Jurnal Hadratul Madaniyah, Volume 13, Issue 3, Oct, 2026. Page 71–81
p-ISSN:2407-3865, e-ISSN:2655-1993

Reconstructing Contemporary Islamic Thought to Address the Moral Crisis of the Digital Generation

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.33084/jhm.v13i3.13309
Received: 18-06-2026 Revised: 12-08-2026 Accepted: 12-10-2026

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Abstract. *The development of digital technology has changed the patterns of social interaction, access to information, and the construction of values among the younger generation. While digitalization opens up opportunities for the development of knowledge and creativity, it also raises various moral problems, such as a decline in communication ethics, increased individualism, the spread of disinformation, and the weakening of the internalization of religious values. This article aims to analyze the relevance of contemporary Islamic thought in responding to the moral crisis of the digital generation through an adaptive approach to technological developments without neglecting Islamic ethical principles. This research uses a descriptive-analytical literature study method, analyzing various literature discussing contemporary Islamic thought, morality, and digital transformation. The results of the study indicate that contemporary Islamic thought offers an integrative paradigm that connects the strengthening of morals, critical digital literacy, religious moderation, and the development of spirituality as the foundation for character formation. Technology is viewed not as a threat to Islamic values, but as a strategic instrument that needs to be guided through ethical awareness and social responsibility. Thus, the moral reconstruction of the digital generation requires a synergy between Islamic character education, strengthening digital literacy, and the internalization of universal human values.*

Keyword: *Contemporary Islamic Thought, Moral Crisis, Digital Generation, Islamic Education, Digital Literacy*

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has fundamentally changed the lifestyle patterns of contemporary society (Anggara & Muttaqin, 2025). The internet, social media, artificial intelligence, and various digital platforms no longer merely function as communication instruments, but have become new social spaces that shape the way individuals think, interact, and construct their identities (Mujianto & Nurhadi, 2022). The younger generation is the group that interacts most intensely with the digital environment because most of their educational, entertainment, communication and self-

actualization activities take place through technology-based media (Muhammad Suherman, 2025). This condition shows that digitalization has created a social transformation that not only affects the technical aspects of life, but also influences the value system and behavioral orientation of society (Timothy & Choandi, 2020).

Despite presenting various opportunities for the development of knowledge and global connectivity, digital transformation also gives rise to increasingly complex moral challenges (Dimas Taufiqurahman, Rangga Saputra, 2025). The increasing cases of cyberbullying, the spread of disinformation, hate speech, consumer culture, and the declining quality of communication ethics in the digital space indicate a shift in values in the lives of the younger generation (Mukhlis & Syaifuddin, 2024). This phenomenon indicates that technological progress does not always go hand in hand with the moral maturity of its users. When digital space is increasingly used as an arena for expression without adequate ethical foundations, technology has the potential to reinforce various forms of behavior that conflict with the principles of humanity and social responsibility.

The moral crisis facing the digital generation has attracted the attention of various academic circles. Several studies highlight the importance of digital literacy as a tool to improve people's ability to filter information and avoid the negative impacts of digital media. Other research emphasizes the urgency of character education as a strategy for developing more responsible behavior in facing the challenges of the digital era. These studies make important contributions to understanding the relationship between technological development and the character formation of the younger generation.

However, studies on the morality of the digital generation are still dominated by pedagogical, technological, and religious moderation approaches. Research by Masripah et al. (2024) shows that digital technology has a significant influence on the religious thinking and practices of Generation Z, thus viewing digital space as a crucial factor in shaping the religious practices of the younger generation. However, this research emphasizes the relationship between technology use and religious behavior without deeply elaborating on the Islamic ethical framework as a basis for addressing digital moral issues.

Another study by Mandala, Witro, and Juraidi examined the transformation of digital-based religious moderation as a strategy to filter radicalism and extremism in the era of disruption. The results emphasized the importance of utilizing digital media to strengthen the values of moderation

and prevent the growth of intolerant ideologies in cyberspace. However, the study focused on religious moderation and preventing radicalism, thus not specifically addressing the moral crisis of the digital generation from the perspective of contemporary Islamic thought (Fauzan, 2020).

