



ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND SMES
(AIJBES)

www.gaexcellence.com/aijbess



THE HYPER-CONNECTED SOUL: A NARRATIVE REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA DEPENDENCY AMONG GENERATION Z THROUGH THE INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK OF DIGITAL MARKETING AND ISLAMIC PSYCHOSPIRITUALITY

Pressca Negin^{1*}, Jati Kasuma Ali^{2,3}, Noraini Nasirun⁴, Yusman Yacob^{1,3}, Leviana Andrew^{2,3}, Anna Bakiewicz⁵

¹Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak Branch, Samarahan Campus, Malaysia

 pressca288@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5165-0378>

 yusmanyacob@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2211-487x>

²Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak Branch, Samarahan Campus, Malaysia

³Sustainable Cooperative Business Group (SCBG), Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak Branch, Samarahan Campus, Malaysia

 jati@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4041-5468>

 leviana141@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9001-7401>

⁴Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Perlis Branch, Arau Campus, Malaysia

 noraini305@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6434-090x>

⁵University of Social Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

 abakiewicz@san.edu.pl

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7991-3931>

*Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 15.07.2026

Revised date: 30.07.2026

Accepted date: 20.08.2026

Published date: 20.09.2026

Abstract:

Generation Z's immersive digital existence has transformed social media from a mere tool into a primary engine for discovery, commerce, and identity construction. This narrative review evaluates the growing crisis of social media dependency among Gen Z through a dual lens of contemporary digital marketing and Islamic psychospirituality. While platforms like TikTok and Instagram drive the global Islamic economy, they also facilitate "algorithmic colonization," threatening the Maqasid al-Shariah, particularly the preservation of the intellect (Hifz al-Aql). Utilizing an Integrated Islamic Stimulus-Organism-Response (I-SOR)

To cite this document:

Neging, P., Ali, J. K., Nasirun, N., Yacob, Y., Andrew, L., & Bakiewicz, A. (2026). The Hyper-Connected Soul: A Narrative Review of Social Media Dependency Among Generation Z Through the Integrated Framework of Digital Marketing and Islamic Psychospirituality. *Advanced International Journal of Business Entrepreneurship and SMEs*, 8 (29), 1517-1531.

framework, the study analyzes how commercial and social stimuli interact with the spiritual state of the heart (Qalb). This study adopts a narrative review methodology, synthesizing scholarly literature published between 2021 and 2026 from databases including Scopus, Google Scholar, and relevant Islamic studies repositories. Through thematic analysis, key patterns relating to social media dependency, digital marketing influences, and Islamic psychospiritual interventions were identified and integrated into the proposed framework. Findings highlight a pervasive shift from private devotion to public display (Riya'), the commodification of worship, and a reliance on "visual Halal" cues within the Nusantara context. The review argues that traditional digital detox strategies are insufficient; instead, it proposes the classical principles of Tazkiyah al-Nafs (soul purification) and Wasatiyyah (moderation) as essential mechanisms for restoring cognitive and moral balance. Recommendations emphasize the necessity for "Muslim Digital Ethics" and spiritual mindfulness (Muraqabah) to foster a Shariah-compliant digital ecosystem that prioritizes the soul's integrity over engagement metrics.

DOI: 10.35631/AJBES.829086

Keyword:

Generation Z, Islamic Psychospirituality, Social Media Dependency, Tazkiyah Al-Nafs, Wasatiyyah



© The authors (2026). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. For commercial re-use, please contact aijb@gaexcellence.com.

Introduction

The global digital landscape at the dawn of the mid-2020s represents a paradigm shift in human existence, where the boundaries between the physical and virtual realms have become increasingly porous. For Generation Z, those born roughly between 1997 and 2012, this environment is not a newly adopted tool but a native habitat (Opena, 2026). As of 2024, the global digital population has exceeded 5 billion active social media users, representing over 62% of the world's inhabitants (Opena, 2026). Neging, Ali, Nasirun and Yacob (2025) observed that, within this demographic, Generation Z stands out as the most engaged, with statistics indicating that nearly half of this cohort spends upwards of four hours daily on social media platforms. This intensive engagement is not merely a hobby; it is a fundamental shift in how this generation processes information, builds identity, and interacts with both the commercial and spiritual worlds. In the context of contemporary Islamic thought and the digitalization of knowledge, this hyper-connectivity presents a dual-edged sword that warrants exhaustive scholarly investigation.

From the perspective of digital marketing, Generation Z has fundamentally disrupted the traditional purchase funnel. The linear path of awareness, interest, desire, and action has been replaced by an "infinite loop" of inspiration, exploration, community, and loyalty (Opena,

2026). They have essentially abandoned traditional search engines like Google in favor of TikTok and Instagram, utilizing these platforms as primary discovery engines for everything from product reviews to religious guidance (Negin et al., 2025). This shift towards visual, short-form, and community-driven content reflects a deeper psychological preference for authenticity and peer-to-peer validation over polished corporate messaging or traditional institutional authority (Opena, 2026).

