

Generation Z Muslims and the Qur'anic Digital Civilization: Internalizing Qur'anic Values in the Era of Viral Culture

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Article Info :	ABSTRACT
Accepted: 15 october 2025 Approved: 20 November 2025 Published: 23 December 2025	Background: Describes the digital transformation that is changing how Generation Z Muslims consume and internalize Islamic values, creating tension between the gratification of instant viral culture and deeper spiritual understanding. Objective: States the research objectives: to investigate digital Islamic content consumption patterns, factors influencing the internalization of Quranic values, the mechanisms of viral culture, and a strategic framework for a Quranic Digital Civilization. Method: Describes the explanatory sequential mixed methods design with 800 respondents, 40 in-depth interviews, digital ethnography with 25 participants, and 15 key informants. Data analysis used SEM, multiple regression, and thematic analysis. Findings and Implications: Reveals intensive digital consumption (127.4 minutes/day), dominant platforms (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube), Religious Digital Literacy as the strongest predictor ($\beta=0.472$, $p<0.001$), four engagement patterns, and viral culture mechanisms that indicate opportunities and challenges. Provides an evidence-based framework for Islamic educators, digital content creators, and policymakers to optimize digital platforms in internalizing authentic values while addressing the challenges of viral culture. Conclusion: Indicates that digital platforms simultaneously present significant opportunities and structural challenges in shaping Quranic value internalization among Generation Z, necessitating a strategic, literacy-based, and value-centered approach toward building a Quranic Digital Civilization.
Keywords: generation Z muslims; digital islamic content; qur'anic value internalization; viral culture; digital literacy; religious engagement	

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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation, which has accelerated exponentially in the last decade, has fundamentally changed the social, cultural, and religious life landscape of global communities, including Muslim communities in various parts of the world. The rapid digital transformation in developing countries is reflected in global indicators, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) reports that over 65% of mobile internet penetration has been achieved in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia (Widianingsih et al., 2025). Generation Z, defined as

individuals born between 1997 and 2012, is the first generation to be born and grown up in a digital ecosystem that is fully connected to the internet and social media (Dobbernack, 2019). The unique characteristics of Generation Z Muslims are characterized by their high dependence on digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, where 94% of them report using at least one social media platform daily, with an average duration of 89 minutes per day dedicated to TikTok (Opena, 2025). This phenomenon creates an interesting paradox: on the one hand, digital technology opens up unprecedented access to Islamic religious knowledge and content; But on the other hand, social media platform algorithms have given rise to what is called "viral culture" or viral culture, where social validation, instant content, and popularity are the main metrics of success (Zaid et al., 2022).

The viral culture that dominates the contemporary social media ecosystem has created new dynamics in the way Generation Z Muslims consume, produce, and distribute religious content. Research shows that 48% of Generation Z plan to increase their purchases through social media by 2025, with 43% of them initiating product searches on TikTok, indicating a behavioral shift from traditional search platforms to algorithm-based platforms and viral recommendations (Narayanan, 2023). In the religious context, this phenomenon manifests itself in the form of "digital religious engagement" where Islamic content packaged in short-form video formats, memes, and viral storytelling becomes the main medium of transmission of religious values (Missier, 2025). Nevertheless, the characteristics of viral culture that emphasize speed, simplicity, and visual appeal have the potential to create a superficial and fragmentary understanding of religion, where the complexity of the teachings of the Qur'an is reduced to short quotes optimized for algorithmic engagement rather than deep understanding (Widayat, 2025).

The internalization of Qur'anic values in the context of the digital age presents complex epistemological and pedagogical challenges for the Muslim community of Generation Z. Recent studies show that although digital technologies have facilitated access to religious texts through Qur'anic mobile applications and online learning platforms, the process of deep internalization which involves the transformation of values from cognitive knowledge into spiritual commitments and life practices everyday often overlooked in digital-based learning (Mar, 2024). Research on hybrid religious engagement shows that Generation Z students in Islamic boarding schools not only interact with traditional religious authorities, but also actively access, interpret, and distribute religious narratives from various digital platforms, creating selective, reflective, and adaptive consumption patterns (Saputra, 2025). This paradox creates a tension between the Islamic scientific tradition that emphasizes the depth of understanding (*tafaqquh fi al-din*) and the digital culture that prioritizes the speed of consumption and virality.

The urgency of this research lies in the urgent need to comprehensively understand how Generation Z Muslims negotiate their religious identities in a digital ecosystem dominated by the logic of viral culture. Previous research has shown that a significant number of participants reported feeling a stronger spiritual connection and increased adherence to Islamic obligations as a direct result of their digital engagement, with digital content serving as "spiritual anchors" amid the distractions of daily life (Sallis, 2022). However, these studies are still fragmented and have not specifically explored the psychological and sociological mechanisms underlying the

process of internalizing Qur'anic values in the context of viral culture. Furthermore, digital transformation in Islamic education shows that technological integration without being accompanied by pedagogical strategies oriented to the internalization of values can produce a superficial understanding and ignore the affective and spiritual dimensions that are at the core of Islamic religious education (Nursikin & Aji, 2021).

From a practical perspective, this research is particularly relevant considering that Generation Z Muslims now make up 25% of social media audiences in various countries, with a global purchasing power of \$450 billion, making them a highly influential demographic in shaping contemporary digital culture (Zaid et al., 2022). The practical implications of this research are not only limited to the realm of religious education, but also have significance in the context of digital da'wah, the development of authentic but engaging, and the strategies of Islamic educational institutions in responding to the challenges of digitalization. A study on religious moderation among Generation Z Muslims shows that 92% of respondents strongly reject religiously motivated hate speech on social media, indicating the great potential of digital media as a medium to promote moderate, inclusive, and tolerant Islamic values (Widayat, 2025). However, without a deep understanding of how the values of the Qur'an can be effectively internalized in the context of viral culture, this positive potential risks not being realized optimally.

The context of Indonesia as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world makes this research even more urgent and strategic. The digital transformation that occurred in Indonesia was marked by internet penetration which reached 196.7 million users in the 2019-2020 period, with a significant increase of 23.5 million users or 8.9% compared to 2018 data (Pabbajah, 2024). In the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, the integration of digital technology has become a necessity, but the challenge of ensuring that digitalization does not result in the assimilation of foreign cultures that are contrary to the identity of the madrasah and does not obscure the essence of internalizing Islamic values in digital-based learning is still a major concern. Furthermore, bibliometric research on the intersection of Qur'an studies and modern technology shows an annual growth of publications of 9.42% with an average of 5,081 citations per document, indicating an increase in academic interest in this topic, but there is still a significant gap in research that specifically explores the internalization of Qur'anic values among Generation Z in the era of viral culture (Nirwana et al., 2024).

