

Reconstructing Moral Internalization in Islamic Religious Education for Generation Z in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the processes of learning, communication, and moral development among Generation Z, creating new challenges for Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Conventional approaches to moral internalization, which primarily emphasize knowledge transmission, role modeling, and habituation, require conceptual reconstruction to remain relevant in digitally mediated educational environments. This study aims to reconstruct the concept of moral internalization in Islamic Religious Education for Generation Z in the digital era through an integrative literature review. The study systematically synthesized scholarly publications on Islamic education, moral education, character development, digital pedagogy, and Generation Z to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework. The findings indicate that effective moral internalization should no longer be understood as a linear pedagogical process but as a multidimensional and transformative educational process integrating cognitive understanding, spiritual awareness, emotional engagement, digital ethical literacy, social participation, and reflective practice. The proposed framework also emphasizes the collaborative roles of teachers, families, educational institutions, and digital environments in fostering sustainable moral development. Theoretically, this study contributes by expanding existing perspectives on Islamic Religious Education through a contextually responsive conceptual model suitable for contemporary digital societies. Practically, the reconstructed framework provides valuable guidance for curriculum development, instructional innovation, teacher professional development, and educational policy aimed at strengthening moral education for Generation Z while preserving the fundamental ethical principles of Islamic education amid ongoing digital transformation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the landscape of education, communication, and social interaction across the globe. Digital platforms, artificial intelligence, social media, and algorithm-driven information ecosystems have reshaped how individuals acquire knowledge, construct identities, and develop values. Within this transformation, education is no longer

confined to classrooms but has become deeply integrated with digital environments that continuously influence learners' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development. While technological innovation has expanded educational opportunities and democratized access to information, it has simultaneously generated unprecedented challenges related to ethics, morality, identity, and character formation. These challenges are particularly significant for Generation Z, whose lives have been inseparable from digital technology since childhood (Widayat et al., 2025). Consequently, educational institutions are increasingly expected not only to develop students' intellectual competencies but also to cultivate moral resilience capable of navigating the complexities of the digital era.

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) occupies a strategic position in addressing these contemporary challenges. Unlike conventional religious instruction that primarily emphasizes the transmission of doctrinal knowledge, Islamic Religious Education seeks to integrate cognitive understanding, spiritual awareness, ethical behavior, and social responsibility into a holistic educational process. The ultimate objective of Islamic education is the development of *insan kamil*, individuals who possess intellectual excellence, spiritual maturity, and noble character (*akhlaq al-karimah*) (Adiyono et al., 2022). Classical Muslim scholars such as Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, Ibn Miskawayh, and Ibn Khaldun consistently emphasized that moral education constitutes the essence of Islamic pedagogy because knowledge without ethical implementation fails to achieve the higher objectives (*maqasid*) of education. Therefore, moral internalization should not merely be understood as the transmission of ethical principles but as a transformative educational process through which Islamic values become deeply embedded within an individual's personality and daily behavior (Mundofi, 2025).

The urgency of reconstructing moral internalization has become increasingly evident as Generation Z demonstrates learning characteristics significantly different from previous generations. Born into an environment dominated by smartphones, social networking platforms, cloud computing, and digital communication, Generation Z represents the first generation of genuine digital natives. Their cognitive habits, learning preferences, communication patterns, and social interactions are heavily mediated by digital technologies (Amirudin et al., 2025; Asfiati, 2023). They tend to process information rapidly, prefer visual and interactive learning experiences, and actively participate in online communities that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. While these characteristics facilitate creativity, collaboration, and information accessibility, they simultaneously expose young people to misinformation, cyberbullying, online radicalization, consumerism, digital addiction, moral relativism, and fragmented identities. Consequently, moral education can no longer rely exclusively on traditional pedagogical approaches that were designed for previous generations whose educational experiences were largely confined to face-to-face interactions.

