



Digital Ethics and Spirituality in Islam

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ABSTRACT

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The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed social interaction patterns and religious practices among Muslims; however, these changes are not always accompanied by adequate ethical and spiritual awareness. This study aims to comprehensively analyze the integration of digital ethics and spirituality from an Islamic perspective, identify moral and spiritual challenges in digital spaces, and examine the role of Islamic education in fostering spiritually grounded digital ethical awareness. This research employs a qualitative approach based on a systematic literature review, utilizing data sources such as scholarly journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, and relevant research reports published within the last five years. Data were analyzed through stages of literature reduction, thematic categorization, conceptual synthesis, and theoretical interpretation. The findings indicate that digital ethics in Islam is rooted in moral values such as *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *ihsan* (excellence), which must be integrated with spirituality as an internal mechanism for shaping moral consciousness. Major challenges in digital spaces include ethical degradation, spiritual distraction, and the influence of algorithms that shape religious practices in a non-reflective manner. Additionally, a gap exists between normative understanding and actual digital behavior. In this context, Islamic education plays a strategic role as a transformative agent through the internalization of moral values and the strengthening of spiritual dimensions. In conclusion, the integration of digital ethics and Islamic spirituality represents a holistic approach essential for building a digital society that is ethical, civilized, and oriented toward transcendental values.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed patterns of social interaction, including the religious practices of Muslims in virtual spaces. This transformation is significant as digital environments have become a primary medium for shaping identity, values, and behavior in modern society. However,

such advancements are not always accompanied by adequate ethical and spiritual awareness. Various studies indicate that the increase in digital activity often correlates with the rise of unethical behaviors such as the spread of misinformation, hate speech, and moral degradation (Ulya et al., 2025). From an Islamic perspective, ethics (*akhlak*) and spirituality are fundamental foundations in all human actions, including those in digital contexts (Müller, 2025; Ricciardi Celsi & Zomaya, 2025). Therefore, it is essential to examine how Islamic values can serve as guidance in addressing the complexities of digital ethics (Akem et al., 2025). This study is thus relevant in responding to the societal need for an ethical-spiritual framework that is adaptive to technological developments (Fadhilah et al., 2025).

The main problem addressed in this study is the disorientation of values between the advancement of digital technology and the internalization of Islamic ethics and spirituality (Gursoy et al., 2025). Many Muslim users actively engage in digital spaces but lack a strong ethical foundation in their online interactions (Cingillioglu & Wellalage, 2026). This condition leads to the phenomenon of “split identity” between religious identity in the real world and behavior in the virtual world (Brugnoli et al., 2023; Maftai et al., 2022; Verma, 2026). Furthermore, the lack of value-based digital literacy exacerbates this issue, resulting in the use of technology without moral consideration (Al Muhaysin & Hassan, 2025; Ieracitano et al., 2024). Other studies reveal that digital spaces often function as value-neutral arenas that neglect the principles of *maqasid al-shariah*, such as the protection of honor, intellect, and religion (Fokou Ngoumo, 2025; B. Kim et al., 2022). Therefore, the core problem lies not only in technology itself but also in the inability of individuals and institutions to integrate Islamic ethics into everyday digital practices (Spinello, 2026; Wilhelm et al., 2020).

Emerging phenomena indicate a growing interest in the concepts of digital Islam and virtual spirituality (Efron, 2022; Stahel & Baier, 2023). Religious practices such as online preaching, digital fatwas, and virtual Muslim communities are becoming increasingly prevalent (Marasabessy & Dahinang, 2026; Theodorakopoulos et al., 2025). However, these developments also introduce new challenges, including the commodification of religion, fragmented religious authority, and the emergence of “algorithmic spirituality” shaped by digital platform logic (Tsokota et al., 2025). Other studies suggest that digital interactions often shift spiritual values toward performative expressions rather than reflective practices (Bibi et al., 2025). In the educational context, the integration of Islamic-based digital ethics has begun to develop, yet its implementation remains limited and unsystematic (Pěkný, 2025). These phenomena reflect a tension between opportunities and challenges in fostering Islamic spirituality in the digital age (Bharti et al., n.d.; Villeval, 2026).

