



Youth in Action: Exploring Emerging Forms of Civic Engagement and Digital Philanthropy among Millennial and Generation Z Muslims

Nur Faizah^{1*} & Shahid Manalundong²

¹Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

²Mindanao State University Marawi, Philippine

*Correspondence: nurfaizah@iainsorong.ac.id

Abstract

The proliferation of digital technology presents unique opportunities and challenges for the civic and philanthropic engagement of Muslim Millennials and Generation Z. This study aims to map the emerging forms of their digital participation, with a focus on the negotiation between the logic of digital platforms and Islamic socio-religious values. Employing a qualitative library research method, this paper systematically analyzes scholarly literature to explore how religious principles such as *ukhuwah* (solidarity) and *ummah* (community) are adapted within digital spaces. Findings indicate that Muslim youth are not passive consumers of technology; rather, they actively create hybrid practices, such as *#SedekahOnline* campaigns, faith-based crowdfunding, and virtual volunteering, that integrate digital efficiency with spiritual obligations like *zakat* and *sadaqah*. Religious values serve as a key motivator for digital philanthropy. However, challenges remain, including limited digital literacy, the commodification of religion, and infrastructural inequality. The study concludes that fostering meaningful digital participation requires social engineering that interconnects technology, critical digital education, and Islamic ethics. By centering cultural-religious dimensions in the analysis, this research addresses a gap in existing literature and provides a more contextualized understanding of youth engagement in the digital age.

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Introduction

Digital technology and social media over the past two decades has not always aligned with the ideals of democratizing citizen participation and upholding humanitarian values (Haponenko et al., 2024; Tappert et al., 2024). While digital technologies have opened new spaces for young people to engage in social, political, and religious issues, such engagement is often shallow, instantaneous, and limited to symbolic actions, such as liking, sharing, or joining online campaigns without meaningful follow-up (Akinyetun, 2022; Alodat et al., 2023;



Omotayo & Folorunso, 2020). This phenomenon raises critical questions about the extent to which digital engagement genuinely represents substantive civic participation.

At the same time, digital technology is frequently perceived as an imported product that carries the logic of individualism and the global market, which may conflict with the communal, solidaristic, and religious values upheld by Muslim societies (Çelebioğlu, 2022; Khan & Nayab, 2021; Zaid et al., 2022). The digital realm is never neutral; it embodies particular values, algorithms, and political-economic logics that can run counter to the ethical orientations of Muslim youth (Abdullah et al., 2024; M. Auezov South Kazakhstan University et al., 2024). Moreover, the penetration of technology into socio-religious domains has not been accompanied by adequate development of digital and philanthropic literacy (Mercy Rolando et al., 2024; Wati et al., 2022).

Consequently, young people often lack the critical readiness to interpret and utilize technology for social and spiritual purposes. This situation is further exacerbated by the limited socio-cultural preparedness to integrate Islamic values with digital participation practices. There thus exists a striking disjuncture between the empowering potential of digital technology for Muslim youth and the readiness of cultural, religious, and communal values that should ideally support the adoption and internalization of citizen engagement and digital philanthropy practices (Al Arif et al., 2023; Jamal et al., 2023). Academic studies on youth, digital technology, and civic participation have so far left significant gaps in understanding this tension between digital logics and the socio-religious values of Muslim youth. Most studies tend to conceptualize digital technology as a linear instrument that promotes social or political participation, without delving deeper into the underlying cultural and religious dynamics (Abhipsa Pal, 2018; Ginzarly & Teller, 2021; Tolbert & Mcneal, 2003). Yet, Muslim youth do not live in a vacuum, their identities are shaped through interactions between religious values, social experiences, and digital exposure. A review of the literature reveals three major tendencies in previous research.

First, studies that emphasize the positive role of digital media in expanding youth political and social participation, such as in the mobilization of social movements or dissemination of critical discourses on social media (Abhipsa Pal, 2018; Omotayo & Folorunso, 2020; Tolbert & Mcneal, 2003). Second, studies focusing on the risks and negative impacts of digital media use, including political polarization, misinformation, and superficial participation (Reid Chassiakos et al., 2016; Vannucci et al., 2020; Wolfowicz et al., 2022). Third, studies centering on digital and media literacy as key factors in enhancing youth capacity to critically and productively engage in digital spaces (Setiadi et al.,

2023; Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017). However, across these tendencies, it becomes evident that the socio-cultural and religious dimensions shaping Muslim youths' understanding and adoption of digital citizen engagement and philanthropy remain largely underexplored. This gap is significant because understanding patterns of Muslim youth participation in digital spaces is not merely a question of technological literacy but also of how cultural, religious, and social solidarity values influence their engagement with technology. In other words, deeper research is required to avoid the assumption that technology operates uniformly across contexts, and to grasp the distinctive nature of Muslim Millennials and Gen Z digital practices.