The growing complexity of digital life has also altered the mechanisms through which moral values are constructed. Previously, family, school, and religious institutions functioned as dominant agents of moral socialization. Today, these institutions increasingly compete with digital influencers, algorithmically curated content, virtual communities, entertainment industries, and artificial intelligence systems that continuously shape perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. In many cases, digital platforms possess greater persuasive power than formal educational institutions because they operate continuously, personalize content according to user preferences, and reinforce behavioral patterns through algorithmic recommendation systems (Irpan & Sain, 2024). As a result, moral development has become a multidimensional process influenced by both educational environments and digital ecosystems. This phenomenon raises important questions regarding whether existing models of moral internalization in Islamic Religious Education remain adequate for preparing Muslim youth to confront ethical challenges emerging from the digital age.

Numerous studies have investigated the implementation of moral education within Islamic Religious Education. Previous research has generally highlighted the importance of teachers' role modeling (*uswah hasanah*), habituation (*ta'wid*), classroom learning strategies, character education programs, family involvement, and school culture in strengthening students' moral development. Other studies have emphasized contextual learning, value-based education, collaborative learning, and the

integration of digital media into Islamic education (Hosaini et al., 2024). These studies collectively demonstrate that moral education remains an essential component of educational reform. However, despite the growing body of literature, much of the existing scholarship continues to conceptualize moral internalization primarily as a pedagogical activity rather than as a dynamic process influenced by rapidly evolving digital environments (Mulyono & Wekke, 2018). Consequently, discussions frequently remain descriptive and normative, focusing on what educators should do instead of critically examining how digital transformation fundamentally reshapes moral formation itself.

Another limitation within existing literature concerns its theoretical orientation. Most studies explain moral internalization through conventional educational frameworks emphasizing cognitive understanding, affective appreciation, and behavioral implementation. Although these dimensions remain valuable, they do not sufficiently account for the complexity of digital citizenship, algorithmic influence, virtual identity construction, online ethical decision-making, or the interaction between religious values and digital cultures (Hirzi, 2026). The emergence of artificial intelligence, immersive technologies, social networking algorithms, and transnational digital communities has introduced ethical dilemmas that extend beyond traditional classroom contexts. Consequently, conceptual models developed in previous educational settings require critical re-evaluation to ensure their relevance within contemporary digital societies.

Furthermore, previous research often investigates moral education from institutional perspectives without adequately considering the broader digital ecosystem in which Generation Z continuously negotiates values and identities. Moral behavior today is not merely shaped through direct instruction but also through participation in online discussions, digital storytelling, multimedia consumption, influencer culture, gaming communities, and virtual collaboration (Guna et al., 2024). These experiences create complex interactions between religious teachings, technological affordances, and socio-cultural influences. Therefore, reconstructing moral internalization requires moving beyond linear educational models toward more integrative frameworks that recognize the reciprocal relationship between formal education, family environments, religious communities, and digital spaces.

Theoretically, reconstructing moral internalization also aligns with broader developments in educational philosophy that increasingly emphasize transformative learning, reflective practice, digital pedagogy, and values-based education. Rather than perceiving learners as passive recipients of moral instruction, contemporary educational theories encourage active engagement, critical reflection, dialogical learning, experiential participation, and ethical reasoning. Such perspectives resonate strongly with Islamic educational philosophy, which encourages *tafakkur* (reflection), *tadabbur* (deep contemplation), *muhasabah* (self-evaluation), and continuous moral self-improvement (Moneim, 2018). Integrating these educational principles into contemporary Islamic Religious Education provides opportunities to develop more adaptive approaches capable of addressing emerging ethical issues while preserving the fundamental objectives of Islamic moral education.

From a practical perspective, educational institutions increasingly require innovative pedagogical frameworks capable of integrating Islamic values with digital competencies. Teachers are expected not only to master instructional technologies but also to guide students in developing ethical digital citizenship, responsible online communication, critical information literacy, empathy within virtual interactions, and moral accountability in technology-mediated environments (Mashudi & Hilman, 2025). This expanded educational responsibility necessitates conceptual models that extend beyond conventional classroom instruction and incorporate digital realities as integral components of moral education rather than external challenges to be avoided.

