JURNAL YADIM
ياياسن دعوه اسلامية مليسيا
"International Journal Of
Islam And Contemporary Affairs"

VOL. 5 (2) | DISEMBER 2025:123-142
E-ISSN: 2785-8898
www.e-jurnal.yadim.com.my

Submission date: 13 November 2025 Acceptance date: 15 Disember 2025
Available online: 25 Disember 2025

ISLAMIC DIGITAL CIVILISATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN SHAPING THE VALUES AND ETHICS OF THE UMMAH

PERADABAN DIGITAL ISLAM: CABARAN DAN PELUANG DALAM PEMBENTUKAN NILAI DAN ETIKA UMMAH

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DOI : https://doi.org/10.61465/jurnalyadim.v5.345

ABSTRACT

The digital era has reshaped patterns of social interaction, knowledge dissemination, and value formation, generating critical challenges for Muslims seeking to preserve Islamic values and ethics within an open and algorithmically mediated digital sphere. This study analyses four interrelated domains of concern: misinformation, data-privacy risks, cyber-security threats, and the cultural shaping of Islamic identity by digital media, while also identifying strategic opportunities to strengthen daʿwah, cultivate Shariah-based digital literacy, and build ethical, resilient online communities. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative, normative-analytical design that integrates conceptual analysis with a targeted literature review. Primary normative sources comprise the Qur'an and Hadith interpreted through a Maqasid al-Shariah lens, supported by secondary literature from peer-reviewed research, policy documents, and reports on digital ethics, daʿwah, and Islamic civilisation. The findings advance a Maqasid-grounded framework of "Islamic Digital Civilisation" as a holistic approach for integrating Islamic values into the digital ecosystem and guiding institutional and policy responses. The article proposes practical, integrated strategies for Islamic institutions, policymakers, and educators to align digital transformation with the ethical aspirations of Islamic civilisation, thereby providing an analytically coherent and policy-relevant foundation for further empirical and applied research.

Keywords: Islamic Digital Civilisation, Islamic Digital Ethics, Ummah, Digital Daʿwah, Maqasid al-Shariah.

ABSTRAK

Era digital telah mengubah corak interaksi sosial, penyebaran ilmu dan pembentukan nilai, sekali gus mewujudkan cabaran kritikal kepada umat Islam yang berusaha memelihara nilai dan etika Islam dalam ruang digital yang terbuka serta diatur secara algoritma. Kajian ini menganalisis empat domain cabaran yang saling berkaitan iaitu: maklumat palsu, risiko privasi data, ancaman keselamatan siber dan pembentukan budaya identiti Islam oleh media digital. Disamping itu turut mengenal pasti peluang strategik untuk memperkukuh dakwah, memupuk literasi digital berteraskan Syariah, serta membina komuniti dalam talian yang beretika dan berdaya tahan. Dari segi metodologi, kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kualitatif normatif-analitis yang menggabungkan analisis konseptual dengan tinjauan literatur terarah. Sumber normatif utama terdiri daripada al-Quran dan Hadis yang ditafsir melalui lensa Maqasid al-Syariah, disokong oleh literatur sekunder daripada penyelidikan berwasit, dokumen dasar dan laporan berkaitan etika digital, dakwah dan peradaban Islam. Dapatan kajian mengemukakan kerangka "Peradaban Digital Islam" berasaskan Maqasid sebagai pendekatan holistik untuk mengintegrasikan nilai Islam dalam ekosistem digital dan memandu respons institusi serta dasar. Artikel ini mencadangkan strategi praktikal dan bersepadu kepada institusi Islam, pembuat dasar dan pendidik bagi menyelaraskan transformasi digital dengan aspirasi etika tamadun Islam, sekali gus menyediakan asas yang koheren dari segi analitis dan relevan dari segi dasar untuk penyelidikan empirikal dan aplikasi selanjutnya.

Kata kunci: Tamadun Digital Islam, Etika Digital Islam, Ummah, Dakwah Digital, Maqasid al-Syariah.

INTRODUCTION

The digitalisation era has brought about a profound paradigm shift in almost every aspect of human life, from modes of communication, work, and learning to the formation of values and identity. For Muslims, this transformation has created a new and complex arena in which Islamic principles must be adapted and applied within the digital context. The concept of an "Islamic Digital Civilisation" emerges as an urgent necessity to ensure that technological advancement is not utilised solely for material purposes, but also as a means to cultivate ethical, moral, and spiritual values in line with Islamic teachings. This paper examines the challenges and opportunities involved in constructing a digital civilisation grounded in Islam, with a focus on value and ethical formation within the ummah.