This study seeks to fill the gap in previous research by examining how cultural and religious values shape Muslim youths' engagement with digital technologies in the context of civic participation and philanthropy. The capacity of young people to participate in digital spaces is not determined solely by technical factors, such as access to devices or internet connectivity, but also by the social, cultural, and religious frameworks that inform their perceptions of the digital sphere. Muslim Millennials and Gen Zs live in a social environment infused with religiosity while simultaneously navigating the digital logic of efficiency, speed, and visibility. This interplay generates unique social practices that cannot be equated with those of non-Muslim youth. Accordingly, this study addresses three central research questions: first, how do Muslim youth conceptualize citizen engagement in digital spaces, particularly regarding social and religious issues?, second, how do religious values, generational identity, and social experiences shape their patterns of participation in digital philanthropy?, Third, can the new forms of Muslim youth participation in digital spaces be mapped and understood as distinctive social practices that differ from conventional frameworks of participation?. Answering these questions will provide a deeper understanding of how young Muslims articulate participation and solidarity in the digital sphere. This understanding can strengthen digital literacy initiatives, foster more meaningful engagement strategies, and inform public policy design tailored to the needs of Muslim youth in the digital era.

This study argues that the dissonance between digital technology and the socio-cultural and religious values of Muslim youth has, paradoxically, generated new patterns of citizen engagement and digital philanthropy. Muslim youth do not fully conform to the market-oriented, algorithm-driven logic of efficiency, speed, and individualism. Instead, they negotiate these logics through the values of solidarity, faith, and community ethics that define their identity. Hence, Muslim youths' participation in digital spaces should not be seen as a mere reproduction of global trends but as a distinctive local articulation. This can

be observed in the phenomenon of online sadaqah campaigns, Islamically inspired social movements, and cross-community solidarity initiatives utilizing digital platforms. These forms demonstrate that digital technology functions not only as a technical medium but also as a contested space of values and identity. The success of digital spaces in facilitating civic engagement and philanthropy thus depends on the readiness of infrastructure, the strength of digital literacy, and the alignment with living religious and ethical frameworks within society. Therefore, this study contends that building meaningful digital participation among Muslim youth requires social engineering that integrates technology, culture, and religion. Within this framework, the study seeks to map how new forms of Muslim youth participation emerge from the dialectical interaction between digital technological logics and Islamic values. This argument is not only crucial for filling an academic gap but also strategic for understanding the trajectory of socio-religious movements among young Muslims in the digital age, while offering insights for the development of public policies and social programs attuned to their identities and needs.

Research Methodology

This study employs a library research or literature study approach, which is a qualitative method that relies on systematic analysis of existing academic literature to explore and conceptualize complex socio-cultural phenomena (Snyder, 2019; Fink, 2019). As a literature-based study, this research does not involve primary data collection from human subjects, but rather synthesizes insights from scholarly texts, journal articles, books, and other published materials relevant to the research focus. Source selection was conducted using a purposive sampling strategy based on three inclusion criteria: first, works that discuss Muslim youth (Millennials and Generation Z); second, publications focusing on digital participation, civic engagement, or digital philanthropy; and third, sources published in reputable or indexed academic journals within the past decade. Data were gathered from secondary sources accessed through academic databases such as Google Scholar and Scopus, using keywords such as 'Muslim youth,' 'digital philanthropy,' 'online sadaqah,' 'digital citizenship,' and 'Islamic crowdfunding.'

The search and selection process involved three stages: identification, screening, and eligibility assessment, to ensure the relevance and credibility of the selected materials (Xiao & Watson, 2019). Analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques, which included data reduction, coding, categorization, and theme development (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Major themes identified include 'digital identity negotiation,' 'religious commodification,' and

‘faith-based philanthropy.’ To enhance analytical rigor and reliability, triangulation of perspectives was performed by comparing findings across various disciplines such as media studies, Islamic philanthropy, youth sociology, and digital culture (Denzin, 2017). This library research design enables a comprehensive understanding of how Muslim youth negotiate digital spaces within their socio-religious contexts, without the constraints of empirical fieldwork. Furthermore, this study provides a theoretical foundation for future empirical investigations into digital engagement among Muslim Millennials and Gen Z.

