

Character-Based English Language Education Model in the Era of Digital Transformation

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Abstract

This study aims to formulate and develop a conceptual model of character-based English language education in the era of digital transformation (CBELT-DT). A systematic and rigorous research approach was adopted through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), adhering to the PRISMA 2020 protocol and SPAR-4-SLR framework, to ensure transparency and replicability in synthesizing the literature. The research was conducted using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach on 25 articles published between 2020 and 2025, sourced from Google Scholar, Scopus, and DOAJ. The inclusion criteria focused on the integration of character education, digital literacy, and instructional innovation within English language teaching contexts. Thematic analysis identified five main themes: the integration of character values in English language learning, the reinforcement of digital literacy and ethics, media and instructional technology innovation, the development of intercultural competence, and the philosophical and cultural foundations of character education. The findings indicate that the CBELT-DT model emphasizes synergy between teacher readiness, technology-based instructional strategies, the internalization of character values, and reflective evaluation. This model is rooted in local values with a global orientation and is relevant for strengthening students' academic competence, digital ethics, and identity. The study contributes to curriculum development, teacher capacity building, and the formulation of adaptive educational policies in response to the challenges of the digital era. Further research is recommended for empirical testing of the CBELT-DT model and the development of valid digital character assessment instruments. These findings underscore the urgency of integrating character education, digital literacy, and global competence into English language learning as a strategic response to the dynamics of 21st-century education.

Keywords

Character Education; Digital Literacy; Digital Transformation; Global Competence; Instructional Innovation

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1. INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation in education has triggered a profound paradigm shift in learning processes worldwide, including in the teaching of English as an international language. Advances in information and communication technology (ICT) have not only revolutionized teaching methods and



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the ways students learn, but have also influenced patterns of thinking, social interactions, and the construction of values in modern society (Fernandez-Gutierrez et al., 2020; Lawrence & Tar, 2018). In the digital era, academic proficiency alone is no longer sufficient; students are now expected to think critically, ethically, creatively, adaptively, and possess strong character to face the increasing complexity of an interconnected global world.

In the Indonesian context, character education occupies a central position as the primary mandate for the development of a holistic human being—one who is not only intellectually intelligent but also faithful, devout, and of noble character (Susilo et al., 2022). This is clearly mandated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which emphasizes that the function of national education is to develop potential and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation. However, in practice, the integration of character education into the learning process—especially in English language teaching—continues to face various conceptual and implementation challenges (Atmazaki et al., 2020; Fardita et al., 2022; Pohan & Malik, 2018; Ratnawati et al., 2024).

English, as a global communication medium, holds strategic potential for instilling character values and building students' global competence (Milal et al., 2020; Qoyyimah, 2016; Wijaya, 2024). Through language learning, students not only acquire linguistic knowledge but also come to know and internalize cultural values, communication ethics, and cross-cultural empathy (Jiang & Wang, 2018; Kim & Huh, 2025). However, the rapid development of digital technology has given rise to new paradoxes. On the one hand, technology expands spaces for global collaboration and encourages creativity-based learning; on the other, it has also brought about digital moral crises such as cyberbullying, hate speech, online plagiarism, misuse of social media, and declining empathy in virtual interactions (Garaigordobil & Martínez-valderrey, 2018; Keitemoge, 2018; Sezer & Tuncer, 2021; Singh, 2023). This phenomenon clarifies that digital advancement does not automatically parallel the maturity of students' character.

Such conditions demand a strategic repositioning of English language learning in the digital era—not merely as the transfer of linguistic competence, but as an integrative vehicle to simultaneously strengthen character, digital literacy, and global competence. Within this framework, teachers are not just language instructors but also designers of character and digital ethics, as well as moral facilitators who instill values of honesty, responsibility, and empathy through meaningful language communication (Gleeson & Flaherty, 2016; Gui et al., 2020; Heeswijk, 2021). In line with this, several other researchers emphasize the urgency of value-based learning approaches to balance cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in English language (Komalasari et al., 2023; Potgieter et al., 2025; Prahaladaiah, 2021).

Furthermore, character education within the digital ecosystem cannot be separated from the framework of Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) initiated by Soares & Lopes (2020) and UNESCO (2024). This framework emphasizes the importance of developing three main competencies for digital citizens: digital skills, ethical awareness, and intercultural empathy. In the context of English language learning, these competencies are highly relevant because language functions as both a means of communication and a bridge for values and culture across nations (Jiang & Wang, 2018; Kim & Huh, 2025). Through digital character education, students are expected to grow into knowledgeable, ethical, and responsible digital citizens.

