

THE THEOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF GENERATION Z'S SELF-CONTROL IN DIGITAL CULTURE FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstrak- Budaya digital telah menjadi bagian penting dalam kehidupan Generasi Z, tetapi intensitas penggunaan media digital menghadirkan tantangan dalam mengatur perhatian, emosi, keinginan, dan perilaku. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis dimensi teologis pengendalian diri Generasi Z dalam budaya digital dalam perspektif Islam. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian lapangan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap Generasi Z, kemudian didukung dengan sumber pustaka. Data dianalisis melalui pengumpulan, reduksi, penyajian, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengendalian diri Generasi Z dalam budaya digital dibentuk oleh lima dimensi teologis. Tauhid menjadi dasar orientasi hidup kepada Allah sehingga individu tidak menjadikan pengakuan sosial sebagai ukuran utama keberhargaan diri. Syukur membantu membangun penerimaan diri dan mengurangi kecenderungan membandingkan kehidupan dengan orang lain. Sabar membentuk kemampuan menahan dorongan sesaat dan mengutamakan kewajiban. Qana'ah membantu mengendalikan keinginan, perilaku konsumtif, dan kecenderungan mengikuti tren digital. Muraqabah membangun kesadaran untuk mengawasi, menegur, dan memperbaiki diri ketika penggunaan media digital mulai berlebihan.

Kata kunci: Budaya Digital; Generasi Z; Pengendalian Diri; Teologi Islam

Abstract- Digital culture has become important in Generation Z's lives; however, intensive digital media use presents challenges in regulating attention, emotions, desires, and behavior. This study aims to analyze the theological dimensions of Generation Z's self-control in digital culture from an Islamic perspective. The study employs a qualitative approach using field research through semi-structured interviews with Generation Z, supported by relevant existing literature. Data were analyzed through collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that Generation Z's self-control in digital culture is shaped by five theological dimensions. Tawhid provides life orientation toward Allah, helping individuals avoid regarding social recognition as the main measure of self-worth. *Syukur* fosters self-acceptance and reduces comparisons with others. *Sabr* strengthens restraint over immediate impulses and prioritizes obligations. *Qana'ah* helps regulate desires, consumer behavior, and tendencies to follow digital trends. *Muraqabah* cultivates awareness to monitor, correct, and improve oneself when digital media use becomes excessive.

Keywords: Digital Culture; Generation Z; Islamic Theology; Self-Control.

Introduction

The development of digital technology has transformed the way humans communicate, access information, learn, work, and build social relationships. The presence of the internet, smartphones, and social media has made digital space no longer merely a supporting tool for life, but an integral part of daily life. This condition is

particularly evident among Generation Z, who have grown up in a digital technological environment and have become accustomed to interacting with digital devices and media from a relatively early age (Adityaputra & Salma, 2022). The concept of digital natives describes a generation that grows up within a digital technological environment, so that technology becomes an inherent part of their communication processes, information seeking, and the formation of their life experiences (Prensky, 2001). Digital culture offers various benefits, but at the same time presents new challenges in the form of excessive information exposure, the urge to remain constantly connected, a culture of consumption, the pursuit of social recognition, and difficulty in regulating the time spent using digital media (Herawati et al., 2022; Risma Ilahi & Febriani, 2024).

One important issue within digital culture is an individual's capacity for self-control. Uncontrolled use of the internet and social media can develop into excessive usage patterns that disrupt academic and social activities, psychological well-being, and even theological dimensions of life. Research on Generation Z shows that individuals with a higher level of self-control tend to be better able to manage their internet usage time, avoid negative impulses from digital spaces, and use the internet according to their actual needs (Fikra, 2024). Other findings on Generation Z indicate that self-control also plays a role in coping with impulsive behavior in digital activities, including the tendency toward spontaneous purchasing within online commerce environments (Artadita & Firmialy, 2024). This suggests that self-control is not merely the ability to resist desires, but also the ability to direct behavior so that it remains consistent with one's goals, needs, and held values.

The issue of self-control becomes increasingly complex because digital culture operates through mechanisms that continuously capture individuals' attention. Notifications, endlessly updated content, recommendation algorithms, and the need to obtain social responses can drive a person to keep checking digital devices even when such activity does not always serve a clear purpose. Excessive social media use has even been linked to mental health problems among university students. A study of students in Indonesia found that higher levels of social media addiction are associated with a greater likelihood of mental health problems, whereas religiosity and good family relationships can serve as factors that support better mental conditions (Sujarwoto et al., 2023). Accordingly, the issue of digital culture cannot be understood merely as a technological matter, but also as a human issue involving the regulation of desire, attention, emotion, and behavior.

Self-control is generally understood as an individual's capacity to regulate thoughts, emotions, impulses, and behavior in order to achieve intended goals. The strength model of self-control explains that this capacity is related to an individual's ability to regulate responses and restrain impulses that are inconsistent with one's goals (Baumeister et al., 2007). This framework is important for explaining the internal mechanisms of self-control, but it has not fully addressed the question of the purpose for which a person exercises self-control and the values on which such control is based. Within the context of Generation Z's life, which is confronted with numerous choices,

temptations, and pressures in digital spaces, self-control requires not only personal ability but also a value orientation that provides direction for behavior (Fikra, 2024).