The digital era has witnessed an explosion in internet usage that has restructured patterns of communication, economic activity, and culture at the global level. The report *Digital 2025: Global Overview* records 5.64 billion internet users, representing almost 68.7%

of the world's population as of April 2025 (Data Reportal, 2025). In Malaysia, 96.8% of individuals aged 15 and above now have internet access, while penetration in rural areas has exceeded 90%, signalling the maturity of the national digital infrastructure (Department of Statistics Malaysia [DOSM], 2024). This development not only drives the growth of the digital economy but also reshapes modes of socialisation, education, and information dissemination among Muslims.

For Muslim societies, digitalisation offers new platforms for daʿwah, Islamic learning, and socio-economic innovation, yet simultaneously presents ethical challenges such as privacy breaches, gadget addiction, and the spread of misinformation. Contemporary Muslim scholars emphasise the urgent need to embed principles of justice, trustworthiness, and public interest (maslahah) within the digital ecosystem so that technology is not exploited purely for materialistic aims (Rabiu et al., 2025: Auda, 2008). In essence, building an Islamic Digital Civilisation means using digital technology in ways that clearly reflect Shariah values and responsible online behaviour, so that technological progress supports and protects, rather than weakens, the Islamic identity and way of life.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, normative-analytical design integrating conceptual analysis with a targeted literature review. Conceptual analysis is employed to clarify and systematise the notion of "Islamic Digital Civilisation", including its definitional boundaries, constitutive dimensions, and underlying assumptions. This process involves identifying key constructs (such as tawhidic worldview, Maqasid al-Shariah, digital ethics and civilisational discourse), examining their usage across relevant scholarly texts, and reconstructing them into a coherent analytical framework suitable for contemporary digital contexts.

The literature review serves two primary purposes: (i) to map the main ethical challenges arising from digital technologies within Muslim societies; and (ii) to identify emergent opportunities for value formation, governance, and daʿwah in the digital sphere. Relevant scholarship on Islamic ethics, digital media, cyber ethics, daʿwah, and civilisational studies was consulted from recognised academic databases and publishers, focusing on peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, empirical studies, policy documents, and regulatory guidelines that address the intersection of Islam, technology and digital culture.

Primary normative references comprise the Qur'an and Hadith, which are analysed through a Maqasid al-Shariah lens to derive ethical principles applicable to digital practices. These principles are then dialogued with insights from contemporary digital sociology and media studies to ensure analytical relevance to current technological realities. Secondary materials are subjected to iterative thematic reading to extract recurrent patterns concerning misinformation, privacy, governance, identity, and digital wellbeing. The synthesis of these textual sources informs the development of a structured Islamic Digital Civilisation framework, enabling the formulation of context-sensitive, theoretically grounded recommendations for policy, education, and institutional practice.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

1. The Concept of Islamic Digital Civilisation

The concept of Islamic digital civilisation builds on the wider idea of Islamic civilisation that Syed Muhammad Naquib al Attas describes as a civilisation emerging among the diverse cultures of Muslim peoples through the permeation of the fundamental elements of Islam within their collective life. Al-Attas introduces foundational Islamic concepts – such as *dīn* (religion as a complete way of life) and *adab* (proper discipline and ethics) – and argues that these concepts must shape educational and civilisational frameworks. He famously calls for the "Islamization of knowledge," urging Muslims to purge Western secular influences from modern knowledge and re-align education and society with Islamic values and ethics. This integration of Islamic principles, according to al-Attas, is crucial for developing an authentic Islamic civilisation even in contemporary (including digital) contexts. Islam's worldview and values provide the blueprint for a holistic civilisation, guiding the development of knowledge, culture, and even technology in line with spiritual and moral objectives (al-Attas, 1993; Ihsan, 2024). In the digital age this vision invites a reimagining of cyberspace as an environment in which technological design, data practices and communication norms are shaped by a tawhidic worldview that regards knowledge and power as trusts from Allah rather than autonomous human achievements. Within such an ecosystem the Maqasid al Shariah, namely the preservation of religion, life, intellect, progeny and property as articulated by contemporary maqasid scholars such as Jasser Auda and Yusuf al Qaradawi, function as a normative compass for assessing how platforms are built, how data are managed and how online interactions influence human flourishing (Auda, 2008; al-Qaradawi, 2006). Islamic digital civilisation therefore denotes not only the presence of Muslims in the digital

sphere but a deliberate effort to order digital technologies and practices in line with these foundational aims.