However, this unprecedented level of connectivity has birthed a pervasive crisis of digital dependency, often colloquially referred to as "social media addiction." This phenomenon is characterized by a compulsive need to remain online, driven by sophisticated algorithms designed to exploit neurological reward loops (Rozza, Efriyanto, Kusumawardhani & Busono, 2026). Within the Islamic framework, this dependency poses a direct threat to the *Maqasid al-Shariah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law), particularly the preservation of the intellect (*Hifz al-Aql*) and the protection of religious integrity (*Hifz al-Din*) (Maulidizen et al., 2025). The constant influx of notifications and the habit of infinite scrolling create a state of *Ghaflah* (heedlessness), distracting the believer from the remembrance of God and the fulfillment of obligatory worship (Akinwale & Grobler, 2026).

This narrative review seeks to explore the complexities of social media dependency among Generation Z through the lens of a Professor in Digital Marketing, integrating elements of Islamic philosophy such as *Tazkiyah al-Nafs* (purification of the soul) and *Wasatiyyah* (moderation) (Akinwale & Grobler, 2026). By examining the intersection of market-driven stimuli and spiritual responses, the report aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how digital platforms shape the "the digitally connected Muslim community (Digital Ummah) and what mechanisms can be employed to restore balance in an age of algorithmic dominance.

Problem Statement

The central problem addressed in this review is the psychological and spiritual erosion caused by excessive social media dependency among Generation Z. Despite the high level of digital literacy within this cohort, Sari and Hidayat (2026) highlighted that there is a growing gap between their technical proficiency and their ethical-spiritual self-regulation. The "always-on" culture fostered by smartphones and high-speed internet has led to a state of persistent screen-time that reduces face-to-face empathy, weakens internal cognitive controls, and heightens the risk of isolation, anxiety, and depression (Akinwale & Grobler, 2026).

From a neurological perspective, social media platforms are engineered to trigger dopamine releases through likes, comments, and shares, creating a behavioral cycle similar to substance addiction (Rozza, Efriyanto, Kusumawardhani & Busono, 2026). Rozza et al. (2026) also mentioned that for the young Muslim, this cycle often results in the dominance of the *Nafs al-Ammarah* (the lower self that commands evil) over the *Aql* (intellect), leading to *Israf* (excessive behavior) and a decline in spiritual sensitivity. This manifests specifically in the stalling of daily prayers (*Salah*) and the neglect of communal duties due to immersion in the digital world (Rozza et al., 2026).

Furthermore, the rise of "digital religiosity" has shifted the source of Islamic knowledge from traditional, authoritative institutions to fragmented, visual-based content on TikTok and Instagram (Putri & Sjabadhyni, 2025). This shift often prioritizes aesthetic appeal and virality over theological depth, leading to a commodification of worship where rituals are performed

for social validation (*Riya* ') rather than sincere devotion (*Ikhlas*) (Sari & Hidayat, 2026). The standardizing pressure of digital platforms risks creating a form of "empty ritualism," where the philosophical depth of Islam is sacrificed for the sake of digital branding (Rozza et al., 2026). Thus, the problem is not merely a matter of "screen time," but a profound challenge to the authentic transmission of Islamic values and the psychological well-being of the next generation of Muslims (Maulidizen et al., 2025).

Literature Review

The existing body of literature on Generation Z and social media usage reveals a demographic that is uniquely characterized by its "digital nativity." Unlike previous generations, Gen Z has never experienced life without the internet, leading to a cognitive and social architecture that is fundamentally different from their predecessors (Opena, 2026). Statistical data from 2024 and 2025 illustrates the sheer scale of this engagement.

Quantitative Landscape of Generation Z Social Media Engagement

In 2024, social media usage among Generation Z grew by 7.7%, significantly outstripping the overall population growth in digital engagement (Negin et al., 2025). Their platform preferences are distinct, with YouTube (88%), Instagram (89%), and TikTok (82%) leading the way (Opena, 2026). However, the way they use these platforms is perhaps more significant than the time spent. Social media has become a "discovery engine" that replaces traditional search (Negin et al., 2025).

Table 1 summarizes key digital behavior trends observed in 2024–2025 and links them to both marketing implications and Islamic ethical considerations. It highlights how prolonged daily social media usage where half of users spend more than four hours—creates opportunities for persistent brand engagement but also raises concerns about *ghaflah* (heedlessness) due to excessive distraction.

Social media has overtaken traditional search engines as a primary discovery tool, with 46% of users preferring platforms like Instagram or TikTok over Google. This shift pushes marketers toward highly visual and interactive content, while emphasizing the Islamic principle of *sidq* (truthfulness) to ensure accuracy and honesty in fast-moving, algorithm-driven environments.

Purchasing behavior is now heavily influenced by social media advertising and influencers, affecting up to 90% of consumers. This trend underscores the importance of influencer-led strategies, alongside the Islamic value of *amanah* (trustworthiness), reminding both brands and influencers of their ethical responsibility toward audiences.

