



Learning From the Perspective of Islamic Educational Psychology in the Age of Digital Distractions

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Abstract: The digital age has brought fundamental changes to the educational landscape; however, it has also given rise to the phenomenon of digital distraction, which has a serious impact on the quality of student learning. Uncontrolled smartphone use, social media addiction, and dependence on short-form digital content have been shown to reduce students' concentration, motivation to learn, and psychological well-being. Amid these challenges, Islamic Educational Psychology offers a holistic conceptual framework for understanding and addressing these issues. This study aims to examine learning concepts from the perspective of Islamic Educational Psychology as a response to the increasingly widespread digital distractions. The method employed is library research using a content analysis approach on literature sources, comprising international and national articles. The findings indicate that the concepts of fitrah, self-control, and Islamic epistemology provide a solid foundation for developing learning strategies resilient to digital distractions. Islamic Educational Psychology is not merely reactive but offers preventive solutions grounded in spiritual and moral values. This study contributes to the development of contemporary Islamic educational theory that is adaptive to the challenges of the digital age.

Keyword : learning, Islamic educational psychology, digital addiction

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Introduction

The development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the way people interact, communicate, and learn. However, behind these advancements lies a serious threat that has now become a global concern: the phenomenon of digital distraction in the field of education. Uncontrolled smartphone use among students has been shown to trigger decreased concentration, sleep disturbances, social anxiety, and even depression (Qiu et al., 2024). Recent research indicates that Generation Alpha – those born after 2010 – are growing up in a digital ecosystem almost entirely mediated by screens, so their digital habits profoundly shape their ways of thinking and learning (Routray et al., 2026). On the other hand, smartphone addiction among college students has been shown to have a negative correlation with self-regulation and academic performance (Kanthawongs et al., 2016). A systematic review by Martin et al. (2025), which analyzed hundreds of studies, confirms that digital distractions are not merely an issue of individual behavior, but rather a structural challenge for 21st-

century education that requires a comprehensive, interdisciplinary conceptual and practical response rooted in the values held by students (Martin et al., 2025).

Various studies have sought to map the challenges of digital distractions in education from diverse perspectives. (Güngör, 2024; MCGarr, 2024) examined educators' perspectives on digital distractions in the classroom, while (Alam et al., 2025) explored how smartphones can be transformed from a source of distraction into a productive tool for learning engagement. (Qu et al., 2025) even identified the hidden creative potential behind smartphone use among vocational students. Nevertheless, these studies generally rely on Western psychological approaches and secular pedagogy, thus failing to adequately address the spiritual and moral dimensions that form the core of character development within the Islamic educational tradition. (Azman, 2025) have indeed touched upon digital integration in Islamic religious education, and (Puspitasari et al., 2025) have addressed Islamic educational psychology in the digital age; however, neither has systematically integrated the framework of Islamic Educational Psychology with the phenomenon of digital distraction in a comprehensive manner. It is this gap—the absence of a synthesis between classical Islamic learning theory and the challenges of contemporary digital distractions—that constitutes the novelty and primary justification of this study.

Based on the identified research gaps, this study aims to examine and synthesize learning concepts from the perspective of Islamic Educational Psychology as a conceptual framework for addressing the challenges posed by digital distractions. More specifically, this study seeks to: first, map the impact of digital distractions on the learning process based on contemporary literature; second, explore core learning concepts in the Islamic tradition such as *fitrah*, *ta'allam*, and self-control; third, to analyze the relevance of Islamic Educational Psychology as an integrative discipline in addressing the issue of digital distractions; and fourth, to formulate theoretical contributions for the development of Islamic education that is adaptive to the dynamics of the digital era. The urgency of these objectives is reinforced by (Jayanti & Evendi, 2025), who assert that Islamic Educational Psychology possesses a wealth of theoretical resources that have not yet been fully optimized in the context of contemporary education, as well as (Kartika, 2025), who document various practical applications of Islamic educational psychology in schools. Thus, this research is not merely descriptive but also oriented toward the development of an operational and applicable theoretical framework for practitioners of Islamic education.

