

Reclaiming Inner Balance: Islamic Spiritual Coping and Mental Health among Generation Z in the Digital Era

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Abstract. Digital mental health has become one of the most urgent concerns for Generation Z in today's society. Although studies on online stress and digital well-being continue to expand, few have explored how Islamic spiritual psychology can address the moral disorientation and identity confusion that young people experience in a highly connected digital world. The World Health Organization (2023) reports that one in seven adolescents worldwide faces mental-health challenges. In Indonesia, data from the Ministry of Health (2023) show that emotional and behavioral disorders rose from six percent in 2013 to nearly ten percent in 2023, affecting about twenty million people. A national survey by Jakpat (2024) found that six of ten Indonesian Gen Z youth often experience mood changes and that more than half struggle with sleep problems caused by digital pressure. These realities reflect what Émile Durkheim described as anomie, a state of moral disconnection and loss of meaning that increasingly characterizes the digital culture. This study constructs an integrative framework linking Durkheim's sociological theory of anomie with the Islamic psychological concept of tazkiyat al-nafs or spiritual purification. Using conceptual library research and theoretical synthesis, it identifies three interrelated dimensions: moral awareness, emotional regulation, and spiritual resilience. The framework offers practical insights for educators, counselors, and Islamic learning institutions to strengthen digital ethics, spiritual intelligence, and emotional stability among youth, providing a faith-based perspective on contemporary mental-health challenges. This conceptual synthesis contributes to the development of an Islamic psychological framework that bridges moral theory and contemporary digital well-being studies.

Keywords: *Islamic Spiritual Coping; Mental Health; Generation Z; Tazkiyat al-Nafs; Spiritual Resilience.*

1. Introduction

In the last five years, digital technology has radically reshaped the ways young people interact, learn, and define themselves. Generation Z, who have grown up in a

borderless digital ecosystem, face psychological pressures far more complex than those experienced by previous generations. On one hand, digital life opens vast opportunities for creativity and self-expression; on the other, it presents serious challenges to mental and spiritual balance. Research by Sao et al. found that excessive use of social media significantly increases stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms among adolescents, while Verma and Chatterji showed that “digital detox” contributes meaningfully to psychological well-being by reducing cognitive overload (Sao & al., 2024). These findings confirm that *digital overload* has become one of the key drivers of mental-health disturbance among young people, including in Indonesia, as reflected in national data from the Ministry of Health and the Jakpat survey, both indicating a rise in emotional distress among youth caused by digital pressure (Indonesia, 2023).

This phenomenon can be understood through Émile Durkheim’s classical sociological framework in *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, where he describes *anomie* as a state of moral disorientation that arises when social norms lose their regulating power (Durkheim, 1897). In digital culture, *anomie* manifests as superficial meaning-seeking, dependence on algorithmic validation, and weakened social solidarity. A study by Mulawarman et al. shows that the transformation of digital communication among Generation Z has changed the way individuals engage in inner dialogue, shaping patterns of *self-talk* that influence counseling and interpersonal relationships (Mulawarman & al., 2025). Similarly, Suandi et al. note that the ever-expanding culture of digital mobility has created new psychological strains that remain only partially understood by contemporary society (Suandi et al., 2024). In this sense, the mental crisis faced by Generation Z can be seen as a symptom of *digital anomie*—a loss of moral direction and meaning amid endless connectivity.

Recent research in psychology and spirituality highlights the essential role of religiosity and spiritual coping in sustaining mental health. Graça and Brandão demonstrate that religious and spiritual coping positively correlates with emotional regulation, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being among university students (Graça & Brandão, 2024). Likewise, Maral et al. find that positive spiritual experiences in childhood and psychological flexibility foster *meaning-based coping* among emerging adults. (Maral et al., 2024). Within the Muslim context, Soraya and Puspitasari show that Islamic coping strategies significantly help Generation Z university students navigate quarter-life crises (Soraya & Puspitasari, 2025). These studies reveal that spirituality is not merely a moral dimension but also a source of psychological strength that nurtures resilience and adaptability in the midst of modern digital stress.

Despite this growing body of research, much of the current scholarship remains fragmented. Rothman et al. emphasize the need to reconstruct character-development models from classical Muslim scholarship to make them relevant for contemporary mental-health contexts (Rothman et al., 2024). At the same time, Wang et al. caution that irrational or rigid forms of religiosity can lead to psychosocial distortion when not grounded in sound spiritual understanding (Wang & al., 2024). Together, these studies reveal a persistent epistemological gap: while modern social theory effectively diagnoses

the symptoms of digital moral disorder, it offers no spiritual cure; meanwhile, Islamic psychology provides a framework for inner purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*), yet it has rarely been contextualized within the dynamics of digital culture.