The Meaning of Digital Participation for Muslim Youth: From Clicktivism to Real-World Action

The role of digital spaces in enhancing citizen engagement among Muslim youth represents a complex phenomenon that cannot be reduced to mere symbolic actions, such as liking or sharing posts on social media. For many Muslim youth, the digital sphere serves as a crucial entry point for cultivating awareness, building solidarity, and organizing communities. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, and YouTube have become dynamic channels that allow young people to engage in discussions on social and political issues. Beyond that, digital spaces function as mediums for mobilizing social actions that are later manifested in offline initiatives such as fundraising, community advocacy, solidarity campaigns, and grassroots movements. The transition from online interaction to offline activism is deeply shaped by the cultural, social, and political contexts that frame Muslim youths’ lived experiences across different regions (E. Harris & Bardey, 2019; Wray-Lake & Shubert, 2019).

Muslim youths’ participation in digital civic engagement reflects a more nuanced understanding of citizenship than the formal definitions typically tied to the state. (A. Harris & Roose, 2014) argue that social movements among minority groups often emerge outside formal institutional frameworks, using more fluid, informal, and do-it-yourself approaches. Such forms of engagement challenge the narrow conception of citizenship that is commonly measured through participation in elections or formal organizational membership. Meanwhile, (Wray-Lake & Shubert, 2019) emphasize that expressions of civic engagement are strongly shaped by ethnicity and socio-political context, which leads Muslim youth to develop distinctive modes of participation. For marginalized groups, digital spaces provide a means to fill the void of representation in formal public arenas. This demonstrates that citizenship is not a static concept but a socially constructed practice that evolves alongside technological and communicative transformations.

(Wilf & Wray-Lake, 2024) highlight that online activities among youth serve not only as a means of information dissemination but also as mechanisms for fulfilling psychological needs and fostering a sense of community belonging. Amid discrimination and marginalization, digital spaces become arenas for both symbolic and material resistance. For instance, Muslim youth facing ethnic stereotypes or exclusion can use digital platforms to offer emotional support and construct counter-narratives that challenge dominant discourses. In this sense, digital spaces play a dual role: as sites of personal empowerment and as arenas for collective mobilization. While digital media can stimulate political consciousness, debates persist regarding the extent to which digital activism can translate into tangible real-world action.

(Zyad, 2023) asserts that social media can indeed broaden political awareness among youth, but it often fails to equip them with the practical skills required for sustained offline civic engagement. This phenomenon, commonly known as slacktivism or superficial activism, reflects a form of participation confined to digital symbols without material consequences. Hence, supportive frameworks are needed to bridge online engagement with concrete social action. Social connectedness within local communities plays a significant role in reinforcing civic participation. (Lenzi et al., 2013) found that adolescents with strong ties to their local communities exhibit higher levels of civic responsibility. This finding suggests that online activism that is linked to real-world communities tends to be more sustainable and impactful. In other words, local communities act as bridges between digital awareness and tangible civic action.

One of the fundamental issues in Muslim youth engagement is representation. (Eseverri-Mayer & Khir-Allah, 2022) emphasize that the narratives of Muslim youth in Spain are often misrepresented or excluded within mainstream political discourses, limiting their political participation. However, digital spaces provide opportunities for reclaiming narratives and amplifying community voices. In this way, online platforms function as counter-publics, arenas where marginalized groups can contest dominant ideologies while fostering cross-community solidarity. (Cureton & Aguinaldo, 2024) note that Muslim refugee youth often face discrimination within educational settings that restrict their development and civic participation.

In this context, digital platforms provide alternative, safer channels for self-expression, confirming that online spaces are not only communicative platforms but also safe spaces for empowerment and community resilience. (Mainsah et al., 2016) document a shift in youth participation patterns from long-term engagement in formal organizations to more flexible, project-based forms of involvement. Social media facilitates this transformation by enabling short-

term yet high-impact campaigns. This reflects a redefinition of political participation pathways that are more responsive to the dynamics of the digital era. The experiences of Muslim YouTubers discussed by (Çelebioğlu, 2022) demonstrate how digital media serve as tools for expressing identity and articulating social issues. The narratives they construct operate as alternative representations that challenge stereotypes. Thus, social media function not merely as tools of communication but as spaces for identity formation and civic expression.