This study argues that Islamic Educational Psychology is not only relevant but actually excels in addressing digital disturbances because it possesses strong epistemological roots and a holistic value orientation. The Islamic intellectual tradition has long formulated a concept of deep learning: (Harahap, 2019) explains that the terms *ta'allama*, *darasa*, and *thalaba* in the Qur'an contain dimensions of earnestness, depth, and active pursuit of knowledge that inherently reject digital superficiality. Al-Ghazali, as examined by (Hermawan, 2014), emphasizes that true learning requires clarity of heart and focus of intention—two elements that directly contradict the culture of digital distraction. Furthermore, (Ahyar, 2026) demonstrate that Ibn Sina's concept of *fitrah* paves the way for deep learning that aligns with human innate potential. The epistemological foundations of Islam, as examined by (Hani Zahrani, Anwar Dhobith, 2022), affirm that knowledge is not merely information, but rather a

light that requires the readiness of the soul. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study is: the systematic integration of the framework of Islamic Educational Psychology will produce a learning model that is not only resistant to digital distractions but also capable of shaping the character of Muslim students of integrity in the digital age.

Methodology

This study employs a library research approach using a systematic literature review design. The units of analysis in this study are scientific articles discussing three main themes, namely: digital disruption in education, the concept of Islamic learning, and Islamic Educational Psychology, as also applied by (Jayanti & Evendi, 2025) and (Martin et al., 2025) in their literature reviews. The data sources consist of 25 scientific articles selected through purposive sampling, including 13 international articles indexed in Scopus and reputable databases such as ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, and ERIC, as well as 12 national articles from Sinta-accredited journals. Data collection was conducted through systematic literature review by searching for articles using the keywords: digital distraction, Islamic educational psychology, smartphones in education, Islamic learning, and Islamic educational psychology, covering the years 2012–2026. The collected data was then analyzed using content analysis, following these stages: data reduction, theme categorization, interpretation, and cross-literature synthesis to produce cohesive and comprehensive conceptual findings.

Result and Discussion

The Phenomenon of Digital Distractions in the Context of Education

Digital distractions have become one of the most pressing challenges in contemporary education. A systematic review conducted by (Martin et al., 2025) of hundreds of studies identified three main categories of digital distractions in the classroom: the use of smartphones for non-academic purposes, constant social media notifications, and compulsive consumption of digital entertainment content. Collectively, these three categories erode students' ability to concentrate, weaken working memory, and hinder the development of deep understanding. (McGarr, 2024) emphasizes that educators in various countries face a serious dilemma: on one hand, digital technology opens up opportunities for innovative learning, yet on the other, it creates an ecosystem of distractions that is difficult to control in the classroom. In line with this, (Güngör, 2024) found that teachers consistently report a decline in student engagement that correlates directly with the intensity of digital device use. This situation indicates that the issue of digital distraction is not merely a matter of individual discipline, but rather a pedagogical challenge requiring a systematic and planned response from all stakeholders in education.

The impact of digital distractions does not stop at the academic level, but extends more deeply into the psychological and social dimensions of students' lives. (Qiu et al., 2024) in their cross-sectional study among college students identified an alarming causal chain: smartphone distraction triggers social withdrawal, which in turn increases digital stress, and ultimately leads to symptoms of clinical

depression.(Addai & Addai, 2026) reinforces these findings by identifying the psychological mechanism of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) as the link between digital dependence and sleep disturbances, which directly impact students' cognitive performance. Furthermore,(Chen et al., 2026), through machine learning analysis of large-scale survey data, demonstrated that uncontrolled smartphone usage patterns are significantly correlated with an increased risk of depression. Interestingly,(Qu et al., 2025) found an important nuance: the impact of smartphones is not always negative –targeted use can actually stimulate creativity –so the approach needed is not merely a ban, but rather guidance based on clear values and goals.