This concept rejects the secular–religious dichotomy by asserting that digital innovation is merely a *wasilah* (instrument) for realising societal *maslahah*; thus, every technological application must be balanced by the principles of justice (ʿadl), trustworthiness (amanah), transparency, and excellence (ihsan) (Noorlila et. al., 2025). Rabiu et. al (2025) further argues that the rapid advancement of technology in the digital age has introduced a multitude of ethical challenges that require careful examination through the lens of Islamic ethics. As technology increasingly permeates various aspects of our lives, from social interactions and communication to data management and decision-making, the need to align these technological developments with Islamic ethical principles becomes ever more pressing. Therefore, Islamic Digital Civilisation offer profound insights and principles that can effectively guide individuals and societies in tackling the ethical challenges brought forth by technology in the digital age. By applying Islamic digital ethical frameworks, Muslims can navigate these challenges in a manner that harmonizes with their religious beliefs and encourages a responsible and conscientious use of technology. While technological advancements bring forth numerous benefits, they also give rise to ethical challenges that warrant careful consideration.

Drawing from previous studies, this research develops a conceptual framework of the Islamic Digital Civilisation structured around four dimensions:

1. **Foundational Values: Tawhid & Maqasid** : Functioning as the core normative compass guiding all technological decisions (Rabiu et al., 2025). A coherent tawhidic orientation anchors decision-making about data, design, platforms, and policies. The Maqasid provide criteria for assessing when digital practices support or threaten human dignity, communal wellbeing, and moral order (al-Rais, S., 2015).
2. **Ethical Governance** : Establishing governance standards based on *shūrā*, accountability and trust in data management and platform design (Rabiu et al., 2025).This includes policies, regulatory structures and institutional practices informed by Shariah values such as shūrā, accountability, and public responsibility in algorithmic design, content moderation and data protection.

3. **Digital Literacy & Adab** : Serving as a mediating mechanism enabling users to translate values into practice, enhancing Muslims' capacity to filter information, safeguard privacy and avoid addiction. This includes policies, regulatory structures, and institutional practices informed by Shariah values (Ita Yunita et. al, 2025)
4. **Resilient Technological Environment** – Providing the systemic infrastructure that facilitates the application of values and *adab* in cyberspace, and supporting Shariah-compliant, secure, and innovative ecosystems (Khalid Ismail et al. 2022, Nasr, 1993). A secure and inclusive infrastructure that supports Shariah-compliant innovation, protects users from cyber harm, minimises addictive design, and ensures preparedness against digital threats.

This framework offers an analytical lens to assess challenges, opportunities and strategies for value formation within the ummah in the digital era and to guide integrated ethical policy recommendations.The concept is illustrated in the following Conceptual Framework of Islamic Digital Civilisation:

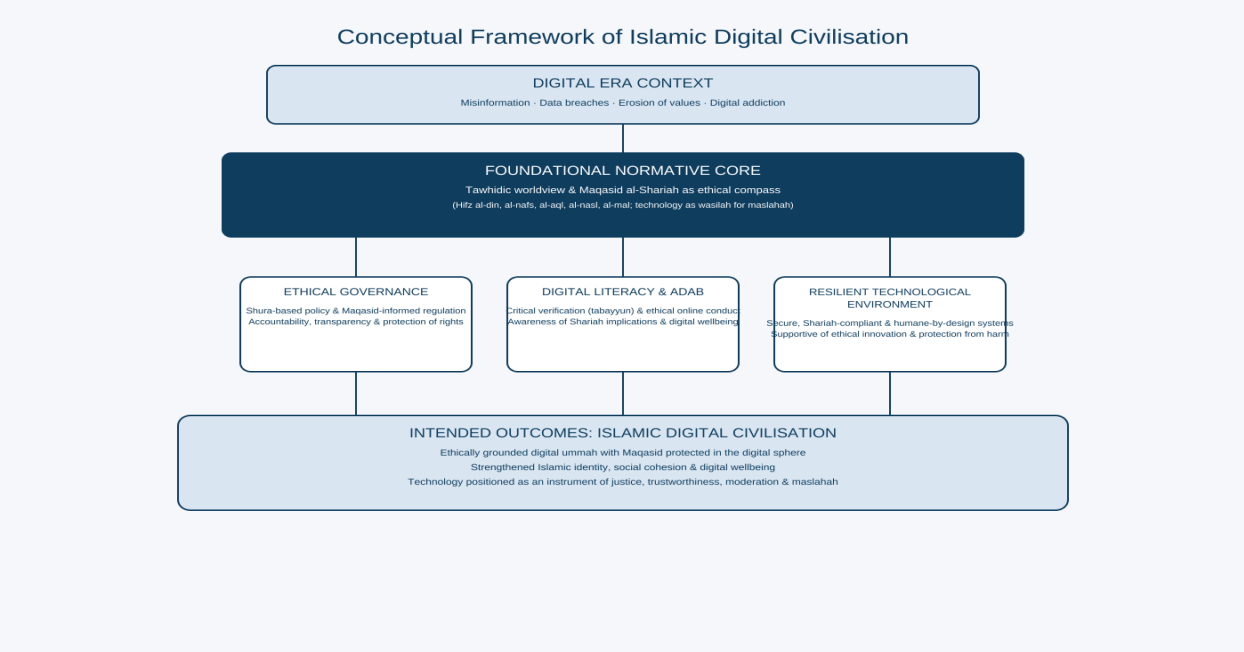

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Islamic Digital Civilisation

The Islamic Digital Civilisation is rooted in the foundational dimension of tawhid and the Maqasid al-Shariah. The tawhidic worldview affirms that all technological innovation is merely an instrument to realise *maslahah* and to prevent *mafsadah*, while the five *maqasid*—

the preservation of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and property—serve as the evaluative criteria for every digital application (al-Rais, S, 2015). Within this framework, artificial intelligence, for example, must be designed such that it does not endanger mental wellbeing (*hifz al-ʿaql*) or exploit private data (*hifz al-māl*). Intention (*niyyah*) and benefit (*maslahah*) thus operate as prerequisites for the legitimacy of any digital innovation, rejecting value-neutral technological determinism (Ahmad et. al., 2025). The principles of Maqasid al-Shariah also broaden this scope to ensure that all actions contribute to the welfare of society and the protection of fundamental human rights.

The ethical governance dimension highlights structures, policies, and processes of technological management that prioritise *shūrā*, trustworthiness, justice, and transparency. This includes data protection frameworks informed by Maqasid, Shariah-oriented algorithmic audits grounded in the concept of *hisbah*, and the participation of religious scholars and technologists in multi-stakeholder governance ecosystems. Such an approach aligns with the imperative of *masʾuliyyah* (accountability), holding platform owners responsible for harm, and with *istiṣlāḥ* (consideration of public interest), which supports open policies where collective benefit is evident (Rabiu et al., 2025).

The third dimension, digital literacy and *adab*, stresses the development of cognitive and moral competencies enabling Muslim users to filter information, restrain hate speech, protect privacy, and assess the Shariah implications of online transactions. Drawing on al-Attas's thought model as operationalised by Ita Yunita et al. (2025), the imperative of integrating knowledge and *adab* in reconstructing Islamic education in the digital era entails combining media literacy skills with the values of *ihsan* and *amanah*, thereby nurturing a culture of *tabayyun* (careful verification) prior to information dissemination. Mainstreaming such modules into school and university curricula, alongside continuous training for parents and community leaders is a critical prerequisite to empowering Muslim digital citizens. This dimension proposes a framework that reconnects knowledge with adab, ensuring Islamic education remains morally grounded and intellectually relevant in the face of digital challenges.

Finally, the resilient technological environment dimension refers to secure infrastructures, robust cyber security policies and inclusive Shariah-compliant innovation ecosystems. Key features include the use of blockchain for halal and zakat audits, Shariah-

compliant data centres that honour *ḥuqūq al-ʿibād* (the right of human beings), humane design that minimises addictive features, and digital disaster-recovery mechanisms grounded in the principle of *rafʿ al-ḍarar* (removal of harm). Government–industry collaboration is vital for developing cyber security standards and halal certification frameworks for fintech, thereby enhancing the agility of the Islamic digital ecosystem in confronting cyber threats and economic uncertainty (Kadir, 2025).

Collectively, this conceptual framework provides a pertinent and robust analytical lens for assessing challenges, opportunities, and strategies for value formation within the ummah in the digital age.