(Clark, 2014) underline the role of smartphones in shaping digital civic behavior. Mobile devices enable instant communication, rapid access to political information, and efficient coordination of social actions. Mobile technology acts as a mediator that extends the reach of youth activism while accelerating community mobilization. However, digital engagement also faces inherent limitations. (Keating & Melis, 2017) observe that online political discourse often reinforces echo chambers, wherein young people primarily interact with others who share similar views. This dynamic can narrow political horizons and hinder cross-perspective dialogue. Therefore, strategies are needed to promote diversity in political conversations and expand inter-community interaction. (Dang et al., 2022) explain that the historical exclusion of minority groups has shaped their modes of civic practice. Rather than engaging in large-scale political movements, many minority communities tend to focus on internal community advocacy. This historical lens helps explain why Muslim youth engagement often centers on community-based initiatives rather than mainstream political protest.

The literature thus indicates that digital spaces play a strategic role in Muslim youth civic engagement. Digital platforms are not merely communicative arenas but also channels of empowerment, spaces of alternative representation, and bridges toward real-world action. Nevertheless, digital engagement must be supported by frameworks that encourage the transformation of symbolic activism into sustained social involvement. Community bonds, equitable representation, safe educational spaces, and strategies to counter echo chambers constitute crucial factors in building inclusive digital citizenship. Therefore, future research and practice in this field should continue to emphasize recognition of the diverse experiences of Muslim youth, both online and offline. In doing so, digital spaces can optimally function as arenas of civic engagement that are not merely symbolic but also substantive, sustainable, and transformative.

Religious Values as the Driving Force of Digital Philanthropy

The digital transformation has significantly reshaped the ways in which Muslim Millennials and Generation Z experience and practice their religiosity, particularly in the realms of philanthropy, zakat, and community solidarity. The digital sphere is no longer viewed merely as a medium for communication or entertainment; it has evolved into a spiritual space where young Muslims can fulfill their religious obligations in a practical, efficient, and accessible manner. The availability of online platforms enables the fulfillment of religious duties such as zakat and sadaqah with ease and speed, illustrating how faith itself is being transformed alongside technological advancement (M. E. Putri & Hanif, 2024).

This phenomenon reflects the intersection between spirituality and generational identity, where religious practices are adapted into digital formats, demonstrating the alignment of Islamic values with the demands of contemporary lifestyles. Financial technology (fintech) plays an indispensable role in strengthening Islamic finance in the digital era. Tech-savvy young Muslims increasingly prefer financial services that are fast, transparent, and compliant with sharia principles. They seek convenience in fulfilling obligations such as zakat, infak, and waqf through digital platforms embedded in their daily routines (M. E. Putri & Hanif, 2024). The emergence of specialized zakat distribution applications exemplifies the growing integration between technology and Islamic finance (Hariyanto et al., 2024). This trend not only facilitates religious observance but also enhances public trust in sharia-compliant financial systems.

The growing attention of Muslim Millennials and Gen Z toward zakat collection also aligns closely with global development agendas, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Studies indicate that millennials possess an advanced level of digital literacy, which ensures that zakat obligations are carried out effectively and accountably (Rizal et al., 2023). Such literacy encompasses not only technical proficiency but also critical awareness of how zakat can serve as a mechanism for poverty reduction, social welfare, and solidarity enhancement. When zakat practices are integrated with social media platforms, their impact expands beyond individual piety, stimulating collective awareness and participation within wider communities. The role of social media in shaping young Muslims' religiosity cannot be overlooked. Muslim Millennials and Gen Z are increasingly active in da'wah through digital platforms, employing communication strategies that resonate with popular culture and contemporary trends (Fitriansyah & Lubis, 2023). This shift marks a transformation from traditional preaching to a more interactive, visual, and

culturally adaptive mode of communication. Through this process, young Muslims negotiate their identities in online spaces, balancing spirituality with modern lifestyles (Çelebioğlu, 2022). These digital identities are both personal and collective, constructing a shared narrative within the global Muslim community.

Youth participation in digital philanthropy is also becoming more prominent. Social media serves as an instrument for promoting zakat, sadaqah, and various charitable initiatives. This enhances cross-border solidarity by allowing individuals from different regions and countries to contribute to collective causes (Pusparini et al., 2023). Digital zakat platforms offering instant transactions provide tangible evidence that religious obligations can now be fulfilled dynamically, rapidly, and interactively. This evolution signifies a shift from traditional models of charity toward more flexible and community-responsive forms of participation (Ferdana et al., 2022). Educational programs that combine technical digital skills with Islamic values have proven effective in enhancing participation in both religious and social activities (Warsiyah et al., 2023). Through digital literacy, this generation can manage their online identities positively, avoid harmful content, and utilize technology for philanthropic purposes. Such education also prepares future community leaders capable of integrating Islamic ethics with technological innovation.