In addition to character reinforcement and digital literacy, English language teaching in the global era must also integrate local character values with global competencies. The theory of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) developed by Byram (1997) asserts that language learning should foster openness, curiosity towards other cultures, knowledge of cultural practices, as well as skills to interpret and relate across cultures (Byram & Wagner, 2018). This means that effective English teaching is not only focused on linguistic aspects, but also plays a role in cultivating cultural sensitivity and global moral awareness, enabling students to appreciate differences, communicate empathetically, and participate actively in a pluralistic global society.

However, empirical reality in the field shows that the implementation of character education in digital learning, particularly in English language teaching, is still dominated by conceptual approaches and lacks empirical evidence. Implementation frameworks such as Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) by Mishra & Koehler (2006) and the SAMR Model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) by Puentedura (2013) actually offer a comprehensive basis for integrating technology in learning. However, both models are still rarely optimized to measure the effectiveness of character value internalization in digital English language teaching in Indonesia. Most research still focuses on the use of digital media rather than on the holistic dimension of character formation. In fact, both TPACK and SAMR have great potential to promote innovative and reflective digital character learning—TPACK enables teachers to design synergistic learning between pedagogy, content, and technology, while SAMR can elevate learning from mere technology use to the transformation of students' behaviors and values.

This research gap indicates the need for the development of a new model that not only emphasizes technological mastery but also stresses the integrated formation of character and digital ethics. The model proposed in this study, namely Character-Based English Language Education in the Era of Digital Transformation (CBELT-DT), aims to fill this gap by integrating national character values, digital literacy, and transformative learning principles. This model is designed as a practical solution for teachers in managing holistic English language learning that builds both linguistic competence and moral and digital competence.

The urgency of this research becomes even more apparent when considering the current socio-educational conditions in Indonesia. Recent survey data Saripudin et al. (2025) and Mariyati & Tandiono (2026) reveal that internet penetration among students has reached more than 90%, yet their critical digital literacy and digital ethics remain low. Many students are still unable to distinguish between freedom of expression and hate speech, or between online collaboration and plagiarism. This situation underscores the importance of integrating English language learning with digital character education as a strategic necessity in facing the challenges of the Society 5.0 era.

Beyond its national relevance, the development of the CBELT-DT model is also globally significant. Education today is moving towards human-centered education, placing human values at the core of digital transformation. Both UNESCO (2024) and OECD (2018) consistently emphasize the importance of balancing technological intelligence with human wisdom in future education. In this context, character education is a moral counterbalance that ensures digital transformation does not lose its ethical direction.

Based on the above, this research is present to answer two main needs: first, the theoretical need to develop a conceptual model of English language education that is able to integrate character values within the digital ecosystem; and second, the practical need for implementable guidelines for teachers and educational institutions in effectively implementing digital character learning. Through the integration of digital literacy, moral ethics, and cultural awareness, English language education can produce a generation of learners who are not only linguistically competent but also possess strong character, digital ethics, and global empathy.

2. METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative research paradigm through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, which is recognized as the most rigorous and transparent method for synthesizing knowledge and mapping the development of a research field. The SLR method enables researchers to comprehensively identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant studies, thus providing a robust foundation for conceptual model development and identifying research gaps.

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, adopting the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol to ensure transparency, replicability, and the quality of literature synthesis. In addition, the implementation of the SLR was strengthened by the Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews (SPAR-4-SLR) framework as developed by Paul et al. (2021), which emphasizes the stages of assembling, arranging, and assessing literature in a systematic and justified manner. This approach was selected as it has proven effective in providing a comprehensive mapping of research developments as well as identifying research gaps and future agendas in the domain of character-based English language education in the digital transformation era (Page et al., 2021; Paul et al., 2021).