Based on these considerations, there remains a significant research gap concerning the conceptual reconstruction of moral internalization within Islamic Religious Education in response to the educational realities experienced by Generation Z. Existing scholarship has successfully identified the importance of character education and Islamic values but has not sufficiently developed an integrative conceptual framework capable of explaining how moral internalization should be redesigned within digitally mediated learning environments. Addressing this gap is essential because educational transformation

requires not only technological innovation but also conceptual innovation that enables Islamic education to remain relevant while preserving its ethical foundations.

Accordingly, this article aims to reconstruct the concept of moral internalization in Islamic Religious Education for Generation Z in the digital era through an integrative conceptual analysis. Rather than merely reviewing existing pedagogical practices, this study seeks to synthesize contemporary educational theories, Islamic moral philosophy, and emerging perspectives on digital learning in order to propose a more comprehensive framework for moral education. The proposed reconstruction contributes theoretically by expanding current understandings of moral internalization beyond traditional pedagogical models and contributes practically by offering a conceptual foundation for educators, curriculum developers, policymakers, and Islamic educational institutions seeking to strengthen character formation amid accelerating digital transformation. Ultimately, the reconstruction proposed in this study aspires to reposition Islamic Religious Education as a transformative force capable of nurturing morally responsible, digitally competent, and spiritually grounded members of Generation Z who are prepared to navigate the ethical complexities of the twenty-first century.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using an integrative literature review approach to reconstruct the concept of moral internalization in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) for Generation Z in the digital era. Unlike conventional narrative literature reviews that primarily summarize previous studies, an integrative literature review enables researchers to critically synthesize theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and conceptual frameworks to generate new interpretations and develop a more comprehensive conceptual understanding (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This approach is particularly appropriate because the objective of this study is not merely to describe existing knowledge but to reconstruct the conceptual foundation of moral internalization by integrating contemporary educational theories, Islamic educational philosophy, and recent developments in digital pedagogy.

The research process consisted of five interrelated stages: problem identification, literature search, literature selection, thematic analysis, and conceptual synthesis. The first stage involved identifying the central issue underlying this study, namely the growing discrepancy between conventional approaches to moral internalization in Islamic Religious Education and the educational realities experienced by Generation Z within increasingly digitalized environments (Dziopa & Ahern, 2011). This problem formulation guided the development of research questions and the identification of relevant academic literature concerning moral education, Islamic Religious Education, character education, educational technology, digital learning, and Generation Z.

The literature search was conducted systematically using internationally recognized academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, Wiley Online Library, Google Scholar, and several reputable open-access scholarly repositories. To ensure comprehensive coverage, combinations of relevant keywords were utilized, such as "moral internalization," "Islamic Religious Education," "Islamic education," "akhlaq education," "character education," "moral education," "Generation Z," "digital natives," "digital pedagogy," "digital ethics," "technology-enhanced learning," and "Islamic moral philosophy." Manual searches were also conducted through the reference lists of influential publications to identify additional relevant studies that might not have been retrieved during the initial database search.

To maintain the quality and relevance of the reviewed literature, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were established before the review process commenced. The inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, book chapters, and review papers published in English or Indonesian. Priority was given to publications published between 2018 and 2026 to capture recent developments in Islamic education and digital learning. Studies discussing Islamic Religious Education, moral development, character education, digital pedagogy, educational philosophy, ethical

citizenship, and Generation Z were considered eligible for inclusion. Conversely, duplicated publications, conference abstracts without full manuscripts, opinion articles, editorial notes, non-academic publications, and studies lacking sufficient methodological rigor were excluded from the analysis.

After the literature selection process, the selected publications were analyzed using thematic content analysis. This analytical technique facilitated the systematic identification of recurring concepts, theoretical perspectives, educational strategies, and emerging issues concerning moral internalization in contemporary Islamic education. Each publication was examined to identify its research objectives, theoretical foundations, methodological approaches, principal findings, educational implications, and conceptual contributions. Similar findings were subsequently categorized into broader analytical themes, including cognitive development, affective engagement, behavioral transformation, spiritual formation, digital ethics, educational technology, teacher professionalism, family involvement, school culture, and learner-centered pedagogy. These themes served as the analytical basis for comparing various perspectives across different disciplinary traditions.