Islamic financial institutions and zakat organizations swiftly adopted technology to ensure the continuity of charitable distribution (Bin-Nashwan et al., 2020). Muslim youth responded by transitioning to online services, demonstrating resilience and creativity in maintaining their religious commitments despite constraints (Ninglasari, 2021). This underscores the role of technology not only as a practical tool but also as a medium that sustains religious continuity in times of crisis. Continuous exposure to digital content has shaped new narratives of piety and community among Muslim youth. Their religious identity is now influenced not only by traditional rituals but also by online interactions and digital representations (Kanafi & Bakhri, 2023). In Indonesia, for instance, research reveals the emergence of a moderate Islamic narrative among millennials, one that harmonizes religious obligations with contemporary sociocultural trends (Firdaus et al., 2023). This narrative demonstrates how young Muslims respond to globalization and digitalization by rearticulating Islam in ways that maintain both authenticity and relevance.

Muslim youth integrate financial innovation with Islamic traditions, particularly in philanthropy and community engagement. This process not only revitalizes Islamic philanthropy but also establishes new models of socio-religious participation that are more inclusive, dynamic, and global (Amaliyah &

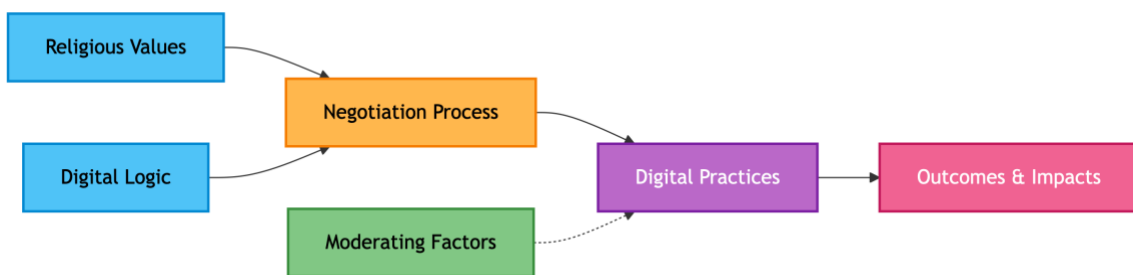
Hartono, 2022; Ulfahadi, 2023) Overall, Muslim Millennials and Gen Z are forging a new path in their religious life. Through digital spaces, they not only perform zakat and charity but also construct religious identities, strengthen community solidarity, and harmonize faith with modernity.

New Forms of Citizen Engagement and Digital Philanthropy

Based on systematic analysis of existing literature, this study identifies a dynamic pattern explaining Muslim youth digital participation. Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework mapping the relationships between key elements identified in the literature review.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model of Muslim Youth Digital Participation: From Values to Practice.



Source: Developed by the author based on literature synthesis, 2025.

This diagram presents a compelling model of how traditional religious values dynamically interact with digital platform logic to create new forms of socio-spiritual engagement. The process begins with two primary drivers: core religious principles and the inherent structures of digital platforms, which converge through a negotiation and hybridization process. This negotiation produces innovative digital practices such as online charity (#SedekahOnline), Islamic crowdfunding, virtual volunteering, and digital advocacy. These emerging practices are moderated by three critical factors: digital literacy, technological infrastructure, and community support, which determine their effectiveness and adoption.

The ultimate outcomes demonstrate a successful integration of faith and technology, resulting in context-specific digital citizenship that respects religious norms, reinforced religious identity through digital participation, and measurable socio-spiritual impact. This model illustrates that digital transformation doesn't dilute religious values but rather creates new pathways for their expression and amplification. The flow chart effectively visualizes how

technology serves as an enabler rather than a disruptor of religious practice, showing that when thoughtfully hybridized, digital platforms can enhance and expand traditional forms of worship, charity, and community engagement while maintaining their spiritual essence. Thus, this framework offers a holistic lens for understanding how Muslim youth digital participation functions simultaneously as a vehicle for religious expression, social action, and identity formation in the 21st century.