Islam offers a broader foundation by situating self-control within the framework of the human relationship with Allah. In the Islamic view, human beings are understood not only as psychological creatures, but also as theological beings who maintain relationships with Allah, with other human beings, and with their surrounding environment. Self-control is not merely aimed at making a person more productive or free from negative behavior, but is also part of human responsibility as a servant of Allah. The awareness that every action lies within Allah's knowledge and observation provides an inner foundation that can guide a person to consider the moral consequences of every action, including those performed in digital space. This principle is consistent with the concept of *muraqabah*, namely the theological awareness that Allah continuously knows and observes human conduct (Nur, 2021; Susanty & Hawadi, 2020).

This theological foundation can be further developed through several core Islamic values relevant to Generation Z's self-control. Tawhid serves as the foundation because it places Allah at the center of life's orientation, so that a person does not make popularity, social recognition, follower counts, or material possessions the primary measure of their self-worth (Kazeem, 2022). *Sabr* (patience) provides the capacity to withstand impulses and endure discomfort without immediately yielding to momentary desires. *Syukur* (gratitude) directs individuals to use blessings, including technology, responsibly and without excess (Afandi & Pranajaya, 2023; Majdi et al., 2024). *Qana'ah* cultivates an attitude of accepting sufficiency and reduces the drive to constantly compare oneself with the lives of others displayed on social media (Fitrianta & Hardew, 2024). Meanwhile, *muraqabah* instills the awareness that even digital activity remains within a moral space under Allah's watch. These five values can be understood as a set of theological values that shape the inner orientation underlying self-control (Nur, 2021).

A number of studies show that theological dimensions and self-regulation are related to individual well-being. Research on secondary school students found that spirituality and self-regulation jointly exert a positive influence on subjective well-being (Saputri & Nashori, 2023). Another study on university students found that religiosity has a negative relationship with social media addiction, such that higher levels of religiosity are associated with lower levels of social media addiction (Nur Peni & Mundzir, 2024). These findings are reinforced by research on Islamic spirituality and student well-being, which demonstrates the importance of spiritual orientation and an accepting attitude toward life in supporting psychological well-being (Saputro et al., 2017). Thus, the theological dimension does not only serve a ritual function, but can also become a source of orientation in facing the psychological and social pressures that arise in modern life.

The value of *qana'ah* also holds particular relevance to digital culture, since social media frequently encourages social comparison, the desire to possess more, and the pursuit of satisfaction through material symbols. Research on *qana'ah* shows that this value is related to the process of academic adjustment and can be understood as one of

the spiritual dimensions relevant to coping with the pressures of student life (Fitrianta & Hardew, 2024). Within the context of digital culture, *qana'ah* can be positioned as a spiritual mechanism that helps individuals limit unnecessary desires, accept their own condition, and avoid becoming easily trapped by the constantly shifting standards of life presented on social media. Thus, *qana'ah* does not imply passivity or resistance to progress, but rather forms the capacity to use things proportionally without allowing desire to become the primary controller of behavior.

Although various studies have discussed the relationship between self-control, spirituality, religiosity, social media addiction, and psychological well-being, research specifically mapping the theological dimension of Generation Z's self-control within digital culture still needs further development. Research on Generation Z's self-control has tended to emphasize psychological and behavioral aspects, whereas research specifically linking theological dimensions and religiosity to Generation Z's self-control remains scarce. Meanwhile, theological values such as *tawhid*, *sabr*, *syukur*, *qana'ah*, and *muraqabah* have not yet been positioned within a single conceptual framework to explain how these values shape the capacity for self-control in facing digital culture.

Based on this gap, the present article views Generation Z's self-control within digital culture as an issue that is not only psychological but also theological in nature. Self-control from an Islamic perspective does not stop at the ability to withstand impulses, but is connected to faith orientation, moral awareness, and human responsibility to Allah. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the theological dimension of Generation Z's self-control within digital culture from an Islamic perspective, focusing attention on five core values: *tawhid*, *sabr*, *syukur*, *qana'ah*, and *muraqabah*. These five values are analyzed as a spiritual foundation that can provide direction for Generation Z in managing impulses, emotions, technology use, information consumption, social interaction, and the pursuit of recognition in digital space.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using field research through in-depth interviews. This approach was chosen to understand the experiences, views, and meanings that Generation Z attributes to self-control in facing digital culture, based on the theological dimension of Islam. The qualitative approach enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of human experience within the context of real life (Moleong, 2017). Through field research, the researcher can interact directly with informants to explore how they use digital media, cope with various impulses that arise, and apply the theological dimension of Islam in regulating their thoughts, emotions, desires, and behavior (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with members of Generation Z in Kudus Regency who have a strong religious background, while secondary data were derived from books, scientific journals, and documentation related to Generation Z, digital culture, self-control, and the theological dimension of Islam. Informants were

selected using a purposive sampling technique based on the suitability of their characteristics to the focus of the research (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews using a question guide focusing on experiences of digital media use, the forms of impulses encountered, ways of exercising self-control, and the Islamic values that serve as the basis for regulating behavior. This technique provides informants with space to explain their experiences and views more broadly (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Data analysis employed the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & A. Michael Huberman, 1994). Data were reduced and grouped according to themes related to self-control and theological dimensions, then presented systematically to identify patterns and meanings within the research. The validity of the data was tested through triangulation, namely by comparing information from several informants and matching it with documentation and relevant literature sources (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Through this method, the research was directed toward obtaining an in-depth picture of the theological dimension of Generation Z's self-control within digital culture, particularly through the values of *tawhid*, *syukur*, *sabr*, *qana'ah*, and *muraqabah*.