The rationale for this study lies in bridging these two intellectual streams—Durkheim's *anomie* as a diagnosis of social pathology, and the Islamic concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* as a framework for spiritual therapy. In *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, al-Ghazālī argues that inner balance can only be achieved through purification of the heart, constant remembrance of God, self-reflection, and disciplined control of desire (Al-Ghazālī, 1983a). Meanwhile, Malik B. Badri, in *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, advocates for integrating revelation with scientific inquiry to develop a holistic understanding of the human being and to heal the moral crisis produced by secularized knowledge (Badri, 1979). Synthesizing these two perspectives, this study proposes the Reclaiming Inner Balance Framework, an attempt to restore Generation Z's inner harmony by combining social diagnosis with spiritual renewal.

This framework rests on three interrelated pillars: moral awareness, emotional regulation, and spiritual resilience. The first draws on Durkheim's notion of shared moral norms as the foundation of social equilibrium (Durkheim, 1897). The second is grounded in al-Ghazālī's emphasis on disciplining the *nafs* through *dhikr* and self-examination to achieve emotional stability (Al-Ghazālī, 1983a). The third is inspired by Badri's idea that mental health depends on reconnecting the spiritual self with divine revelation (Badri, 1979). Therefore, any effort to resolve the mental-health crisis of the digital generation must go beyond behavioral interventions and involve a reconstruction of moral and spiritual values that harmonize external connectivity with internal consciousness.

Based on this foundation, the study aims to (1) analyze manifestations of anomie in Generation Z's digital behavior, (2) examine the relevance of *tazkiyat al-nafs* as a form of spiritual coping in the digital era, and (3) formulate an integrative model combining Durkheim's social theory with Islamic psychology as a conceptual framework for mental balance in modern life. The central question guiding this inquiry is: How can the integration of Émile Durkheim's theory of anomie and the Islamic concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* explain and offer a spiritually grounded coping framework for Generation Z as they face moral disorientation and mental-health pressures in the digital era? Through this approach, the study not only enriches modern Islamic psychological theory but also provides practical insights for educators, counselors, and religious institutions to foster digital ethics, spiritual awareness, and emotional resilience among young Muslims.

2. Method

The research method used in this study is library research. This method was chosen because the study does not focus on collecting empirical field data but rather on reviewing, analyzing, and interpreting relevant literature sources. The library research approach enables the researcher to examine phenomena in depth through secondary data and to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic spiritual values can be integrated into the study of digital mental health. In addition, this approach allows for

conceptual verification of theories and facilitates replication by other researchers (Larry L Richardson, 2019).

The primary sources in this study serve as the grand theoretical foundation, consisting of three classical works that function as the integrative theoretical anchors. The first is Émile Durkheim's *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, which explains the concept of anomie as moral disorientation resulting from weakened social norms (Durkheim, 1897). The second is al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, which emphasizes tazkiyat al-nafs—the purification of the self through reflection, remembrance of God, and self-discipline—as a path to inner balance (Al-Ghazālī, 1983a). The third is Malik B. Badri's *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, which highlights the need to integrate revelation with scientific methods to understand and address the psychological crises of modern humanity (Badri, 1979).

The secondary sources include previous research and studies related to digital mental health, religiosity, and spiritual coping among Generation Z. These articles were collected from reputable academic databases covering publications from 2020 to 2025. The inclusion criteria required: (a) relevance to the topic of digital mental health, (b) discussion of spiritual or faith-based coping strategies, and (c) transparent and replicable methodology.

The analytical techniques used in this study were content analysis and theoretical synthesis. Content analysis was applied to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and relationships among key concepts in the reviewed literature, while theoretical synthesis was employed to integrate those conceptual findings into a coherent theoretical framework. The analytical process followed four main stages: (1) data inventory, collecting both primary and secondary literature sources; (2) thematic classification, grouping the findings into key categories such as moral awareness, emotional regulation, and spiritual resilience; (3) analysis and interpretation, exploring interconnections among these concepts using an interpretive qualitative approach; and (4) theoretical synthesis, merging Durkheim's concept of anomie with al-Ghazālī's tazkiyat al-nafs and Badri's integrative epistemology to produce the conceptual model *Reclaiming Inner Balance Framework*, which highlights moral, emotional, and spiritual equilibrium for Generation Z in the digital age (Johnny Saldaña, 2021).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Thematic Findings on Digital Mental Health and Spiritual Coping among Generation Z

The classical ideas of Émile Durkheim, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, and Malik B. Badri provide an essential foundation for understanding the psychological phenomena of the digital generation. Durkheim, in *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, describes anomie as a state of moral disorientation caused by the weakening of social bonds, leading to inner tension and a loss of direction in life (Durkheim, 1897). Al-Ghazālī, in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, emphasizes that a soul not refined through tazkiyat al-nafs (spiritual purification) becomes dominated by nafs ammārah—the lower self that drives impulsivity and emotional

instability (Al-Ghazālī, 1983b). Meanwhile, Badri, in *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, calls for integrating divine revelation with empirical science to restore the harmony between intellect and spirituality in modern psychology (Badri, 1979). Collectively, these classical perspectives form the theoretical basis for analyzing digital mental health and spiritual coping among Generation Z.