The emergence of new forms of participation among Muslim youth can be conceptualized through Islam-based social campaigns, intercommunity solidarity movements, and crowdfunding initiatives aimed at socio-religious purposes. These practices signify a major shift occurring at the intersection of digital technology and Islamic values, aligned with the aspirations of younger generations. Notable examples include initiatives such as #SedekahOnline, virtual volunteering, and digital petitions, all of which demonstrate how digital platforms can be reformulated as impactful instruments of social engagement. Crowdfunding has become an important mechanism that enables Muslim youth to financially support various causes they care about. The integration of religious narratives within crowdfunding campaigns has been found to influence their success rates, highlighting the role of socio-religious storytelling in motivating funding decisions among contributors (Rama et al., 2022). This demonstrates that crowdfunding functions not only as a financial tool but also as a catalyst for community solidarity, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which intensified reliance on digital fundraising platforms while revealing structural inequalities (Kenworthy et al., 2023).

Furthermore, crowdfunding is increasingly utilized not only for individual projects but also for broader socio-religious initiatives. Muslim youth employ platforms that align with their ethical and moral values to raise funds for disaster relief, education, and healthcare (Baber et al., 2022). The flexibility of crowdfunding allows them to navigate funding barriers that often disadvantage marginalized groups, such as those from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Horta et al., 2022). The capacity of crowdfunding to democratize access to financial opportunities is evident in the experiences of youth who successfully mobilize community support through culturally relevant strategies. The social dynamics surrounding crowdfunding among Muslim youth intersect with issues of identity and community narrative. Participation in crowdfunding not only facilitates financial mobilization but also fosters a sense of belonging and collective responsibility, particularly in contexts where young people feel marginalized. Such campaigns allow them to assert agency and redefine their narratives within broader social discourse (Eseverri-Mayer & Khir-Allah, 2022).

By integrating digital technology with cultural and religious practices, young Muslims engage meaningfully in civic life, influencing dominant discourses about Islam and social contribution (Kiliyamannil, 2022). To systematically capture the innovative modes of participation emerging from this negotiation, the following table maps the primary forms of digital civic engagement and philanthropy observed among Muslim Millennials and Gen Z. These forms represent concrete manifestations of how Islamic values are hybridized with digital logics to create distinct, context-sensitive practices.

Table 1

Typology of Emerging Digital Civic and Philanthropic Practices among Muslim Youth.

Form of Participation	Primary Platform/Medium	Core Islamic Value(s) Activated	Key Characteristics & Examples	Key References
Digital Sadaqah/Zakat Campaigns (e.g., #SedekahOnline)	Social Media (Instagram, Twitter/X), Dedicated Zakat Apps	<i>Sadaqah, Zakat, Amanah</i> (trust)	Micro-donations, narrative-driven fundraising, transparency focus. <i>Example: Instagram campaigns for medical bills.</i>	Al Arif et al. (2023); Ferdana et al. (2022); Pusparini et al. (2023)
Islamic/Value s-Based Crowdfunding	Platforms: LaunchGood, Kitabisa, etc.	<i>Ummah, Ta'awun</i> (cooperation), <i>Barakah</i>	Project-based fundraising for mosques, schools, disaster relief. Uses religious narratives.	Rama et al. (2022); Baber et al. (2022); Kenworthy et al. (2023)
Virtual Volunteering & Digital Da'wah	Zoom, WhatsApp, YouTube, Podcasts	<i>Amal jama'i</i> (collective action), <i>Da'wah, Ilm</i> (knowledge)	Online skill-sharing, religious content creation, teaching. Overcomes geographical limits.	Çelebioğlu (2022); Zaid et al. (2022); Ulfahadi (2023)
Digital Petitions & Advocacy Campaigns	Change.org, Social Media (#hashtags)	<i>Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, Adl</i> (justice)	Mobilizing public opinion, policy advocacy, symbolic solidarity campaigns.	Eseverri-Mayer & Khir-Allah (2022); Cureton & Aguinaldo (2024)
Inter-Community Solidarity Networks	Facebook Groups, Telegram, Community Apps	<i>Ukhuwah Islamiyah, Ma'slahah</i> (public interest)	Cross-border support for marginalized groups, refugees, crisis response. Builds belonging.	Eseverri-Mayer & Khir-Allah (2022); Kiliyamannil (2022)

Source: Developed by the author based on literature synthesis, 2025.