Table 1. Summary of Studies on the Phenomenon of Digital Distractions in Education

No	Aspect	Key Findings
1	Systematic review: causes, consequences & prevention of digital distractions	Three main categories: non-academic smartphone use, social media notifications, compulsive digital entertainment; collectively erode concentration, weaken working memory, and hinder deep understanding.
2	Educators' perspectives on digital distraction in pre-service teacher education	Educators face a dilemma: digital technology opens innovative opportunities yet creates an uncontrollable distraction ecosystem; a serious challenge for classroom pedagogy.
3	Teachers' views on digital distraction in the classroom	Teachers consistently report a decline in student engagement directly correlated with the intensity of digital device use in the classroom.
4	Cross-sectional study on smartphones, social withdrawal, and depression among college students	Causal chain identified: smartphone distraction → social withdrawal → digital stress → clinical depression symptoms among college students.
5	Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), sleep quality, and digital dependence	FOMO identified as psychological mechanism linking digital dependence to sleep disturbances, which directly impairs students' cognitive performance.
6	Machine learning analysis of smartphone use patterns and depression risk	Uncontrolled smartphone usage patterns are significantly correlated with increased risk of depression based on large-scale survey data analysis.
7	Smartphone use and adolescent creativity among Chinese vocational students	Smartphone impact is not always negative; targeted use can stimulate creativity. Guidance grounded in clear values is needed rather than outright prohibition.

Source : (Addai & Addai, 2026; Chen et al., 2026; Güngör, 2024; Martin et al., 2025; MCGarr, 2024; Qiu et al., 2024; Qu et al., 2025)

The Concept of Learning from an Islamic Perspective

Islam, as a civilization of knowledge, possesses a rich conceptual tradition regarding the nature and process of learning, long before modern psychology formulated its theories.(Harahap, 2019) conducted an in-depth study of three Qur'anic terms referring to learning activities: ta'allama, which means studying something earnestly and repeatedly; darasa, which involves deep and critical examination; and thalaba, which emphasizes active and motivated seeking. Together, these three concepts form a portrait of the ideal learner in Islam: one who is active, diligent,

critical, and driven by intrinsic motivation rooted in spiritual awareness. These characteristics are diametrically opposed to learning behaviors shaped by a superficial digital culture, where information is consumed passively, shallowly, and in a fragmented manner. Thus, the concept of Qur'anic learning has inherently contained an antithesis to the culture of digital distraction long before the phenomenon emerged, making it relevant as a normative framework for responding to the challenges of the digital age.

Classical Islamic intellectual tradition features two central figures whose ideas are highly relevant to the challenges of learning in the digital age. (Hermawan, 2014) provides an in-depth analysis of Al-Ghazali's view, which asserts that true learning (*ta'allum haqiqi*) can only occur when the heart (*qalb*) is in a state of purity, focus, and freedom from worldly distractions – a prerequisite that directly challenges the digital multitasking culture dominating the learning styles of today's generation. Al-Ghazali views distraction not merely as a technical obstacle, but as a spiritual ailment that must be cured through self-discipline and the purification of intent. Meanwhile, (Ahyar, 2026) explore the concept of *fitrah* in Ibn Sina's thought as the foundation of deep learning: humans are born with innate intellectual and spiritual potential that can only develop optimally in a state of spiritual equilibrium. Complement this framework with an Islamic epistemology that views knowledge not merely as factual information, but as light (*nur*) that illuminates both the mind and the heart simultaneously, demanding a state of complete spiritual readiness – a condition that is impossible to achieve amidst a flood of digital notifications (Hani Zahrani, Anwar Dhobith, 2022).