The final analytical stage involved conceptual synthesis, which constituted the principal contribution of this study. Rather than simply compiling previous findings, the synthesis process critically interpreted and integrated multiple theoretical perspectives to formulate a reconstructed framework of moral internalization suitable for Generation Z within digitally mediated educational environments. The reconstruction was achieved by comparing classical Islamic educational philosophy with contemporary educational theories emphasizing transformative learning, reflective practice, digital pedagogy, ethical citizenship, and student-centered learning. This comparative synthesis enabled the identification of conceptual relationships that have received limited attention in previous studies while simultaneously proposing a more comprehensive understanding of moral internalization in Islamic Religious Education.

To enhance the trustworthiness and academic rigor of the review, transparency was maintained throughout the entire research process by applying systematic literature selection procedures, consistent analytical criteria, iterative comparison among multiple sources, and critical interpretation of the reviewed literature. The study also adopted theoretical triangulation by integrating perspectives from Islamic educational philosophy, moral psychology, educational technology, digital learning, and contemporary pedagogy. This interdisciplinary integration strengthened the analytical depth of the conceptual reconstruction while reducing the limitations associated with relying on a single theoretical perspective. Consequently, the findings of this integrative literature review are expected to provide a robust conceptual foundation for future empirical research, curriculum development, educational policy, and pedagogical innovation aimed at strengthening moral internalization in Islamic Religious Education for Generation Z in the digital era.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Reconstructing Moral Internalization in Islamic Religious Education for Generation Z in the Digital Era

The accelerating transformation of digital technology has fundamentally reshaped the processes through which individuals acquire knowledge, construct identities, and develop moral values. Within contemporary society, moral formation is no longer exclusively influenced by family, educational institutions, and religious communities, but increasingly by digital ecosystems characterized by social media, artificial intelligence, algorithm-driven information systems, virtual communities, and interactive learning platforms (Abidin, 2020). For Generation Z, whose daily experiences are inseparable from digital technologies, these transformations create both unprecedented opportunities and significant ethical challenges. Consequently, the conventional understanding of moral

internalization in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) requires critical reconstruction to remain relevant to the educational realities of the twenty-first century (Ali & Aljahsh, 2025).

Traditionally, moral internalization within Islamic Religious Education has been understood as a gradual educational process through which Islamic ethical values are transmitted from teachers to students through classroom instruction, religious guidance, role modeling (*uswah hasanah*), habituation (*ta'wid*), and continuous supervision. Classical Islamic educational philosophy has consistently emphasized that moral education extends beyond the acquisition of religious knowledge, requiring the integration of cognitive understanding, emotional appreciation, and practical implementation in everyday life (Fikri, 2023). This educational philosophy has successfully guided Islamic educational institutions for centuries by emphasizing personal interaction between educators and learners as the primary mechanism of character formation. However, while these educational principles remain fundamentally relevant, the environments in which moral development occurs have undergone profound transformation.

Generation Z represents a distinctive educational cohort whose learning behaviors, communication patterns, and social interactions differ substantially from previous generations. As digital natives, they continuously interact with digital devices, online learning environments, virtual communities, social networking platforms, and algorithmically curated information. Their educational experiences extend far beyond formal classrooms into digital spaces where knowledge, opinions, values, and behavioral norms are constantly negotiated (Faraji et al., 2023). Consequently, moral development has become increasingly multidimensional, influenced simultaneously by educational institutions, family environments, peer networks, online communities, digital influencers, entertainment industries, and intelligent technological systems (Desmaniar et al., 2022). This complexity requires educational models capable of integrating traditional Islamic values with contemporary digital realities rather than treating technology merely as an external educational tool.