A content analysis of contemporary literature reveals four major challenges faced by Generation Z in the digital environment: digital stress, moral disorientation (anomie), emotional instability, and loss of spiritual meaning. These themes demonstrate how digital spaces shape psychological structures, often amplifying Durkheim's anomie through moral fragmentation and reinforcing Al-Ghazālī's concept of spiritual imbalance resulting from the dominance of the nafs. Digital stress arises from hyperconnectivity and excessive exposure to information. Studies show that the unending stream of digital stimuli causes fatigue, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion among young people (Syarifah et al., 2025). The constant demand for productivity and social validation mirrors Durkheim's concept of social deregulation, in which an individual's sense of worth becomes detached from stable norms and community bonds (Sulistiono, 2025). In this sense, digital stress is not merely a technological side effect but a moral and existential disruption.

Moral disorientation manifests as the erosion of ethical clarity in online interactions. Generation Z often oscillates between authenticity and performativity, constructing identities dependent on digital approval and algorithmic visibility (Song et al., 2024). This ethical fragmentation aligns with Durkheim's notion of anomie and Al-Ghazālī's view of the unrestrained nafs both illustrating the weakening of moral consciousness. Islamic spiritual coping, grounded in muhasabah (self-reflection) and dhikr (remembrance of God), functions as a mechanism of restoration to reestablish internal order and divine orientation (Yamada & al., 2020).

Emotional instability constitutes another critical theme. The immediacy of digital feedback loops fosters anxiety, envy, and loneliness, undermining emotional regulation (Wong & al., 2025). Empirical evidence indicates that many young adults experience increased mood fluctuations linked to excessive online engagement (Daffa & al., 2024). Al-Ghazālī's spiritual psychology offers a meaningful interpretive lens: emotional turmoil arises when the heart is clouded by attachment to worldly distractions. Restoring equilibrium, therefore, requires muraqabah (spiritual mindfulness) and dhikr to redirect emotions toward transcendence. Badri extends this idea, asserting that therapy devoid of spirituality fails to reach the root of human distress (Badri, 1979).

Finally, the loss of spiritual meaning represents the deepest layer of the digital mental health crisis. The dominance of digital culture has displaced sacred sources of meaning, leaving individuals to construct identity and purpose through virtual engagement (Park & al., 2023). Research demonstrates that integrating spirituality—through faith-based self-care applications or religious counseling—can enhance resilience and emotional stability among Generation Z. This finding affirms Badri's argument that psychology must remain grounded in revelation and divine connection.

Synthesizing these findings reveals a triadic structure of imbalance and recovery: moral imbalance as defined by Durkheim's anomie, emotional imbalance as interpreted through Al-Ghazālī's concept of the undisciplined soul, and spiritual imbalance as highlighted by Badri's critique of secular fragmentation. The convergence of classical Islamic thought and modern psychology emphasizes that genuine recovery in the digital age requires more than behavioral adjustment, it demands spiritual realignment. The following section elaborates on this synthesis through the Reclaiming Inner Balance Framework.

3.2 Reinterpreting Durkheim's Anomie in the Digital Era

Durkheim's classical concept of anomie, a breakdown of moral regulation and social cohesion, finds renewed relevance in the digital era, where hyperconnectivity reshapes norms and identity formation. Rapid shifts in digital communication and algorithmic mediation generate plural moral frameworks, undermining collective conscience and fostering disorientation (Durkheim, 1897). Yan and Peng extend Durkheim's moral sociology into the digital context, framing "ethical anomie" as a collapse of normative boundaries driven by information excess and algorithmic pluralism (Yan & Peng, 2025). In parallel, Nurfa'is and Guan demonstrate how digital culture dilutes communal values through linguistic deregulation and fragmented moral standards (Guan, 2025). Etzrodt further situates digital anomie within the continuum of Weberian disenchantment, suggesting that the erosion of meaning under technological rationality mirrors Durkheim's anomic condition (Etzrodt, 2024).

Studies between 2020 and 2025 increasingly reveal that anomie in digital society manifests not only as moral disorientation but also as psychological and relational detachment. Büchi introduces the concept of "digital well-being," arguing that digital hyper-engagement often correlates with loneliness and self-alienation, particularly among Generation Z (Büchi, 2021). Yan and Peng and Yu find that moral confusion online stems from the disintegration of traditional moral references amid pervasive digital media integration (Yu, 2022). Similarly, Guan describes "cyber anomie language" as a sociolinguistic phenomenon wherein fragmented discourse and reactive communication produce identity instability and weaken moral consensus. These findings highlight that moral disarray and emotional isolation reinforce each other in shaping digital anomie.