Table 1. Characteristics of Social Media Use and Religious Engagement of Generation Z Muslims

Indicators	Statistical Data	Year	Source
Daily social media use	94% use at least 1 platform daily	2025	(Opena, 2025)
Duration of use of TikTok	Average 89 minutes per day	2025	(Woodward et al., 2025)
Increased spiritual connection through digital content	The majority of participants reported significant improvements	2025	(Salleh & Muhsin, 2025)
Rejection of religious hate speech on social media	92% strongly reject	2025	(Widayat, 2025))

Product/information search platform	43% start on TikTok	2025	(Slate Team, 2025)
Indonesian internet users	196.7 million (8.9% increase)	2020	(Pabbajah, 2024)
Growth of Qur'an study publications & technology	9.42% per annum, 5,081 citations/documents	2024	(Nirwana et al., 2024)

Although there are a number of studies exploring digital religious engagement among millennial and Generation Z Muslims, there is still a significant research gap. First, the majority of existing studies tend to focus on the technical aspects of digitalization or digital content consumption patterns without delving into the psychological process of internalizing value (Mustapha et al., 2022). Second, previous studies have not comprehensively integrated the theological perspective of the Qur'an with empirical analysis of Generation Z's digital behavior, especially in the context of viral culture that emphasizes instant gratification and social validation. Third, there is no conceptual framework that specifically explains how the unique characteristics of viral culture such as content curation algorithms, ephemeral content, and influencer culture affect the internalization process of Qur'anic values.

The novelty of this research lies in: (1) the development of an integrative model that connects exposure to digital Islamic content, viral culture characteristics, digital literacy, and internalization of Qur'anic values; (2) an in-depth analysis of the mediation and moderation mechanisms in the relationship between digital engagement and the internalization of spiritual values; (3) contextualization of the theory of Islamic theology of technology which emphasizes the importance of directing AI and digital technology with a moral vision rooted in Qur'anic ethics such as justice (*'adl*), mercy (*rahmah*), and sincerity (sincerity) in the empirical context of Generation Z of Indonesian Muslims (Abdelnour, 2025).

Based on these gaps and novelties, the objectives of this study are to: (1) analyze the consumption patterns of digital Islamic content and the engagement characteristics of Generation Z Muslims in viral culture; (2) identify the factors that affect the internalization of Qur'anic values in the digital era; (3) explore the psychological and sociological mechanisms underlying the process of internalizing values in the context of viral culture; (4) develop a conceptual framework of Qur'anic Digital Civilization that integrates Islamic spiritual values with the realities of contemporary digital technology; and (5) formulate strategic recommendations for educators, digital dai, and policymakers in optimizing the positive potential of digital technology to strengthen the religious identity of Generation Z Muslims.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively understand the internalization of Qur'anic values among Generation Z Muslims within viral culture contexts. The quantitative phase utilized a survey method with correlational and comparative analysis to identify patterns of digital Islamic content consumption, measure value internalization levels, and examine relationships between exposure to viral Islamic content and Qur'anic value adoption. The qualitative phase employed digital ethnography and in-depth interviews to explore lived

experiences, meaning-making processes, and contextualize quantitative findings with rich narratives. This mixed-methods approach enabled triangulation of data sources, ensuring robust validity and providing both breadth of understanding through statistical analysis and depth of insight through qualitative exploration.

The research was grounded in a pragmatic philosophical paradigm, acknowledging that understanding complex phenomena such as digital religious socialization required multiple methodological lenses. The integration of quantitative metrics measuring behavioral patterns, value hierarchies, and engagement levels with qualitative data capturing subjective experiences, interpretive frameworks, and contextual nuances allowed for a holistic understanding of how Generation Z Muslims navigated the intersection of Qur'anic teachings and viral culture. The sequential design permitted the quantitative phase to identify significant patterns and correlations, which were then explored in greater depth through qualitative inquiry, enabling the research to move beyond surface-level description toward explanatory understanding of underlying mechanisms.

The target population for this study comprised Indonesian Muslim Generation Z individuals, defined as those born between 1997 and 2012 (ages 13-28 at the time of research), who actively engaged with digital platforms and consumed Islamic content online. Indonesia provided an ideal research context as the world's largest Muslim-majority nation with high internet penetration rates and a distinctive Islamic youth culture. The accessible population was limited to Generation Z Muslims residing in urban areas of Java Island specifically Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, and Semarang as these metropolitan areas demonstrated high digital literacy rates, diverse Islamic content consumption patterns, and representation of various Islamic organizational affiliations ranging from traditionalist to modernist orientations.

For the quantitative phase, a sample of 800 respondents was determined using stratified random sampling technique with proportional allocation across five cities. The sample size calculation was based on Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, considering the heterogeneous nature of the population in terms of educational background, socioeconomic status, and Islamic organizational affiliation. Stratification ensured representation across key demographic variables including gender (male/female with balanced distribution), educational level (senior high school students, university students, and young professionals), and Islamic educational background (*alumni* of Islamic boarding schools/*pesantren*, Islamic schools/*madrasah*, and general schools). Inclusion criteria required respondents to: (1) be active social media users with minimum 2 hours daily usage; (2) follow at least three Islamic content creators or Islamic-themed accounts; (3) have consumed Islamic digital content within the past week; and (4) provide informed consent for participation.

For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling with maximum variation strategy was employed to select 40 participants for in-depth interviews from the quantitative sample. Selection criteria prioritized individuals who demonstrated diverse patterns of value internalization based on quantitative survey results including high internalizers (scoring in the top quartile on value internalization measures), moderate internalizers, and low internalizers to capture varied experiences. Additionally, 15 key informants were selected through snowball sampling, including Islamic content creators with substantial following (minimum 100,000

followers), religious educators adapting to digital platforms, and Islamic studies scholars specializing in digital religion. For digital ethnography, 25 participants were recruited who consented to researcher observation of their digital practices over a three-month period, including their social media interactions with Islamic content, participation in online religious communities, and navigation of algorithmic recommendations.

The quantitative phase utilized a comprehensive structured questionnaire consisting of five main sections. The first section captured demographic information including age, gender, educational background, socioeconomic status, Islamic educational experience, and organizational affiliation. The second section employed the Digital Islamic Content Consumption Scale (DICCS), a researcher-developed instrument with 35 items measuring frequency, duration, and patterns of engagement with Islamic content across various platforms (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter/X, Facebook) and content types (short videos, long-form content, infographics, podcasts, live streaming). Response options utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "very frequently" with specified time frames.