Results and Discussion

Theological Dimension in Islam

The theological dimension in Islam refers to faith in Allah, which forms the basis for the way human beings understand themselves, their lives, and their behavior. Faith in Allah is not only related to knowledge of His oneness and attributes, but also to the awareness that human beings bear moral responsibility for every action they perform. The theological dimension does not stop at the cognitive aspect, but is connected to how this faith is internalized and manifested in daily life. Within the context of self-control, faith in Allah becomes the basis for a person to direct their desires and behavior in accordance with Islamic values (Gani, 2020). Theological awareness prevents human beings from viewing themselves as creatures free to follow every impulse of their base desires. Every desire must be weighed according to what is right and wrong, good and bad, lawful (*halal*) and unlawful (*haram*). Therefore, self-control from an Islamic perspective possesses a moral and spiritual dimension that is oriented not only toward the capacity to control behavior, but also toward the capacity to direct behavior toward goals that are pleasing to Allah. This perspective positions self-control as part of the process of character formation and human responsibility as a servant of Allah (Al-Ghazali, 2000).

One important concept within the theological dimension is *muraqabah*, namely the inner awareness that Allah continuously knows and observes human beings. This awareness can shape a form of control that originates from within a person, since an individual considers not only whether their behavior is known to others, but also recognizes that all of their actions lie within Allah's knowledge. This concept becomes increasingly relevant in digital culture because many activities are carried out privately

through digital devices and are not always subject to the observation of others. Awareness of Allah's supervision can serve as the basis for a person to continue restraining their behavior even in the absence of direct social control (Al-Ghazali, 2000; Gani, 2020). *Muraqabah* is conceptually closely related to the process of self-monitoring, namely an individual's ability to observe and evaluate themselves before responding to an impulse. Individual self-monitoring can become part of the formation of more directed behavior, because the individual acts not merely based on spontaneous impulses, but also based on awareness of their relationship with Allah (Karofi, 2023).

Self-control is also related to the capacity to be patient (*sabr*) in facing impulses and desires. From an Islamic perspective, *sabr* does not merely mean enduring hardship, but also encompasses the capacity to maintain obedience and refrain from that which is forbidden. This capacity is strongly relevant within digital culture, since individuals are continuously confronted with various stimuli in the form of information, entertainment, social interaction, and various forms of content that can generate the desire to remain constantly connected. Thus, *sabr* can be understood as one of the spiritual mechanisms that helps a person control their responses to the various impulses that arise in digital life (Al-Ghazali, 2000). In addition to *sabr*, *qana'ah* also holds relevance for self-control. *Qana'ah* teaches a person to accept what they have and not allow desire to grow without limit. This value is important within a digital culture that frequently and continuously displays other people's lifestyles, achievements, material possessions, and various forms of accomplishment. Such exposure can encourage social comparison and the desire to possess more. *Qana'ah* can become a spiritual value that helps individuals limit their desires, so that life satisfaction is not determined solely by possession, consumption, or social recognition (Al-Iskandari, 1999).

Based on the discussion above, the theological dimension in this study can be understood through several interrelated elements: *tawhid* provides the foundation of faith, *muraqabah* forms the awareness of Allah's supervision, *sabr* helps a person withstand impulses, while *qana'ah* helps limit excessive desire. Together, these elements indicate that self-control in Islam is not merely a psychological capacity to control behavior, but is also a manifestation of theological awareness and character formation.

Generation Z's Self-Control in Digital Culture

Generation Z has grown up in an environment very closely tied to digital technology. The internet, social media, and digital devices have become part of daily life, whether for learning, communicating, seeking information, obtaining entertainment, or building social relationships. This closeness offers various benefits, but also presents challenges in the form of a high intensity of interaction with technology. When internet use is not accompanied by the ability to regulate time and impulses, individuals can more easily experience excessive internet use. Self-control has become one of the important capacities for Generation Z in facing digital culture (Prensky, 2001). Self-control is important so that technology remains a means to achieve life goals, rather than becoming a source of distraction that controls an individual's attention, time, emotions,

and behavior. It is within this context that the Islamic theological approach can provide an additional dimension by introducing moral and spiritual awareness into the process of regulating digital behavior (Razak & Kamarulbahri, 2024).

