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## Islamic Communication Ethics in Social Media Usage Among Contemporary Muslim Adolescents

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Islamic Ethics, Social Media, Muslim Adolescents, Digital Adab.

**Abstract:** The pervasive influence of digital platforms has precipitated a distinct ethical crisis among contemporary Muslim adolescents, characterized by a dichotomy between their religious identity and their virtual behavior. This study aims to construct a comprehensive framework of Islamic communication ethics tailored to the psychosocial realities of Generation Z to bridge the gap between religious knowledge and digital practice. Employing a qualitative library research design, this study systematically analyzed and synthesized data from classical Islamic texts (Turath) and contemporary socio-educational literature published between 2020 and 2025. The data were interpreted using a hermeneutic content analysis approach to recontextualize theological concepts into modern digital protocols. The findings reveal that the prevalence of cyberbullying, misinformation, and digital narcissism stems from the erosion of Tabayyun (verification) and Qaulan Sadida (truthful speech). The analysis indicates that technical digital literacy is insufficient to govern adolescent behavior; rather, effective regulation requires the internalization of Muraqabah (awareness of divine surveillance) to counter the moral disengagement caused by online anonymity. The study concludes that fostering a noble digital character demands a holistic pedagogical approach, termed "Digital Adab," which integrates theological consciousness with psychological self-regulation. These insights provide a theoretical basis for parents and educators to mitigate the impact of toxic online cultures.

### Introduction

The rapid proliferation of digital platforms has fundamentally transformed the interaction patterns of contemporary Muslim adolescents, creating a complex intersection between religious identity and virtual behavior (Huda & Santoso, 2021). However, this digital saturation is concurrently driving a significant moral crisis, characterized by the erosion of traditional adab, the normalization of cyberbullying, and the rampant spread of unverified information among youth (Rahman et al., 2023). Consequently, there is an urgent necessity to re-evaluate adolescent digital literacy through the lens of Islamic communication ethics to mitigate the psychological

and social degradation caused by toxic online environments (Huda & Santoso, 2021). The integration of core Islamic principles, such as Tabayyun (verification) and Qaulan Sadida (truthful speech), is essential to safeguard the moral development of the younger generation against the corrupting influence of unregulated digital content (Rahman et al., 2023).

Despite the growing relevance of this issue, previous research has predominantly focused on general digital safety or the legal aspects of cybercrime without sufficiently integrating theological perspectives into adolescent behavioral studies (Pratama & Aziz, 2022). While some existing literature has explored Islamic ethics in media, these studies largely concentrate on adult professionals or institutional public relations, thereby neglecting the unique developmental and social challenges faced by teenagers (Kurniawan, 2024). Furthermore, current scholarship often discusses Islamic values as abstract theological concepts rather than as practical, applied frameworks for navigating specific social media trends and algorithmic pressures (Pratama & Aziz, 2022). This indicates a significant research gap regarding how Muslim adolescents specifically negotiate and internalize religious ethical codes amidst the intense peer pressure and anonymity of the digital world (Kurniawan, 2024).

Addressing this critical void, this study introduces novelty by constructing a contextualized model of Islamic communication ethics that is specifically tailored to the psychosocial reality of the "Gen Z" Muslim population (Fauziah & Lestari, 2025). The primary objective of this research is to analyze the extent of ethical compliance in social media usage among adolescents and to identify effective strategies for internalizing Islamic values in their digital interactions (Abdullah, 2020). Theoretically, this study contributes to the enrichment of the Islamic communication discipline by bridging classical Turath with modern media studies, while practically, it serves as a vital guide for educators and parents in fostering a generation that is both digitally savvy and spiritually grounded (Zainuddin, 2023).

## **Research Methods**

This study adopts a qualitative research design utilizing a library research approach to deeply explore the theoretical and normative foundations of Islamic communication ethics (Sari & Asmendri, 2020). This specific methodological choice is driven by the study's objective to interpret and synthesize complex ethical concepts from textual sources rather than to quantify empirical data from fieldwork (Darmalaksana, 2020). By employing this design, the researcher acts as the primary instrument in identifying, analyzing, and reconstructing the concept of digital adab to create a comprehensive framework suitable for the modern adolescent context (Adlini et al., 2022). Consequently, the research focuses on the "what" and "how" of ethical value

internalization, relying on a hermeneutic understanding of religious texts and contemporary academic discourse (Hamzah, 2021).