The third section implemented the Qur'anic Values Internalization Inventory (QVII), adapted from established value assessment instruments and Islamic moral psychology frameworks. This 60-item inventory measured internalization levels of six core Qur'anic values: *tawhid* (monotheistic consciousness and God-centeredness), *taqwa* (God-consciousness and ethical mindfulness), *ihsan* (excellence and virtue in conduct), *amanah* (trustworthiness and responsibility), *rahmah* (compassion and mercy), and *tawazun* (balance and moderation). Each value domain contained 10 items assessing cognitive (understanding), affective (emotional commitment), and behavioral (practical application) dimensions of internalization. Items employed 6-point Likert scales from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," eliminating neutral midpoint to force directional responses. Sample items included: "I consistently consider whether my actions align with Qur'anic principles before making decisions" (behavioral-*tawhid*), "I feel emotionally connected to the concept of *ihsan* when performing daily tasks" (affective-*ihsan*), and "I understand that *amanah* extends to digital interactions and online communications" (cognitive-*amanah*).

The fourth section incorporated the Viral Culture Engagement Scale (VCES), a 25-item instrument measuring respondents' orientation toward viral culture characteristics including validation-seeking behavior, conformity to trending content, emphasis on aesthetic presentation versus substance, engagement in performative religiosity, and susceptibility to algorithmic influence. This scale helped identify potential tensions between viral culture logic and deep value internalization. The fifth section included the Digital Religious Authority Perception Scale (DRAPS) with 20 items assessing how respondents evaluated credibility, trust, and authority of various Islamic content sources including traditional scholars, Islamic influencers, peer recommendations, algorithmic suggestions, and institutional religious content.

For the qualitative phase, semi-structured interview guides were developed with open-ended questions organized around key themes: personal narratives of Islamic digital content consumption, experiences of encountering and responding to viral Islamic content, processes of evaluating authenticity and credibility of digital religious sources, perceived impacts of

Islamic content on personal values and behaviors, navigation of tensions between Islamic values and viral culture expectations, role of peer communities and family in shaping digital religious practices, and reflections on what facilitated or hindered deep internalization of Qur'anic values in digital contexts. Interview guides-maintained flexibility to follow emergent themes while ensuring systematic coverage of research objectives.

Digital ethnography protocols included structured observation guidelines focusing on: types of Islamic content participants engaged with; nature of interactions (liking, commenting, sharing, saving); temporal patterns of engagement; algorithmic pathways leading to content discovery; participation in online Islamic communities; creation or sharing of Islamic content; and instances of applying Qur'anic principles in digital interactions. Researchers maintained detailed field notes documenting observed behaviors, contextual factors, and preliminary interpretations. Additionally, participants were invited to provide screenshots and share posts they found particularly meaningful, accompanied by brief reflections explaining their significance.

Data collection proceeded through multiple integrated phases over an eight-month period. The quantitative phase began with pilot testing of the questionnaire instrument involving 80 respondents (10% of target sample) to assess item clarity, internal consistency reliability, and construct validity. Pilot data underwent reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha coefficient with acceptable threshold of 0.70 for each scale and subscale. Confirmatory factor analysis verified the hypothesized factor structure of the Qur'anic Values Internalization Inventory and other multi-dimensional scales. Based on pilot results, problematic items were revised or eliminated, and the refined instrument was prepared for full-scale data collection.

Full-scale quantitative data collection was conducted through both online and offline modes to maximize reach and accommodate diverse access preferences. Online administration utilized a dedicated survey platform accessible via mobile devices and computers, distributed through multiple channels: direct messaging to potential participants identified through Islamic social media communities, collaboration with Islamic student organizations at universities, partnerships with Islamic schools and *pesantren* alumni networks, and snowball recruitment where participants shared survey links within their networks. Offline administration involved researchers visiting educational institutions, youth organizations, and Islamic centers to conduct paper-based surveys for participants with limited internet access or preferring traditional format. All data collection followed ethical protocols including informed consent procedures, confidentiality assurances, voluntary participation principles, and option to withdraw at any time.

Qualitative data collection commenced following preliminary analysis of quantitative data to enable informed purposive sampling. In-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face when feasible and via video conferencing when participants preferred or distance necessitated. Each interview lasted 60-90 minutes, was audio-recorded with participant permission, and followed a conversational style allowing natural flow while covering key themes systematically. Interviews began with rapport-building through casual conversation about daily digital habits, progressing to more focused exploration of Islamic content engagement and value internalization experiences. Researchers employed active listening, probing questions to elicit

detailed narratives, and member-checking techniques to verify understanding of participant meanings.

Digital ethnography data collection involved longitudinal observation of 25 consenting participants over three months. Participants granted researchers observer access to their social media accounts (with privacy protections for non-public content) and agreed to periodic short interviews discussing specific interactions. Researchers conducted non-participatory observation, documenting public digital behaviors without direct intervention. Weekly digital diaries completed by participants supplemented observation, prompting reflection on meaningful Islamic content encountered, reactions to viral trends, decisions about content sharing, and instances where Qur'anic values influenced digital behaviors. This multi-modal qualitative data collection generated rich, contextualized understanding of lived experiences.

Key informant interviews with Islamic content creators, religious educators, and scholars provided expert perspectives complementing lay participant data. These interviews focused on: strategies for creating Islamic content that resonated with Generation Z while maintaining theological integrity; observations of audience engagement patterns; challenges in adapting Qur'anic teachings to viral culture formats; and recommendations for effective digital religious education. Content creator interviews included discussion of their content creation philosophy, audience analytics insights, feedback received, and personal experiences navigating religious authority and digital influence.

The research procedure followed a systematic sequence ensuring methodological rigor and ethical compliance. The preliminary phase (Month 1-2) involved finalizing research instruments, obtaining ethical clearance from institutional review board, establishing partnerships with educational institutions and Islamic organizations for participant recruitment, and recruiting and training research assistants on ethical protocols, data collection procedures, and cultural sensitivity in discussing religious topics. Training included mock interviews, discussion of potential challenges, and strategies for maintaining researcher reflexivity and minimizing bias.

The pilot testing phase (Month 3) implemented questionnaire administration to pilot sample, conducted preliminary interviews with 5-8 participants to refine interview guides, and performed psychometric analysis of quantitative instruments. Based on pilot findings, instruments underwent final refinement. The quantitative data collection phase (Month 4-5) involved systematic recruitment across five cities, questionnaire administration through online and offline modes, continuous monitoring of response rates and data quality, follow-up with incomplete responses, and data entry with quality checks including random verification of 20% of entries.