The weakening of social bonds within virtual spaces aligns with Durkheim's theory of declining solidarity. Walima and Rosdawiyah document how social media disrupts traditional communal structures in rural Indonesia, shifting solidarity patterns into algorithmic echo chambers detached from shared ethical foundations (Walima & Rosdawiyah, 2022). Watts and Gu complement this view by suggesting that while digital environments can reconstruct new solidarities through online collaboration, they often fail to provide enduring moral cohesion (Gu, 2025). This echoes Durkheim's concern that modernity's moral individualism, without renewed collective norms, leads to alienation and normlessness.

Emerging data also confirm the growing phenomenon of digital loneliness and moral confusion. Shinde and R link misinformation and fake news consumption to

weakened moral reasoning, while Büchi emphasizes that the illusion of constant connection masks deep social fragmentation (Shinde & R., 2023). Nurfa'is extends this by showing how digital spaces foster performative sociality that lacks genuine moral accountability (Nurfa'is, 2025). Together, these studies illustrate how Durkheim's anomie has evolved: from the moral disintegration of industrial societies to the algorithmic alienation of digital ones.

In reinterpreting Durkheim for Generation Z, digital anomie emerges as both a sociological and psychological crisis. It signifies the erosion of institutional moral authority, family, religion, and education, replaced by fluid digital norms. Yan and Peng argue that online moral pluralism produces identity confusion (Yan & Peng, 2025). Guan highlights how fragmented communication further destabilizes shared values (Guan, 2025). Etzrodt situates this in a larger trajectory of rationalized disenchantment (Etzrodt, 2024). Addressing this requires integrating Durkheimian insights with digital ethics, emphasizing literacy, empathy, and shared moral regulation. Büchi calls for strengthening digital literacy and emotional regulation to promote healthier online interactions (Büchi, 2021). Shinde and R propose community-centered ethics to counter moral atomization (Shinde & R., 2023).

Thus, Durkheim's notion of anomie, the moral void born from social transition, illuminates the paradox of digital modernity: societies more connected than ever, yet increasingly fragmented in meaning. By synthesizing insights from sociology, communication studies, and digital ethics, this reinterpretation underscores that restoring digital solidarity requires not more connectivity, but deeper moral coherence.

3.3 Al-Ghazālī's Concept of Tazkiyat al-Nafs as a Path to Emotional and Moral Balance

Al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* frames tazkiyat al-nafs the purification of the soul as a process of moral refinement, emotional regulation, and spiritual equilibrium (Al-Ghazālī, 1983b). Through the sequential framework of takhalli (purging vices), tahalli (adopting virtues), and tajalli (experiencing divine illumination), Al-Ghazālī provides a structured pathway toward inner purification that integrates intellect ('aql), emotion (qalb), and desire (nafs) (Aisy et al., 2025). Contemporary scholarship reaffirms that tazkiyah fosters emotional awareness, empathy, and cognitive control, enabling believers to manage affective impulses while nurturing moral (Ibrahim et al., 2022). These insights show that tazkiyat al-nafs functions not merely as a mystical doctrine but as a comprehensive framework for self-regulation and moral development applicable to the digital age.

Muḥāsabah (self-accountability) serves as the central practice in tazkiyah, allowing individuals to reflect critically on intentions, behavior, and their spiritual progress (Farida & Kasdi, 2021). This reflective habit parallels modern therapeutic approaches in emotional self-monitoring and metacognitive awareness. Studies such as Sukisno et al and Asri et al. demonstrate that self-reflective and faith-centered interventions effectively strengthen emotional balance and family harmony amid digital stress (Asri & al., 2024). Meanwhile, dhikrullah (the remembrance of God) functions as a meditative and attentional exercise that redirects focus from worldly distractions to transcendental calm, reducing anxiety

and cognitive overload (Sukisno & al., 2024). Within Iḥyā, Al-Ghazālī presents dhikr not only as devotional remembrance but as a form of inner mindfulness an idea reinforced by modern Islamic psychology linking remembrance with decreased emotional reactivity and improved well-being.

The discipline of controlling the nafs anchors tazkiyah as a moral and emotional safeguard against the excesses of ego driven behavior (Luthfi & Purnama, 2022). In educational and familial contexts, this translates into cultivating self-discipline, patience, and moral restraint through structured spiritual routines. Farida and Kasdi emphasize the pedagogical relevance of Iḥyā' in pesantren education for nurturing ethical maturity and spiritual stability, while Luthfi and Purnama argue that Al-Ghazālī's educational philosophy remains critical for teachers' emotional competence and moral leadership (Saragih & Purba, 2024). These contemporary applications echo the ethical dimension of tazkiyat al-nafs, where character development harmonizes the cognitive, affective, and spiritual domains.