Table 2. Summary of Studies on Learning Concepts from an Islamic Perspective

No.	Aspect	Key Concepts
1	Qur'anic terms for deep learning: <i>ta'allama</i> , <i>darasa</i> , <i>thalaba</i>	<i>Ta'allama</i> (earnest, repeated study), <i>darasa</i> (deep critical examination), <i>thalaba</i> (active, motivated seeking) – collectively forming an ideal learner profile diametrically opposed to passive digital culture.
2	Al-Ghazali's concept of true learning (<i>ta'allum haqiqi</i>)	True learning requires purity of heart (<i>qalb</i>) and clarity of intention; digital multitasking is a spiritual ailment to be cured through self-discipline and purification of intent.
3	Ibn Sina's concept of <i>fitrah</i> as foundation of learning	<i>Fitrah</i> (innate human potential) develops optimally only in spiritual equilibrium; deep learning aligns with this inherent intellectual and spiritual potential.
4	Islamic epistemological foundations of education	Knowledge is not merely information but "light" (<i>nur</i>) illuminating mind and heart simultaneously, requiring complete spiritual readiness – impossible to achieve amidst constant digital notifications.

Source : (Ahyar, 2026; Hani Zahrani, Anwar Dhobith, 2022; Harahap, 2019; Hermawan, 2014)

Islamic Educational Psychology as a Framework for Analysis

Islamic Educational Psychology is an integrative discipline that combines the principles of scientific psychology with the foundational values, epistemology, and anthropology of Islam to understand and optimize the human learning process in a holistic manner. (Hadziq, 2019), in his study of the thought of Zakiah Daradjat—a pioneer of Indonesian Islamic educational psychology—explains that this discipline does not separate the psychological dimension from the spiritual dimension: mental health, learning motivation, and character formation are viewed as an interconnected whole that mutually influence one another. Zakiah Daradjat specifically emphasizes that a spiritual vacuum is the root of various psychological disturbances among students, including the tendency to seek refuge in compulsive digital stimulation. In their comprehensive literature review, (Jayanti & Evendi, 2025) identify that Islamic Educational Psychology has successfully articulated theories regarding motivation, memory, moral development, and intelligence that are both empirically grounded and rooted in Islamic values, thereby better addressing the needs of Muslim students compared to conventional educational psychology approaches that are secular and culture-blind.

The relevance of Islamic educational psychology grows stronger when confronted with the reality of a digital generation that requires guidance in values, not merely behavior management. (Kartika, 2025) document various practical applications of Islamic educational psychology in schools that have successfully enhanced students' intrinsic motivation, discipline, and psychological well-being through an approach grounded in Islamic values. (Puspitasari et al., 2025) explicitly contextualize Islamic educational psychology within the challenges of the digital age, offering solutions grounded in the concepts of *tawazun* (balance), *muraqabah* (awareness of Allah's oversight), and *muhasabah* (self-reflection) as mechanisms for transcendent self-regulation. (Sasmita, 2022) emphasize the importance of educational psychology for the digital generation by demonstrating that a values-based approach is more effective and sustainable than an approach based solely on technological restrictions. Meanwhile, (Efendi, 2025) analyze the psychological factors influencing learning from an Islamic perspective, finding that the integration of spiritual dimensions consistently enhances the quality of both the learning process and outcomes. Taken together, these

findings confirm the position of Islamic Educational Psychology as an analytical framework that is not only theoretically valid but also practically effective.

Islamic Educational Psychology Solutions for Addressing Digital Distractions

The response of Islamic educational psychology to digital addiction is both preventive and curative, focusing on the development of strong inner character rather than merely the enforcement of external regulations. (Erhamwilda, 2024) identified that the development of self-control based on Islamic values is the most fundamental strategy in protecting students from the pitfalls of digital addiction. The concepts of mujahadah (sincerely striving against one's desires) and riyadhah (spiritual exercises) in Islamic tradition directly cultivate the ability to delay gratification—a critical psychological competency proven to be strongly correlated with resilience against digital distractions. (Ainun, 2025) reinforce this argument by demonstrating that a psychological approach in Islamic education that integrates spiritual, intellectual, and physical dimensions produces students who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess emotional and spiritual maturity that serves as a natural bulwark against digital addiction. Thus, the Islamic solution is not repressive but formative: shaping individuals who inherently possess the capacity to manage themselves amidst a sea of digital stimuli.