Growing awareness of mental health is reflected in the rise of planned social media detoxes, with 63% of users seeking moderation. This fuels "digital wellness" branding opportunities and aligns with *wasatiyyah* (moderation), a core Islamic principle advocating balance in all aspects of life.

Finally, the dominance of short-form video content (under 60 seconds) shows a preference for authenticity and immediacy over polished production. While effective for engagement, this trend also presents the risk of fragmented or superficial understanding, touching on concerns related to *hifz al-‘aql* (preservation of intellect) within Islamic thought.

Table 1: Digital Media Consumption Trends (2024–2025): Marketing Implications Through an Islamic Ethical Lens

Metric	Statistical Value (2024-2025)	Marketing Implication	Islamic Perspective
Daily Usage Time	50% spend >4 hours	Need for persistent engagement	Risk of <i>Ghaflah</i> (heedlessness)
Search Preference	46% use social media vs. Google	Content must be visual/interactive	Need for <i>Sidq</i> (truthfulness) in content
Purchase Inspiration	90% inspired by social ads/influencers	Shift to influencer-led strategies	Importance of <i>Amanah</i> (trustworthiness)
Mental Health Awareness	63% planned social detoxes in 2024	Rise of "Digital Wellness" branding	Demand for <i>Wasatiyyah</i> (moderation)
Content Preference	Short-form video (<60s) dominates	Authenticity over polish	Danger of fragmented knowledge (<i>Hifz al-Aql</i>)

Source : Rozza et al. (2026) & Maulidizen et al. (2025)

The Digital Ummah: Islam and Nusantara Culture in the Digital Age

Within the Nusantara region (primarily Indonesia and Malaysia), the intersection of digital behavior and religiosity is particularly pronounced. Generation Z Muslims in these areas are increasingly using social media for "digital da'wah," seeking religious motivation and identity through platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels (Riyadi et al., 2026). Research indicates that short-form videos yield four times the interaction rate of traditional lectures, suggesting that the "ustadz" figure is undergoing a metamorphosis into a digital creator (Riyadi et al., 2026).

However, this digitalization of knowledge brings significant risks. While Riyadi et al. (2026) reported that short-form Islamic content increases engagement among Generation Z, Putri and Sjabadhyani (2025) cautioned that excessive reliance on visually driven religious content may reduce theological depth and critical reflection. These contrasting findings suggest that social media functions simultaneously as a mechanism for religious outreach and a source of religious simplification.

Islamic Psychospiritual Responses to Addiction

Scholars have turned to classical Islamic concepts to address the modern crisis of digital addiction. *Tazkiyah al-Nafs* is frequently cited as a comprehensive framework for restoring self-regulation (Abdul Razak & Tengku Kamarulbahri, 2024). Unlike Western digital detox strategies which focus solely on external behavior, *Tazkiyah* addresses the internal cognitive and moral balance (Abdul Razak & Tengku Kamarulbahri, 2024).

Supporting this perspective, Akib et al. (2025) found that Islamic psychotherapy interventions significantly improve adolescent spiritual well-being by cultivating self-awareness, emotional regulation, and religious commitment. Their systematic review suggests that Islamic-based therapeutic approaches may serve as valuable interventions for addressing contemporary behavioral challenges, including excessive dependence on digital technologies.

Muhasabah (Introspection): This acts as the primary step for adolescents to recognize the source of their addiction and its impact on their spiritual health (Briliana, 2025).

Muraqabah (Mindfulness): This spiritual mindfulness helps individuals resist the impulsive urge to check notifications by maintaining a constant awareness of God's presence (*Ihsaan*) (Abdullah, Rahman & Karim, 2025).

Wasatiyyah (Moderation): This principle advocates for a balanced approach to technology, using it for benefit (*Maslahah*) while avoiding the harm (*Darar*) of excess (Anwar et al., 2025).

Recent scholarship has further strengthened the conceptualization of Islamic psychospirituality as an integrated biopsychosocial-spiritual framework. Sa'ari et al. (2025) argued that Islamic psychospiritual development functions as a foundational mechanism for strengthening emotional resilience, cognitive balance, and spiritual well-being. Their work emphasizes that psychological health cannot be separated from spiritual consciousness, supporting the present study's proposition that social media dependency should be addressed through both behavioral regulation and spiritual rehabilitation. This perspective complements Tazkiyah al-Nafs by positioning spiritual self-development as a protective factor against digital overconsumption. The following matrix (Table 2) provides a summary of key scholarly contributions to the study of social media dependency and Islamic ethics.