Several studies have attempted to examine the relationship between digital ethics and Islamic values (Sharaf, 2025). For instance, (Greig & Hogg, 2025) emphasize the importance of digital ethics in enhancing religious awareness in cyberspace through Islamic educational approaches. Meanwhile, (Verma, 2026)

highlights the strategic role of Islamic education in shaping students' morality and spirituality in the digital era. On the other hand, (Uzar, 2026) integrate a Sufi perspective in understanding digital ethical dilemmas by emphasizing self-awareness and control of desires in technology use. These studies contribute significantly to building a conceptual framework that connects ethics, spirituality, and technology. However, most of them remain normative and have not yet developed operational integrative models within educational and digital societal contexts.

Additionally, studies such as (Qadri et al., 2025; Sultanbayeva et al., 2025) demonstrate that the moral crisis in digital spaces can be addressed through strengthening morality and spirituality based on Islamic values. Nevertheless, there are differences in approaches between studies emphasizing normative-theological aspects and those adopting sociological-critical perspectives. Some studies highlight the importance of *maqasid al-shariah* as the foundation of digital ethics (Bakirov & Suleimenov, 2025), while others emphasize practical dimensions through digital literacy (S.-S. Kim et al., 2025). The primary limitation of previous research lies in the lack of comprehensive synthesis integrating ethical, spiritual, and digital practice dimensions simultaneously. Moreover, there is still limited research explicitly linking the digital ethical crisis with spiritual degradation within a systematic analytical framework (Jasmine & Selvi, n.d.; Mueller, 2025). This indicates a research gap in developing a holistic and integrative conceptual model.

The novelty of this article lies in its effort to integrate digital ethics and Islamic spirituality into a holistic conceptual framework through a qualitative literature review approach. Unlike previous studies that tend to be partial, this article combines theological, philosophical, and pedagogical perspectives in understanding digital ethical phenomena. Furthermore, it positions Islamic spirituality not merely as a normative value but as an internal mechanism that shapes ethical awareness in digital interactions. This approach also emphasizes the importance of Islamic education as a transformative agent in developing sustainable digital ethics. Thus, this article offers a new synthesis that can serve as a foundation for developing educational models and social practices based on Islamic digital ethics.

Based on the above discussion, the research questions of this study are: (1) how can digital ethics in the Islamic perspective be integrated with spirituality, (2) how can moral and spiritual challenges in digital spaces be critically analyzed, and (3) what is the role of Islamic education in fostering spiritually grounded digital ethical awareness. The objective of this study is to develop a comprehensive conceptual understanding of the relationship between digital ethics and Islamic spirituality through literature synthesis. Theoretically, this article contributes to enriching the field of Islamic education and technology ethics by offering an integrative framework that connects values, practices, and spiritual consciousness. The main argument proposed is that digital ethics in

Islam cannot be separated from spirituality, as both complement each other in shaping responsible human behavior in the digital era.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach based on a systematic literature review aimed at comprehensively examining and synthesizing various works related to digital ethics and spirituality in Islam. The data sources include reputable scholarly journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, and research reports relevant to the topic. The selection of literature is conducted selectively based on the following criteria: (1) relevance to the theme of digital ethics and Islamic spirituality, (2) publication year prioritized within the last five years to ensure recency, and (3) the quality of sources derived from indexed journals or recognized academic publishers. The data collection process involves searching scientific databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science using specific keywords, followed by identification and selection of relevant literature through critical reading of titles, abstracts, and full texts to ensure alignment with the research focus.