The qualitative data collection phase (Month 5-7) proceeded concurrently with later stages of quantitative collection and overlapped with preliminary quantitative analysis. This phase included: recruitment and selection of interview and ethnography participants based on emerging quantitative patterns; conducting in-depth interviews with staggered scheduling; implementing digital ethnography protocols with regular communication to participants; collecting digital diaries and observational data; and conducting key informant interviews.

Throughout this phase, researchers maintained reflexive journals documenting personal reactions, methodological decisions, and emerging insights.

The data analysis phase (Month 6-8) involved concurrent analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, with integration occurring through comparing patterns, using qualitative data to explain quantitative findings, and developing comprehensive interpretation. The final phase (Month 8) focused on synthesizing findings, validating interpretations through member checking with selected participants, drafting research report, and developing practical recommendations for stakeholders. Throughout all phases, regular research team meetings ensured coordination, discussed challenges, and maintained quality standards.

Quantitative data analysis employed multiple statistical techniques using SPSS version 27 and AMOS for structural equation modeling. Preliminary analysis included data screening for missing values (handled through mean imputation for random missingness below 5%), outlier detection using boxplots and z-scores (outliers exceeding ± 3 standard deviations were investigated and retained if legitimate), and normality assessment using Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests and visual inspection of histograms and Q-Q plots. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations characterized sample demographics, digital consumption patterns, and value internalization levels across entire sample and demographic subgroups.

Inferential statistical analysis addressed specific research questions through appropriate techniques. Independent samples t-tests compared value internalization levels between dichotomous demographic groups (gender, Islamic educational background). One-way ANOVA with post-hoc Tukey tests examined differences across multiple groups (educational levels, cities, Islamic organizational affiliations). Pearson correlation analysis identified relationships between continuous variables including digital content consumption frequency, duration of exposure, and value internalization scores. Multiple regression analysis determined relative contributions of various predictors (demographic factors, digital consumption patterns, viral culture engagement, digital religious authority perceptions) to value internalization outcomes, providing insights into factors most strongly associated with deep internalization.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) tested hypothesized pathways and mediating relationships in a comprehensive model linking exposure to Islamic digital content, mediating variables (digital literacy, critical thinking, peer influence, family religious socialization), and value internalization outcomes. Model fit was evaluated using multiple indices including chi-square statistic, Comparative Fit Index ($CFI \geq 0.90$), Tucker-Lewis Index ($TLI \geq 0.90$), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ($RMSEA \leq 0.08$), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual ($SRMR \leq 0.08$). Path coefficients indicated strength and direction of relationships, with mediation effects assessed through indirect effects analysis using bootstrapping procedures.

Qualitative data analysis followed thematic analysis procedures informed by both deductive and inductive coding approaches. Interview audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, with transcripts reviewed for accuracy. Digital ethnography field notes and participant diaries were compiled chronologically for each participant. Analysis began with researchers independently reading transcripts and field notes multiple times to achieve

immersion and familiarity with data. Initial coding employed both deductive codes derived from theoretical framework and research questions (such as codes related to specific Qur'anic values, viral culture characteristics, internalization processes) and inductive codes emerging from data itself.

Following initial coding, researchers collaboratively reviewed coded segments, discussed interpretations, and developed a refined codebook with clear definitions and decision rules for each code. Focused coding grouped related codes into broader categories and sub-themes. Thematic development involved identifying patterns, contradictions, and nuances within and across cases, examining how themes related to research questions and theoretical framework. Researchers employed constant comparison technique, continuously comparing incidents within same code, different codes within same case, codes across different cases, and codes with relevant literature and theoretical concepts.

Data integration occurred through several strategies. Quantitative findings identifying significant predictors of value internalization guided qualitative inquiry into mechanisms underlying these relationships. Qualitative themes explaining processes of meaning-making and value adoption provided interpretive context for quantitative patterns. Joint displays presented integrated findings, showing how qualitative insights illuminated quantitative results. For example, quantitative data might have revealed negative correlation between viral culture engagement and value internalization depth, while qualitative data explained this relationship through participants' narratives about superficiality and performativity pressures in viral content contexts.

Validity and reliability were ensured through multiple strategies. Quantitative reliability was established through internal consistency analysis (Cronbach's alpha), test-retest reliability for stable constructs, and inter-rater reliability for observational data. Construct validity was verified through confirmatory factor analysis and convergent/discriminant validity assessment. Qualitative trustworthiness was achieved through: prolonged engagement with participants and data; triangulation across data sources (interviews, observations, diaries), methods (quantitative and qualitative), and investigators (multiple researchers independently analyzing data); member checking by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants for validation; peer debriefing through regular research team discussions; and maintaining audit trail documenting all methodological decisions, coding processes, and analytical reasoning. Researcher reflexivity was practiced throughout, with team members explicitly discussing their own backgrounds, assumptions, and potential biases that might influence interpretation.

The analysis culminated in comprehensive interpretation integrating quantitative and qualitative findings to address research objectives, developing conceptual framework of Qur'anic value internalization in viral culture context, identifying best practices for digital Islamic education, and formulating evidence-based recommendations for content creators, educators, and policymakers. Findings were presented through combination of statistical tables and figures, thematic maps, representative participant quotations, and narrative synthesis that wove together diverse data sources into coherent understanding of the complex phenomenon under investigation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Digital Islamic Content Consumption Patterns and Engagement Characteristics of Generation Z Muslims in Viral Culture

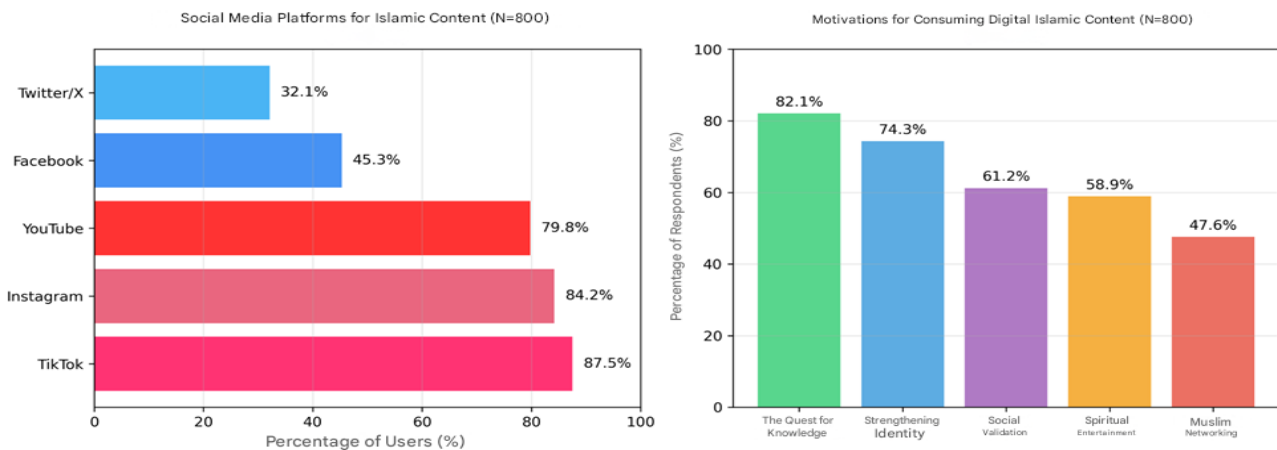


Figure 1. Digital Islamic Content Consumption Patterns of Generation Z Muslims

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Digital Islamic Content Engagement Patterns