The data collection process was conducted by searching three major reputable academic databases: Google Scholar, Scopus, and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). The selection criteria for articles included: (1) publication period between 2020–2025; (2) focus on the context of English Language Teaching (ELT); (3) direct and explicit relevance to the themes of character education and digital literacy; and (4) publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals indexed in the three selected databases. The literature search strategy was designed using specific keywords such as "character education," "digital literacy," "English language teaching," and "digital pedagogy," with the application of Boolean operators and filtering techniques to obtain relevant literature coverage. From the initial search, 75 scholarly articles were identified. After a thorough screening process to remove duplicates and apply the predefined exclusion criteria, 50 articles remained. Following the eligibility assessment based on the research focus and methodological relevance, a total of 25 articles were finally included for in-depth content analysis and synthesis. (see PRISMA Flow Diagram in Figure 1).

Data analysis followed the four main stages of PRISMA 2020: (1) identification, i.e., selection of articles based on specific keywords and domain; (2) screening, i.e., checking for completeness, duplicate removal, and relevance check; (3) eligibility, i.e., selection based on topic, method, and research context suitability; and (4) inclusion, i.e., determining articles that met all criteria for further analysis. These stages also refer to the SPAR-4-SLR principles, which recommend the sequential processes of assembling (identification and acquisition), arranging (organization and purification), and assessing (evaluation and reporting) to ensure replicability and justification of decisions throughout the review process (Paul et al., 2021).

Data from the selected articles were extracted and analyzed using a content analysis approach to identify themes, patterns, and conceptual tendencies in previous research, as practiced by Rehman et al. (2019) in SLRs in the field of digital marketing. Each article was classified by year of publication, research method, focus of study, integrated character values, and the digital aspects highlighted. The results of the analysis are visualized in the PRISMA Flow Diagram (Figure 1), which documents the literature selection process from identification to final inclusion. This process ensures transparency, validity, and replicability of the resulting synthesis, as well as guaranteeing that the findings truly represent the latest developments in the field of character-based English language education in the digital era.

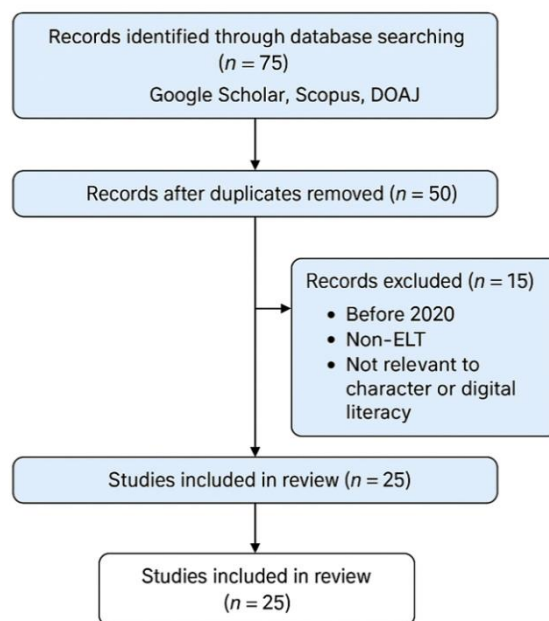


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of Study Selection Process

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

General findings

A review of 25 articles meeting the inclusion criteria reveals a clear overview of the direction and development of research on character-based digital education within English Language Teaching (ELT) over the past five years. Publication mapping indicates a rising trend in the number of studies, especially during the 2023–2024 period. This shows that the issue of digital character education is increasingly becoming a primary focus in language education research, both in Indonesia and globally.

Table 1. Distribution of Articles by Year of Publication, Research Focus, Thematic Characteristics, and Research Methods

Research Focus	Author & Year	Main Thematic Characteristics	Research Method
Character value integration in ELT (2 articles)	Milal et al., (2020)	English teaching materials based on Islamic character values	R&D
	Wulandari et al. (2020)	Integration of local wisdom values (diligence, honesty, politeness, love for local culture) into English materials	R&D
Value-based teaching (3 articles)	Prahaladaiah (2021)	Value-based teaching strategies in English language and literature instruction	Qualitative (case study)
	Ashfihana (2021)	Integration of character education into lesson plans by pre-service teachers	Qualitative (observation, document)
	Saripudin, D., et al., (2021)	Value-based digital storytelling for character building	R&D (Borg & Gall)
Digital literacy & media ethics (5 articles)	Albashrawi et al., (2022)	Impact of social media on empathy, importance of ethical social media use	Quantitative (online survey)
	Fadhilah et al.	Digital literacy & media ethics among	Quantitative (pre-