Table 2: Literature Review Matrix

Author (Year)	Focus Area	Key Findings	Islamic Concept Integrated
Basith Arham & Kulsum (2025)	Adolescent Social Media Addiction	<i>Tazkiyatun Nafs</i> provides a spiritual solution to behavioral dependency.	<i>Muhasabah</i> , <i>Taubat</i> , <i>Qana'ah</i>
Syaiful Anwar et al. (2025)	Social Media Addiction in Malaysia	<i>Al-Wasatiyyah</i> is vital for balancing digital and spiritual lives.	<i>Al-Wasatiyyah</i> , <i>Muraqabah</i>
Zaid et al. (2021)	Digital Religious Literacy	Gen Z acquires religious knowledge through fragmented, visual social media.	Digital <i>Fitrah</i> , <i>Dakwah</i>
Shompa et al. (2023)	Maqasid al-Shariah & Media	Social media must be used properly to protect the intellect and social harmony.	<i>Hifz al-Aql</i> , <i>Hifz al-Din</i>
Aziz et al. (2021/2024)	Hedonistic Consumption	Digital platforms encourage <i>Riya'</i> and <i>Israf</i> through identity commodification.	<i>Riya'</i> , <i>Israf</i> , <i>Maqasid al-Shariah</i>
Saharani (2025)	Halal Marketing & Trust	Digitalization offers growth but requires high	<i>Sidq</i> , <i>Amanah</i> , <i>Halal</i>

			transparency to maintain trust.	
Dokoupilová et al. (2024)	Gen Social/Mental Health	Z	High dependency leads to underdeveloped social skills and mental health risks.	<i>Hifz an-Nafs</i> (Protection of life/wellbeing)

Research Framework

To analyze the relationship between digital marketing and social media dependency, this review adopts an expanded Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model. The original SOR model, proposed by Woodworth (1929) and later refined by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), suggests that environmental stimuli induce internal emotional or cognitive states, which in turn lead to behavioral responses (approach or avoidance) (Hussain, Ting, Abbasi, & Rehman, 2023). In the context of the Professor's perspective on Digital Marketing for a Muslim audience, the "Organism" must be enriched with Islamic psychospiritual dimensions.

The Integrated Islamic-SOR (I-SOR) Model

The I-SOR model posits that behavior is not just a reaction to external triggers but is filtered through the spiritual state of the heart (*Qalb*) and the intellect (*Aql*).

The relationship between Stimulus and Response is moderated by the spiritual health of the individual. For example, a stimulus like "Influencer Luxury Endorsement" might trigger *Israf* in a spiritually weak organism but might trigger *Muhasabah* (self-reflection) or *Qana'ah* (contentment) in a spiritually resilient individual (Abdullah, Rahman & Karim, 2025). This framework provides a holistic view of how digital marketing interacts with the modern Muslim soul.

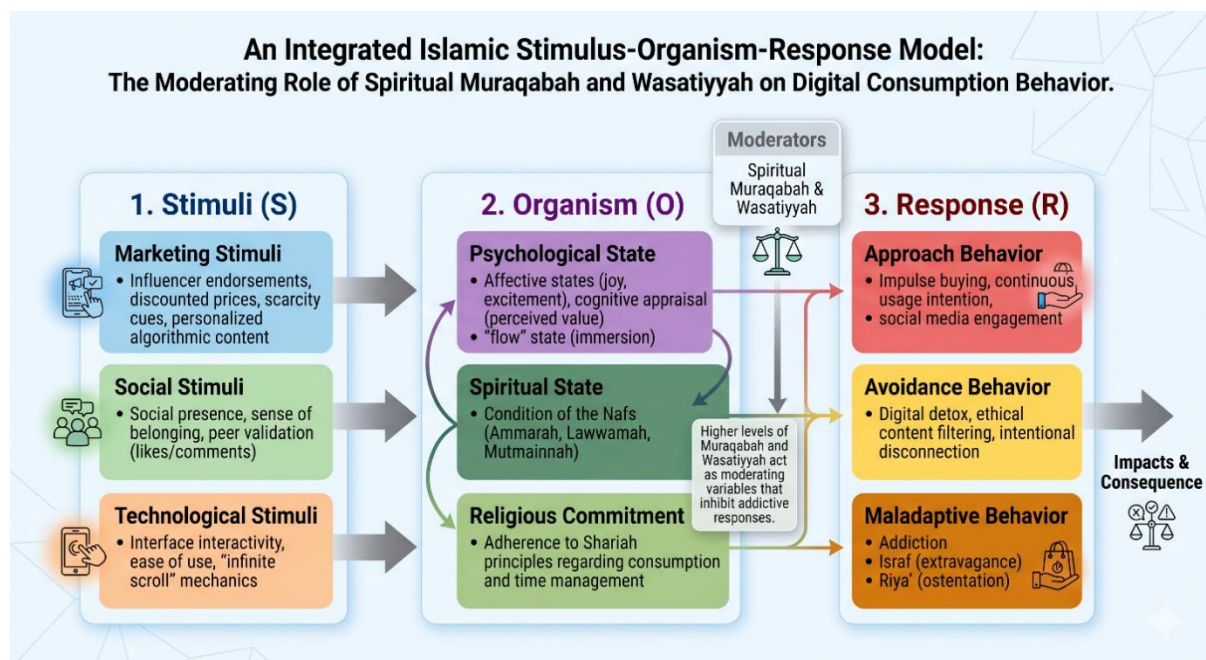


Figure 1: The Integrated Islamic-SOR (I-SOR) Model

Source: Hussain, Ting, Abbasi and Rehman (2023), Riyadi et al. (2026), Ali, Khan & Singh (2025), MayaPutra & Yusrizal (2025)

1. Stimuli (S):

- **Marketing Stimuli:** Influencer endorsements, discounted prices, scarcity cues, and personalized algorithmic content (Hussain et al., 2023).
- **Social Stimuli:** Social presence, sense of belonging, and peer validation (likes/comments) (Hussain et al., 2023).
- **Technological Stimuli:** Interface interactivity, ease of use, and "infinite scroll" mechanics (Hussain et al., 2023).

