



The relevance of buya hamka and kh's educational thoughts. hasyim asy'ari in answering the crisis of character in the digital era

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ABSTRACT

Character crises in the digital era—such as the erosion of communication manners, the rise of false information, and violations of academic integrity—demand a reformulation of educational ethics rooted in spiritual and rational values. This research aims to synthesize the educational thinking of Buya Hamka and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari and analyze its relevance in responding to the moral challenges of cyber society. Through a qualitative approach based on library research, the results of the study show that Buya Hamka emphasizes education based on a monotheistic worldview that balances intellectual and spiritual potential, fights for freedom of thought (*hurriyyah al-fikr*), and forms an independent personality with noble character. Meanwhile, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari constructs education as a dimension of spiritual worship that prioritizes the virtue of *adab* over knowledge (*al-adab qabl al-'ilm*), purification of the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*), and the blessing of knowledge manifested in real deeds. The synthesis of these two ideas presents a holistic educational ethical framework that combines internal awareness (*muraqabah*), intellectual humility, and moral accountability. The implications of this study provide a foundation for the formation of a polite, critical, and responsible digital civility during rapid technological developments.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology in the digital era has changed the foundation of human life as a whole, not only in the technical-operational realm but also in the cultural order, epistemology, and patterns of social interaction (Haikal et al., 2026). The presence of the internet, social media, and artificial intelligence (*Artificial Intelligence*) create a new ecosystem that determines the way young people think, communicate, and build their identity (Cindrakasih et al., 2026). In the realm of education, this digital disruption shifts the center of gravity of learning from the formal authority of school institutions and teacher figures towards an open information landscape that is abundant but not selected (Saxena, 2025). The flexibility and speed of access to

information offered by the digital space on the one hand broadens the horizons of knowledge, but on the other hand loosens the ethical ties and socio-cultural norms that have so far maintained the harmony of civilization (Fatimah, 2025). As a result, the process of socializing values and building the character of the younger generation experiences constant tension between the noble values taught by the family and educational institutions (Zayyana et al., 2025).

This shift in digital culture has fundamental implications for the emergence of the phenomenon *crisis of character* (character crisis), which is a condition when there is moral degradation, disorientation of values, and the inability of individuals to articulate basic ethics in daily actions (Mua and Heatubun, 2024). In the digital space, this character crisis manifests in various forms of deviant behavior that are increasingly worrying (Shafika et al., 2025). The decline in manners and politeness in communication is evident from the rampant hate language (*Hate Speech*), destructive comments, as well as a loss of respect for differences of opinion (Sazali, H., & Cipta, 2026).

The phenomenon of character crisis in the digital space is strengthened by various data and empirical research results in the Indonesian context. A report by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2024) shows that the internet penetration rate in Indonesia has reached 79.5%, with the largest proportion of users coming from the adolescent and young adult age groups (Gen Z and Gen Alpha). However, this high accessibility has not been balanced with an adequate level of understanding of digital *ethics*. A report by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology together with the Katadata Insight Center (2023) indicates that the digital ethics index of Indonesian people is still in the medium category and is vulnerable to a decline amid the rapid flow of disinformation. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI, 2023) also noted an increase in cases of cyber-based violence and digital bullying involving school-age children, both as perpetrators and victims. This empirical reality confirms the gaping gap between technical-operational proficiency in using digital devices and ethical-spiritual maturity in utilizing these technologies.

This crisis condition indicates a fundamental limitation in the modern education paradigm that tends to be techno-positivistic and pragmatic. Modern education is often trapped in cognitive achievement, mastery of technological literacy, and purely vocational efficiency, while ignoring the dimension of spirituality and deep character development (Ojha & Dhar, 2024). When education is reduced to just a means of transferring academic knowledge and an instrument of manpower, educational institutions fail to equip students with a solid moral compass (Sharma, 2021). Without a strong foundation of faith, morals, manners, and social responsibility, the technological abilities mastered by students have the potential to become destructive instruments that damage the social order (Hasbullah et al., 2025). Therefore, it is necessary to revitalize educational thinking that can integrate intellectual and technological sophistication with spiritual depth and ethical firmness, as contained in the ideas of Islamic scholars and educational figures of the archipelago.