Research Focus	Author & Year	Main Thematic Characteristics	Research Method
Innovation in technology & interactive media (7 articles)	(2022)	students	post test)
	Lv (2022)	Strategies for developing digital media literacy & legal literacy among teenagers	Mixed-method
	Arafah & Hasyim (2022)	Role of digital literacy in addressing hoaxes & intolerance on social media, ethical information evaluation	Descriptive-analytic
	Utami et al. (2022)	Digital literacy & digital ethics of parents in educating children	Quantitative-descriptive
	Jalaluddin (2023)	Use of innovative learning technologies in foreign language teaching	Qualitative
	Bakeer (2023)	Effects of innovative pedagogy (flipped classroom, blended learning) on EFL learning	Quasi-experiment
	Hossain & Al Hasan (2023)	EdTech innovation (applications, multimedia, games) in EFL learning	Mixed-method
Global character values & cross-cultural collaboration (6 articles)	Liu (2023)	Effectiveness of multimedia & mobile learning (apps, audio, video) in English teaching	Quantitative (MLAS)
	Ningsih (2023)	Use of Slido (digital quizzes, polling) to enhance student engagement & motivation	Mixed-method
	Zhao (2023)	Integration of multimedia & cooperative media in English teaching	Qualitative
	Farida et al. (2024)	Importance of cross-cultural communication & collaboration among students from various countries	Mixed-method
	Xia et al. (2024)	Cross-cultural collaboration through interactive digital platforms (Busuu, HelloTalk)	Mixed-method
	Li & Wei (2024)	Strengthening global identity & cultural self-confidence through foreign language education	Mixed-method
	Nguyễn & Stoller (2024)	Cross-cultural collaboration & principles of successful global collaboration in language education	Qualitative
Development of digital character education model (CBELT-DT) (2 articles)	Tan & Abbas (2024)	Development of global competence & character through character education & citizenship	Qualitative-descriptive
	Zailli (2024)	International education programs, student exchanges, & multicultural curriculum	Qualitative
	Suhra et al. (2025)	Development of an integrative character education model in English teaching	Qualitative (case study)
	Syandri & Munir (2025)	Development & testing of character-based reading materials for English teaching	R&D (ADDIE model)

Based on Table 1 above, the distribution of published articles by year and research method can be described as follows.

a. Distribution of Articles by Year of Publication

The distribution of articles in Table 1 shows a relatively even trend from 2020 to 2025 (including prospective data and in press articles). During the 2020–2022 period, the main research focus was on integrating character values into English language teaching, as well as on digital literacy and media ethics. Articles such as Milal et al., (2020), Wulandari et al. (2020), and several others in 2021–2022, highlight the development of character-based teaching materials, the implementation of character education through teaching strategies, and the importance of digital literacy and ethics in media use.

Entering 2023, there is a significant shift in focus towards learning technology innovation and the use of interactive media, in line with the rapid adoption of EdTech and online learning post-pandemic. Articles such as Jalaluddin (2023), Bakeer (2023), and Liu (2023) document various technological innovations, including flipped classroom, blended learning, mobile learning, and the integration of interactive and multimedia platforms.

In 2024, research attention shifts towards global character values and cross-cultural collaboration in education, responding to the increasingly interconnected world. Articles such as a et al. (2024), Li & Wei (2024), Xia et al. (2024), Tan & Abbas (2024), and Tan & Abbas (2024) discuss the importance of cross-cultural communication, global collaboration, strengthening cultural identity, as well as international exchange programs and multicultural curricula.

Meanwhile, in 2025, articles begin to emphasize the development of integrative character education models based on case studies and innovative teaching materials, indicating continuity in research on character, innovation, and global collaboration. Overall, the distribution of articles by year of publication is presented in Figure 2 below.