2. The Importance of Ethical Value Formation in the Ummah

The cultivation of ethical values within the ummah is fundamental to the continuity of Islamic civilisation, as these values function as a "shield" that filters external influences before they permeate social behaviour both offline and online. In cyberspace, users often feel less bound by conventional norms, which facilitates risky behaviour such as slander, privacy violations, and algorithmic manipulation. In Malaysia alone, 31,173 cybercrime incidents were recorded between 2019 and 2023, causing losses of up to RM1.3 billion, with 47% involving online fraud (National Cyber Security Agency [NACSA], 2024). This reality underscores that honesty (*ṣidq*), trustworthiness, responsibility (*masʾuliyyah*), and respect are not merely ideal values but critical necessities for curbing cyber harms with economic, psychological, and social implications (Ahmad, et. al., 2025).

In this context, digital literacy does not stop at improving technical skills, but also includes the development of critical awareness and media ethics. Digital literacy encompasses complex terms regarding various skills, mindsets, and technologies, as well as how we interact and behave in the digital world. Thus, digital literacy is more than just the ability to access the internet and technology through the internet, but also concerns the safe, secure, and productive use of the internet by the community (Pedro et. al , 2013).

In an age where the boundary between physical and virtual realities is increasingly blurred, the need for strong ethical foundations becomes even more critical. Values such as honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, and respect must be embedded in every digital

interaction to prevent adverse outcomes such as cyber fraud, cyberbullying and hate propagation. This paper outlines ways these values can be nurtured and reinforced within the digital context.

DISCUSSION

This section discusses in detail the challenges and opportunities or strategies involved in constructing an Islamic Digital Civilisation.

1. Challenges and Opportunities in Shaping the Ethical Values of the Ummah

In the present digital era, the formation of ethical values within the ummah faces multiple emerging challenges. Four central areas are often emphasised, each bringing its own set of challenges as well as meaningful opportunities for positive moral development.

(a) the spread of false information;

(b) data privacy and cyber security;

(c) erosion of traditional values;

(d) digital addiction and psychological impacts.

Fundamentally, the Maqasid al-Shariah provides an Islamic meta-ethical framework that can serve as a conceptual foundation for value formation and sound ethics in the use of information technologies. By mapping the five *ḍarūriyyāt* the protection of religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*ʿaql*), progeny (*nasl*), and property (*māl*) onto contemporary digital issues and challenges, this framework becomes a central theoretical basis for ethical evaluation in each identified digital challenge. Recent empirical and normative research confirms the suitability of Maqasid as a theoretical lens for digital ethics, whether in governance and social media (Tarequl, 2019), artificial intelligence or broader Islamic digital ethics (Chaudhary, 2020; Rabiu et al., 2025).

a. Dissemination of False Information

The proliferation of false information or fake news poses a serious threat to ethical value formation, as it poisons intellectual and social domains. Globally, this phenomenon has reached alarming levels. Reports indicate that misinformation is now recognised as a worldwide problem affecting Malaysia as well. An international study found Malaysia to be

among the highest in Asia in terms of exposure to fake news, with 77% of media respondents reporting encounters with non-verifiable information (Bernama, 19 May 2023).

In Malaysia, the impact is evident in the thousands of complaints received and increasingly assertive enforcement actions. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) recorded 3,285 fake news complaints between 2020 and May 2022, with an additional 143 complaints in the first two months of the following year. The government's Special Task Force on Fake News reported that from December 2022 to December 2023, a total of 861 suspicious news contents particularly involving the "3R" (royalty, religion, race) and political leadership were identified. Of these, 91 investigation papers were opened and numerous legal actions taken, while collaboration between MCMC and social media companies led to the removal of more than 6,000 fake contents in a single year (Kosmo, 27 February 2024). These statistics illustrate the pervasiveness of misinformation in the local digital sphere.

Ethically and socially, fake news undermines honesty and trustworthiness. False information can generate confusion, panic, and conflict. The Malaysian government recognises that fake news adversely affects political stability, economic resilience, social harmony, religious and cultural sensitivities, as well as national security and sovereignty. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, hundreds of unfounded rumours circulated regarding virus transmission and "miracle cures", compelling authorities to conduct around 350 fact-checks in just the first five months of 2020 (ISIS, 2020). Such health-related misinformation not only misleads the public but can trigger harmful decisions (e.g. vaccine refusal or use of unproven "remedies"), thereby compromising the protection of life (*nafs*).