In the digital era, tazkiyah offers a vital paradigm for coping with informational overload, social media addiction, and moral relativism (Sawari et al., 2022). Sukisno et al. propose value-based parenting grounded in Iḥyā' principles as a response to digital era emotional volatility, while Sawari et al. highlight that integrating Iḥyā'-based ethics into Islamic curriculum development enhances students' moral literacy in the context of Society 5.0.¹⁰ Similarly, Saragih and Purba show how Qur'anic educational values strengthen religious character formation mirroring Al-Ghazālī's intent to unify knowledge, ethics, and spirituality. Thus, tazkiyat al-nafs becomes a dynamic coping system for cultivating emotional intelligence, spiritual resilience, and moral clarity in hyperconnected societies.

Ultimately, the tazkiyah paradigm connects classical Islamic spirituality with empirical evidence on emotional regulation and resilience. The synergy of muḥāsabah, dhikrullah, and nafs regulation equips individuals to navigate contemporary challenges with mindfulness, compassion, and ethical consciousness realizing Al-Ghazālī's vision of the balanced self (*al-insān al-kāmil*). This synthesis underscores that the purification of the soul is both a psychological necessity and a spiritual journey toward equilibrium in the digital age.

3.4 Malik B. Badri's Integrative Model of Islamic Psychology

Malik B. Badri's Integrative Model of Islamic Psychology (IMIP) represents a paradigmatic synthesis that reconciles divine revelation (wahy) with empirical inquiry. Rooted in his seminal work *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, Badri argued that Western secular psychology, detached from spiritual foundations, fails to address the metaphysical nature of the human soul (nafs). His model insists that revelation and empirical science are not dichotomous but complementary epistemic sources. Revelation provides ontological truths about the soul and its purpose, while empirical methods refine the practical understanding of these truths within clinical and behavioral contexts. This approach repositions psychology as both a moral and scientific discipline aimed at tazkiyat al-nafs (purification of the soul) and holistic well-being (Badri, 1979). Badri's

perspective aligns with contemporary Islamic psychology scholars who advocate integrating spiritual interventions into therapeutic frameworks, emphasizing that Islamic psychology must operate within its own epistemological paradigm rather than as an appendage of Western models (Elzamzamy et al., 2024).

In this framework, the IMIP draws on Qur'anic anthropology and classical scholars such as al-Ghazālī, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Rāzī to construct a spiritually coherent model of human behavior. Badri views empirical science as a tool for uncovering observable aspects of the human psyche, while revelation explains its transcendental dimensions. His integrative stance anticipates the growing recognition of spiritually based interventions within clinical settings, such as those articulated by Latif, Dockrat-Boda, and Rassool, who present practical strategies for embedding Islamic ethics and spiritual exercises in therapy (Latif et al., 2024). In the same vein, Toprak argues that the study of *ilm al-nafs* (science of the self) among Muslim scholars demonstrates a psycho-ontological continuity between scriptural teachings and experiential data, a notion that validates Badri's insistence on unity between reason and revelation in addressing psychological disorders (Toprak, 2024).

Badri's IMIP provides the theoretical basis for reconciling Durkheim's sociological understanding of moral order with al-Ghazālī's concept of inner purification. Durkheim regarded religion as a cohesive force maintaining moral solidarity within society, whereas al-Ghazālī perceived spirituality as the internalization of divine ethics guiding one's conduct. Badri bridges these views by asserting that true social integration arises when moral laws reflect divine order (Wahid & al., 2025). The moral disintegration or anomie that Durkheim described as the collapse of collective norms finds its spiritual remedy in al-Ghazālī's concept of *tazkiyah*, where the purification of the soul restores equilibrium between individual and society. This spiritual sociology reframes Durkheimian thought within a theocentric paradigm, where divine revelation offers the ultimate axis of social cohesion. Baykal supports this Durkheimian-spiritual synthesis by demonstrating that religious consciousness, when interpreted as a collective moral energy, aligns with Islamic notions of communal responsibility (*fard kifāyah*) (Baykal, 2021).