Self-control relates to a person's ability to regulate their thoughts, emotions, attention, desires, and behavior in accordance with the goals they wish to achieve. Within the context of internet use, self-control enables individuals to determine when to use the internet, for what purposes it is used, and when its use should be stopped. Research on Generation Z shows that individuals with better self-control tend to have better time-management skills, are able to avoid negative impulses from the internet, and use the internet according to their needs. Conversely, low self-control makes individuals more easily responsive to internet stimuli and increases vulnerability to internet addiction (Fikra, 2024). This issue becomes increasingly complex because digital culture provides continuous stimulation. Notifications, short videos, messages, comments, trends, online games, and various forms of digital content can repeatedly attract a person's attention. This condition can make it difficult for individuals to shift their attention from digital activities to other, more important activities. Therefore, self-control is needed so that a person is able to delay responses, determine priorities, and limit technology use according to actual needs (Hayani et al., 2022).

Digital culture can also give rise to *fear of missing out* (FOMO), namely a person's concern about being left behind regarding information, activities, or experiences that others are engaged in. FOMO can drive individuals to continuously check social media and maintain connectivity with the digital environment. Among Generation Z TikTok users, self-control has been found to be related to the ability to manage the tendency toward FOMO. This indicates that self-control is not only related to the duration of social media use, but also to the ability to manage the psychological drive to constantly know and follow what is happening in digital space (Mufarida & Santosa, 2024). Excessive social media use is also related to religious life. The intensity of interaction with social media can reduce attention toward other activities when individuals lack the ability to manage priorities. Research on university students in Indonesia found a negative relationship between religiosity and social media addiction. This finding indicates that religiosity may be one of the factors related to an individual's ability to control their engagement with social media (Nur Peni & Mundzir, 2024).

In addition to social media, digital culture also generates consumptive impulses. Digital platforms enable individuals to obtain various products quickly and easily, while advertisements, promotions, and lifestyle content continuously provide consumption stimuli. Among Generation Z, who are active within digital environments, self-control plays a role in controlling the tendency toward impulsive buying. The issue of self-control in digital culture is thus related not only to internet addiction, but also encompasses the ability to control consumption, desires, and decisions that arise spontaneously as a result of exposure to the digital environment (Artadita & Firmialy, 2024). Based on the discussion above, Generation Z's self-control in digital culture can be understood as the capacity to regulate thoughts, attention, emotions, time, desires, and behavior when

interacting with digital technology, so that technology use remains consistent with life goals and held values. Self-control encompasses the ability to limit internet and social media use, control the urge to remain constantly connected, regulate responses to digital content, restrain consumptive behavior, and maintain a balance between digital activity and real life (Elkatmış, 2024).

Theological Dimension as the Foundation of Generation Z's Self-Control

Self-control is shaped not only through psychological capacity, but also through awareness of the human relationship with Allah. Faith in Allah provides the orientation that every behavior carries moral and spiritual consequences. This awareness can become a source of internal motivation that enables individuals to restrain themselves even in the absence of environmental supervision. The theological dimension can provide a deeper foundation for self-control, because individuals control their behavior not merely to avoid social consequences, but also because of an awareness of accountability to Allah (Al-Ghazali, 2000). The theological dimension of Generation Z's self-control within digital culture can be understood as the relationship between faith awareness of Allah and an individual's capacity to regulate their digital behavior. Theology here is not positioned as abstract knowledge about God, but as a source of awareness that influences how a person thinks, judges, makes decisions, and acts. The theological dimension becomes the internal foundation that helps individuals translate belief into behavioral control (Karofi, 2023).

Tawhid provides the foundation of faith in Allah, *muraqabah* builds awareness of Allah's supervision, while moral awareness helps a person assess whether an action is consistent with Islamic values. Furthermore, *sabr* provides the capacity to delay or reject inappropriate impulses, while *qana'ah* helps limit excessive desire. Empirically, the relationship between religiosity, self-control, and problematic internet use is also evident in research on Muslim university students, which shows that Islamic religious coping influences self-control, while self-control acts as a mediator of problematic internet use (Roudhotina & Uyun, 2022). The relationship between religiosity and self-control cannot be adequately understood solely from the frequency with which a person performs religious activities, but also from how religion is internalized as a commitment, an identity, and a relationship with Allah. Thus, the theological dimension can be understood as a multilayered construct, with each layer capable of exerting a different influence on the capacity for self-regulation (Kerasha et al., 2024).

Self-control from an Islamic perspective does not mean eliminating human desire, but rather directing desire so that it aligns with higher values and goals. Within digital culture, this principle can be realized through the ability to limit social media use, avoid content inconsistent with Islamic values, control the need for social recognition, limit digital consumption, and use technology for beneficial purposes. Thus, the theological dimension provides value direction, while self-control becomes the practical capacity to apply that value within digital life (Artadita & Firmialy, 2024). The theological dimension of Generation Z's self-control within digital culture can be understood as the relationship

between faith awareness of Allah and an individual's ability to regulate digital behavior. The theological dimension provides a source of awareness, motivation, and moral orientation, while self-control constitutes the actualization of that awareness in behavior. This perspective positions digital culture not merely as a technological issue, but also as a space for testing and actualizing faith, character, responsibility, and the human capacity for self-control (Fikra, 2024; Roudhotina & Uyun, 2022).