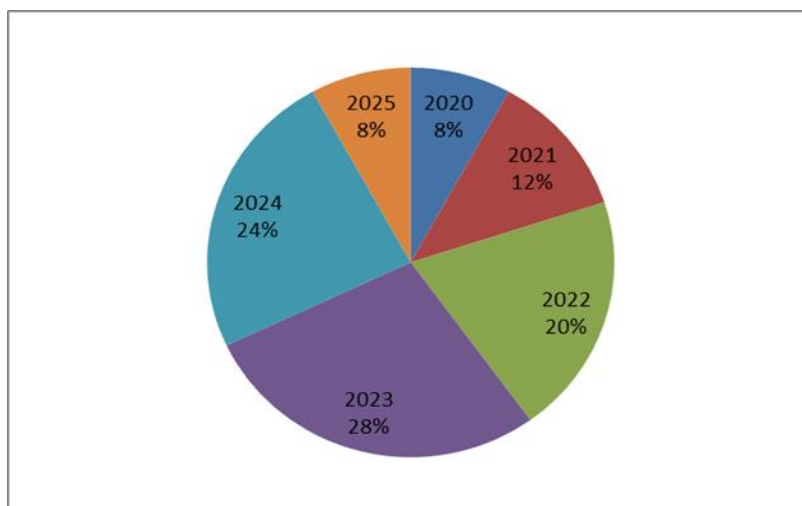


Figure 2. Distribution of Articles by Publication Year

b. Distribution of Articles by Research Method

The articles in Table 1 employ a variety of research methods, which can be grouped as follows:

1) Research and Development (R&D)

R&D methods are most widely used in articles focusing on the development of character-based teaching materials or the integration of local wisdom values (e.g., Milal et al., 2020; D. Saripudin et al., 2021; Syandri & Munir, 2025; Wulandari et al., 2020). Models used vary from ADDIE to Borg & Gall. This approach is applied to produce innovative products (modules, teaching materials, digital media) and to test their effectiveness.

2) Qualitative

Qualitative methods are frequently used to explore character education practices (Ashfihana, 2021; Prahaladaiah, 2021), teacher strategies, and the development of integrative learning models (Suhra et al., 2025). Techniques include interviews, observations, document analysis, and thematic narratives. Cross-cultural collaboration studies, such as Nguyễn & Stoller (2024), are typically narrative-based with case studies, reflective experiences, and autoethnography.

3) Quantitative and Mixed-Methods

Research focusing on digital literacy, media ethics, and technology innovation in teaching tends to use quantitative surveys, pre-test/post-test, or quasi-experimental designs (Albashrawi et al., 2022; Bakeer, 2023; Fadhilah et al., 2022; Liu, 2023). Some articles combine quantitative and qualitative approaches (mixed-methods), particularly in EdTech innovation studies (Hossain & Al Hasan, 2023; Lv, 2022; Ningsih, 2023; Xia et al., 2024), to capture both numerical and narrative dimensions.

4) Descriptive-Analytic

Some articles, especially those highlighting global character values, cross-cultural collaboration, and multicultural education, use a descriptive-analytic approach or literature review (Arafah & Hasyim, 2022; Tan & Abbas, 2024; Zailli, 2024). This approach is commonly chosen for conceptual mapping, policy synthesis, or developing new theoretical frameworks.

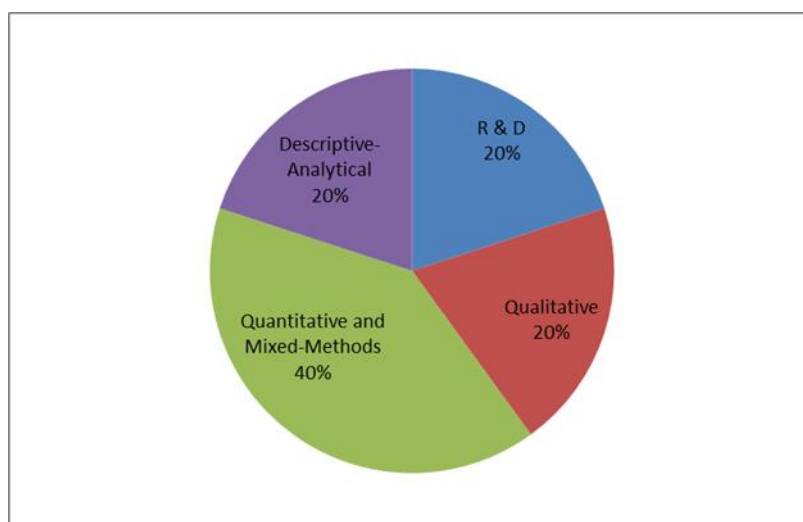


Figure 3. Distribution of Articles Based on Research Methods

Thematic Findings

a. Integration of Character Values in English Language Learning

This theme highlights systematic efforts to embed character values into English language teaching materials. Articles such as Milal et al. (2020) and Wulandari et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of internalizing Islamic values as well as local wisdom in the learning process. The development of instructional materials that focus not only on linguistic aspects but also on character formation—such as honesty, hard work, politeness, and love for local culture—strengthens the role of English education as a vehicle for character education. The use of Research and Development (R&D) models in these studies affirms that the innovation of character-based materials can be empirically tested for their impact and effectiveness.