IMIP also responds to the existential and epistemological dilemmas confronting modern Muslim psychologists. By acknowledging both empirical validity and spiritual authenticity, Badri prevents the fragmentation of the Muslim psyche between faith and science. Elzamzamy, Bader, and Bircan argue that contemporary Islamic psychology must evolve through systematic engagement with classical sources while subjecting them to modern empirical scrutiny, precisely the dialectic that IMIP advances (Elzamzamy et al., 2024). Similarly, Faizal et al. found that Islamic-based counseling grounded in self-efficacy theory can foster resilience within Muslim communities when infused with *tazkiyah*-oriented practices, further attesting to IMIP's practical relevance.⁸

Ultimately, Malik B. Badri's integrative approach establishes a model of psychological *tawhīd* (unity) in which spiritual illumination and empirical observation coexist as dual modes of knowing the self. His contribution transcends disciplinary boundaries, demonstrating that the essence of psychological health in Islam lies in aligning scientific inquiry with divine guidance. The IMIP thus stands as a philosophical and

methodological bridge between Durkheim's social theory and al-Ghazālī's mysticism, reclaiming the unity of knowledge that modernity has long divided.

3.5 Theoretical Synthesis: The Reclaiming Inner Balance Framework

The Reclaiming Inner Balance Framework synthesizes classical and contemporary perspectives on moral, emotional, and spiritual equilibrium through a triadic integration of Émile Durkheim's moral sociology, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's spiritual psychology, and Malik B. Badri's integrative Islamic psychology. This synthesis recognizes that the psychological well-being of Generation Z, shaped by the digital age's disorienting moral climate, requires a multidimensional approach that reclaims harmony between external social norms and internal spiritual alignment. The framework proposes three interrelated pillars: Moral Balance, Emotional Balance, and Spiritual Balance that together restore the coherence of the human self (*nafs*), anchoring empirical mental health practices in transcendental moral purpose (Durkheim, 1897). Contemporary discussions on Islamic psychology and digital well-being further support this integrative approach, emphasizing how moral and spiritual frameworks can enhance youth mental health (Elzamzamy et al., 2024). The framework further draws upon Malik B. Badri's integrative Islamic psychology to link empirical mental health practices with transcendental moral purpose (Badri, 1979).

3.6 Moral Balance: Reconstruction of Values and Life Direction

Drawing from Durkheim's concept of *anomie*, the first pillar addresses moral disorientation by re-establishing the collective conscience that binds individuals to shared values. Durkheim emphasized that moral regulation is foundational to social integration and personal purpose, and that its collapse produces existential emptiness (Durkheim, 1897). Durkheim's further work emphasizes that moral cohesion is indispensable for collective stability, reinforcing its ethical significance in social life (Atari & al., 2023). In the contemporary context, studies in moral psychology reinforce this claim, showing that moral foundations—care, fairness, loyalty, authority, and sanctity—are evolutionarily stable mechanisms for sustaining moral cohesion (Avataneo et al., 2025). Thus, the framework positions moral reconstruction as a process of realigning individual conduct with divine and communal ethics, ensuring social stability and moral clarity in the digital era.

3.7 Emotional Balance: Regulation and Introspection

Inspired by al-Ghazālī's theory of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), the second pillar centers on emotional regulation through self-introspection (*muhāsabah*) and moderation (*i'tidāl*). Al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* outlines that emotional turbulence arises when the *qalb* (heart) is clouded by excessive desires and distractions, and that its purification restores rational and spiritual harmony (Al-Ghazālī, 1983a). Al-Ghazālī's emphasis on balance between intellect and desire further deepens this view (Badri, 1979). Contemporary research supports this view: Yu, Zhao, and Zhu (2025) found that resilience mediates the recovery from academic stress through adaptive emotional regulation, while Mujawar et al. (2024) emphasize resilience and mindfulness as protective factors in clinical

therapy. By integrating these findings, the Emotional Balance pillar aligns classical Sufi introspection with empirical models of resilience, proposing that stable emotion emerges from both spiritual reflection and evidence-based regulation practices.

3.8 Spiritual Balance: Connection with God through Dhikr and Worship

Building on Badri's Integrative Model of Islamic Psychology, the third pillar envisions spiritual balance as the unifying axis that sustains moral and emotional health. Badri argues that spiritual disconnection is the root of psychological fragmentation, and that healing requires realignment of the self with divine presence through dhikr (remembrance of God) and consistent worship (Badri, 1979). Modern empirical literature echoes this position. Miller-Karas expands this notion by linking trauma recovery to the restoration of spiritual meaning (Miller-Karas, 2023). Thus, the Spiritual Balance pillar translates Badri's vision of psychological *tawhīd* (unity) into a therapeutic model that integrates spirituality as both preventive and restorative in addressing digital-era distress.

3.9 Integration of Moral, Emotional, and Spiritual Dimensions in the Reclaiming Inner Balance Framework

The Reclaiming Inner Balance Framework offers a living synthesis that bridges modern sociological insight and classical Islamic psychology to understand how mental and spiritual equilibrium can be restored within the digital generation. It envisions moral, emotional, and spiritual life not as separate compartments but as parts of one breathing ecosystem, each influencing and sustaining the other. Through this integration, mental health is seen as both a psychological and moral task: to live ethically, feel deeply, and stay connected to what is sacred (Durkheim, 1897).