One fundamental limitation of conventional models of moral internalization lies in their assumption that educational institutions remain the dominant agents of value formation. In reality, digital technologies have redistributed educational authority across multiple interconnected platforms where learners actively construct meaning through continuous interaction with diverse sources of information. Social media algorithms personalize content according to users' preferences, often reinforcing existing beliefs while simultaneously exposing learners to conflicting moral perspectives originating from different cultural, political, and religious contexts. Consequently, moral reasoning increasingly develops within environments characterized by information abundance rather than information scarcity (Department of Islamic Education, Postgraduate Studies, Universitas Islam Negeri Datokarama Palu, Indonesia et al., 2023). This phenomenon fundamentally alters how ethical values are acquired, interpreted, and practiced among contemporary learners.

Furthermore, conventional approaches frequently conceptualize moral internalization as a linear process progressing sequentially from cognitive understanding to affective appreciation and finally behavioral implementation. Although this framework continues to provide valuable pedagogical guidance, it insufficiently explains the dynamic interactions between digital experiences and moral development. Digital environments encourage continuous participation, immediate feedback, collaborative knowledge construction, and identity experimentation. Young people often encounter ethical dilemmas in virtual contexts before discussing them within classrooms or families. Issues such as cyberbullying, misinformation, online privacy, artificial intelligence, digital surveillance, hate speech, religious intolerance, and algorithmic manipulation require forms of moral reasoning that extend beyond conventional classroom instruction (Zakiyyah et al., 2024). Consequently, Islamic Religious Education requires a reconstructed conceptual framework capable of responding to these emerging ethical realities.

Based on the synthesis of contemporary educational theories and Islamic educational philosophy, this study proposes that moral internalization should no longer be understood merely as the transmission of ethical knowledge but as a dynamic, reflective, participatory, and digitally integrated

process of character formation (Supriyono et al., 2025). The proposed reconstruction emphasizes that moral internalization develops through reciprocal interactions among spiritual values, educational experiences, digital environments, reflective practices, and social engagement. Rather than positioning technology as an obstacle to moral education, the reconstructed framework recognizes digital technology as an educational environment within which Islamic ethical values must be actively interpreted, negotiated, and practiced.

The reconstructed framework consists of six interconnected dimensions that collectively strengthen moral internalization within Islamic Religious Education. The first dimension is cognitive understanding, which remains essential because learners require comprehensive knowledge of Islamic ethical principles derived from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Islamic intellectual traditions. However, cognitive development should extend beyond memorization toward critical thinking, ethical reasoning, contextual interpretation, and informed decision-making capable of addressing contemporary moral issues. Students should be encouraged to analyze ethical challenges emerging from digital societies through reflective engagement with Islamic sources rather than relying exclusively on prescriptive instruction.

The second dimension is spiritual internalization, emphasizing that moral education ultimately aims to strengthen the relationship between individuals and Allah. Spiritual awareness functions as the internal foundation upon which ethical behavior is sustained despite external pressures. In digitally saturated environments where external validation often shapes personal identity, Islamic Religious Education should cultivate sincerity (*ikhlas*), self-consciousness before God (*muraqabah*), gratitude, humility, and personal accountability. These spiritual qualities encourage learners to perceive moral behavior not merely as compliance with institutional regulations but as expressions of faith and personal responsibility.

The third dimension involves emotional engagement. Contemporary educational research consistently demonstrates that lasting moral transformation requires emotional attachment to ethical values. Accordingly, Islamic Religious Education should employ pedagogical approaches encouraging empathy, compassion, reflective dialogue, collaborative learning, storytelling, and experiential activities capable of connecting religious teachings with students' lived experiences. Emotional engagement enables learners to internalize values more deeply because ethical principles become personally meaningful rather than externally imposed obligations.

The fourth dimension introduces digital ethical literacy as an integral component of moral internalization. Unlike previous educational models developed before the emergence of digital societies, the reconstructed framework recognizes that ethical behavior increasingly occurs within virtual environments. Students should therefore develop competencies related to responsible social media participation, information verification, digital privacy, respectful online communication, ethical artificial intelligence use, cybersecurity awareness, and critical digital citizenship. Integrating these competencies into Islamic Religious Education enables learners to translate Islamic ethical principles into responsible digital practices while preparing them to confront emerging technological challenges.