In the context of the search for a conceptual basis, Buya Hamka's educational thinking offers integral, rational, and progressive ideas (Alfian, 2019). This idea sits education as a process of formation *And then there's the Smash Bros.* through coordination between reason, faith, and morals (Hamka, 2015b). For Hamka, knowledge cannot be separated from tauhid; science and technology are the means to understand the greatness of Allah and serve humanity (Hamka, 2015b). Hamka emphasized the importance of the concept of "freedom of the soul" (*Hurriyyah al-nafs*), which is a mental-spiritual state when a person is free from false thinking, fear, and blind taklid, but remains firmly attached to divine values (Kumalasari & Wibowo, 2021). In Hamka's view, education must produce individuals who dare to think critically, have a broad view, have a dynamic spirit, and have a firm personality in facing the changing times (Hamka, 2016). Hamka's thinking provides a foundation for strengthening rational obedience and responsible freedom, which are urgently needed by students in filtering the rapid flow of information in the digital era (M. F. Arifin, 2024).

On the other hand, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari presents a very strong foundation of educational ethics based on the tradition of purification of the soul (*Tazkiyatun nafs*) and the bestowal of manners (Cahyaningsih et al., 2026). In his main work, *Adab al-'Alim wa al-Muta'allim*, Stuart (2021) affirming that adab occupies a central position and precedes the search for knowledge (*Al-Adab Qabl Al-'Ilm*). Useful knowledge (*'Ilm Naft'*) is not just an accumulation of cognitive information, but a divine light that can only dwell in a clean soul and is decorated with moral karimah. Hasyim Ash'ari systematically formulates the ethics of students and the ethics of educators, which include sincerity of intention, cleanliness of heart from reprehensible natures, patience in seeking knowledge, and the embodiment of knowledge into real deeds (*Iqtida' al-'ilm al-'amal*) (M. F. Arifin, 2024). In addition, the concept of respect for teachers and the structuring of scientific relations offered by Hasyim Asy'ari plays a key role in building moral authority, intellectual humility, and hierarchical awareness in pursuing knowledge (Mislawaty and Febriyanti, 2025).

Although the thoughts of Buya Hamka and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari has been widely studied by previous researchers, most of the literature still studies the ideas of the two figures partially and separately. Existing studies generally examine Hamka's thought in the framework of Islamic education philosophy or modernism (Cahyaningsih et al., 2026; Siti, 2021) or explore the ideas of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari is limited to the realm of Islamic boarding school manners and traditional character education (Arifin et al., 2022; Mas'ady Ashabul, 2025). Based on these gaps, this study aims to analyze the concept of education according to Buya Hamka and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, identify the similarities and differences in thought between the two, and examine their relevance to the development of contemporary Islamic education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library *research* through a comparative approach. The focus of the research is directed to identify the educational thoughts of Buya Hamka and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari and identify their relevance in responding to character crises in the digital era. The primary source of research includes Buya Hamka's works that discuss education, morals, personality, and outlook on life. Meanwhile, the primary source of KH's thought. Hasyim Asy'ari. Secondary sources include academic books, scientific journal articles, and official reports that are relevant to the thoughts of the two figures and character problems in the digital era. Data is collected through documentation techniques by identifying, recording, and classifying ideas about science, faith, morals, manners, and social responsibility.

Data analysis is carried out through *content analysis* and comparative analysis. Content analysis is used specifically to identify educational concepts that are explicitly contained in the works of each character. Furthermore, comparative analysis is used to identify similarities, differences, and intersections of thought between the two. This comparative identification is focused on educational goals, the relationship between science, faith, and morals, personality formation, manners in the educational process, and the relationship between science and charity and social responsibility. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of literature sources and consistent re-reading of the text (*audit trail*) to ensure the accuracy of the data identified. The results of the comparative analysis are then studied contextually to identify their relevance to the phenomenon of character crises in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Buya Hamka's Educational Thoughts

Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah's (Buya Hamka) educational thinking is rooted in the worldview of monotheism which places humans as dignified beings with balanced intellectual and spiritual potential. According to Hamka (2015) in his main work, *Philosophy of Life* emphasizing that the essence of education is the process of guiding the development of human physical,

intellectual, and spiritual potential in order to reach the level of *And then there's the Smash Bros.* (perfect man). The ultimate goal of education is not limited to the accumulation of knowledge or the attainment of social status, but rather to know God (*Ma'rifatullah*), improve moral quality, and realize benefits for humanity. Education in Hamka's conception is a means of liberating human beings from the darkness of ignorance to the brightness of rational and civilized faith.