Moral reconstruction draws upon Émile Durkheim's idea of *anomie*, a state of moral confusion that emerges when collective values lose their binding power (Durkheim, 1897). In today's digital culture, *anomie* takes on new forms: ethical relativism, performative identity, and the quiet loneliness of constant connection. Rebuilding moral order, then, is not about nostalgia for old norms but about reawakening shared moral consciousness that links individual freedom to communal and divine purpose. This is where digital ethics must begin: from the recovery of moral clarity in a space designed to blur it.

The second dimension, emotional introspection, resonates deeply with Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, the purification of the soul (Al-Ghazālī, 1983b). Through the disciplines of *muḥāsabah* (self-reflection) and *dhikr* (the remembrance of God), a person learns to pause, regulate emotion, and center the heart. These practices are not escapist rituals but methods of regaining balance when overstimulation and algorithmic validation distort our inner compass. In this sense, *tazkiyah* becomes a quiet act of resistance, a way to reclaim patience, humility, and peace amid the noise of digital life.

Spiritual balance, in turn, finds its philosophical ground in Malik B. Badri's Integrative Model of Islamic Psychology (Badri, 1979). Badri warns that modern psychology, when divorced from revelation, reduces human experience to mechanistic

processes (Badri, 1979). His vision re-centers psychology around theocentric truth: healing begins where faith and reason meet. To realign the self (*tawḥīd al-naḥs*) is not merely to cure distress but to restore coherence between mind, emotion, and transcendence. Spiritual connection, in this light, is not an accessory to therapy, it is its deepest foundation.

Taken together, these three dimensions form a cycle of restoration. Moral awareness provides ethical direction, emotional reflection cultivates inner steadiness, and spiritual connection infuses both with meaning. They do not function sequentially but flow into one another, much like breath. In the lived reality of Generation Z, where moral disorientation and digital exhaustion often coexist, this framework offers not a formula but a path, a movement back toward wholeness.

Ultimately, the Reclaiming Inner Balance Framework reminds us that well-being is not only a clinical condition but a moral and spiritual posture toward life. True resilience cannot grow in isolation from ethics or faith. It arises when one's moral compass, emotional life, and spiritual consciousness are woven together into an integrated rhythm of being, a rhythm that allows the self to stand firm, aware, and at peace in the digital storm.

3.10 Implications for Islamic Education, Counseling, and Digital Ethics

The intersection of Islamic education and digital ethics is increasingly vital in shaping the moral and emotional well-being of Generation Z. Integrating classical Islamic psychology with contemporary digital literacy provides educators and counselors with a framework to address identity crises, moral disorientation, and emotional instability among adolescents. As Dhulfiqaar argues, an integrative approach that combines *tazkiyat al-naḥs* (spiritual purification) with digital literacy fosters a holistic sense of well-being, aligning moral cognition with digital ethics (Dhulfiqaar, 2025). Similarly, Ahmad highlights that embedding *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* into digital competency frameworks can enhance responsible online behavior and strengthen faith-based decision-making among Muslim youth (Ahmad, 2025). This synthesis extends classical Islamic moral theory, rooted in Durkheimian social cohesion and al-Ghazālī's introspective spirituality, into the digital sphere, redefining well-being as both a moral and technological responsibility.

Islamic teachers and counselors play a pivotal role as transformative agents in cultivating ethical digital behavior and emotional intelligence. Alimni, Amin, and Kurniawan emphasize that teachers who integrate spiritual and emotional instruction promote students' self-regulation and resilience (Alimni et al., 2022). Mulawarman et al. found that Muslim counselors implementing online faith-based counseling sessions were able to enhance adolescents' self-awareness and emotional balance (Mulawarman & al., 2023). Such practices operationalize *tazkiyah*-oriented counseling, wherein guidance draws upon Qur'anic ethics and empirical psychology to mitigate stress, anxiety, and digital addiction. In this context, educational institutions must foster a culture of digital *amanah* (trustworthiness), nurturing not only cognitive competence but also spiritual maturity (Badri, 1979). Badri's integrative psychology reinforces this model by connecting faith with evidence-based mental health practices.

The institutional role of Islamic education extends beyond curriculum design to cultivating a spiritually safe digital ecosystem. Abed Khasawneh and Khasawneh demonstrate that using digital storytelling grounded in Islamic values can foster moral reasoning and empathy, while encouraging critical engagement with technology (Khasawneh & Khasawneh, 2024). Likewise, Rifai et al. propose an ethical framework for artificial intelligence in Islamic education that synthesizes Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah with national digital regulations, ensuring that technological development remains ethically grounded (Rifai & al., 2025). These findings underscore the importance of institutional collaboration between educators, families, and communities to create a digitally conscious ummah, one that harmonizes technical literacy with the moral purpose of khilāfah (stewardship).