b. Value-Based Teaching

The integration of character values in English language learning naturally evolves into a value-based teaching approach. This theme is further explored by Prahaladaiah (2021), Ashfihana (2021), and

Saripudin et al. (2021), who emphasize how teachers and learning media can deliberately design instruction that instills universal values such as empathy, responsibility, integrity, and self-reflection. Qualitative exploratory methods and field observations reveal that value-based teaching is not just theoretical but can be built through lesson planning, the use of value-based digital storytelling media, and critical reflection on the teacher's role as a model.

c. Digital Literacy and Media Ethics

Along with the transformation of learning into the digital realm, digital literacy and media ethics have become essential foundations for character education in the 21st century. Studies from 2022, such as those by Albashrawi et al., Fadhillah et al., and Lv, affirm that technological proficiency must be accompanied by ethical use of social media, awareness of hoaxes, intolerance, as well as the importance of empathy and sympathetic behavior in cyberspace. Research using quantitative, survey, and mixed-methods approaches emphasizes that digital literacy and media ethics are not merely technical skills but are part of character values contextualized to students' digital lives today.

d. Innovation in Learning Technology and the Use of Interactive Media

The transformation of language and character learning is increasingly evident through technological innovation and interactive media. In this theme, 2023 articles such as Jalaluddin, Bakeer, Hossain & Al Hasan, and Liu discuss a variety of innovations—from flipped classrooms, blended learning, mobile learning, to the use of real-time interactive platforms and multimedia. Technological innovation not only increases engagement and learning motivation but also opens up opportunities for collaboration, cross-cultural interaction, and the formation of global character values such as tolerance and openness. The use of quasi-experimental, mixed-methods, and thematic analysis methods underscores that technology can be a catalyst for more adaptive and relevant character learning.

e. Development of Digital Character-Based English Language Teaching Model (CBELT-DT)

The above four themes culminate in the need for an integrated, adaptive, and contextual digital character-based English language teaching model—widely referred to in the literature as Character-Based English Language Teaching in Digital Technology (CBELT-DT). The development of this model is reflected in the works of Suhra et al. (2025) and Syandri & Munir (2025), which explicitly build integrative models of character education based on case studies and the development of digital learning materials. The CBELT-DT model places technological innovation, digital literacy, and global character values as a unified whole ready for implementation in 21st-century learning.

Thematic Integration and Implications for Model Development

The five main themes identified in this literature review collectively reinforce the urgency of developing a Character-Based English Language Education in the Era of Digital Transformation (CBELT-DT) model that is relevant, effective, and ready to address the challenges of educational globalization and technological advancement. The integration of character values into English teaching materials lays the foundation for value-based teaching, which, in the digital context, increasingly demands digital literacy and media ethics among learners. Technological innovation and the use of interactive media not only enrich character education strategies, but also create opportunities for broader cross-cultural collaborative learning. Thus, these findings emphasize that developing the CBELT-DT model is a strategic response to realizing English language education that is not only linguistically competent, but also character-oriented and ready for the demands of the global digital era.

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the perspective that English language learning is not merely a vehicle for transferring linguistic skills, but also serves as an effective medium for character formation and digital morality (digital citizenship education). In the digital transformation era, the function of language extends beyond communication, becoming a vehicle for shaping identity, ethics, and a culture

of meaningful interaction. The synthesis of the literature demonstrates that integrating character values into technology-based English teaching holds great potential to shape learners who are not only academically competent but also ethical, empathetic, and responsible in digital spaces. The CBELT-DT conceptual model (Character-Based English Language Education in the Era of Digital Transformation) developed in this study emphasizes the integration between teachers' pedagogical competence, students' digital literacy, and the internalization of character values through a systematic learning process. This model illustrates the interconnectedness between four main components: Input, Process, Output, and Evaluation. At the input stage, the importance of teacher readiness in digital and pedagogical competencies, as well as students' digital literacy as the foundation of learning, is highlighted. The process stage focuses on teaching strategies that integrate character values into technology-based learning activities. The expected output is the formation of linguistic competence, digital ethics, and meaningful learning, while the evaluation phase centers on moral reflection-based assessments, collaborative projects, and digital portfolios.