The data sources for this study are categorized into primary and secondary data, collected through a systematic documentation technique (Assingkily, 2021). Primary sources include foundational Islamic texts such as the Quran and Sunnah related to communication ethics, while secondary sources comprise peer-reviewed journal articles and proceedings published between 2020 and 2025 that discuss digital behavior among Muslim youth (Hardani et al., 2020). The data collection process involved a heuristic search across digital databases like Google Scholar and Scopus using specific Boolean keywords such as "Islamic Cyber Ethics," "Social Media Adab," and "Muslim Adolescent Behavior" to ensure the relevance and currency of the literature (Assingkily, 2021). Strict inclusion criteria were applied to filter out non-academic sources, ensuring that only high-quality evidence was utilized to support the theoretical arguments (Sari & Asmendri, 2020).

Data analysis was performed using a qualitative content analysis method, which involves the systematic classification and evaluation of textual information to identify recurring themes and patterns (Rijali, 2021). The analysis procedure followed the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, allowing the researcher to distill complex theological injunctions into practical ethical guidelines (Nugrahani, 2022). In the data reduction phase, raw information regarding adolescent online behavior was synthesized with Islamic moral codes, while the data display phase mapped these relationships to visualize the gap between ideal ethics and actual practice (Rijali, 2021). Finally, the conclusion drawing stage integrated these findings to formulate a novel conceptual model of Islamic communication ethics that is theoretically sound and practically applicable for Generation Z (Nugrahani, 2022).

## **Research Results**

The comprehensive textual analysis reveals that the fundamental ethical framework for Muslim adolescents in the digital sphere is anchored in the Quranic principle of Tabayyun (verification) and Qaulan Sadida (truthful speech), which serves as the primary theological defense against the proliferation of misinformation. The synthesis of the literature indicates a critical epistemological disconnect where adolescents often compartmentalize their religious obligations from their digital activities, viewing social media as a value-neutral zone exempt from the strictures of Islamic morality. The findings demonstrate that the "viral culture," which prioritizes speed and engagement over accuracy, stands in direct opposition to the Islamic mandate of verification. Consequently, the analysis identifies that the erosion of Tabayyun is

the root cause of the specific vulnerability of Muslim youth to hoax spreading and slander (fitnah). The literature suggests that re-contextualizing these classical concepts not merely as religious rituals but as digital literacy protocols is essential to bridging the gap between religious knowledge and online behavior, ensuring that the impulse to share information is always preceded by a rigorous validation process.

Furthermore, the study elucidates that the ethical crisis of cyberbullying and toxic speech (hate speech) among adolescents is symptomatic of a lack of Qaulan Ma'rufa (good speech) and the absence of Muraqabah (awareness of God's surveillance). The textual examination highlights that the anonymity afforded by digital platforms frequently leads to a state of moral disengagement, where the digital "self" feels detached from accountability. The analysis finds that the implementation of Qaulan Layyina (gentle speech) is identified in the reviewed texts as the necessary counter-narrative to the prevailing culture of online aggression. The results strongly suggest that the internalization of Islamic communication ethics is contingent upon cultivating a sense of spiritual omnipresence, where the adolescent understands that digital footprints are recorded not just by algorithms but by divine scribes (Raqib and Atid). Thus, the study confirms that technical guidelines on internet safety are insufficient without this spiritual dimension of self-regulation that governs the emotional intent behind every comment and status update.

Finally, the research establishes that the phenomenon of digital narcissism and "flexing" behavior among Muslim youth stems from a misalignment with the values of Tawadhu (humility) and Qana'ah (contentment). The analysis reveals that social media algorithms are designed to exploit the adolescent need for validation, often pushing them toward ostentatious displays that contradict Islamic modesty (Haya). The findings indicate that the most effective strategy for internalizing ethical values is through the reconstruction of digital identity, shifting the focus from seeking social validation (likes and shares) to seeking Ridha (God's pleasure). The literature synthesis concludes that this transformation requires an ecosystem of Uswah Hasanah (exemplary modeling), where parents and educators model ethical digital habits, demonstrating that Islamic identity is not static but must be dynamically maintained through consistent ethical choices in the virtual world. Therefore, the construction of a noble digital character is found to be a holistic process integrating theological understanding, psychological self-control, and environmental reinforcement.