From the Maqasid al-Shariah perspective, the spread of slander and falsehood directly contravenes the objectives of preserving intellect and religion. Islam places strong emphasis on truthfulness and *tabayyun* (verification), as commanded in Qur'an; al-Hujurat, verse 6, which warns believers to verify news brought by unreliable sources lest harm be inflicted upon others out of ignorance. The purveyors of fake news are categorised as *fāsiq* and considered guilty of grave sin because their actions may incite slander, suspicion, and hatred, ultimately leading to social fragmentation.

Accordingly, the dissemination of fake news constitutes a major challenge to ethical formation because it normalises a culture of non-integrity and erodes the foundation of trust within society. This challenge, however, can be addressed through two interrelated interventions: media literacy education and robust regulatory enforcement. Both must be integrated systematically to safeguard ethical integrity in the ummah (Chaudhary, 2020).

Media and information literacy (MIL) remains relatively weak, particularly among youth; almost half (49.3%) of Generation Z in Malaysia report difficulty distinguishing true from false information, while 58.6% are unfamiliar with fact-checking platforms (Ahmad et al., 2022). In line with UNESCO's *Think Critically, Click Wisely!* framework, which emphasises source evaluation, cross-verification, and digital ethics (UNESCO, 2024), this study recommends mainstreaming MIL in schools, higher education institutions, and community-based programmes linked to daʿwah. This approach strengthens *hifz al-ʿaql* through evidence-based reasoning skills while fostering a culture of *taḥqīq al-ḥaqīqah* (verification of truth) consonant with Islamic principles of honesty and trustworthiness.

Education alone, however, is insufficient; the information ecosystem also requires responsive regulation. The experience of the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance 2021 on COVID-19-related fake news demonstrates the need to reinforce multimedia legal mechanisms. A co-regulation model involving MCMC and independent fact-checking bodies previously applied in safeguarding electoral integrity—could be expanded (Ahmad et al., 2022). Under the Maqasid principles of *hifz al-dīn* and *hifz al-ʿaql*, such an integrated framework upholds truth (*al-ṣidq*) and prevents slander that fractures communal unity (Auda, 2008). Combating fake news thereby becomes integral to preserving intellect and religion in the public sphere.

b. Data Privacy & Cyber Security

The digital revolution has introduced substantial challenges to personal data privacy and cyber security. In an interconnected world, personal information (such as names, identity numbers, addresses, health records, and financial data) is stored and transmitted electronically, exposing individuals and organisations to risks of privacy invasion, data theft, cyber fraud, and hacking.

Major data breaches and rising cyberattacks in Malaysia reveal structural weaknesses in the protection of personal information. A notable incident was the leak of 46.2 million mobile numbers exceeding the national population in October 2017, including addresses and SIM details (The Straits Times, 2017). Threat trends have persisted: CyberSecurity Malaysia reported 5,181 incidents to the Cyber999 response centre between January and October 2024, with online fraud accounting for 3,483 cases, followed by malicious content (480) and malware (403) (Bernama, 2024). These vulnerabilities damage public trust, compromise economic security, and threaten privacy rights recognised under the Personal Data Protection Act 2010 (PDPA, 2010).

From an Islamic ethical standpoint, digital intrusion is analogous to *tajassus* (spying) and unlawful appropriation of property, contravening the Maqasid of preserving wealth (*hifz al-māl*), honour (*hifz al-ʿird*), and life (*hifz al-nafs*) (Auda, 2008). Addressing these challenges requires an integrated approach. Opportunities and strategies can be strengthened across several aspects:

(i) **Technical** – implementation of advanced cyber defence systems and security practices (e.g. encryption, strong passwords, two-factor authentication) to protect data;

(ii) **Legal/Organisational** – enforcement of legal frameworks (such as PDPA) and cyber laws that penalise offenders and obligate organisations to safeguard user data;

(iii) **Individual Responsibility** – enhanced awareness and responsibility among users to protect their personal data (e.g. not sharing passwords, exercising caution with suspicious links) and to act ethically with others' information;

iv) **Moral/Spiritual** – embedding the values of *amanah* and integrity in every aspect of data handling.