Within counseling and character development, the integration of spiritual intelligence (al-dhākā' al-rūḥī) and emotional literacy becomes crucial. Siregar et al. reveal that Islamic ethical governance in online environments mitigates narcissistic tendencies and promotes humility and moral restraint (Siregar & al., 2025). Similarly, Sholehuddin et al. found that integrating spiritual education within family and community systems helps strengthen emotional stability in the digital era. Together, these insights reinforce the role of Islamic counseling as both preventive and restorative, bridging faith and psychology to restore emotional stability amidst digital overstimulation (Sholehuddin, M., Mucharomah, M., Atqia, W., & Aini, 2023).

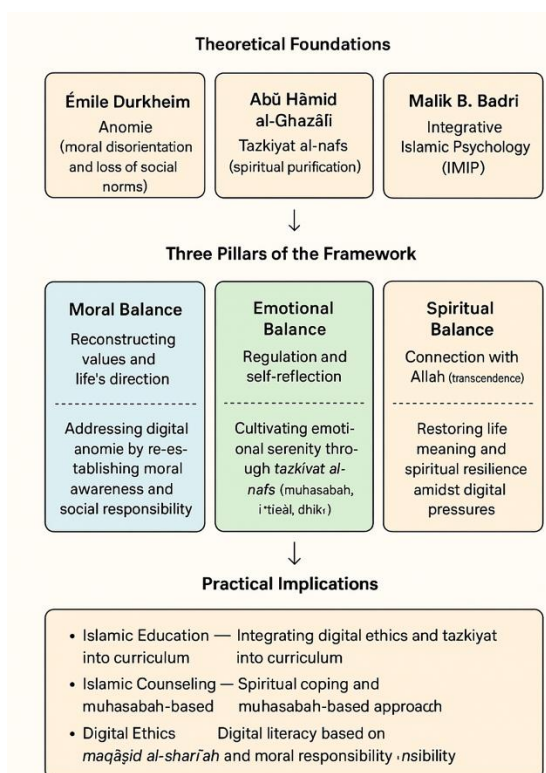


Figure 1. Reclaiming Inner Balance Framework

This research contributes to the ongoing development of Islamic psychological frameworks capable of bridging classical moral theory with digital well-being studies. By uniting Durkheim's social ethics, al-Ghazālī's self-purification, and Badri's integrative psychology, the findings propose an epistemological model where moral, emotional, and spiritual intelligences coalesce to shape ethical digital citizenship. The implications reach educational policy and practice, urging Islamic institutions to include faith-based digital ethics and emotional regulation modules in teacher training and counseling curricula. The model encourages mu'āmalah (ethical conduct) that is both technologically informed and spiritually anchored, positioning digital literacy as a form of ibādah (worship) that maintains the balance between intellect, emotion, and faith (Badri, 1979). Durkheim's sociological ethics further illuminate how moral education can strengthen community resilience in digital contexts (Durkheim, 1897).

Future directions should explore the longitudinal effects of Islamic-based digital ethics education on adolescents' resilience, identity formation, and moral reasoning. As Sati et al. note, the digital transformation of Islamic knowledge demands adaptive ethics to preserve authenticity while embracing innovation (Sati & al., 2025). Similarly, Mulawarman et al. suggest that counselor training must integrate digital ethics and Islamic spiritual psychology to effectively address online mental health issues. Such expansion will enable Islamic education to serve as both moral compass and therapeutic framework, guiding the next generation toward equilibrium between digital competence and divine consciousness (Mulawarman & al., 2023).

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight that the mental health challenges confronting Generation Z in today's digital environment extend far beyond psychological stress – they also reflect a deeper moral and spiritual imbalance born from what Durkheim described as digital anomie. By bringing together Durkheim's ideas on moral disconnection and the Islamic psychological concept of tazkiyat al-nafs or spiritual purification, this research presents a model of inner balance built upon three interrelated elements: moral awareness, emotional regulation, and spiritual resilience. These three aspects work together to help individuals regain harmony between the values shaped by society and their inner sense of faith and purpose.

This framework offers meaningful direction for educators, counselors, and institutions seeking to strengthen faith-based approaches to mental well-being in the digital age. It suggests that nurturing moral clarity, emotional steadiness, and spiritual mindfulness can provide young people with practical tools to navigate the anxiety and confusion of an always-connected world. Looking ahead, future studies could explore this model in real-world educational or counseling settings to assess how effectively it fosters healthier digital behavior and emotional balance – thus contributing to a more holistic understanding of Islamic spiritual psychology.

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