Data analysis is conducted using qualitative thematic synthesis techniques through several systematic stages, including literature reduction to extract key information, thematic categorization to group findings based on conceptual similarities, conceptual synthesis to integrate diverse perspectives, and theoretical interpretation to construct comprehensive scholarly arguments. This process is iterative and reflective, allowing for continuous analytical refinement. To ensure data validity, this study applies several strategies, including cross-checking sources to maintain consistency, comparing research findings to identify similarities and differences, and verifying the coherence of arguments based on strong literature evidence. This approach aligns with qualitative literature review practices in Islamic and technology studies, emphasizing the integration of critical analysis and methodological rigor in producing credible conclusions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Digital ethics in the Islamic perspective refers to a set of moral values and ethical principles that regulate individual behavior in digital spaces based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, such as truthfulness (*sidq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), and self-control (*mujahadah al-nafs*). Meanwhile, Islamic spirituality is understood as an inner awareness that connects humans with Allah through the internalization of values such as tauhid (monotheism), ihsan (excellence), and tazkiyatun nafs (self-purification) (Ulya et al., 2025). The integration of these two dimensions implies harmonizing external behavior (digital conduct) with internal consciousness (spiritual awareness), ensuring that digital activities are not merely technical but also ethically and spiritually meaningful (Müller, 2025; Ulya et al., 2025).

A number of studies indicate that digital ethics in Islam cannot be separated from the concept of akhlak as the fundamental basis of human behavior. Muharromah & Manshur (2025) emphasize that Islamic education plays a strategic role in instilling digital ethics through the internalization of Qur'anic moral values. Similarly, Saputra & Asbi (2025) find that one of the main challenges in digital ethics is the lack of religious awareness in technology use, leading users to neglect ethical norms. Meanwhile, Rabi'u & Merican (2025) argue that digital ethics should be understood as part of social responsibility rooted in spiritual values. These findings suggest that Islamic digital ethics is not merely normative but also contextual, adapting to the dynamics of technological development.

On the other hand, the integration of spirituality into digital ethics has been widely discussed in contemporary Sufi studies. Adnan & Ramli (2024) highlight that the concepts of *ihsan* and *muraqabah* (awareness of divine supervision) are key to shaping ethical behavior in digital environments. Rosyad (2025) further demonstrates that a Sufi approach can strengthen individuals' self-control against negative influences on social media. However, Wijaya et al. (2025) criticize that spirituality in digital spaces is often reduced to symbolic or performative expressions rather than substantive practice. In addition, Nurfazri et al. (2025) reveal that the phenomenon of "digital Islam" creates new opportunities for disseminating spiritual values while also posing risks of religious distortion due to algorithmic influences. This reflects the complex interplay between spirituality and technology.

Based on the existing literature, it can be concluded that most studies still treat ethics and spirituality as separate dimensions or link them only normatively without in-depth analysis. The prevailing approaches tend to be descriptive and have not yet developed integrative and applicable models for real digital life. Moreover, there is a tendency toward reductionism in understanding spirituality, where inner dimensions are often overlooked in fast-paced digital practices. Therefore, a more holistic approach is needed—one that not only emphasizes ethical rules but also prioritizes the internalization of spiritual values as the foundation of moral awareness.

The patterns identified across studies reveal several key tendencies. First, digital ethics in Islam is consistently rooted in *akhlak* and *maqasid al-shariah*. Second, spirituality functions as an internal mechanism that reinforces ethical compliance. Third, there is a gap between normative understanding and actual practice in digital spaces. Fourth, Islamic education emerges as a key factor in bridging the integration of ethics and spirituality. These patterns demonstrate that the relationship between digital ethics and spirituality is complementary, where ethics governs external behavior while spirituality shapes internal consciousness.

The integration of digital ethics and Islamic spirituality contributes significantly to developing a comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding Muslim behavior in the digital age. This perspective reinforces

the argument that addressing the crisis of digital ethics cannot rely solely on regulation or technological literacy but must also involve strengthening individuals' spiritual dimensions. Therefore, this approach is highly relevant for the development of adaptive Islamic education and for fostering a digital society that is not only technologically competent but also morally and spiritually grounded.