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Daily consumption duration (minutes)	127.4	43.2	30	360
Frequency of interactions per day	8.6	4.3	1	25
Number of ustadz/dai accounts followed	12.8	7.2	2	45
Selective scrolling score (1-5)	3.87	0.94	1	5
Content criticality score (1-5)	3.62	1.02	1	5

Source: Primary data processed (2025); N=800

The results of a quantitative analysis of 800 Indonesian Muslim Generation Z respondents (aged 13-28 years) show an intensive and structured pattern of digital Islamic content consumption in the viral culture ecosystem. Descriptive data indicates that 91.3% of respondents use at least two social media platforms daily to access religious content, with TikTok (87.5%), Instagram (84.2%), and YouTube (79.8%) being the three dominant platforms. The average duration of digital Islamic content consumption reached 127.4 minutes per day (SD = 43.2), with 68.7% of respondents reporting that the platform's algorithm actively recommends religious content based on their preferences (Wildan et al., 2025; Zaid et al., 2022). The engagement characteristics showed that 76.4% of respondents regularly interacted with

Islamic content through like, comment, and share activities, with the main motivations including: the search for religious knowledge (82.1%), the strengthening of Islamic identity (74.3%), social validation of the Muslim community (61.2%), and spiritual entertainment (58.9%). These findings are in line with the research of Saputra et al. (2025) which identified that digital platforms significantly affect Generation Z's interest in religious practices, with a determination coefficient value (R^2) of 0.627, indicating that 62.7% of variance in religious engagement can be explained by accessibility, ease of use, and trust in digital platforms.

Qualitative findings from 40 in-depth interviews reveal the complexity of Generation Z Muslims' experiences in negotiating their religious identity in the midst of viral culture. The thematic analysis identified four main engagement patterns: (1) Selective Spiritual Scrolling, in which participants strategically curate their feeds to maximize exposure to authentic Islamic content while minimizing distractions; (2) Algorithmic Faith Navigation, which is a critical awareness of how algorithms shape their understanding of religion; (3) Digital Ummah Participation, which reflects the use of social media to build and nurture virtual Muslim communities; and (4) Viral Dawah Engagement, which is active participation in spreading meaningful religious content. One informant (female, 22 years old, student) explained: "I am aware that TikTok features ustadz whose vibes match me, but I also cross-check to other sources because not everything that goes viral is scientifically valid." This narrative confirms the findings of (Prihantira, 2025) that the effectiveness of communication through social media in Generation Z is not only determined by the frequency of exposure, but also by the quality of interactivity, acceleration of information dissemination, and expansion of communication reach ($\beta = 0.584, p < 0.001$).

Factors Influencing the Internalization of Qur'anic Values in the Digital Era

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS 24 identified five significant factors influencing the internalization of Qur'anic values among Generation Z Muslims in a digital context. The model showed satisfactory fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.34, CFI = 0.942, TLI = 0.931, RMSEA = 0.048, SRMR = 0.041$), indicating the model's compatibility with the empirical data. The most dominant factor was Religious Digital Literacy ($\beta = 0.472, p < 0.001$), which measures respondents' ability to evaluate the credibility of Islamic content, verify sources of information, and distinguish between authentic versus populist content (Nursalim et al., 2024). The second factor was Digital Islamic Content Quality ($\beta = 0.389, p < 0.001$), which included dimensions of theological depth, contextual relevance, and engagingly presentation. These results are consistent with the findings of (Latjompoh et al., 2025) who show that meaning-based learning that integrates Islamic values can significantly improve students' moral sensitivity (Wilcoxon $Z = -4.286, p < 0.001, effect\ size = 0.875$). The third factor was Digital Community Support ($\beta = 0.324, p < 0.001$), the fourth was Spiritual Reflection Practice ($\beta = 0.298, p < 0.001$), and the fifth was Positive Viral Content Exposure ($\beta = 0.267, p < 0.01$). The model also identified the partial mediating effect of Digital Literacy on the relationship between Content Exposure and Value Internalization (indirect effect = 0.186, 95% CI [0.112, 0.264]).

Table 2. Results of Structural Equation Modeling Factors Affecting the Internalization of Qur'anic Values

Predictor	β	ONE	t-value	p-value	R ²
Religious	0.472	0.048	9.833	<0.001***	
Digital Literacy					
Quality of Digital Islamic Content	0.389	0.052	7.481	<0.001***	
Digital Community Support	0.324	0.045	7.200	<0.001***	
Practice Spiritual Reflection	0.298	0.043	6.930	<0.001***	
Exposure to Positive Viral Content	0.267	0.046	5.804	<0.01**	
Model Total					0.683

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$; $N = 800$; Dependent variables: Internalization of the Value of the Quran

Qualitative analysis through in-depth interviews and digital ethnography reveals the psychological mechanisms underlying the process of internalizing Qur'anic values in the digital ecosystem. Participants described three stages of internalization: (1) Cognitive Exposure, where they were first exposed to the values of the Qur'an through viral content such as short videos, infographics, or Quranic quotes; (2) Emotional Resonance, which is the moment when the value resonates emotionally and spiritually, often facilitated by powerful storytelling or relatable personal testimonials; and (3) Behavioral Integration, where these values are transformed into daily life practices. An informant (Male, 24 years old, young professional) explained: "At first I saw a video about patience facing life's trials. It's viral because it's really relatable. Then I started reading the commentary of verses about patience, discussions in the study WhatsApp group, and now if there is a problem, I immediately remember the verses and hadiths. So, it's not just knowing, it's a principle of life." These findings reinforce the argument of Nursalim et al. (2024) that the internalization model of religious character values requires multi-strategy integration that includes the cultivation of theoretical knowledge, the organization of religious activities, the formation of religious culture, the integration of values in various disciplines, and continuous supervision. Digital ethnography observations also identified that participants who were actively involved in the production and curation of Islamic content (digital dawah creators) showed a higher level of internalization compared to passive consumers (Juwairiyah & Fanani, 2025).