2. Organism (O):

- **Psychological State:** Affective states (joy, excitement), cognitive appraisal (perceived value), and the "flow" state (immersion) (Hussain et al., 2023).
- **Spiritual State:** The condition of the *Nafs* (Ammarah, Lawwamah, or Mutmainnah). Higher levels of *Muraqabah* and *Wasatiyyah* act as moderating variables that inhibit addictive responses (Riyadi et al., 2025).
- **Religious Commitment:** Adherence to Shariah principles regarding consumption and time management (MayaPutri & Yusrizal, 2025).

3. Response (R):

- **Approach Behavior:** Impulse buying, continuous usage intention, and social media engagement (Hussain et al., 2023).
- **Avoidance Behavior:** Digital detox, ethical content filtering, and intentional disconnection (Ali et al., 2025).
- **Maladaptive Behavior:** Addiction, *Israf* (extravagance), and *Riya'* (ostentation) (MayaPutri & Yusrizal, 2025).

Methodology

This study utilizes a narrative review methodology, a qualitative approach suited for synthesizing complex concepts and identifying broad themes across diverse scholarly domains. The methodology follows a protocol designed to ensure depth and expert-level insight.

Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted between February and April 2026 using Google Scholar, Scopus, Dimensions, and selected Islamic studies databases. Search terms included "Generation Z social media addiction", "social media dependency", "digital marketing and Gen Z", "Islamic psychospirituality", "Tazkiyah al-Nafs", "digital well-being", and "Islamic digital ethics".

Screening Process

A total of 96 publications were initially identified. After removing duplicate records and excluding studies that were not directly related to social media dependency, Generation Z, digital marketing, or Islamic psychospirituality, 43 articles were retained for final review.

Analytical Procedure

This methodology allows for a deep-seated interpretation of how contemporary digital systems interact with ancient spiritual principles, providing a "reason-why" analysis that Generation Z consumers themselves demand.

Findings and Discussions

The findings of this review highlight a significant divergence between the inherent digital habits of Generation Z and the traditional ethical expectations of Islamic life. The following thematic discussions explore the complexities of this digital-spiritual intersection.

The Algorithmic Influence on Spiritual Cognition (Heart)

One of the most striking findings is the extent to which social media algorithms have replaced traditional social and spiritual structures. For Generation Z, algorithms determine not only what they buy but what they *believe* (Rahman, Khan & Lim, 2025). Platforms like TikTok and Instagram use curatorial algorithms that prioritize high-engagement content, which often translates to content that is aesthetically pleasing or emotionally provocative (Rahman, Khan & Lim, 2025).

This creates a form of "algorithmic religiosity," where young Muslims may experience their faith through a filter that favours "trendy" rituals such as specific crying-during-prayer trends or aesthetic congregational selfies—over deep, solitary worship (Ismail & Rehman, 2024). From the perspective of *Hifz al-Aql* (Protection of the intellect), this is concerning because it discourages critical and rational thinking, replacing it with fragmented, instantaneous understanding (Ahmad Syahir et al., 2025). The intellect is effectively "colonized" by the platform's engagement metrics, leading to a state of *Ghaflah* where the primary motivation for action is social validation rather than the pleasure of Allah (Ahmad Syahir et al., 2025).

The Commodification of Identity and Riya' (Ostentation)

Digital marketing on social media functions through the "power of social proof," where identity construction and consumption are inextricably linked (Abdullah et al., 2025). For Generation Z, owning the latest product or participating in a viral trend is a performative act of "self-branding" (Hidayat & Sari, 2026). In the Islamic ethical context, this behavior often manifests as *Riya'*—the display of one's actions (including religious ones) for the sake of public approval (Riyadi et al., 2025).

Statistics indicate that 90% of Gen Z purchases are inspired by social content (Patel et al., 2025). This susceptibility to influencer-led consumption drives hedonistic patterns characterized by *Israf* (extravagance) and materialism (Anwar et al., 2025). The Quranic condemnation of those who "give less than due" and the warning against the "glamorization of material excess" are directly relevant here. This behavior is exacerbated by "Buy Now, Pay Later" platforms and digital credit, which normalize interest-bearing debt and undermine traditional Islamic financial ethics (*Fiqh al-Muamalat*).