Author & Year	Research Focus	Method	Key Findings	Contribution
(Mastori et al., 2025)	Islamic digital ethics	Conceptual	Islamic ethical principles are relevant to the digital world	Theoretical foundation of digital ethics
(Dedi Sopyan, 2023)	Digital spirituality (Sufism)	Qualitative	<i>Ihsan</i> and <i>muraqabah</i> strengthen ethical behavior	Integration of spirituality
(Galang et al., 2020)	Digital ethics education	Literature review	Islamic education is important in digital ethics	Pedagogical approach
(Sari et al., 2025)	Ethics and big data	Critical analysis	Low awareness of digital ethics	Social critique
(Habsi et al., 2025)	Social digital ethics	Conceptual	Digital ethics as social responsibility	Global perspective
(Canu et al., 2025)	Sufistic ethics	Qualitative	Sufism strengthens digital self-control	Sufistic approach
(Setiawan & Soewarno, 2024)	Digital spirituality	Case study	Spirituality tends to be performative	Critique of digital practices
(Siauw, 2021)	Digital Islam	Systematic review	Algorithms influence religious understanding	Structural analysis

Tabel 1 : Sintesis Literatur

How Moral and Spiritual Challenges in Digital Spaces Can Be Critically Analyzed

Moral and spiritual challenges in digital spaces refer to various forms of behavioral deviation and the decline of inner awareness resulting from human interaction with digital technology. In the Islamic perspective, moral challenges relate to violations of ethical values such as honesty, responsibility, and proper communication (*adab*), while spiritual challenges involve the weakening of awareness of one's relationship with Allah (*muraqabah*) and transcendent life purposes. Digital spaces—characterized by anonymity, speed, and minimal direct social control—often create conditions that enable value disorientation (Chaudhary, 2020; Rabiū & Merican, 2025). Therefore, these challenges are not merely technical but also philosophical and theological, as they simultaneously affect both moral and spiritual dimensions of human life.

Various studies indicate that one of the primary challenges in digital environments is the rise of unethical behaviors such as the spread of misinformation, hate speech, and cyberbullying. Saputra & Asbi (2025) found that the development of big data and social media has accelerated information dissemination without adequate ethical control. This is reinforced by Hidayat & Putri (2026), who argue that the lack of value-based digital literacy is a major

factor contributing to the moral crisis among Muslim users. Meanwhile, Rabiū & Merican (2025) emphasize that digitalization has shifted traditional social norms, leading individuals to act without considering moral consequences. These findings suggest that moral challenges in digital spaces are closely linked to the weak internalization of ethical values in technology use.

Beyond moral concerns, the spiritual dimension also faces significant pressure in the digital era. Adnan & Ramli (2024) demonstrate that intensive technology use can diminish the quality of spiritual reflection, as human attention becomes fragmented by rapid information flows. Wijaya et al. (2025) identify the phenomenon of “performative spirituality,” where religious practices on social media are more oriented toward image than substantive meaning. Additionally, Nurfazri et al. (2025) highlight that digital algorithms can shape users’ religious preferences, reducing spirituality to platform-driven logic. However, Rosyad (2025) offers an alternative perspective by suggesting that a Sufi approach can strengthen spiritual awareness amid digital distractions. This reflects a duality of challenges and opportunities within the spiritual dimension. Existing literature tends to frame moral and spiritual challenges as direct consequences of technology without deeply examining the structural and cultural factors that also influence them. Many studies remain normative, focusing on what ought to be rather than explaining why and how these phenomena occur. Moreover, there is a tendency to treat users as passive subjects of technology, despite the inherently dialectical nature of human-technology interaction. The lack of interdisciplinary approaches further limits the analysis, as digital ethics requires integration of theological, sociological, and media studies perspectives. Therefore, a critical analysis is essential to understand these challenges in a more comprehensive and contextual manner.