Theological Dimensions of Generation Z in Self-Control within Digital Culture ***Tawhid as the Foundation of Generation Z's Self-Control***

Based on interview results from one of the informants, the theological value that plays an important role in shaping Generation Z's self-control is tawhid. Tawhid relates not only to the belief that Allah is the only God, but also serves as the basis for determining life's direction. The awareness of being a servant of Allah drives a person to make devotion to Allah the primary purpose of their life (Informant YH, 2024). Accordingly, the use of digital media is not directed solely toward obtaining attention, popularity, or recognition from others, but remains situated within a framework of values and responsibility to Allah. Within the context of digital culture, tawhid helps Generation Z control the impulse to constantly follow trends, compare themselves with others, or display a life considered attractive on social media. A person with tawhid awareness understands that a person's honor is not determined by the number of followers, likes, comments, or recognition from social media users. True honor stems from closeness to and the pleasure (ridha) of Allah. This awareness can help a person avoid being easily swept up by the social pressures that arise in digital spaces (Kerasha et al., 2024).

Tawhid forms the basis for building self-control. When life orientation is directed more toward Allah, a person has a stronger guide for determining what should be done and what should be avoided. Social media is no longer the primary measure for evaluating one's own success. Generation Z can use digital media more wisely because they are able to distinguish between needs and wants, between benefit and merely following trends, and between productive and excessive social media use (Asyadily, 2024; Fitriyani et al., 2024). Research shows that religiosity can provide a more stable framework of thought, emotional support, and moral guidance for students. Religious values can help students become calmer and better able to focus their attention on matters that are truly important in their lives. Within the context of digital culture, this condition can support a person's ability to control impulses and behavior when facing various social demands present in digital media (Mirawati et al., 2024).

The strengthening of tawhid is also related to Generation Z's capacity to build self-identity. The development of social media enables a person to construct their self-image based on the assessments and responses of the digital environment. Without a strong spiritual foundation, this condition can make a person overly dependent on social recognition. Conversely, an understanding of tawhid can help a person build a more stable identity, since the measure of their self-worth is based not only on human judgment, but also on their relationship with Allah. Therefore, the strengthening of

tawhid becomes one of the important foundations in shaping Generation Z's self-control amid digital culture (Ginting et al., 2023).

In addition to providing value direction, tawhid can also help a person manage the emotions and pressures that arise from digital media use. The Islamic psycho-spiritual approach, which emphasizes the human relationship with Allah through faith and worship, demonstrates the importance of the spiritual dimension in maintaining emotional stability and coping with life's pressures. This reinforces the view that self-control within digital culture cannot be achieved merely through limiting social media usage time, but also requires the strengthening of spiritual awareness as the basis for regulating thoughts, emotions, desires, and behavior (Reskido et al., 2024). Strengthening the value of tawhid can help individuals build a life orientation more directed toward Allah. This orientation plays a role in shaping a person's ability to control desires, evaluate actions more critically, and avoid making social recognition the primary measure of self-worth. Within the context of Generation Z, the value of tawhid can serve as a guide in facing a digital culture that encourages image-building, excessive consumption, and the continuous pursuit of validation.

Thus, tawhid can be understood as the theological foundation of Generation Z's self-control. The awareness that human beings are servants of Allah helps individuals position digital media as a means, not as the center of life. Orientation toward Allah makes a person better able to control the desire for social recognition, avoid excessively following trends, and refrain from comparing their life with the lives of others on digital media. In the Islamic perspective, self-control is therefore not merely a psychological capacity, but is also part of religious awareness rooted in the human relationship with Allah.

Syukur as a Form of Acceptance and Generation Z's Self-Control

The second theological dimension is the value of *syukur*. Within the context of self-control, *syukur* can be understood as the capacity to accept one's own condition and to recognize the various blessings bestowed by Allah. This attitude helps a person avoid continuously comparing their life with the lives of others. Based on interview results, an attitude of gratitude was evident when a respondent tried to calm themselves after viewing various social media posts displaying standards of happiness and life considered ideal. The respondent recognized that every person has different standards of happiness, capacities, and life conditions, so that not everything displayed by others needs to be used as a personal benchmark (Informant KS, 2024). Gratitude is expressed not only through words, but also through acceptance of oneself. A grateful person is able to view their life more proportionally and does not make other people's lives the primary measure for evaluating themselves. This awareness is important for Generation Z because social media frequently displays other people's lives in forms that appear more attractive, successful, happy, and perfect. Without self-control, such exposure can make a person feel inadequate about their own life. Gratitude has a negative relationship with the tendency to engage in social comparison (Winata & Andangsari, 2017).

Syukur functions as a control over desires that arise from exposure to other people's lives on digital media. A person can still enjoy the development of social media without treating everything they see as a demand that must always be followed. This relates to a person's tendency to engage in social comparison. Social media use can encourage individuals to more frequently observe the experiences and achievements of others. When other people's lives appear better, happier, or more successful, a person may feel that their own life is not yet sufficient. This condition can disrupt psychological well-being and make it difficult for individuals to feel satisfied with their lives. Research shows that the tendency toward social comparison is related to problematic social media use and the emergence of an urge to continuously follow the various activities of others (Reer et al., 2019).

