self-control scale, an ukhuwah–digital prosociality index, and communication ethics rubrics for schools and families—needs to be developed first so that the concepts can be tested. Cross-site empirical tests through surveys and field experiments will enable testing of the proposed propositions. Longitudinal studies following netiquette curriculum interventions can trace the sustainability of behavioral change. Mixed and comparative approaches—including comparisons between madrasahs and general schools, across age ranges, and across platforms such as chat, short video, and online gaming—will enrich external validity. At the same time, evaluations of policies and feature designs that embed amar ma'rūf principles—such as community-based reporting or cool-down timers—should be tested for their impact on the health of public discourse. Expanding the canon to other works of Islamic social education will strengthen the model's robustness.

In conclusion, 'Ulwan's construction provides a value–practice roadmap for responding to social problems in the digital era/Society 5.0: from value internalization, the formation of social–moral competencies, the application of communication ethics, to community governance. The main contributions of this discussion lie in reframing Islamic social education theory for the digital context, formulating testable mechanisms, and offering implementable guidance across the ecosystems of family, school, community, and platform. Although conceptual and grounded in document analysis, this model offers a solid foundation for practical implementation and empirical testing in subsequent research stages (Abada et al., 2023; Cholil, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Rahayu, 2019; Salgues, 2018; A. P. Sari et al., 2017; 'Ulwan, 2017; Zakaria, 2024).

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that 'Ulwan's four pillars—instilling a noble soul (piety, ukhuwah, īsār, courage), safeguarding others' rights (parents, relatives, neighbors, teachers), social ethics (salām, speaking, joking), and social oversight–critique (amar ma'rūf nahi munkar and the exemplarity of the salaf)—can be coherently mapped onto the digital context. This construction operates through a chain of mechanisms: value internalization (hablumminallāh–hablumminannās) → self-discipline and digital literacy (mediators) → ethical online behavior, with parenting patterns, school culture, and platform

design as moderators. Thus, the research question is answered at the conceptual level in alignment with a document-based qualitative design: the resulting model is able to restrain digital deviations (gadget addiction, disinformation, erosion of empathy) while simultaneously strengthening civil social practices in both offline and online spaces.

We propose the following propositions for empirical testing: (1) the internalization of piety is associated with increased digital self-control (mediator) that reduces deviant online behavior; (2) *ukhuwah* and *iṣār* increase digital prosocial behavior through strengthened empathy; (3) adherence to the ethics of speaking reduces the spread of disinformation through improved communicative accuracy; and (4) engagement in *amar ma'rūf nahi munkar* strengthens community collective efficacy. These effects are moderated by family parenting patterns, school/madrasah culture, and platform design features.

Practical implications can be directly adopted:

- a. Family: active mediation and a “digital adab contract” that links salutation, courteous speech, and decorous humor with device rules; digital sabbath practice to build self-control.
- b. School/Madrasah: Islamic Netiquette modules (role-play in polite admonition, simple fact-checking, attitude rubrics linking teachers'/peers' rights with online behavior).
- c. Community/Mosque: *ukhuwah*-based anti-hoax digital literacy through peer mentoring, community reporting, and recognition of exemplarity/moral courage.
- d. Platform/Policy: nudges—greeting reminders, friction before mass forwarding, and user-friendly reporting channels—to bridge values into practice.

Scope and transferability. The findings are primarily intended for the context of Islamic education, families and adolescents, and the ecosystems of schools/madrasahs, communities, and digital platforms. Transfer to broader contexts requires adaptation and empirical verification.

Limitations. (i) A document-based qualitative design limits causal inference and generalization; (ii) focus on a single primary text (*'Ulwan*) risks canonical bias; (iii) translation of classical concepts to modern platform ecosystems is prone to semantic misalignment; (iv) selection of secondary literature still leaves room for bias. Therefore, extrapolation across populations, contexts, and platforms should be undertaken with caution.

Future research agenda: (1) operationalization of constructs (piety–digital self-control scales, an *ukhuwah*–digital prosociality index, communication ethics rubrics for families/schools); (2) testing of propositions through cross-site surveys and field experiments; (3) longitudinal studies following netiquette curriculum interventions; (4) mixed-comparative approaches across types of institutions, age ranges, and platforms (chat, short video, online gaming); (5) evaluation of policies and features based on *amar ma'rūf*; (6) expanding the canon to other works of Islamic social education to strengthen the model's robustness.

Overall, *'Ulwan's* construction provides a concise yet applicable value–behavior roadmap—from value internalization, the formation of social–moral competencies, and the application of communication ethics, to community governance—and offers a sufficiently solid foundation for targeted implementation and empirical testing in subsequent research stages.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Midi HS is the researcher as well as the sole author of the research report in this study. The researcher independently carried out all activities related to the research, starting from planning the study, preparing research funding, conducting the research, and writing the research report.

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Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of Interest's statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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