From the reviewed studies, several key patterns emerge. First, there is a strong correlation between low digital literacy and increased ethical violations. Second, digital distractions contribute to a decline in individual spirituality. Third, social media encourages the formation of performative religious identities. Fourth, algorithms play a significant role in shaping religious perceptions and practices. Fifth, spiritual approaches such as Sufism are increasingly proposed as alternative solutions to address these crises. These patterns indicate that moral and spiritual challenges in digital spaces are multidimensional and interconnected.

The critical analysis of these challenges contributes significantly to understanding the urgency of integrating digital ethics and Islamic spirituality. The findings reinforce the argument that the crisis of digital ethics cannot be addressed solely through technical or regulatory measures but requires strengthening the spiritual dimension as the internal foundation of human behavior. Thus, this study provides a theoretical basis for developing educational models and social practices capable of addressing digital-era challenges holistically, while affirming that ethics and spirituality are inseparable components in building a civilized digital society.

Moral and Spiritual Challenges in Digital Spaces

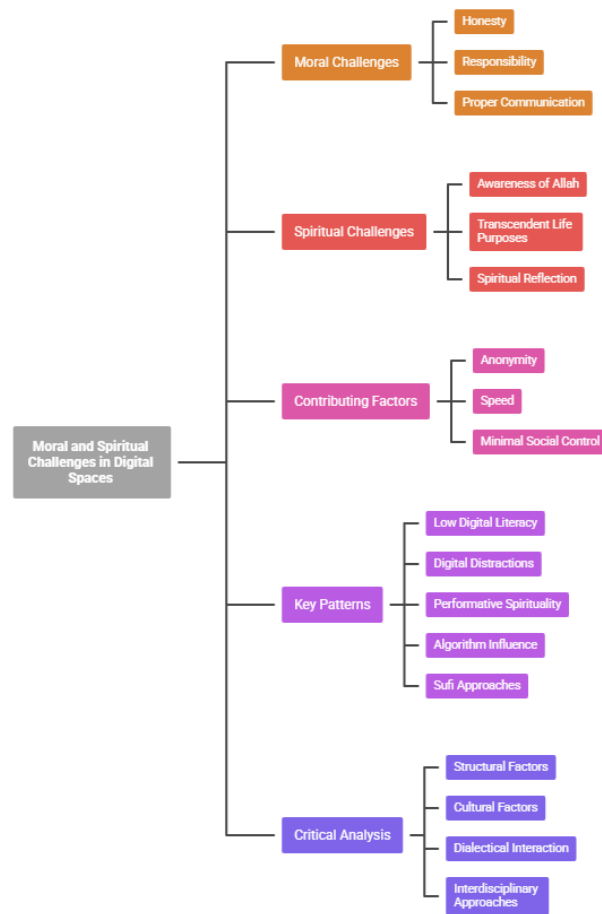


Image 1 : Moral and spiritual challenges in digital spaces

The figure illustrates a conceptual framework of moral and spiritual challenges in digital spaces, structured into several interrelated dimensions. First, moral challenges encompass issues such as honesty, responsibility, and proper communication, which are often strained in online interactions. Second, spiritual challenges involve the weakening of awareness of Allah, the loss of transcendent life purposes, and the decline of spiritual reflection. These challenges are further intensified by contributing factors, including anonymity, the rapid speed of information exchange, and minimal social control in digital environments.

Moreover, the framework identifies key patterns such as low digital literacy, digital distractions, performative spirituality, algorithmic influence, and the emergence of Sufi-based approaches as potential responses. Finally, the critical analysis highlights the importance of examining structural and cultural factors, dialectical interactions, and interdisciplinary approaches in understanding and addressing these phenomena. Overall, the diagram underscores the complex and multidimensional nature of ethical and spiritual issues in the digital era.