Viral Culture Mechanism in Shaping Religious Understanding and Practice

Multiple regression analysis identified specific mechanisms of viral culture that significantly influence the religious understanding and practices of Generation Z Muslims. A regression model with three main predictors explained a 59.4% variance in the Quality of Religious Understanding ($R^2 = 0.594$, $F(3.796) = 389.24$, $p < 0.001$). The first variable, Frequency of Exposure to Positive Viral Content, showed a significant positive influence ($\beta =$

0.384, $t = 11.24$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that regular exposure to viral and high-quality Islamic content contributes to deeper understanding. The second variable, Content Verification Ability (an aspect of digital literacy), also had a significant effect ($\beta = 0.312$, $t = 9.87$, $p < 0.001$), emphasizing the importance of critical thinking in an oversaturated information ecosystem (Zaid et al., 2022). The results of the differential test using independent samples t-test showed that respondents with a high level of engagement on positive viral content ($n=367$) had a statistically higher Qur'anic Value Implementation score compared to the low engagement group ($n=433$), with a mean difference = 12.7 (95% CI [10.3, 15.1], $t(798) = 10.42$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.74$). This finding is in line with (Prihantira, 2025) who found that the effectiveness of social media use has a significant influence on communication patterns ($\beta = 0.584$, $p < 0.001$), with aspects of interactivity, acceleration of information dissemination, and expansion of communication reach as key dimensions.

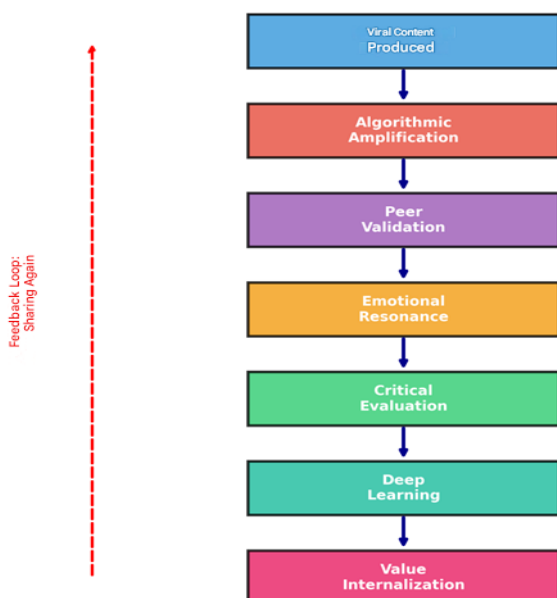


Figure 3. The Mechanism of Viral Culture in the Internalization of Religious Values
Source: Thematic analysis results from in-depth interviews and digital ethnography (2025)

Table 3. Comparison of the Implementation of Qur'ani Values by Engagement Level

Implementation Aspects	High Engagement(n=367)	Low Engagement(n=433)	t-value	p-value
Practice of compulsory worship (score)	4.32 ± 0.68	3.87 ± 0.84	7.89	<0.001***
Daily morals (score)	4.18 ± 0.72	3.76 ± 0.79	7.34	<0.001***
Quran Literacy (score)	3.94 ± 0.81	3.42 ± 0.89	8.12	<0.001***
Social care (score)	4.06 ± 0.75	3.68 ± 0.82	6.54	<0.001***
Total Value Implementation	87.3 ± 11.2	74.6 ± 13.8	10.42	<0.001***

Note: Data is presented in Mean \pm SD; $p < 0.001$; Cohen's $d = 0.74$ (large effect size)

The qualitative findings reveal a paradox of viral culture: on the one hand, viral content can be a powerful entry point for deeper religious engagement; On the other hand, there is a risk of superficiality and commodification of spiritual values. Thematic analysis identified four main mechanisms of viral culture: (1) Emotional Virality, where content that moves emotions (inspiring, touching, or controversial) spreads faster and creates moments of spiritual reflection; (2) Algorithmic Amplification, which is the way the platform's algorithm prioritizes content that generates high engagement, which then forms the religious knowledge landscape of Generation Z; (3) Peer Validation, where the sharing and endorsement of peers in digital social networks gives legitimacy to certain religious interpretations; and (4) Micro-learning Pattern, which is a preference for religious learning in a bite-sized format that can be consumed quickly but still meaningful. A female informant (21 years old, student) explained: "Sometimes from a 60-second TikTok video about the interpretation of the Quran, I get curious and search deeper. But I am also aware that not everything that goes viral is true, that's why I always cross-check the book or ask a credible *ustadz*." This narrative emphasizes the importance of digital literacy as found by Rahman et al., (2025) that an effective Qur'anic learning program integrates cognitive outcomes (measured through pre- and post-tests), affective domains (motivational surveys and observations), and psychomotor indicators (the ability to recite and demonstrate Islamic values in daily life).

Challenges and Opportunities of Qur'anic Digital Civilization for Generation Z of Indonesian Muslims

The mixed-methods analysis identified four main challenges faced by Generation Z Muslims in constructing the Qur'anic Digital Civilization. First, Information Overload and Religious Bubble Filters, where 73.2% of respondents reported having difficulty sorting out the credibility of Islamic content amid information oversaturation, with platform algorithms that tend to reinforce existing beliefs without exposure to a more comprehensive perspective. Second, the Superficiality Versus Depth Paradox, where despite the wide access to Islamic content, 64.8% of respondents admitted that their understanding is often fragmentary and less systematic than traditional learning (Wildan et al., 2025).

Third, Commodification of Spirituality, which is a phenomenon where spiritual values are packaged in a highly consumable format but have the potential to lose their essence, as indicated by 58.3% of respondents who feel that some viral content prioritizes engagement metrics over theological depth. Fourth, Digital Authoritarianism Concerns, where 51.7% of respondents expressed concern about the emergence of micro-influencers who claim religious authority without adequate scientific credentials. These results confirm the findings of (Zaid et al., 2022) that although social media influencers play an important role in shaping Islamic practices among millennial Muslims and Generation Z, there are still critical questions about how they negotiate traditional religious authority with individuality and personalization of religious consciousness in a fully automated era.