When these elements converge, the ummah can cultivate a safe and ethical digital culture. Thus, ensuring data privacy and cyber security is not solely a technical issue; it is part of the collective moral responsibility to uphold the trust (*amanah*) highly esteemed in Islam. Protecting privacy and preventing cybercrime equates to safeguarding communal property and dignity, fully consistent with the Maqasid al-Shariah (Rabiu, et al., 2025).

Islamic ethics firmly uphold the protection of privacy and confidentiality, drawing clear guidance from the Qur'an and Hadith, including the prohibition of spying and backbiting in Surah al-Ḥujurāt, verse. 12. These principles provide a normative basis for

responsible technological use, requiring transparency, informed consent, and strict safeguards over personal data. In this framework, Muslims are encouraged to utilise digital technologies in ways that maximise their benefits while ensuring that the collection, storage and use of personal information remain fully aligned with ethical and Shariah-compliant standards.

c. Erosion of Traditional Values

Global information flows and social media influences have contributed to the erosion of traditional values, especially among younger generations. Traditional values refer to norms, customs, and moral codes passed down across generations. Such as strong family and community bonds, respect for elders, modesty, cooperation, and firm adherence to religious teachings and local cultures.

The emergence of a global digital media ecosystem accelerates generational shifts from collectivist orientations emphasising family etiquette, respect for authority, and communal cooperation towards individualistic patterns centred on self-fulfilment and expressive freedom. In Malaysia, media analyses show that sustained exposure of Gen Z to Westernised content via social media tends to normalise aspirations of personal power and recognition, thereby weakening traditional norms that restrain hedonism. (Yapp, et al., 2024). Similar cross-national evidence from India finds that video streaming and influencer culture facilitate cultural homogenisation, displacing local icons with cosmopolitan lifestyles (Hazarika, Bora, & Nath, 2024).

From the standpoint of the ummah's ethical values, the erosion of tradition has deep implications: weakening family ties, shifts in marital norms (e.g. delaying marriage, higher divorce rates), declining respect for authority (teachers, religious leaders), and changes in religious commitment and practice.

In Maqasid terms, the erosion of traditional *adab* threatens the preservation of religion (*hifz al-dīn*) and progeny (*hifz al-nasl*) by undermining the family institution, communal solidarity, and core moral discipline. Preserving religion is not limited to ritual performance; it entails sustaining core Islamic virtues respect, God-consciousness (*taqwa*), brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), trustworthiness that are often embodied in local traditions. Preserving progeny is directly linked to a stable family institution and sound moral order.

Thus, Maqasid protection calls for transformative strategies rather than mere rhetorical appeals. Opportunities in this regard include:

(i) Strengthening digital value-literacy programmes in schools and mosques that filter global narratives through the lens of Islamic *adab*.

(ii) Promoting local content creation that foregrounds cultural and Islamic identity within social media ecosystems.

(iii) Forging smart collaborations between religious scholars, educators, and digital platforms to promote ethical online communities.

Such integrated approaches aim to balance the appeal of global culture with the necessity of preserving the moral heritage of the ummah.

d. Digital Addiction & Psychological Effects

Digital addiction refers to excessive and uncontrolled use of digital devices, the internet, or social media to the extent that it causes negative impacts on mental, physical, and daily functioning. This phenomenon cuts across all age groups, from children to the elderly. Indicators include constant attachment to devices, compulsive browsing, and anxiety when disconnected. With ubiquitous access and abundant digital content, many individuals inadvertently fall into patterns of addiction.

Internet addiction among Malaysian has become a vigorous discussion due to its negative behavioural consequences. Internet addiction normally derived from a situation of overdependence of internet usage or online activity obsession. According to a survey, Malaysians spend an average of 7 to 8 hours a day online, including time spent browsing through social media. (Ali, S.M. et al., 2022). A cross-sectional study of adolescents aged 13–14 in Kelantan during the pandemic found that 48.6% experienced moderate to severe addiction levels (Sangaran et al., 2024).

Digital addiction adversely affects psychological, physical, social, and spiritual dimensions, thereby diminishing ethical quality and overall wellbeing. Clinical studies associate excessive use with higher levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and loneliness. Social media addiction is specifically linked with Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), envy, diminished self-worth through social comparison, and cyberbullying, all of which harm emotional stability. Recent meta-analytic studies have found evidence of a relationship

between problematic internet use and the appearance of internalizing symptomatology such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, self-esteem, or subjective well-being in adolescent or young adult populations (Lozano-Blasco & Cortes-Pascual, 2020; Cai et al., 2023)

In social terms, digitally addicted individuals often self-isolate and prefer online interactions to face-to-face encounters, weakening real-life social skills such as empathy, conversational *adab*, and constructive conflict resolution. Family members may feel neglected when others are absorbed in their devices at the dining table or during shared time at home, eroding family communication and impeding value transmission.