Conversely, gratitude can help a person reduce the tendency to compare themselves with others. Research on university student social media users shows that the higher a person's sense of gratitude, the lower their tendency toward social comparison. Gratitude can be one of the factors that helps individuals accept their own condition and reduces the urge to use other people's lives as a measure of their own success (Putra, 2018). Several studies explain that individuals with a strong sense of gratitude tend to be able to appreciate simple pleasures, feel content with the life they have, and do not always feel compelled to follow the various life trends within their social environment (Rosyida & Romadhani, 2022). This attitude bears strong relevance to the interview findings in this study. The awareness that every person has different standards of happiness and different capacities indicates a capacity to accept one's own condition while simultaneously controlling the urge to follow the standards of life displayed on social media.

From an Islamic perspective, gratitude does not mean passively accepting one's condition without effort to improve. Rather, gratitude encourages a person to recognize and make good use of Allah SWT's blessings. Therefore, members of Generation Z who possess an attitude of gratitude can still hold aspirations and a desire to develop, without making other people's achievements a source of pressure upon themselves. They are able to strive according to their own capacities, while accepting the results with the awareness that every human being has a different destiny and life path (Ali et al., 2020). Gratitude is also related to subjective well-being. Studies within the perspective of positive psychology show that faith, patience, and gratitude have a significant relationship with subjective well-being among adolescents. The more strongly these three values are internalized, the better the subjective well-being experienced. This finding indicates that gratitude has not only a spiritual dimension, but also an influence on how a person views and experiences their life. Research on Qur'an-memorizing students shows that spirituality, including gratitude, plays a role in shaping subjective well-being. This demonstrates that spiritual life can help a person develop a more positive assessment of their own life. Within the context of Generation Z living amid digital culture, gratitude can serve as an internal strength for coping with the various social pressures that arise through digital media (Hasanah & Haris, 2023).

Thus, gratitude can be understood as one of the theological dimensions that supports Generation Z's self-control. Gratitude helps individuals accept themselves, appreciate what they have, reduce the tendency to compare themselves with others, and avoid readily treating the life displayed on social media as a measure of happiness. In this context, gratitude is not merely a spiritual relationship between human beings and Allah, but also an inner strength that helps Generation Z use digital media in a healthier, more proportional, and more responsible manner.

***Sabr* as the Capacity to Withstand Impulses and Regulate Digital Media Use**

The third theological value found in this study is *sabr*. Within the context of self-control, *sabr* relates to a person's ability to withstand momentary impulses, control desires, and continue carrying out more important activities despite various distractions from digital media. Based on interview results, several respondents recognized that social media use could cause them to delay tasks, reduce study time, and disrupt their Qur'an memorization activities. One respondent experienced a situation in which social media use caused tasks that should have been completed to be delayed (Informant DL, 2024). Another respondent similarly felt that continuous social media use caused academic activities and Qur'an recitation to be postponed (Informant HS, 2024). These findings indicate that the issue of self-control relates not only to the duration of social media use, but also to the ability to control the urge to continue using digital media. When a person already knows that a task must be completed or Qur'an recitation must be performed, yet continues to choose to keep viewing social media content, there is a difficulty in withstanding momentary desire. In such conditions, *sabr* becomes an important value because it helps individuals delay temporary pleasure in order to complete more important obligations (Yusuf, 2018).

In the lives of Generation Z, this capacity to withstand impulses becomes increasingly important because digital media provides various easily accessible and continuously updated forms of entertainment. New content, short videos, notifications, and various social media activities can cause a person to continually extend their usage time without realizing it. As a result, previously planned activities can become delayed. Self-control through patience is required so that a person is able to stop when social media use no longer provides benefit and to return to the activities for which they are responsible (Neidi, 2021). This is consistent with research finding a significant relationship between internet addiction and academic procrastination among university students. The higher the level of internet addiction, the higher a person's tendency to delay academic work. Difficulty in controlling digital media use can thus directly affect time management and the completion of academic tasks (Hayani et al., 2022).

Other research on adolescents also shows that excessive social media use can disrupt productivity and the regularity of daily activities (Mainidar et al., 2023). Within the context of this study, this condition can be observed in respondents' experiences of delayed tasks, reduced study time, and postponed Qur'an recitation activities due to prolonged social media use. *Sabr* becomes an important value in helping Generation Z

regulate priorities between the need for entertainment and academic as well as religious responsibilities. From the perspective of Islamic theology, *sabr* carries a broader meaning than merely enduring hardship. *Sabr* is the capacity to restrain oneself from impulses that may lead to harmful or detrimental actions. Al-Ghazali explains *sabr* in three forms: patience in performing obedience (*al-sabr 'ala al-tha'ah*), patience in avoiding prohibited acts (*al-sabr 'an al-ma'shiyah*), and patience in facing trials (*al-sabr 'ala al-bala'*) (Al-Ghazali, 2000). These three forms of patience bear a strong relationship to self-control within digital culture.

Patience in performing obedience can be realized through the ability to continue performing acts of worship, memorizing the Qur'an, studying, and completing tasks even when social media offers more attractive entertainment. Meanwhile, patience in avoiding prohibited acts can be realized through the ability to refrain from using digital media for things that are unbeneficial or even contrary to Islamic values. Patience in facing trials, in turn, relates to the ability to accept various conditions without turning to social media as an excessive means of escape. Thus, *sabr* can become a spiritual strength that helps Generation Z control impulses and regulate behavior amid digital culture. *Sabr* enables a person to pause momentarily before yielding to the urge to open social media, to delay gratification, and to choose more important activities. From an Islamic perspective, self-control through *sabr* is not merely a matter of time management, but constitutes a spiritual exercise in placing desire under the control of reason, religious values, and responsibility to Allah.