The fifth dimension emphasizes social engagement. Moral internalization cannot be achieved solely through individual reflection because Islamic ethics fundamentally encourage collective responsibility and social contribution. Students should therefore participate in collaborative educational activities, community service, social initiatives, interfaith dialogue, environmental responsibility, and digital campaigns promoting justice, compassion, and social solidarity. Such experiences enable learners to transform ethical knowledge into meaningful social action while strengthening their sense of civic responsibility within increasingly interconnected societies.

Finally, the reconstructed framework incorporates reflective practice as a continuous mechanism of moral development. Reflection enables learners to evaluate their behaviors, identify ethical challenges, recognize personal weaknesses, and formulate strategies for continuous self-improvement. Islamic educational traditions have long emphasized practices such as *muhasabah* (self-evaluation), *tafakkur* (reflection), and *tadabbur* (deep contemplation) as essential processes of spiritual and moral

growth (Nasir & Rijal, 2021). Within contemporary educational settings, these reflective traditions may be strengthened through reflective journals, digital portfolios, mentoring sessions, classroom dialogue, and technology-assisted self-assessment that encourage learners to connect Islamic teachings with everyday experiences.

The proposed reconstruction therefore shifts the paradigm of moral internalization from teacher-centered value transmission toward learner-centered ethical transformation. Teachers remain essential as facilitators, mentors, and moral exemplars, yet they are no longer viewed as the sole sources of moral authority. Instead, educators guide students in critically engaging with diverse digital experiences through Islamic ethical principles while encouraging independent moral reasoning and lifelong character development. Likewise, families, religious communities, educational institutions, and digital platforms are recognized as interconnected components of a comprehensive moral ecosystem requiring collaborative engagement.

Ultimately, reconstructing moral internalization within Islamic Religious Education represents more than a pedagogical adjustment; it signifies a paradigmatic transformation in understanding how Islamic values are cultivated within digitally mediated societies. The proposed framework demonstrates that preserving the enduring objectives of Islamic moral education does not require rejecting technological change but rather integrating timeless Islamic ethical principles with innovative educational practices capable of preparing Generation Z for the moral complexities of the digital era. Through this reconstructed perspective, Islamic Religious Education can continue fulfilling its fundamental mission of nurturing intellectually competent, spiritually grounded, ethically responsible, and digitally literate Muslim citizens who contribute positively to contemporary global society.

Educational Implications of the Reconstructed Framework for Islamic Religious Education

The reconstructed framework of moral internalization proposed in this study has significant implications for the future development of Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Rather than perceiving moral education as a separate instructional component delivered exclusively through religious subjects, the reconstructed framework positions moral internalization as a comprehensive educational process that permeates curriculum design, teaching and learning practices, school culture, teacher professionalism, family engagement, and the broader digital ecosystem. Such a holistic perspective reflects the evolving educational needs of Generation Z, whose moral experiences are increasingly shaped by interactions occurring simultaneously in physical and virtual environments (Nun et al., 2025). Consequently, educational institutions must reconsider not only what moral values should be taught but also how those values can be meaningfully experienced, practiced, and sustained within digitally mediated societies.

One of the primary implications concerns curriculum development. Traditional Islamic Religious Education curricula have generally concentrated on strengthening students' understanding of Islamic doctrines, rituals, and moral teachings. Although these components remain indispensable, contemporary curricula should move beyond knowledge transmission toward competency-based moral education that integrates ethical reasoning, critical reflection, digital citizenship, and social responsibility. Moral values should therefore be embedded throughout the curriculum rather than confined exclusively to Islamic Religious Education subjects (Mustofa et al., 2023). This interdisciplinary integration enables students to encounter ethical principles across diverse learning contexts, reinforcing the understanding that morality is not limited to religious instruction but constitutes a fundamental dimension of everyday academic, professional, and social life.