Furthermore, Nurjanah developed a study on digital literacy and the resilience of religious moderation through the perspective of maqashid al-syari'ah. This research shows that critical and ethical digital literacy can strengthen societal resilience against polarization, hate speech, and extremism in the digital space. While offering a strong normative Islamic foundation, this research is more oriented towards strengthening religious moderation and digital da'wah than building a conceptual construct of contemporary Islamic thought in response to the moral crisis of the digital generation.

Based on these three studies, it appears that existing studies have made significant contributions to explaining the relationship between digital technology, religious practices, digital literacy, and religious moderation. However, there remains an underexplored academic space: how contemporary Islamic thought can be constructed as an epistemological and ethical framework to comprehensively respond to the moral crisis of the digital generation (Muzni & Budiman, 2021). In contrast to previous research, this article positions contemporary Islamic thought not only as a discourse of religious renewal, but as a normative paradigm that integrates morals, critical digital literacy, spirituality, and social responsibility in facing the moral challenges of digital society.

Based on these conditions, this article aims to analyze the relevance of contemporary Islamic thought in addressing the moral crisis of the digital generation. This study seeks to identify the main principles in contemporary Islamic thought related to moral strengthening, moderation, digital literacy, and character building, and to explain their contribution to shaping the behavior of a more ethical and responsible young generation (Nadliroh, 2024). Through a literature study approach, this research not only describes the moral crisis phenomenon that is occurring, but also examines various Islamic intellectual ideas that can be used as a normative basis in responding to this challenge (Shodikin, Nugroho, & Intania, 2025).

This paper begins with the argument that the moral crisis of the digital generation is essentially a crisis of value orientation that cannot be resolved solely through strengthening regulations, technological oversight, or improving digital skills. This problem requires an approach that integrates the dimensions of ethics, spirituality, and social awareness simultaneously. In this context,

contemporary Islamic thought offers a relevant perspective because it positions religion as a source of values that adapts to changing times without losing its moral substance. The novelty of this article lies in its attempt to reconstruct the relationship between contemporary Islamic thought and digital morality through an integrative approach that connects Islamic moral values, critical digital literacy, and character building as the foundation for forming a civilized digital generation.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research design to analyze the relevance of contemporary Islamic thought in addressing the moral crisis of the digital generation. This approach was chosen because the research is oriented towards a conceptual study of the ideas, values, and constructions of thought that have developed within the Islamic intellectual tradition and their relationship to the dynamics of digital society. Research data were obtained from various academic sources, including books, scientific journal articles, research results, and relevant literature discussing contemporary Islamic thought, morality, character education, and digital transformation. Data collection was carried out through searching, selecting, and classifying literature based on the relevance of the theme, academic authority, and its contribution to the focus of the study. Next, the data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical techniques by critically interpreting various concepts and arguments found to identify the contribution of contemporary Islamic thought in formulating an ethical framework that is responsive to the moral challenges of the digital generation. Through this approach, this study seeks to produce a conceptual synthesis that explains the relationship between Islamic moral values, digital literacy, and character building as a moral foundation in contemporary digital society.

FINDINGS

The results of the study show that the development of digital technology has created fundamental changes in social interaction patterns, identity construction, and the value systems of the younger generation (Agustina, 2024). Although digitalization offers various conveniences in accessing information, communicating, and developing knowledge, this study found that the digital space has also become an arena for the emergence of increasingly complex moral problems. The forms of moral crisis identified include a decline in communication ethics, a growing tendency towards individualism, the widespread spread of disinformation and hate speech, digital media addiction, and a weakening of spiritual awareness. This phenomenon demonstrates that technological progress is not always accompanied by adequate development of moral capacity. In other words, the crisis facing the digital

generation is not solely a technological issue, but rather a question of value orientation in utilizing technology (Yaya Mulyana A et al) .

This study also found that contemporary Islamic thought has significant relevance in responding to these moral challenges (Akalily Narmi, Mohd. Zariat Abdul Rani, 2022). In contrast to approaches that view modernity and religion as two opposing entities, contemporary Islamic thought places them in a dialogical and complementary relationship. Muhammad Abduh's rationalist ideas, Fazlur Rahman's contextual approach, and Nurcholish Madjid's inclusive Islamic thought demonstrate that Islamic values have the adaptive capacity to respond to ever-changing social dynamics (Rosyid & Dhani Dwi Afrizal, 2025). In the context of the digital era, this thinking emphasizes that technology should not be understood as a threat to morality, but rather as an instrument that needs to be guided through the principles of morality, social responsibility, moderation, and spiritual awareness.