***Qana'ah* as an Attitude of Sufficiency in Controlling Desire within Digital Culture**

The fourth theological dimension found in this study is *qana'ah*. From the interview results, *qana'ah* emerged as one of the values most clearly related to Generation Z's self-control in facing the various impulses that arise through digital media. *Qana'ah* is understood as an attitude of feeling sufficient, accepting, and being content with what Allah SWT has provided, even when what is received does not always align with one's desires. This attitude helps a person avoid continuously pursuing what is possessed or displayed by others on social media (Informant YH, 2024). *Qana'ah* plays an important role in controlling digital culture, since social media frequently presents various forms of life that appear more attractive, more comfortable, and more successful. Such exposure can generate the desire to possess the same items, follow certain lifestyles, or achieve accomplishments similar to those displayed by others. Without self-control, a person may continue to feel inadequate even when their basic needs have been met. *Qana'ah* helps a person recognize that not everything seen on social media must be possessed or followed (Fitrianta & Hardew, 2024).

Qana'ah can be viewed as the opposite of an attitude of perpetual dissatisfaction. Instead, *qana'ah* cultivates a sense of sufficiency, contentment, and calm regarding what Allah has provided. This attitude does not mean that a person stops striving, but it helps individuals distinguish between genuinely important needs and desires that arise merely

due to the influence of the digital environment. Research shows that the urge to continuously follow the lives of others on social media is related to dissatisfaction with one's own condition. When a person observes the lives of others considered better, a tendency arises to feel that one's own life is still lacking and that one needs to possess or do the same things. In such conditions, *qana'ah* can become a spiritual value that helps a person accept their own condition and avoid making other people's lives the primary measure of happiness (Akbar et al., 2018). *Qana'ah* also cannot be understood as a passive attitude or a lack of desire to develop, and is closely related to the attitudes of *ridha* (contentment) and gratitude toward Allah's provisions. This attitude can reduce the urge to continuously follow trends and the feeling of being left behind by others, enabling a person to live with greater calm and to accept their own condition with equanimity (Saputro et al., 2017).

Ibn Atha'illah's thought in *Al-Hikam* also positions *qana'ah* as one path toward inner tranquility. A heart continuously filled with desire for worldly matters will find it difficult to attain tranquility if such desire is not controlled (Al-Iskandari, 1999). Within the context of Generation Z, this view holds strong relevance because digital media can expand the space in which desire arises. Various products, lifestyles, journeys, achievements, and forms of pleasure displayed on social media can cause a person to continuously desire something new. Empirically, *qana'ah* has a positive relationship with life satisfaction and a negative relationship with stress levels. The higher a person's attitude of *qana'ah*, the greater their tendency to experience life satisfaction and the lower the level of stress experienced. Thus, *qana'ah* possesses not only spiritual value, but is also related to an individual's capacity to maintain psychological balance (Saputro et al., 2017).

Research on Generation Z also shows a positive relationship between *qana'ah* and psychological well-being. The attitude of *qana'ah* is related to the capacity for self-acceptance, independence in making choices, and having clearer life goals (Samsiah, 2024). This indicates that a sense of sufficiency does not cause a person to lose motivation to develop, but can instead help individuals determine their life direction based on their own awareness and needs. *Qana'ah* is also related to the capacity to control consumptive behavior. Research on students living away from home shows that the higher a person's attitude of *qana'ah*, the lower their tendency toward consumptive behavior (Fitrianta & Hardew, 2024). This finding is relevant to digital culture because social media has become one of the spaces widely used to display and promote lifestyles and various consumer products. Self-control through *qana'ah* can help a person avoid readily purchasing something merely because they were drawn to it after seeing it on social media.

Field data in this study reveal concrete manifestations of this *qana'ah*. When encountering an attractive item on social media, a respondent did not immediately purchase it, but first considered their financial condition and personal needs (Informant KS, 2024). A similar attitude was observed when a respondent came across attractive clothing on social media. The decision to purchase was based not merely on the desire

to possess, but first considered the item's usefulness and other needs that had to be met (Informant GN, 2024). These findings indicate that *qana'ah* can be manifested in the form of the capacity to delay desire, weigh benefit, and determine priorities. In this regard, *qana'ah* does not remain merely an inner feeling of sufficiency, but is translated into concrete behavior in daily life. A person who possesses *qana'ah* is not inclined to readily purchase something merely because they see others owning it or because the item is currently trending on social media.

Thus, *qana'ah* can be understood as a form of self-control with a theological foundation. *Qana'ah* helps Generation Z control desire, reduce the tendency to compare themselves with others, and avoid readily following lifestyles displayed on digital media. An attitude of sufficiency also enables individuals to better accept their own condition without losing the spirit to strive. Therefore, *qana'ah* becomes an important spiritual value in building Generation Z's self-control amid a digital culture that continuously drives the emergence of new desires (Maulidizen et al., 2024).