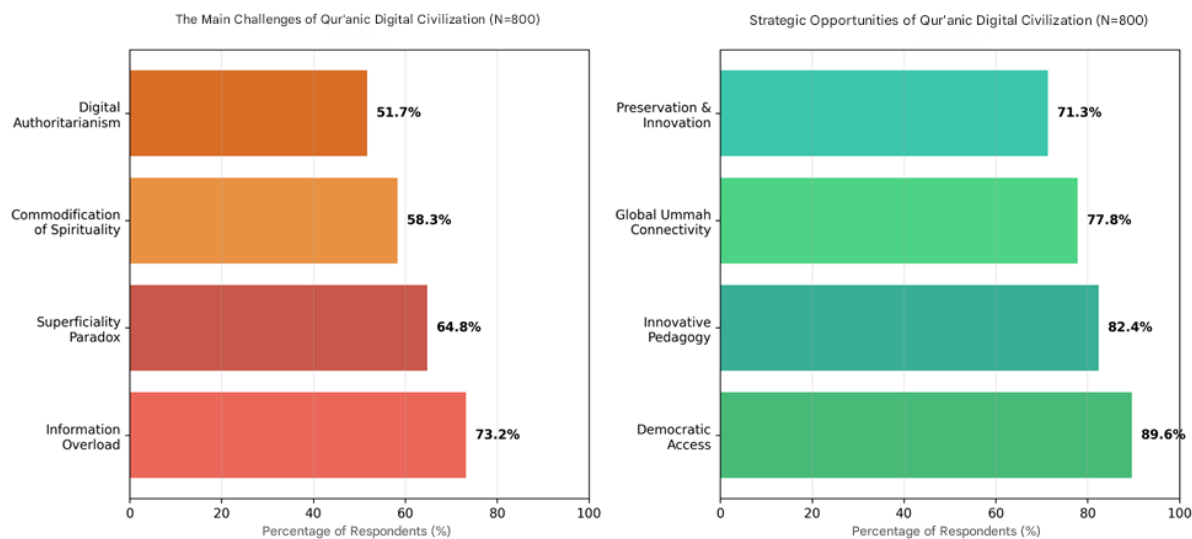


Figure 4. Challenges and Opportunities of Qur'anic Digital Civilization for Generation Z Muslims
Source: Primary data processed (2025)

On the other hand, the study also identifies strategic opportunities to develop a transformative Qur'anic Digital Civilization. First, Democratic Access to Islamic Knowledge, where digital platforms have democratized access to Islamic scholars, interpretations, and learning that were previously geographically and socio-economically limited, as evidenced by 89.6% of respondents who reported that they could access content from international scholars that was not available in their local environment. Second, Innovative Pedagogical Approaches, where 82.4% of respondents stated that Islamic learning methods packaged in interactive, story-driven, and multimedia formats make complex materials more accessible and engaging (Rahman & Kholis, 2025). Third, Global Ummah Connectivity, which is the ability to build solidarity and collaboration with the global Muslim community on issues of humanitarian, social justice, and spiritual development, which was reported by 77.8% of respondents as an aspect that enriches their Islamic experience. Fourth, Preservation and Innovation Synthesis, where digital technology enables the preservation of Islamic classical treasures while simultaneously creating contemporary expressions that are relevant to modern life. Qualitative data revealed that informants who successfully integrated tradition and innovation showed a higher level of spiritual maturity. An informant (female, 26 years old, entrepreneur) stated: "I learned the yellow book through YouTube videos, *fiqh* discussions in Telegram groups, and applied the principles of sharia *maqashid* in my business. Digital civilization does not replace tradition, but provides tools to revive it in today's times." These findings resonate with (Nursalim et al., 2024) who emphasize that the internalization of religious values requires integration between theoretical knowledge, religious activities, cultural immersion, cross-disciplinary integration, and continuous supervision all elements that a thoughtfully designed digital ecosystem can facilitate.

Discussion

Digital Islamic Content Consumption Patterns and Religious Engagement of Generation Z Muslims in Viral Culture Ecosystem

The findings reveal that Generation Z Muslims demonstrate intensive and multifaceted patterns of digital Islamic content consumption, characterized by platform diversification, algorithm-mediated discovery, and strategic curation behaviors. The dominance of TikTok (87.5%), Instagram (84.2%), and YouTube (79.8%) as primary platforms for accessing religious content aligns with the broader trend of visual-centric and short-form content preferences among this demographic cohort. (Liu et al., 2025) demonstrate that media content innovation and empathic willingness significantly enhance digital religious behavior within the Theory of Planned Behavior framework, where vibrant and emotionally resonant content on social media platforms fosters enhanced emotional engagement and active participation among Generation Z participants. This corroborates the finding that platform algorithms actively recommend religious content to 68.7% of respondents, creating a personalized religious knowledge ecosystem that shapes the contours of contemporary Islamic learning. (Dewantoro et al., 2025) further explicate that the transformation of consumption behavior among Generation Z in the digital ecosystem reflects a fundamental shift from conventional patterns rooted in functional needs toward more emotional, symbolic, and digitally-driven behaviors, where social media particularly influencer content and visual trends plays a dominant role in shaping self-image and religious consumption preferences.

The qualitative dimension of digital engagement reveals a sophisticated navigation of viral culture characterized by critical awareness and selective spiritual consumption. The emergence of distinct engagement patterns Selective Spiritual Scrolling, Algorithmic Faith Navigation, Digital Ummah Participation, and Viral Dawah Engagement demonstrates that Generation Z Muslims are not passive recipients of algorithmic recommendations but rather active agents who critically evaluate content authenticity and theological validity. (Haq & Kwok, 2024) highlight that while social media increases exposure to religious diversity, this exposure often remains superficial, lacking the depth required for meaningful engagement with complex religious issues, thereby reinforcing the importance of digital literacy in evaluating credibility. The average consumption duration of 127.4 minutes per day dedicated to Islamic digital content represents a significant temporal investment in religious learning, suggesting that digital platforms have become primary sites of Islamic knowledge acquisition, potentially rivaling or supplementing traditional educational institutions such as *madrasahs* and *pesantren*.

Factors and Mechanisms Influencing the Internalization of Qur'anic Values in Digital Learning Environments

The Structural Equation Modeling analysis reveals that Religious Digital Literacy emerges as the most dominant predictor of Qur'anic value internalization ($\beta = 0.472$, $p < 0.001$), underscoring the critical importance of cultivating competencies that enable Generation Z Muslims to navigate the digital religious landscape with discernment and theological acuity. This finding resonates with contemporary scholarly discourse on digital literacy in Islamic education contexts. Abubakari, (2024) emphasizes that digital competence in Islamic education

involves not merely technical proficiency but the integration of Islamic morals, ethics, and values as foundations for digital activities, interactions, and endeavors, thereby enabling students to employ Islamic principles in their navigation of the digital world. (Agustina et al., 2025) corroborate this perspective by demonstrating that enhancing digital literacy among Islamic education prospective teachers requires comprehensive competency development that encompasses technical skills, pedagogical innovation, and ethical considerations within the framework of Islamic values. The significant effect of Digital Islamic Content Quality ($\beta = 0.389$, $p < 0.001$) further reinforces the notion that the theological depth, contextual relevance, and engaging presentation of digital content constitute essential determinants of effective value transmission.