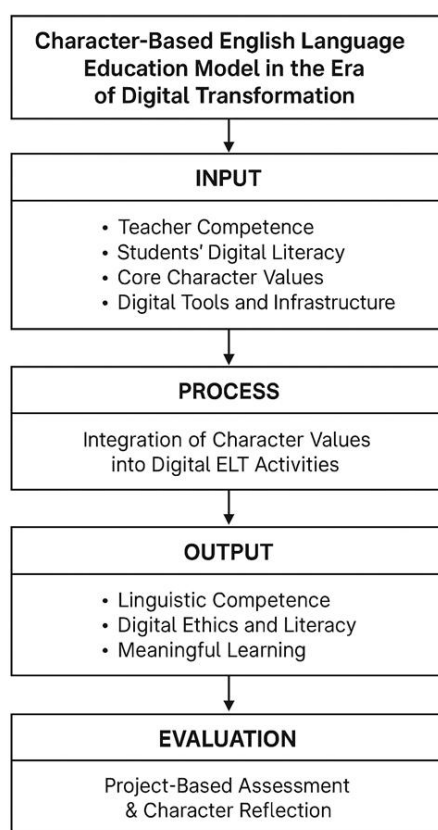


Figure 4. Conceptual model CBELT-DT (Character-Based English Language Education in the Era of Digital Transformation)

Theoretical Integration: Synergy between Character, Digital Literacy, and Innovative Pedagogy

This study confirms that character-based English language teaching in the digital era requires the synergy of character internalization, digital literacy strengthening, and pedagogical innovation. The CBELT-DT model developed here is strongly supported by recent empirical findings. Wulandari et al. (2020) demonstrated that contextual and sustainable integration of local wisdom—through materials, songs, and folktales—effectively strengthens students' character and identity in English learning. This emphasis on integrative strategies is also confirmed by Suhra et al. (2025), showing that open discussion, problem-based learning, role-play, and value reflection enhance character formation, identity, and student mindset—aligning with the CBELT-DT model's principles.

In terms of digital literacy, Saripudin et al. (2021) and Arafah & Hasyim (2022) highlight that digital

literacy is not just about technical skills, but also involves critical, reflective thinking and ethical awareness of hoaxes, hate speech, and social polarization. Fadhilah et al. (2022) experimentally proved that strengthening digital literacy significantly improves ethical understanding in social media and fosters students' self-control in the digital realm.

From the perspective of pedagogical innovation, Farida et al. (2024), Jalaluddin (2023), and Liu (2023) emphasize the importance of technology, multimedia, mobile learning, and hybrid learning in increasing motivation, participation, and cross-cultural learning experiences. Farida et al. (2024) specifically found that mastering cross-cultural communication and actively using hybrid multimedia can enhance students' linguistic abilities and intercultural sensitivity. Thus, integrating character values, digital literacy, and innovative pedagogy within the CBELT-DT model is proven increasingly relevant for addressing the needs of holistic and contextual 21st-century education (Zailli, 2024).

Pedagogical Perspective: Implementing TPACK and SAMR Models in Digital Character Education

The implementation of TPACK and SAMR models in digital character education is increasingly supported by empirical evidence. Liu (2023), through quantitative research, demonstrated that a combination of multimedia, mobile learning, and personalized instruction substantially increases motivation, effectiveness, and personalization in English learning, including the internalization of character values and student reflection. Ashfihana (2021) confirms that project-based learning, group discussions, storytelling, and character rubric assessments are effective for instilling honesty, responsibility, and empathy in English classrooms.

Saripudin et al. (2021) further support these findings, showing that value-based digital storytelling significantly builds religiosity, honesty, discipline, and care through reflective and collaborative activities. Jalaluddin (2023) adds the importance of teachers' skills in integrating technology, pedagogy, and character-based content into learning. The TPACK model helps teachers select media and strategies aligned with character goals, while SAMR encourages transformation through activity redesign up to the redefinition level. The main challenge identified is the need for intensive teacher training to design, implement, and evaluate digital character education effectively and contextually (Liu, 2023; Suhra et al., 2025).