Based on the synthesis of various literature, this study produces an integrative model that explains the relationship between the moral crisis of the digital generation, the principles of contemporary Islamic thought, and transformation strategies that can be carried out to build the character of the younger generation (Haq, 2026). The model shows that the moral reconstruction of the digital generation requires the integration of four main dimensions, namely moral education, Islamic digital literacy, digital preaching, and strengthening spirituality (Permatasari, Ramadani, & ..., 2025). These four dimensions serve as a connecting mechanism between Islamic values and the realities of contemporary digital life. These findings indicate that resolving the moral crisis cannot be achieved simply through strengthening regulations or mastering technology, but rather requires developing ethical awareness capable of directing technology use toward individual and social well-being.

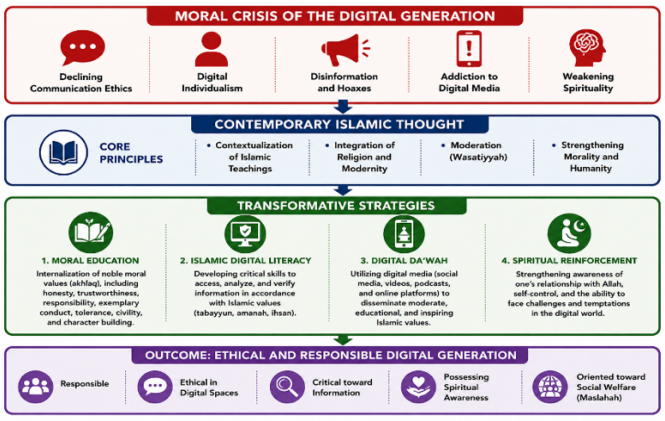


Figure 1. Integrative Model of Contemporary Islamic Thought in Facing the Moral Crisis of the Digital Generation

Source: Results of the author's synthesis and construction (2026).

The model in Figure 1 shows that the moral crisis of the digital generation is a starting point that requires simultaneous conceptual and practical responses. Contemporary Islamic thought serves as a normative framework that provides basic principles for facing changing times, while moral education, Islamic digital literacy, digital da'wah, and spiritual strengthening serve as instruments of transformation that can be implemented in social life and education. The relationship between these elements results in the ultimate goal of forming a digital generation that not only possesses technological competence but also character, responsibility, critical thinking, spiritual awareness, and a focus on social welfare (Fauzi, Elmi, Pelu, & Suhairom, 2023).

DISCUSSION

The development of digital technology has not only resulted in changes in the technical aspects of human life, but has also transformed the way individuals build social relations, acquire knowledge, and form value systems (Al-Haq & Amalih, 2021). Research findings indicate that the moral crisis of the digital generation arises as a consequence of the imbalance between the acceleration of technological development and the moral capacity to manage its impact. Phenomena such as the decline in communication ethics, the strengthening of individualism, the spread of disinformation, and the weakening of spiritual awareness indicate that the main problem of the digital era lies not with technology itself, but rather with the absence of an ethical framework capable of guiding the responsible use of technology (Musa Sahat, Wulandari, Marito Sari, & Raihana, 2023). In this context, a moral crisis can be understood as a crisis of value orientation that occurs when instrumental progress is not followed by strengthening of the moral and spiritual dimensions.

These findings reinforce the argument that a purely technological approach is inadequate to address the various moral problems emerging in the digital space. While various policies on surveillance, content restrictions, and digital skills development have contributed to mitigating the negative impacts of technology, they have not addressed the normative roots of the problem. The low capacity of individuals to engage in ethical reflection often leads to the use of technology without considering its social, humanitarian, and religious implications. Therefore, efforts to reconstruct morality require an approach that is not solely oriented toward regulatory aspects but also fosters awareness capable of internalizing moral values into digital life practices (Dini Ramdhani & Pramono pramono, 2024).