Curriculum reform should also recognize that Generation Z acquires knowledge through highly interactive, visual, and technology-supported learning experiences. Accordingly, curriculum developers should incorporate authentic case studies, digital simulations, collaborative projects, problem-based learning, and ethical inquiry into Islamic Religious Education. Contemporary moral dilemmas involving artificial intelligence, misinformation, cyberbullying, digital privacy, environmental sustainability, religious diversity, and social justice provide meaningful opportunities

for students to apply Islamic ethical principles within realistic situations (Yusuf et al., 2026). Such contextual learning encourages learners to understand that Islamic morality remains relevant for addressing contemporary global challenges while strengthening their ability to make responsible ethical decisions in rapidly changing environments.

The reconstructed framework further highlights important implications for classroom pedagogy. Teachers should transition from predominantly lecture-based instructional methods toward learner-centered pedagogical approaches emphasizing dialogue, reflection, collaboration, inquiry, and experiential learning. Rather than presenting moral values as fixed prescriptions requiring passive acceptance, educators should facilitate meaningful discussions allowing students to analyze ethical dilemmas critically through the perspectives of the Qur'an, Sunnah, Islamic scholarship, and contemporary realities. This dialogical approach promotes intellectual engagement while encouraging students to internalize moral values through personal understanding rather than external compliance (Hanif, 2024).

Digital technology also assumes a constructive educational role within the reconstructed framework. Instead of viewing digital media primarily as sources of moral threats, Islamic Religious Education should intentionally utilize technology to strengthen ethical learning experiences. Learning management systems, educational applications, multimedia resources, virtual discussions, digital storytelling, podcasts, online collaborative platforms, and artificial intelligence-assisted learning tools can enrich students' engagement with Islamic teachings. More importantly, these technologies provide opportunities for students to practice ethical behavior within authentic digital environments where communication, collaboration, and information sharing increasingly occur (Muslim, 2022). Consequently, digital literacy and digital ethics should become integral components of Islamic Religious Education rather than supplementary educational topics.

The proposed framework also has substantial implications for teacher professionalism. Teachers remain central figures in moral education; however, their responsibilities have expanded considerably within digitally connected societies. Beyond mastering subject content, educators must demonstrate digital competence, ethical leadership, reflective practice, emotional intelligence, and intercultural awareness. Teachers should function simultaneously as facilitators of learning, mentors of character development, digital role models, and ethical guides capable of helping students navigate increasingly complex technological environments. Continuous professional development programs should therefore equip teachers with competencies related to digital pedagogy, educational technology integration, online communication ethics, media literacy, and innovative character education methodologies. Such professional development enables educators to respond more effectively to the educational characteristics of Generation Z while maintaining the spiritual objectives of Islamic education (Marshall, 2018).

Equally important is the strengthening of collaboration between educational institutions, families, religious organizations, and local communities. Moral internalization cannot be sustained solely through classroom activities because students continuously negotiate values across multiple social contexts. Families remain the earliest and most influential educational environment for developing ethical habits, emotional security, and spiritual awareness. Schools, meanwhile, reinforce these values through structured educational experiences, while religious communities provide opportunities for practical religious engagement and moral participation. In the digital era, collaboration among these stakeholders should be expanded through technology-supported communication, parent education programs, online mentoring, community-based projects, and collaborative initiatives promoting positive digital citizenship (Ruslan & Irham, 2022). Such partnerships contribute to creating a consistent moral ecosystem supporting students' character development across various educational settings.

Another important implication concerns educational assessment. Conventional assessment practices frequently emphasize cognitive achievement through written examinations that primarily measure students' factual understanding of religious concepts. The reconstructed framework argues that moral internalization requires more comprehensive assessment strategies capable of evaluating

ethical reasoning, behavioral consistency, reflective capacity, social participation, and responsible digital engagement. Authentic assessment methods including reflective journals, learning portfolios, project-based assessment, peer evaluation, self-assessment, community service documentation, and digital citizenship projects provide richer evidence of students' moral development than traditional examinations alone (Suryandari, 2025). These assessment approaches encourage continuous self-improvement while emphasizing that moral education is an ongoing developmental process rather than a measurable accumulation of theoretical knowledge.