Social and Cultural Perspectives: Local Values as a Digital Ethical Filter

The integration of local values as a digital ethical filter is a key finding supported across studies. Wulandari et al. (2020) underline that incorporating local cultural values—through songs, folktales, and contextual materials—enriches the learning experience while strengthening morality, cultural identity, and student diversity. Suhra et al. (2025) show that social and local cultural themes are highly effective in building empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility in English language learning.

Arafah & Hasyim (2022) and Fadhilah et al. (2022) further reinforce that digital literacy rooted in local values is highly effective for addressing hoaxes, cyberbullying, and cultivating digital ethical awareness. Zailli (2024) and Farida et al. (2024) add that technology-based cross-cultural communication will only be effective if students have value filters, sensitivity to differences, and the ability to adapt ethically and critically in the global space. Thus, the importance of character-based English learning rooted in local values and oriented toward global competence is increasingly relevant, as mandated by the CBELT-DT model.

Implications for Teacher Practice and Curriculum

The implications of this research are broad for teacher professional development and curriculum design. The success of character integration is highly dependent on explicit lesson planning, contextual theme/material selection, and the implementation of collaborative and reflective classroom methods (Suhra et al., 2025). Teachers must be empowered as role models, facilitators of value reflection, and drivers of an interactive and inclusive learning culture (Ashfihana, 2021; Saripudin et al., 2021).

Arafah & Hasyim (2022) and Fadhilah et al. (2022) stress the urgency of ethical, critical, and character-based digital literacy training, as well as early socialization of digital ethics. Farida et al. (2024), Jalaluddin (2023), and Liu (2023) recommend that English curricula systematically incorporate cross-cultural communication, hybrid multimedia, and project-based learning to prepare students for global challenges without losing their local roots. Zailli (2024) emphasizes that multicultural and inclusive curricula can enhance student readiness for globalization and build the Pancasila Student Profile, balancing academic competence, character, and 21st-century skills.

Gaps and Further Research Directions

Despite significant progress in integrating digital character and pedagogical innovation, several gaps remain. Ashfihana (2021), Suhra et al. (2025), and Wulandari et al. (2020) found that the integration of character in lesson planning (RPP) is often not followed by real practice in the classroom, thus requiring longitudinal research and cross-regional observations. Farida et al. (2024), Liu (2023), and Saripudin et al. (2021) highlight the need for quantitative and mixed-methods research to measure the actual impact of technology, mobile learning, and hybrid multimedia on character development, digital literacy, and intercultural competence. Adjusting digital character learning strategies to local socio-cultural contexts remains a challenge (Suhra et al., 2025; Wulandari et al., 2020), as does the development of valid and adaptive digital character assessment instruments (Ashfihana, 2021; Saripudin et al., 2021). Comparative studies and empirical testing of the CBELT-DT model at various educational levels and settings are still required to ensure replicability and scalability (Farida et al., 2024; Liu, 2023).

Overall, this research provides a strategic contribution to the development of character-based and digital literacy English language education in Indonesia. The CBELT-DT model and empirically tested integrative practices offer practical and conceptual guidance for teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers to shape adaptive, ethical, and globally competitive learners (Farida et al., 2024; Zailli, 2024). This research also enriches academic discourse by affirming the urgency of synergy between local values, digital literacy, innovative pedagogy, and cross-cultural competence as the foundation of English language education in the digital era (Jalaluddin, 2023; Liu, 2023; Suhra et al., 2025).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on a systematic review of 25 recent articles, this study affirms the urgency and relevance of developing the Character-Based English Language Education Model in the Era of Digital Transformation (CBELT-DT) as a response to both the challenges and opportunities presented by technological advancement and the globalization of education. The main findings indicate that the integration of character values, digital literacy, pedagogical innovation, and intercultural competence not only strengthens academic dimensions but also shapes students' identities, ethics, and empathy as digitally literate citizens with strong character. The CBELT-DT model, both conceptually and practically, emphasizes the synergy of teacher readiness, technology-based learning strategies, the internalization of character values, and reflective evaluation rooted in local values with a global orientation. This research provides a strategic contribution to curriculum development, teacher capacity building, and national education policy, equipping the young generation with superior English language skills, robust character, and digital ethics. Future research should focus on empirically testing the CBELT-DT model across various educational levels, developing valid digital character assessment instruments, and exploring the adaptation of character-based learning strategies to suit local socio-cultural contexts, thereby ensuring more effective, adaptive, and sustainable implementation in response to the dynamics of the digital era.

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