The Nusantara Context: Visual Halal vs. Authentic Compliance

In the Nusantara region, the findings reveal a unique "visual Halal" phenomenon. Generation Z consumers often prioritize visual cues—such as an influencer's endorsement or the "clean look" of a brand—over official Halal certification (Jamaludin et al., 2025). This highlights a critical gap in digital literacy. While the growth of the Halal industry in Indonesia and Malaysia is immense, the *authenticity* of Halal communication is often sacrificed for aesthetic appeal (Jamaludin et al., 2025).

However, there is a countertrend. Some Gen Z entrepreneurs are successfully integrating Islamic values into their digital strategies. This "Islamic Marketing" model prioritizes *Sidq* (honesty), *Amanah* (trustworthiness), and *Adl* (justice). These entrepreneurs use platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp to build trust-based relationships through transparent communication about product ingredients and pricing, fulfilling consumer rights and ensuring *Halalan Tayyiban*. This suggests that social media *can* be a tool for positive spiritual outreach if used with intentional ethical guidelines.

Psychospiritual Well-being and the Hifz al-Aql Crisis

The review confirms that social media dependency is a pressing public health concern for Generation Z, with direct impacts on brain regions associated with emotional regulation and attention span (Rosnerová, Z., Ponisciaková, Kicová & Strenitzerová, 2025). The constant exposure to digital stimuli disrupts the "internal organism" (the soul), leading to a collapse of self-regulation (Yaqub, Atif, Waseem & Ehtisham, 2023).

Islamic psychospirituality offers a restoration model through *Tazkiyah al-Nafs* and *Riyadah al-Nafs*. The practice of *Dhikr* (remembrance) has been empirically studied as a mechanism for mental recovery from addiction, helping to build internal stability and meaning in life based on Islamic values. Furthermore, the application of *Wasatiyyah* encourages critical digital literacy, where Muslims are taught to evaluate the *purpose* and *consequences* of their online behavior rather than just passively scrolling (Roman, 2026). This preservation of the intellect is essential for preventing the moral disintegration that often accompanies algorithmic culture (Roman, 2026).

Recommendation

Based on the narrative review and the identified tensions between digital marketing and Islamic ethics, the following recommendations are proposed for key stakeholders.

For Educators and Institutions of Higher Learning

The digitalization of Islamic knowledge must be accompanied by the teaching of "Muslim Digital Ethics". Curricula should integrate *Maqasid al-Shariah* with digital literacy to help students recognize manipulative marketing tactics and algorithmic bias. Educators should utilize the same platforms (TikTok, Instagram) to provide "reason-why" religious education that meets Gen Z where they are, using visual storytelling to frame Islamic values as an aspirational lifestyle choice.

For Digital Marketers and Influencers

There is a need to formalize a "Shariah Framework for Digital Marketing" that goes beyond Halal labels to include behavioral ethics (Anwar et al., 2025). Marketers should prioritize *Sidq* and *Amanah* by clearly disclosing sponsorships and avoiding deceptive claims (MayaPutra & Yusrizal, 2025). Influencers, as role models with significant moral agency, should resist the glamorization of *Israf* and instead promote sustainable, ethical consumption patterns that protect the *Maqasid* of wealth and progeny (Rozza et al., 2026).

For Parents and Community Leaders

The "5C's" framework (Child's needs, Content, Calm, Crowding out, and Communication) should be adapted for the Muslim family context, incorporating spiritual practices like *Muraqabah* and *Salah* as natural "digital detox" moments. Community structures should encourage *Wasatiyyah* by fostering real-world social interactions that reduce the dependency on digital validation.

For Policymakers

Governments in the Nusantara region should encourage the development of mHealth applications that integrate Islamic psychospiritual principles (Ahmad, Hassan and Karim, 2024). These apps can offer tailored support for mental health and spiritual resilience, using technology to treat the very dependency it helps create (Ahmad et al., 2024).

Theoretical Contribution

The principal theoretical contribution of this study lies in extending the conventional Stimulus-Organism-Response framework through the integration of Islamic psychospiritual constructs. While previous SOR studies primarily focus on cognitive and emotional mechanisms, the proposed I-SOR model introduces spiritual variables including *Qalb*, *Nafs*, *Muraqabah*, and *Wasatiyyah* as explanatory mechanisms influencing digital behavior. This extension offers a culturally grounded framework for understanding social media dependency among Muslim Generation Z consumers.