From the perspective of contemporary Islamic thought, technology is not positioned as a threat to religiosity, but rather as part of the dynamics of civilization that must be managed wisely. This view

aligns with the ideas of Muhammad Abduh, who emphasized the importance of rationality and openness to scientific developments as instruments of human progress. Modernity is not understood as a process that requires Muslims to abandon their religious identity, but rather as a space that allows for the actualization of Islamic values in a more contextual form (Raihanah, 2019). Thus, the relationship between Islam and technology is integrative, not antagonistic. This perspective is important because it allows the digital generation to utilize technology productively without losing the moral orientation that underpins social life.

The relevance of contemporary Islamic thought is increasingly evident through the contextual approach developed by Fazlur Rahman. Through the double movement method, Islamic teachings are not understood textually and statically, but are interpreted based on their moral objectives and then applied to ever-changing social contexts. In the digital era, this approach allows universal Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, justice, and respect for human dignity to be translated into media ethics, information production ethics, and digital interaction ethics (Agustina, 2024). Thus, digital morality is not understood as a concept separate from Islamic teachings, but rather as a new manifestation of ethical principles that have long been at the heart of Islamic teachings.

Furthermore, Nurcholish Madjid's thinking makes a significant contribution in explaining the need for a moderate and inclusive approach in the face of social change. Open digital spaces often become arenas for the growth of polarization, intolerance, and extremism, which threaten social cohesion. In such situations, the values of religious moderation (wasathiyah) become a strategic instrument for building a culture of dialogue, respect for differences, and social responsibility in interactions within the digital public sphere (Dakhoir & Tarantang, 2023). Moderation not only functions as a religious principle, but also as a social mechanism capable of maintaining a balance between freedom of expression and respect for the rights of others.

Table 1. Dimensions of Moral Reconstruction of the Digital Generation Based on Contemporary Islamic Thought

Dimensions	Main Functions	Implementation in the Digital Era
Moral Education	Shaping character and moral behavior	Integrating character education into digital learning
Islamic Digital Literacy	Developing critical thinking skills regarding information	Information verification, anti-hoaxes, and media ethics
Digital Da'wah	Disseminating Islamic values through technology	Educational content, social media, podcasts, and digital platforms
Spirituality	Building transcendental awareness	Strengthening ethical awareness and responsibility to God in digital activities

Based on the synthesis results, this study found that moral education, Islamic digital literacy, digital preaching, and strengthening spirituality are four interrelated dimensions in the process of moral reconstruction of the digital generation. Moral education plays a role in forming the foundation of character, Islamic digital literacy develops critical skills in dealing with the flow of information, digital preaching expands the transformation of values through media close to the younger generation, while spirituality serves to build transcendental awareness that guides individual behavior. These four dimensions cannot be separated because each has a different but complementary function in forming a moral ecosystem that is adaptive to technological developments (Muzni & Budiman, 2021).

Thus, the primary contribution of this research lies in constructing an integrative model that positions contemporary Islamic thought as an epistemological and ethical framework for addressing the moral crisis of the digital generation. This model demonstrates that moral development in the digital era requires a synergy between strengthening Islamic values and the ability to adapt to technological developments. These findings also emphasize that the success of building a digital generation with character is not determined solely by technological mastery, but rather by the ability to integrate digital competence with moral awareness, social responsibility, and spirituality oriented toward the common good.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the moral crisis of the digital generation is a consequence of the imbalance between the acceleration of technological development and the strengthening of moral values that

guide its use. In this context, contemporary Islamic thought offers a relevant conceptual framework through the integration of moral values, religious moderation, Islamic digital literacy, digital da'wah, and the strengthening of spirituality as the foundation for the character formation of the younger generation. The research findings indicate that technology cannot be positioned as the primary cause of moral degradation, but rather as an instrument that requires ethical orientation so that its use remains in harmony with humanitarian principles and Islamic values. Therefore, the moral reconstruction of the digital generation demands a holistic approach by connecting digital competence, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility within an integrative educational framework. Based on these findings, further research is recommended to develop empirical studies on the implementation of the contemporary Islamic integrative thought model in various educational settings to test its effectiveness in building the character of an adaptive, critical, and moral digital generation.

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