The Role of Islamic Education in Building Spirituality-Based Digital Ethical Awareness

The role of Islamic education in this context refers to the function of the educational system in transforming digital ethical values grounded in Islamic spirituality to learners. Islamic education is not merely oriented toward knowledge transfer but also toward character formation (*akhlak*) and spiritual awareness (*ruhiyah*) integrated into daily life, including digital activities. Digital ethics based on Islamic spirituality encompasses the internalization of values such as amanah (trustworthiness), *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *ihsan* (excellence), and the awareness of divine supervision (*muraqabah*) in every online interaction (Sugianto, 2024; Muharromah & Manshur, 2025). Thus, Islamic education serves as a strategic medium for harmonizing technological advancement with moral and spiritual values.

Several studies indicate that Islamic education plays a significant role in developing digital ethics through value-based curriculum and learning approaches. Setiawan and Chalim (2025) found that integrating digital literacy into Islamic education enhances students' ethical awareness in social media use. Similarly, Sugianto (2024) demonstrates that Islamic religious education contributes to reducing negative digital behaviors such as hate speech and misinformation by instilling moral consciousness. Other research highlights that spirituality-based character education, inspired by scholars like Al-Ghazālī, strengthens moral resilience and self-control in the digital era (Putri et al., 2025). These findings collectively emphasize that Islamic education has strong potential to shape ethical digital behavior through structured pedagogical interventions.

On the other hand, the spiritual dimension in Islamic education is a crucial factor in fostering digital ethical awareness. Adnan and Ramli (2024) emphasize that integrating Sufi concepts such as *tazkiyatun nafs* (self-purification) and *ihsan* into education enhances students' ability to control themselves amid digital distractions. Rosyad (2025) further shows that *sufistic* approaches cultivate inner awareness that encourages consistent ethical behavior both offline and online. However, Wijaya et al. (2025) criticize that spiritual education is often implemented symbolically and has not yet reached practical application in digital contexts. Additionally, Nurfazri et al. (2025) point out that Islamic education has not fully adapted to rapid technological changes, indicating a gap between educational ideals and digital realities.

Based on existing literature, although Islamic education is recognized as strategically important, its implementation still faces several limitations. Many approaches remain normative and are not yet systematically integrated into digital curricula. There is also a gap between conceptual teachings and actual practices in digital spaces, reflecting a lack of contextual and applied pedagogical models. Moreover, Islamic education tends to underutilize technology as a medium for teaching ethics itself. Therefore, a pedagogical transformation is required—one that balances cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions while being responsive to digital challenges.

Patterns emerging from the literature reveal several key trends. First, Islamic education serves as a foundational framework for digital ethics through the internalization of moral values. Second, spirituality acts as a core mechanism in strengthening ethical awareness. Third, the integration of digital literacy within Islamic education remains suboptimal. Fourth, sufistic approaches are increasingly recognized as effective alternatives for deep moral development. Fifth, there is a growing need for contextual and adaptive educational models that align with technological developments. These patterns indicate that while Islamic education holds great potential, innovation in its implementation is essential.

The role of Islamic education in building spirituality-based digital ethical awareness contributes significantly to addressing moral and spiritual challenges in the digital era. This theme reinforces the argument that solutions to digital ethical crises must begin with a holistic and sustainable educational process. By integrating ethical values and spirituality into learning, Islamic education can cultivate individuals who are not only technologically competent but also morally and spiritually grounded. Therefore, Islamic education becomes a key pillar in creating a digital society that is ethical, civilized, and oriented toward transcendental values.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that digital ethics in the Islamic perspective cannot be separated from the dimension of spirituality, as both complement each other in shaping human behavior in digital spaces. Ethics regulates external actions, while spirituality serves as the internal foundation that guides moral consciousness. However, the literature reveals a gap between normative understanding and actual practice, alongside emerging moral and spiritual challenges driven by the complexity of digital technology. Furthermore, Islamic education plays a strategic role in integrating digital ethics and spirituality through the internalization of moral values (akhlaq) and the strengthening of spiritual awareness. Nevertheless, its implementation still requires more contextual and adaptive development in response to digital dynamics. Therefore, strengthening spirituality through education becomes a key element in building a digital society that is ethical, civilized, and grounded in Islamic values.

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