At the practical and institutional levels, several approaches have proven effective in integrating Islamic values with the management of digital technology in educational settings. (Azman, 2025) found that Islamic religious education teachers who integrate digital technology in a planned and values-based manner are able to create more meaningful and distraction-resistant learning experiences, with the key to success lying in strengthening the awareness of intention (niyyah) and spiritual orientation in every digital activity. On the other hand, (Kopecka-piech, 2024) offers a complementary perspective from outside the Islamic tradition by demonstrating that “digital disconnection”—the practice of intentionally disconnecting from digital devices—when carried out consciously and in a structured manner within a family context, has been shown to improve the quality of social relationships and physical activity. These findings resonate strongly with the Islamic concepts of qana’ah (contentment) and zuhud (detachment from the material world). Furthermore, (Choy et al., 2026) identify the role of parental mediation in children’s use of short-form video content as a practical strategy that, when grounded in Islamic values regarding the responsibility of care (amanah), can serve as a comprehensive and sustainable family solution to address the challenges of digital disruption.

Table 3. Summary of Studies on Islamic Educational Psychology as a Framework for Analysis

No.	Aspect	Key Findings
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1	Zakiah Daradja's perspective on Islamic Educational Psychology	Psychological and spiritual dimensions are inseparable; a spiritual vacuum is identified as the root of psychological disturbances including compulsive digital stimulation-seeking.
2	Literature review on Islamic Educational Psychology and its implementation	Articulates theories on motivation, memory, moral development, and intelligence that are both empirically grounded and rooted in Islamic values, surpassing secular educational psychology approaches.
3	Practical applications of Islamic Educational Psychology in schools	Islamic values-based approaches successfully enhanced students' intrinsic motivation, discipline, and psychological well-being in institutional settings.
4	Islamic Educational Psychology in the digital age: challenges and solutions	Tawazun (balance), muraqabah (awareness of Allah's oversight), and muhasabah (self-reflection) function as effective transcendent self-regulation mechanisms for the digital generation.
5	Importance of educational psychology for the digital generation	Values-based approach is more effective and sustainable for the digital generation than approaches relying solely on technological restrictions.
6	Psychological factors influencing learning from an Islamic perspective	Integration of spiritual dimensions consistently enhances the quality of both the learning process and its outcomes.

Source : (Efendi, 2025; Hadziq, 2019; Jayanti & Evendi, 2025; Kartika, 2025; Puspitasari et al., 2025; Sasmita, 2022)

Conclusion

This study concludes that Islamic Educational Psychology offers a holistic, integrative, and superior conceptual framework for addressing the challenges posed by digital distractions, which increasingly threaten the quality of learning among the contemporary Muslim generation. The three most important findings of this study are: first, classical Islamic concepts such as fitrah, ta'allama, and clarity of heart in learning inherently contain an antithesis to the culture of digital distraction; second, transcendent self-regulatory mechanisms such as muraqabah, muhasabah, and tawazun have proven to be more effective and sustainable compared to approaches relying solely on technology restrictions; third, the integration of spiritual dimensions into learning consistently enhances students' intrinsic motivation and psychological resilience against digital distractions. The strength of this research lies in its cross-tradition synthesis—systematically integrating contemporary Western educational psychology literature with classical Islamic intellectual heritage. The limitation of this study is the lack of primary data-based empirical studies that directly test the effectiveness of the Islamic Educational Psychology approach in the context of digital

distractions; therefore, future experimental and quasi-experimental studies are highly recommended.

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