As illustrated in Table 1, the digital practices of Muslim youth are not monolithic but represent a spectrum of engagements where technology serves as a conduit for specific Islamic ethical principles. The typology reveals two central dynamics: first, the translation of classical obligations (like zakat and sadaqah) into digital

formats that prioritize accessibility and viral reach; and second, the expansion of civic action into spaces where Islamic concepts like ummah and amar ma'ruf nahi munkar are enacted through network-based mobilization. Crucially, these forms are not merely digital replicas of offline acts. For instance, Islamic crowdfunding leverages the logic of algorithmic visibility and global connectivity to operationalize ta'awun (cooperation) on a transnational scale, while virtual volunteering redefines amal jama'i (collective work) by decoupling it from physical co-presence. This hybridization generates what can be termed a 'digital fiqh of participation,' where religious imperatives are continually interpreted within the affordances and constraints of digital platforms. However, the success and authenticity of these forms remain contingent on navigating the challenges outlined earlier, such as avoiding the commodification of religious sentiment in viral campaigns or ensuring equitable digital access for meaningful participation. Thus, the table not only categorizes but also provides a framework for analyzing the depth and sustainability of these emerging socio-digital rituals.

This trend reflects a broader global movement in which youth harness technology for social good, thereby redefining community engagement in the digital era. By participating in campaigns that embody shared values and collective aspirations, Muslim youth actively reshape public perceptions of their identity and contributions (Kiliyamannil, 2022). Initiatives such as #SedekahOnline illustrate how traditional acts of giving are being preserved and adapted to digital contexts, reinforcing the essence of charity (sadaqah) as a core Islamic principle that deeply resonates with the younger generation (Rama et al., 2022). Virtual volunteering provides another avenue for Muslim youth to engage with their communities. The digital landscape enables individuals to contribute their time and skills while overcoming logistical constraints that often limit traditional volunteerism. Online platforms facilitate the coordination of mobilization and support efforts, showcasing the adaptability of young people in responding to contemporary community challenges (Paoloni et al., 2019). This adaptability marks the emergence of a new ethos in which volunteerism is embedded within a globally connected community striving for collective progress. Additionally, digital petitions exemplify how Muslim youth utilize technology to advocate for social justice and policy change. Online petitions empower them to raise awareness about issues that directly affect their communities, from demanding institutional reform to championing broader social justice movements (Baber et al., 2022). This grassroots mobilization amplifies their voices within social discourse, particularly in spaces where they have traditionally been marginalized.

Islamic values play a central role in these forms of engagement, linking spiritual beliefs to social activism. The principles of sadaqah (charity) and ummah (community well-being) inspire both individual and collective efforts to address urgent social concerns. These digital practices represent a cross-generational dialogue that translates traditional Islamic teachings into the framework of contemporary youth activism (Krivonos, 2016). By connecting these values with modern methodologies, participation becomes broader and more inclusive, resonating with the diverse lived experiences of Muslim youth. As crowdfunding and virtual initiatives continue to expand, it becomes evident that the motivations driving Muslim youth participation are deeply rooted in their socio-cultural contexts. Challenges such as economic inequality and social injustice encourage proactive engagement, motivating them to develop innovative solutions that address immediate needs while promoting systemic change (Yusuf, 2014).

This proactive approach underscores the resilience and ingenuity of Muslim youth in navigating and reshaping complex social landscapes. The interaction between digital platforms and Islamic principles opens new pathways for understanding youth participation. By embracing digital technology, Muslim youth demonstrate transformative capacities to influence their social environments and broader narratives about Islamic practice. This positions them as key agents of change who challenge stereotypes and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of their multifaceted identities as socially responsible individuals (Kiliyamannil, 2022). Intercommunity solidarity movements further exemplify the potential of collective action beyond traditional boundaries. These movements leverage social media and digital platforms to unite diverse groups under shared objectives, fostering dialogue and mutual understanding that yield tangible social benefits (Eseverri-Mayer & Khir-Allah, 2022).

Through these various forms of engagement, Muslim youth underscore the importance of creating spaces for dialogue and empowerment. The integration of crowdfunding, virtual volunteering, and digital petitions affirms their commitment to activism and participatory citizenship. By reimagining digital arenas as platforms for advocacy and collective support, they embody a generation striving for justice and inclusion within their communities and broader social landscapes (Kiliyamannil, 2022). In summary, the creative application of digital technology by Muslim youth marks a growing trend toward active and meaningful participation in social initiatives. The convergence of Islamic values with contemporary engagement strategies provides unique insights into how digital platforms serve as vehicles for social transformation,

empowering future generations to articulate their aspirations and drive positive change within their communities and across the globe.