Epistemologically, Hamka reconstructs the close relationship between knowledge, faith, morals, and charity. According to Hamka in *Institutions of Wisdom*, true knowledge is knowledge that is illuminated by the light of faith, which in turn gives birth to *Ethics* or noble morals (Hamka, 1992). Faith without knowledge will be trapped in blind fanaticism and passivity, while knowledge without faith will provoke damage due to the loss of an ethical compass. Morality is not seen as a rigid theological doctrine, but rather an outward manifestation of the depth of faith and intellect. Hamka emphasized that the fruits of knowledge and morality are *righteous deeds* tangible action that has a positive impact on the social environment. Thus, the educational process must be able to transform academic knowledge into concrete social ethics.

Formation of mind and personality (*Shaykhsiyyah*) became the central focus in Hamka's thought. In his book *Personal*, Hamka, (2016) mapping that superior personality is not formed instantly, but through a consistent character education process, including strengthening thinking, emotional structuring, and disciplining will. Ethics, according to Hamka, consists of the integration of intelligent intellect, subtle feelings, and strong will. A person who has a strong personality is an individual who can control his passions, have firm life principles, and exude humility and sincerity in interacting with others. Education is tasked with guiding students so that they do not become a trailing person (*Ammiyyah*) but become an independent and characterful person.

KH's Educational Thoughts Hasyim Asy'ari

KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's educational thinking is conceptualized systematically in his monumental work, *Adab al-'Alim wa al-Muta'allim*. Hasyim Asy'ari sat down to seek knowledge as part of worship *Mahdha* which rests on a holy intention and deep spiritual awareness. The essence of seeking knowledge according to Ash'ari, (2014) not merely to obtain a formal title, worldly position, or comparative superiority over others, but a means to worship Allah, revive Islamic law, and erode self-ignorance. Therefore, the orientation of education is focused on the formation of personal and social piety based on submission to divine values.

The formulation of the relationship between knowledge, morals, and charity in the thought of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari placed *adab* in the most prime position (*Al-Adab Qabl Al-'Ilm*). Abundant knowledge without being balanced by noble manners is seen as something dangerous, because it can trigger intellectual arrogance (*kibr*). Ash'ari, (2014) affirms that the main requirement in pursuing knowledge is the straightening of intentions and purification of the soul (*Tazkiyatun nafs*). Students are obliged to cleanse their hearts from spiritual diseases such as resentment against prejudice, envy (*Stuart*), show off (*Riya'*), and self-esteem (*'Ujub*). A clean soul is likened to a fertile soil that is ready to receive seeds of wisdom and useful knowledge (*'Ilm Nafi'*).

In *Adab al-'Alim wa al-Muta'allim*, Hasyim Asy'ari formulated in detail the hierarchy of manners which includes the manners of students and the manners of educators. The manners of students are divided into three main domains: manners towards oneself (such as simplicity, traits) *qana'ah*, and the use of time), manners towards knowledge (maintaining the honor of books/literature and the seriousness of learning), and manners towards educators. Educators are also required to have high manners, such as consistency between words and deeds, mature mastery of the material, affectionate nature to students, and sincerity in teaching without expecting material rewards alone Ash'ari, (2014). Educators are positioned as moral role models (*Uswah Hasanah*) which shapes the character of students through real life experiences.

Respect for teachers (*ta'dzim al-ustadz*) is a crucial pillar in educational ethics initiated by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari. However, this respect needs to be interpreted critically within the framework of scientific ethics, not as blind obedience that kills critical reason. Respect for teachers is rooted in

respect for the framework of scientific transmission (*sanad*) and recognition of the authority of expertise and moral devotion of the educator. Respecting teachers means maintaining the ethics of interaction, listening attentively to explanations, and not degrading the dignity of educators. This ethics aims to create a learning climate filled with respect, *intellectual humility*, and the blessing of knowledge.

The educational process in the view of KH. Hasyim Asy'ari demands high discipline, seriousness (*Ittiqan*), and self-control (*Sāo Paulo*). Pursuing knowledge is seen as a spiritual and intellectual struggle that requires the sacrifice of time, focus, and mental stamina. Students are trained not to easily succumb to laziness, avoid consumptive attitudes, and be able to curb lustful desires that distract from learning goals. This inner discipline becomes a moral defense fortress that prevents students from ethical negligence (Scott, 2014).