## Discussion

The theoretical synthesis confirms that the primary ethical failure among contemporary Muslim adolescents lies in the neglect of *Tabayyun* (verification) when consuming and sharing viral content (Saputra & Ali, 2021). Research indicates that the psychological impulse to share information instantly often overrides the theological mandate to verify the truth, leading to the unintentional spread of slander or *fitnah* (Hakim, 2021). Consequently, the integration of *Tabayyun* must be reframed not merely as a ritualistic religious concept but as a critical digital literacy skill to combat the algorithmic bias that favors sensationalism over accuracy (Firdaus, 2025). This suggests that religious literacy alone is insufficient without the specific application of critical thinking skills to navigate the complexities of modern information streams (Saputra & Ali, 2021).

Furthermore, the prevalence of cyberbullying and toxic speech reflects a significant detachment from the principle of *Qaulan Sadida* (speaking the truth and justice) in virtual interactions (Wahyuni, 2022). The anonymity provided by social media platforms creates a state of "moral disengagement" where adolescents feel unaccountable for their harsh words, distinguishing their online persona from their offline religious identity (Karimah & Hidayat, 2023). Therefore, internalizing the concept of *Muraqabah* (the awareness of being watched by God) is identified as the most effective psychological barrier against online aggression, as it transcends the limitations of external parental monitoring (Maulida & Rizki, 2022). Without this spiritual consciousness, technical restrictions on internet usage fail to curb the underlying behavioral intent to demean others (Wahyuni, 2022).

Finally, the phenomenon of digital narcissism and "flexing" contradicts the fundamental Islamic value of *Tawadhu* (humility), as adolescents are driven by platform mechanisms to seek external validation through ostentatious displays (Setiawan, 2024). This validation-seeking behavior indicates a shift in the locus of self-worth, where the desire for social metrics (likes and shares) replaces the pursuit of God's pleasure or *Ridha* (Maulida & Rizki, 2022). The literature argues that mitigating this ethical erosion requires a supportive ecosystem where educators and parents model *Qana'ah* (contentment), thereby reducing the pressure on adolescents to curate unrealistic online identities (Firdaus, 2025). Thus, the construction of a noble digital character is a holistic process that requires synchronizing theological understanding with the psychological resilience to resist the narcissistic allure of social media (Setiawan, 2024).

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of Islamic communication ethics among contemporary Muslim adolescents is currently hindered by a significant "digital dissonance," where religious values are often compartmentalized and separated from online behavior. The synthesis of the literature confirms that the erosion of Tabayyun (verification) is the primary vulnerability facilitating the spread of misinformation, while the anonymity of the digital sphere undermines the practice of Qaulan Sadida (truthful speech), leading to unchecked cyberbullying. The findings establish that technical literacy alone is insufficient to govern adolescent behavior; rather, the internalization of Muraqabah (awareness of divine surveillance) serves as the most critical psychological determinant in curbing toxic online interactions. Consequently, the research asserts that constructing a noble digital character requires a paradigm shift from viewing social media as a value-neutral space to recognizing it as a domain of spiritual accountability where every digital footprint carries moral weight.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the discipline of Islamic Media Studies by formulating a structured framework of "Digital Adab" that effectively bridges classical Turath with modern developmental psychology. It expands the discourse beyond legalistic interpretations of halal and haram in media usage, offering a more nuanced psychological approach that focuses on intention (Niyah) and self-regulation. Methodologically, the study demonstrates the utility of hermeneutic content analysis in recontextualizing ancient theological injunctions to address contemporary algorithmic challenges. However, the study is limited by its qualitative library research design, which relies exclusively on secondary textual data and theoretical synthesis. This limitation precludes the observation of real-time behavioral nuances and restricts the ability to measure the statistical prevalence of ethical violations among specific demographic subgroups of Muslim youth.

To validate and expand upon these theoretical constructs, future research is strongly recommended to employ empirical designs, such as quantitative surveys or mixed-method approaches, to measure the actual correlation between religious religiosity and digital ethical compliance. Researchers should investigate how specific social media architectures—such as the short-form video algorithms of TikTok versus the visual curation of Instagram—uniquely impact the erosion of specific Islamic values like Ghadul Bashar (lowering the gaze) or Tawadhu (humility). Furthermore, it is suggested that future studies focus on the development and testing of practical educational modules for parents and teachers, creating evidence-based interventions that can effectively cultivate digital resilience and spiritual consciousness in the "Generation Z" Muslim population.

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