Conclusion

Social media dependency among Generation Z represents one of the most significant challenges to contemporary Islamic civilization and the "Digital Ummah." While digital platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for the global Islamic economy and the dissemination of knowledge, they also harbor structural risks that exploit the psychological and spiritual vulnerabilities of the youth. The transition from private to public worship, the commodification of identity through *Riya'*, and the erosion of the intellect via algorithmic immersion are clear violations of the *Maqasid al-Shariah*. However, as this review has demonstrated, the integration of Islamic psychospiritual frameworks such as *Tazkiyah al-Nafs* and *Wasatiyyah* offers a robust pathway for restoring balance. By viewing digital behavior through the I-SOR model, we can see that the "organism"—the soul—is the critical site of intervention. In the aspect of digital marketing, the future lies in "Ethical Branding" and "Digital Stewardship." Success in the modern era must be measured not just by clicks and conversions, but by the extent to which a brand or platform contributes to the *Maslahah* (public

interest) and the spiritual well-being of the consumer. As Generation Z grows into leadership roles, fostering their digital ethical literacy and spiritual resilience will be the defining task of Islamic education and marketing ethics in the 21st century.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universiti Teknologi MARA for providing the necessary resources and support throughout the course of this research. Special appreciation is extended to reviewers who contributed valuable insights and constructive feedback, which greatly enhanced the quality of this paper.

Funding Statement: The authors receive no funding for the publication of this paper.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All authors have contributed to this work and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission to the Advanced International Journal of Business Entrepreneurship and SMEs (AIJBES).

Ethics Statement: This study did not involve any human participants, animals, or sensitive data requiring ethical approval. The authors confirm that the research was conducted in accordance with accepted academic integrity and ethical publishing standards.

Author Contribution Statement: All authors contributed significantly to the development of this manuscript. Pressca was responsible for the conceptualization, methodology, and overall supervision of the study. Jati and Yusman handled data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. Leviana and Anna contributed to the literature review, drafting, and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript prior to submission.

References

- Abdul Razak, A. H., & Tengku Kamarulbahri, T. M. S. (2024). Culturally sensitive approaches to internet addiction among adolescent and young adult: The integration of Islamic practices. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counselling (IJEPC)*, 9(55), 216–225. <http://irep.iium.edu.my/id/eprint/117496>
- Abdullah, M., Rahman, N., & Karim, S. (2025). Integrating mobile health with Islamic psychospiritual digital approaches to psychological and spiritual well-being. *ResearchGate*. Retrieved May 3, 2026, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/394870002_Integrating_Mobile_Health_with_Islamic_Psychospiritual_Digital_Approaches_to_Psychological_and_Spiritual_Well-Being
- Ahmad Syahir, A. N., Zainal Abidin, M. S., Sa'ari, C. Z., & Mukaffa, Z. (2025). Integrating mobile health with Islamic psychospiritual: Digital approaches to psychological and spiritual well-being. *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam*, 15(1), 229–258.
- Ahmad, N., Hassan, R., & Karim, S. (2024). The study of social media contribution to knowledge sharing in Maqasid Al-Shariah. *International Journal of Islamic Studies and Social Science*, 6(3), 55–68. Retrieved May 3, 2026, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/394177265_The_Study_of_Social_Media_Contribution_to_Knowledge_Sharing_in_Maqasid_Al-Shariah
- Akinwale, Y. O., & Grobler, W. C. (2026). Digital transformation and economic growth in emerging economies. *Journal of Applied Business and Economics*, 10(1), 5840–5853. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/bcp/journal/v10y2026i1p5840-5853.html>
- Ali, M., Khan, R., & Singh, P. (2025). Stimulus-organism-response mechanism in predicting continuous usage intentions toward digital travel platforms. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(4), 112–120. Retrieved May 3, 2026, from <https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/articles/stimulus-organism-response-mechanism-in-predicting-continuous-usage-intentions-toward-digital-travel-platforms/>
- Anwar, N. S. S., Saro, N., Muhiddin, N. I., & Wan Abd Rahim, W. N. S. B. W. (2025). Faith in the digital sphere: The application of Al-Wasatiyyah on social media among Muslims in Malaysia. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(9), 7652–7659.
- Author, M. N. (2025). Digital transformation in halal product marketing: A maqasid al-shariah approach. *Iqtishodia: Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah*, 10(2), 58–65. doi: 10.35897/iqtishodia.v10i2.1908.
- Briliana, V. (2025). Evolving digital consumption behavior of Generation Z Muslim consumers in the halal cosmetics market. *Journal of Digital Marketing and Halal Industry*, 7(2), 336–360. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jdmhi.2025.7.2.25537>
- Gottfried, J., & Park, E. (2025). Americans' social media use 2025. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved May 9, 2026, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2025/11/20/americans-social-media-use-2025/>
- Hidayat, R., & Sari, N. (2025). Social media influence on youth lifestyle: An Islamic perspective. *Cendekiawan: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora dan Pendidikan*, 7(1), 85–97. Retrieved May 3, 2026, from <https://zia-research.com/index.php/cendekiawan/article/download/485/362>
- Hongsuchon, T., Chen, S.-C., & Khan, A. (2025). Applying the S-O-R model to explore impulsive buying behavior driven by influencers on social commerce websites. *PeerJ Computer Science*, 11, e3113. <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj-cs.3113>