The end of the educational process according to KH. Hasyim Asy'ari is the embodiment of knowledge into deeds and social responsibility (*iqtida' al-'ilm al-'amal*). Knowledge that is not practiced is likened to a tree that does not bear fruit (*kash-shajar bi-la thamar*). Educators and students are morally responsible to utilize their knowledge to guide society, uphold justice, and spread peace. The formation of solid adab ultimately produces individuals who are not only insightful, but also have the moral sensitivity to contribute tangibly to the benefit of the people and the nation.

Relevance to Character Crisis in the Digital Era

The escalation of digital technology has given birth to a new public space that is fast-paced, anonymous, and decentralized. On the one hand, the cyber environment expands access to information; on the other hand, this environment triggers a sharp character crisis among the younger generation. The educational thinking of Buya Hamka and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari has axiological relevance in responding to the decline in communication manners, the spread of hoaxes, and cyberbullying. Hamka places ethics, subtlety of feelings, freedom of reason, and responsible freedom as the basis of human behavior. Meanwhile, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari emphasizes the ethics of language, prudence in receiving information, purity of intention, and purification of the soul from malice and hatred. The synthesis of these two ideas can be the basis for the formation of polite, critical, and empathetic digital communication ethics. Digital media users are not only required to maintain the honor of others, but also to verify the truth of information before disseminating it and reject all forms of verbal violence and stigmatization.

In the face of individualism, social media addiction, and instant culture, Hamka emphasizes social responsibility, control of lust by reason, personality independence, patience, and seriousness in undergoing the process. This emphasis is in accordance with KH's thoughts. Hasyim Asy'ari regarding *ukhuwah*, the practice of knowledge for the benefit of society, self-discipline, the use of time, and seriousness in pursuing knowledge. The integration of the two ideas directs the use of digital media to measurable, productive, and socially oriented activities. Thus, technology is not only a means of fulfilling personal pleasure, but also a medium to develop social concern and form a strong learner mentality and appreciate the academic process.

The relevance of both thoughts is also seen in responding to plagiarism, abuse of artificial intelligence, intolerance, and hate speech. Hamka emphasized the importance of intellectual honesty, moral responsibility, the courage to produce work independently, openness, and fairness in responding to differences. As for KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, he places scientific trust, respect for the work of others, humility, and avoidance of the attitude of feeling the most correct as part of scientific manners. The synthesis of these thoughts can be used as a basis for the enforcement of digital academic integrity, especially in the honest and responsible use of artificial intelligence. At the same time, these values support the formation of a digital civilization that is tolerant, moderate, and respectful of diversity.

Furthermore, the problem of freedom without responsibility and the use of technology that is purely pragmatically oriented can be answered through the union of moral freedom with

spiritual awareness. For Hamka, freedom of thought and expression must be directed by divine values and the goal of benefit, while KH. Hasyim Ash'ari emphasizes the awareness of Allah's supervision (*muraqabah*) and the relationship between knowledge and righteous deeds. The meeting of these two ideas results in a framework of moral accountability that not only relies on external supervision, but also on the internal awareness of technology users. Therefore, the use of digital technology needs to be reoriented from pragmatic interests towards the development of education, humanity, the progress of civilization, and the common good.

CONCLUSION

The educational thinking of Buya Hamka and KH. Hasyim Asy'ari complementarily reconstructs the essence of Islamic education that integrates knowledge, faith, adab, and charity as the main foundation in forming a superior personality (*insan kamil*). If Hamka focuses on the balance of intellectual and spiritual potential, freedom of thought, and the formation of a rational and moral independent personality, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari emphasizes the dimension of the search for knowledge as a spiritual worship that places the virtue of adab above knowledge (*al-adab qabl al-'ilm*), the importance of purification of the soul, and the blessing of knowledge manifested in real deeds. The synthesis of these two thoughts presents a very relevant ethical and spiritual framework to respond to character crises in the digital era—such as the phenomenon of hoaxes, erosion of communication manners, social media addiction, to violations of academic integrity and abuse of artificial intelligence—by reorienting technological freedom to internal awareness (*muraqabah*), intellectual honesty, humility, and the public benefit.

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