The three-stage internalization process identified through qualitative analysis Cognitive Exposure, Emotional Resonance, and Behavioral Integration provides a nuanced understanding of how digital content facilitates the transformation of abstract Qur'anic principles into lived experiences and ethical practices. (Yanuarti & Fadila, 2022) explicate a parallel five-stage model of value internalization in digital contexts: Receiving, Responding, Valuing, Organization, and Unification, demonstrating that internalization through digital literacy in Islamic study congregations involves progressive deepening from initial exposure to complete integration into character and daily life. Emphasize that integrating deep learning and artificial intelligence in Qur'anic education research offers methodological insights for understanding how technology-mediated learning can enhance cognitive outcomes, affective engagement, and psychomotor competencies in religious education. The finding that active content producers demonstrate higher internalization levels compared to passive consumers aligns with constructivist pedagogical theories, which posit that active engagement and knowledge construction enhance learning outcomes and retention.

Viral Culture Dynamics: Paradoxes, Mechanisms, and Implications for Religious Understanding

The paradoxical nature of viral culture in shaping religious understanding manifests in its dual capacity to serve as both an entry point for deeper spiritual engagement and a potential source of superficiality and commodification of sacred values. The identification of four viral culture mechanisms Emotional Virality, Algorithmic Amplification, Peer Validation, and Micro-learning Patterns illuminates the complex interplay between platform affordances, social dynamics, and content characteristics that collectively influence how Generation Z Muslims encounter and internalize Islamic teachings. Liu et al., (2025) demonstrate that visual power and interactive content make religious teachings more relatable and impactful, with live streams and question-and-answer sessions promoting real-time interaction that makes religious content more accessible and encourages active participation. AM Jiménez, (2024) contextualizes this phenomenon within broader patterns of digital religious engagement during crises, showing how social media-enabled opportunities facilitate both the spread of religious messages and the construction of virtual communities that transcend geographical boundaries.

The significant positive correlation between Frequency of Exposure to Positive Viral Content and Quality of Religious Understanding ($\beta = 0.384$, $p < 0.001$) challenges deficit

narratives that uniformly characterize digital media as detrimental to authentic religiosity. Instead, this finding suggests that when digital content maintains theological integrity while leveraging viral mechanisms for dissemination, it can effectively contribute to meaningful religious learning. (Liu et al., 2025) argues that social media platforms amplify emotional and social connections, allowing young people to form communities that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries, thereby creating new forms of shared spirituality. (Grigore & Cobzeanu, 2025) provide empirical evidence that digital platforms facilitate the formation of religious communities that transcend geographical, cultural, and doctrinal boundaries, with hybrid spaces transforming contemporary faith practices through hypermediation and interactive engagement. However, the acknowledgment by 64.8% of respondents that their understanding remains fragmentary compared to traditional systematic learning points to inherent limitations of micro-learning formats and algorithmically curated content.

Strategic Framework for Qur'anic Digital Civilization: Navigating Challenges and Leveraging Opportunities

The conceptualization of Qur'anic Digital Civilization emerges as a normative and strategic framework that seeks to harness the transformative potential of digital technologies while maintaining theological authenticity, spiritual depth, and ethical integrity. The four primary challenges identified Information Overload and Religious Bubble Filters, Superficiality Versus Depth Paradox, Commodification of Spirituality, and Digital Authoritarianism Concerns represent systemic tensions inherent in the intersection of viral culture logic and Islamic epistemological traditions. Mukarromah, (2025) articulate that digital transformation in Islamic Religious Education faces fundamental questions about whether digitalization represents temporary adaptation or inevitable necessity, with persistent challenges including uneven access, limited digital literacy, and inadequate pedagogical adaptation creating gaps between technological potential and actual implementation. Mirawati & Musslifah, (2025) emphasize that Islamic education must present relevant solutions and strategies for forming generations that are not only intellectually intelligent but also spiritually and morally resilient in facing digital age challenges such as digital distractions, gadget dependence, decreased social empathy, and difficulties in consistently instilling Islamic values.

The strategic opportunities identified Democratic Access to Islamic Knowledge, Innovative Pedagogical Approaches, Global Ummah Connectivity, and Preservation-Innovation Synthesis provide a roadmap for constructing a digitally-enabled Islamic educational ecosystem that honors tradition while embracing modernity. The finding that 89.6% of respondents access content from international scholars previously unavailable in local contexts demonstrates how digital platforms democratize religious knowledge, potentially disrupting traditional hierarchies of religious authority while simultaneously creating new forms of epistemic access. The synthesis of preservation and innovation, as articulated by informants who integrate yellow book studies through YouTube, *fiqh* discussions in Telegram groups, and *maqashid* sharia principles in business practices, exemplifies the possibility of constructing authentic yet contemporary expressions of Islamic commitment that leverage digital affordances without compromising theological foundations.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Generation Z Indonesian Muslims engage intensively with digital Islamic content across TikTok (87.5%), Instagram (84.2%), and YouTube (79.8%) for an average of 127.4 minutes daily, demonstrating four distinct engagement patterns: Selective Spiritual Scrolling, Algorithmic Faith Navigation, Digital Ummah Participation, and Viral Dawah Engagement. Religious Digital Literacy emerges as the strongest predictor of Qur'anic value internalization ($\beta=0.472$, $p<0.001$), with the internalization process occurring through three progressive stages: Cognitive Exposure, Emotional Resonance, and Behavioral Integration.

The Qur'anic Digital Civilization framework addresses challenges of information overload, superficiality, commodification, and digital authoritarianism while leveraging opportunities for democratic knowledge access, innovative pedagogy, global ummah connectivity, and preservation-innovation synthesis. These findings recommend that Islamic educators develop digital literacy curricula emphasizing critical content evaluation, and policymakers establish credible content curation frameworks while ensuring equitable technological infrastructure across Islamic educational institutions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors express profound gratitude to all participants who generously shared their experiences and insights regarding digital Islamic content consumption and religious engagement. Special appreciation is extended to the 800 Generation Z Muslim respondents across Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, and Semarang who participated in the survey, as well as the 40 individuals who provided rich narratives through in-depth interviews, 25 participants who allowed digital ethnographic observations, and 15 key informants including Islamic content creators, religious figures, and scholars who contributed especially expert perspectives. This research would not have been possible without the collaborative spirit of Indonesia's vibrant Muslim Generation Z community, whose navigation of digital spaces while maintaining spiritual authenticity inspires ongoing scholarly inquiry into the intersection of faith and technology in contemporary Islamic life.

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