From the Maqasid perspective, these harms jeopardise *hifz al-ʿaql* (preservation of intellect) and *hifz al-nafs* (preservation of life), and violate the principle of *wasatiyyah* (moderation) emphasised by Dar al-Ifta' (2024). Islam discourages self-destructive excess and mandates balance; addiction is an extreme behaviour that undermines individual and communal welfare.

Understanding digital addiction requires examining its causes and solutions across several dimensions:

(i) **Technological Design** – Many platforms deliberately deploy addictive features (infinite scrolling, push notifications, engagement-maximising algorithms). Technology companies bear social responsibility to incorporate more ethical designs (e.g. usage limits, break reminders, wellbeing dashboards).

(ii) **Education** – Digital literacy should include mental-health literacy, educating youth on addiction risks, warning signs, and self-regulation strategies. Parents and teachers must guide children's internet use (e.g. setting reasonable screen-time limits, using age-appropriate content filters).

(iii) **Individual/Psychological Responsibility** – Individuals should cultivate self-discipline and structured routines, including device-free periods, offline hobbies (sports, reading physical books, in-person socialising), and, where necessary, seeking counselling or therapy.

(iv) **Adab and Spirituality** – Religious approaches can strengthen inner resilience. Increasing spiritual practices (prayer, dhikr, occasional "fasting" from social media) can restore tranquillity and self-control. Preachers may highlight that time and health are divine trusts for which individuals will be held accountable, and thus must not be squandered.

Overall, digital addiction is a complex contemporary challenge arising from human interaction with highly immersive technologies. Nevertheless, by recognising its moral, mental, and relational consequences, societies can enhance awareness and design strategies grounded in ethical values and Shariah guidance. Digital technologies offer substantial benefits, but their use must be governed by ethics and self-control to avoid corrupting human nature and values. In this way, the ethical values of the ummah in the digital era can be strengthened without sacrificing technological progress.

Taken together, these four core challenges constitute critical tests for the sustainability of morality and integrity within Muslim societies in the digital age. Empirical evidence from Malaysia and beyond confirms that these issues are real, widespread, and demand urgent action. In confronting this reality, faith in tawhid guided by the Maqasid al-Shariah serves as a normative compass, ensuring that any interventions, opportunities, and strategies contribute towards building an Islamic Digital Civilisation that safeguards the moral wellbeing of the ummah in the new millennium.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the development of an Islamic Digital Civilisation requires a deliberate and comprehensive effort spanning formal education, scholarly guidance, grassroots community initiatives, and strategic collaboration among governments, technology industries, and ethics experts. The four key challenges misinformation, data breaches, erosion of traditional values, and digital addiction should be understood as new manifestations of Maqasid-related tests in cyberspace.

By integrating the principles of *hifz al-dīn*, *hifz al-nafs*, *hifz al-ʿaql*, *hifz al-nasl*, and *hifz al-māl* into media literacy policies, data protection laws, locally grounded digital content, and mental health intervention programmes, the ummah can harness technology as a vehicle for strengthening faith and *adab*, rather than merely as a tool for entertainment or economic transaction. This holistic approach facilitates the construction of a digital ecosystem that preserves Islamic identity, reinforces social bonds, and supports innovation aligned with Shariah values.

At the same time, the agenda of Islamic Digital Civilisation opens avenues for multidisciplinary research combining data science, psychology, contemporary *fiqh*, and

public policy to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and anticipate emerging risks. This paper aspires to catalyse further discourse on methodologies for measuring digital ethics indices, developing religion-sensitive co-regulation models, and designing platforms that promote digital wellbeing anchored in tawhid. Sustained collaboration among academia, industry, and policymakers is crucial to ensuring that technology remains an instrument of empowerment for the ummah, while safeguarding the values of justice, trustworthiness, and moderation in an increasingly complex and challenging digital landscape.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author gratefully acknowledges YADIM for the opportunity and sponsorship to present the findings of this study at the International Convention on Sustainable Development and Daʿwah Movement (Series 2/2025), themed "Transformation & Daʿwah Strategies in the Digital Era."

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