- Hossain, M. S., & Rahman, M. M. (2024). Exploring the impact of social media on youth behavior: A case study approach. *Scholar Insight Journal*, 2(1), 62–80. Retrieved May 3, 2026, from <https://scholarinsightjournal.com/index.php/sij/en/article/download/62/80/319>
- Hussain, A., Ting, D. H., Abbasi, A. Z., & Rehman, U. (2023). Integrating the S-O-R model to examine purchase intention based on Instagram sponsored advertising. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 29(1), Article 2108185.
- Ismail, R., & Rehman, A. (2024). Screen and social media addiction: An Islamic perspective on balance. *Al-Manhal Journal of Islamic Studies*, 5(2), 75–102. Retrieved May 3, 2026, from <https://www.almanhal.org.pk/ojs3303/index.php/journal/article/download/345/412>
- Jamaludin, M. A., Rosli, N. L. I., & Ibrahim, M. I. (2025). Islamic media algorithms and halal perception in Malaysia. *Journal of Halal Science and Management Research*, 1(1), 171–178.
- Maulidizen, A., Citra, Y. P. A., & Darmansyah, M. D. W. (2025). Critical analysis of Gen-Z's hedonistic consumer behavior through the lens of Islamic ethical consumption. *Jurnal Publikasi Sistem Informasi dan Manajemen Bisnis (JUPSIM)*, 4(2), 548–562. <https://doi.org/10.55606/jupsim.v4i2.5212>
- MayaPutra, M. U., & Yusrizal. (2025). Islamic marketing within the digital economy: Ethical and sustainable practices in Indonesia's cellular services sector. *Ekonimika Syariah: Journal of Economic Studies*, 9(2), 1–20.
- Neging, P., Ali, J. K., Nasirun, N., & Yacob, Y. (2025). A conceptual framework for determining social media dependency (SMD) among Gen Zers. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(1), 4138–4147. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.9010322>
- Opena, A. (2026). 65+ Gen Z social media usage statistics [2026] that can't ignore. *Cropink*. <https://cropink.com/gen-z-social-media-usage-statistics>
- Patel, D. G., Kshatri, A. H. S., Kommuru, S., & Javvaji, C. K. (2025). A narrative review of digital addiction and health: A new challenge for modern medicine. *Cureus*, 17(12), e100491.
- Putri, R. A., & Prasetyo, H. (2025). The influence of social media on consumer protection law in Indonesia. *Res Judicata: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 9(1), 45–60. Retrieved May 3, 2026, from <https://jurnal.unissula.ac.id/index.php/rlj/article/viewFile/49483/14371>
- Putri, Y. C., & Sjabadhyni, B. (2025). The impact of halal certification and halal awareness on consumer intentions to purchase skincare products online. *Islamic Perspective on Communication and Psychology*, 2(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.61511/ipercop.v2i1.2025.1375>
- Rahman, A., Khan, S., & Lim, J. (2025). Social media trends and FoMO among Gen Z: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Digital Media Studies*, 8(2), 45–67. Retrieved May 3, 2026, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/396124820_Social_Media_Trends_and_FoMO_Among_Gen_Z_A_Systematic_Literature_Review
- Rahman, F., & Sari, D. (2025). The role of social media marketing and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on purchase intention among Generation Z. *Golden Ratio of Marketing and Applied Psychology of Business*, 6(1), 1–13.
- Riyadi, A., Surur, A. T., & Nasarruddin, R. B. (2026). Contemporary da'wah strategies to promote halal awareness among Generation Z in Indonesia. *Jurnal Halal Center*, 1(1), 72–87. <https://doi.org/10.28918/jhc.v1i1.14243>

- Roman, D. (2026, January 5). How Gen Z is using social media. *WeAreBrain Blog*. Retrieve May 3, 2026, from <https://wearebrain.com/blog/how-gen-z-is-using-social-media/>
- Rosnerová, Z., Ponisciaková, O., Kicová, E., & Strenitzerová, M. (2025). The impact of the digital world on the buying behaviour of Generation Z. *Administrative Sciences*, 15(12), 459.
- Rozza, S., Efriyanto, E., Kusumawardhani, A. D., & Busono, L. A. S. (2026). Comparing factors affecting Indonesian and Malaysian Muslim Gen Z's intention to purchase halal cosmetics. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 16(3), 225–232. <https://doi.org/10.32479/irmm.22979>
- Sari, N., & Hidayat, A. (2026). The influence of TikTok and fear of missing out (FoMO) on purchase intention of skincare products among Generation Z. *Golden Ratio of Marketing and Applied Psychology of Business*, 6(1), 5840–5853.
- Siregar, A., & Putri, D. (2025). Stimulus–organism–response framework in analyzing digital consumer behavior. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 6(2), 155–168. Retrieved May 3, 2026, from <https://ejournal.seaninstitute.or.id/index.php/JMS/article/download/5820/4591/16370>
- Yaqub, R. M. S., Atif, M. A., Waseem, F., & Ehtisham. (2023). Unveiling the dynamics: Exploring the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) model in the context of social media influencer marketing, electronic word of mouth, and purchase decisions, with a focus on the mediating role of brand awareness. *Bulletin of Business and Economics*, 12(2), 427–438. <https://doi.org/10.61506/01.00048>