***Muraqabah* as Self-Monitoring Awareness in Digital Media Use**

The fifth theological dimension is *muraqabah*. *Muraqabah* can be understood as the awareness that Allah SWT continuously knows and observes every human action. This awareness drives a person to monitor themselves, including when using digital media. Within the context of self-control, *muraqabah* is evident in an individual's capacity to recognize when social media use has begun to become excessive, then to stop it and redirect their attention toward more beneficial activities. Interview results show that several respondents possessed the awareness to stop using their mobile phones upon realizing that the activity had already consumed too much of their time. They then attempted to redirect their attention toward more beneficial activities, such as reading the Qur'an or completing tasks (Informant AH, 2024). *Muraqabah* was also evident when a person recognized that social media had become a means of escape from academic pressure. One respondent experienced a situation of feeling burdened while working on their thesis, leading them to use their mobile phone to relieve fatigue. However, social media use instead caused the work to be further delayed. After recognizing this condition, the respondent attempted to stop using their mobile phone, performed *istighfar* (seeking Allah's forgiveness), and reminded themselves to return to completing the task (Informant GN, 2024).

This experience shows that *muraqabah* operates through awareness, self-reproach, and behavioral change. Individuals not only recognize that they have used social media excessively, but also feel driven to correct that behavior. It is this awareness that distinguishes self-control originating from *muraqabah* from mere restriction of digital media use. Control does not come only from external rules, but grows from an inner awareness that every action carries responsibility before Allah (Sukma, 2019). *Muraqabah* is one of the spiritual exercises that plays a role in shaping self-awareness and character. As *muraqabah* strengthens, a person becomes better able to control their base desires and use technology wisely for beneficial purposes (Gani, 2020). *Muraqabah*

is also evident in a person's capacity to make their surrounding environment a reminder to improve their behavior. One respondent recognized that they were still using social media when they saw their roommate reciting the Qur'an or completing tasks. This situation then drove them to stop using social media and return to more beneficial activities (Informant AH, 2024). This shows that self-awareness can be reinforced by an environment that supports positive habits.

Muraqabah also does not always emerge directly as an already-established habit. Based on the interview results, the formation of this awareness occurs through a process of habituation. At first, a person may need to force themselves to abandon a less beneficial habit. However, when performed continuously, such behavior can transform into a habit and ultimately become an inner need to do good (Informant YH, 2024). This process is consistent with a systematic review on the role of theological dimensions in shaping mental health. The implementation of theological values such as *muraqabah* contributes to reducing stress and anxiety while increasing inner calm. This influence is related to improved emotion regulation, self-awareness, and the capacity to control one's thoughts. The process of habituation in *muraqabah* can thus be understood as a process of internalizing spiritual values that gradually shapes self-control (A Shukor et al., 2019).

Muraqabah provides the basis of awareness for Generation Z to control their behavior in the absence of supervision from others. A person may use social media without the knowledge of parents, lecturers, friends, or other parties. However, the awareness of *muraqabah* makes individuals understand that no behavior is truly free from Allah's knowledge. Thus, *muraqabah* can be understood as a form of self-control originating from transcendental awareness. If self-control relies solely on external rules, a person may more easily revert to old habits once those rules are no longer in place. *Muraqabah*, in contrast, builds supervision from within through awareness of Allah's closeness and observation. Within the context of Generation Z, this value becomes important because it helps individuals control their digital media use based on awareness, rather than merely due to prohibitions or supervision from others.

Conclusion

The dimension of Islamic theology found within Generation Z's self-control is not merely a normative religious concept, but is also present within everyday experience and behavior. Tawhid, *syukur*, *sabr*, *qana'ah*, and *muraqabah* are values that help individuals regulate desire, manage emotions, determine priorities, control digital media use, and maintain a balance between digital activity and academic as well as spiritual responsibilities. Tawhid provides direction and life orientation by placing Allah SWT at the center of life's purpose. *Syukur* helps individuals accept and appreciate their own condition, making them less inclined to compare their lives with others. *Sabr* shapes the capacity to withstand impulses and delay gratification when digital media interferes with obligations. *Qana'ah* helps individuals feel sufficient and control the consumptive desires that arise from exposure to lifestyles on social media. Meanwhile, *muraqabah* shapes the

awareness to monitor and correct oneself when digital media use begins to become excessive.

Self-control from an Islamic perspective possesses a dimension broader than merely the capacity to limit social media usage time. Self-control is a process that involves aspects of faith, spiritual awareness, emotion management, desire control, and habit formation. Thus, self-control is achieved not only through external rules, but also through the strength of values that grow from within. These findings indicate that digital culture need not be viewed solely as a threat to Generation Z. Digital media can be used positively when individuals possess a strong spiritual foundation. Islamic theological values provide guidance so that Generation Z is able to position digital media as a means for learning, communicating, creating, and self-development, rather than as the center of life that determines one's values and happiness. Generation Z's self-control within digital culture can be understood as a process of strengthening orientation toward Allah, self-acceptance, the capacity to withstand impulses, a sense of sufficiency, and self-monitoring awareness. These five values complement one another and form a theological framework that enables Generation Z to face the various pressures of digital culture with greater calm, wisdom, and responsibility.

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