From a policy perspective, the reconstructed framework supports the development of educational policies integrating moral education with digital transformation strategies. Policymakers should ensure that curriculum standards, teacher education programs, educational technology initiatives, and school quality assurance systems explicitly incorporate ethical dimensions alongside academic competencies. Investments in digital infrastructure should therefore be accompanied by equal commitment to developing ethical digital cultures within educational institutions (Zahraa, 2025). National educational policies emphasizing character education can be strengthened by incorporating Islamic ethical perspectives that remain responsive to technological innovation, globalization, and multicultural realities.

The reconstructed framework also contributes to broader discussions concerning the future direction of Islamic Religious Education. Rather than perceiving modernization and technological advancement as threats to Islamic values, this framework demonstrates that educational innovation and religious tradition can coexist productively through thoughtful pedagogical integration. Islamic educational philosophy possesses enduring principles including justice, compassion, responsibility, honesty, wisdom, moderation, and social solidarity that remain highly relevant for addressing contemporary ethical challenges (Sholeh et al., 2024). The task of educators is therefore not to replace these principles but to reinterpret and contextualize them within the realities experienced by digital-native learners.

Finally, the reconstructed framework provides several directions for future research. Since this study develops a conceptual reconstruction through an integrative literature review, subsequent empirical investigations are necessary to validate and refine the proposed framework within different educational contexts. Future studies may examine its implementation in Islamic schools, madrasahs, pesantren, higher education institutions, and online learning environments. Comparative research involving different cultural settings may also reveal contextual variations in the processes of moral internalization among Muslim youth across diverse societies. Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaboration among scholars of Islamic education, educational psychology, digital pedagogy, artificial intelligence, and sociology would contribute to expanding theoretical understanding of moral development within increasingly digitalized educational environments.

Overall, the educational implications presented in this study reaffirm that reconstructing moral internalization is not merely an academic exercise but a strategic response to the changing realities of contemporary education. By integrating Islamic moral philosophy with contemporary educational theories and digital pedagogical practices, Islamic Religious Education can continue fulfilling its essential mission of cultivating individuals who are intellectually capable, spiritually grounded, ethically responsible, socially engaged, and digitally competent. Such an educational transformation will enable Generation Z to navigate the moral complexities of the digital era while preserving the enduring ethical values that constitute the foundation of Islamic civilization.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has reconstructed the concept of moral internalization in Islamic Religious Education by responding to the educational challenges encountered by Generation Z in the digital era. The findings suggest that conventional approaches to moral internalization, which primarily emphasize knowledge transmission, role modeling, and habituation, remain important but are no longer sufficient

to address the complexities of digitally mediated learning environments. The rapid expansion of digital technologies, social media, artificial intelligence, and virtual interactions has fundamentally transformed the ways in which young people construct knowledge, negotiate values, and develop moral identities. Consequently, moral internalization should be understood as a dynamic, multidimensional, and continuous educational process that integrates cognitive understanding, spiritual awareness, emotional engagement, digital ethical literacy, social participation, and reflective practice.

The reconstructed framework proposed in this study contributes theoretically by extending existing discussions on Islamic Religious Education beyond traditional pedagogical perspectives toward a more holistic and contextually responsive conceptual model. Rather than positioning technology as a challenge external to moral education, the framework recognizes digital environments as integral spaces where Islamic ethical values must be interpreted, practiced, and strengthened. This perspective reinforces the relevance of Islamic Religious Education in preparing students to become morally responsible, spiritually grounded, and digitally competent individuals capable of navigating the ethical complexities of contemporary society.

From a practical perspective, the proposed framework provides valuable implications for curriculum development, teaching and learning practices, teacher professional development, authentic assessment, and collaboration among schools, families, and communities. The successful implementation of moral internalization requires an integrated educational ecosystem in which Islamic values are consistently reinforced across both physical and digital learning environments. Future empirical studies are recommended to validate and refine the proposed conceptual framework in diverse educational settings, thereby contributing to the continuous development of Islamic Religious Education in the era of digital transformation.

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