Challenges of Digital Literacy and Social Engineering in Digital Participation

Over the past decade, the development of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed how individuals and communities interact, including within religious contexts. Muslim youth, as a demographic highly familiar with technology, have become increasingly active in utilizing digital spaces for various participatory practices, ranging from da'wah (religious outreach) and social activism to philanthropy. However, such digital participation does not come without challenges. Limited digital literacy, the commodification of religion, and technological infrastructure inequalities all pose significant barriers to meaningful engagement among Muslim youth in online environments. Digital literacy is therefore a crucial aspect in understanding how Muslim youth participate in digital spaces.

This literacy extends beyond technical competence in using devices or applications; it also involves a critical awareness of the social, political, and economic dynamics that shape digital platforms (Lomachinska & Hryshyna, 2024). Many young Muslims continue to face limitations in recognizing digital risks such as misinformation, algorithmic exploitation, and the commodification of religious practices. Misinformation, for instance, often influences how young generations consume religious content, which in turn affects their interpretation of Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, social media algorithms operate under capitalist logics that privilege popularity and commercial profitability over ethical or spiritual value. This tendency creates bias in how religious practices are represented in the digital sphere. (Kusumaningputri, 2019) emphasizes the need for educational strategies that strengthen critical reading and analytical skills among Muslim learners. Such critical literacy allows young people to move beyond passive consumption and become active producers of content capable of negotiating Islamic values within a digitally mediated ecosystem. In other words, digital literacy must be understood as a multidimensional competency encompassing technical proficiency, ethical awareness, and critical reflection.

Another phenomenon shaping Muslim youth's digital participation is the commodification of religion. In digital contexts, religion is often treated as a marketable asset, manifested through symbols, practices, or narratives. (Darmawan, 2023; Husna, 2019; Imawan et al., 2023) note that commodification risks diluting the core religious values by transforming them into consumable goods. (Redden, 2012) describes this as the 'commodification of belief,' where

religious practices are packaged and circulated as marketable products. (Kusumalestari, 2020) highlights how religious expressions in digital media are frequently framed according to market logic rather than spiritual intent. Similarly, (Noviani & Sitompul, 2023; S. A. Putri, 2024) demonstrate that representations of Islam in media often coincide with consumer culture, for example, online charity campaigns that promote not only philanthropic values but also modern self-image and 'Islamic lifestyle.' This phenomenon raises critical questions: To what extent do commodified religious expressions still represent spiritual authenticity? Do religious symbols in digital spaces strengthen Muslim identity, or do they reduce it to a mere consumer trend? These questions compel Muslim youth to reflect on how they express religiosity online.

Beyond literacy and commodification, technological infrastructure remains a decisive factor in shaping Muslim youth's digital participation. Internet availability, network quality, and access to digital devices determine the degree of engagement possible. Inequalities in access often exacerbate the digital literacy gap. (Fandir, 2024) underscores the importance of integrating technological innovation into Islamic education, yet this integration faces serious obstacles, particularly in regions with limited digital infrastructure. The uneven distribution of access risks excluding certain youth groups from digital participation, thereby creating a 'digital divide' within Muslim communities themselves. Conversely, robust technological infrastructure not only facilitates access but also fosters the formation of productive online communities. Through such communities, youth can share experiences, exchange ideas, and build solidarity that reinforces their identity and participation in digital spaces. To address these challenges, social engineering strategies grounded in Islamic values can provide a constructive approach. Such strategies aim to cultivate a sense of ownership and responsibility among youth regarding their digital practices. (Fandir, 2024; Mpofu, 2021) emphasize that Islamic values such as ummah (community) and sadaqah (charity) can serve as foundations for designing digital literacy programs that are not only technical but also ethical and reflective. Integrating Islamic principles into digital literacy can help youth understand that online engagement is not merely technical interaction but also a form of social worship imbued with moral dimensions. For example, verifying information before sharing, avoiding hate speech, and promoting positive narratives about Islam on social media. Hence, Islamic value-based digital literacy enhances not only technical capacity but also strengthens social and spiritual responsibility.

Addressing the challenges of Muslim youth's digital participation requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach involving education,

community, and cross-sector partnerships. (Chernichkin & Topchiev, 2021) suggest that critical dialogue within communities empowers youth to navigate the complexities of digital spaces more effectively. Education plays a central role in equipping younger generations with both technical skills and critical awareness. Educational programs should be designed adaptively and inclusively, considering the diverse socio-cultural contexts of Muslim youth. (Lubis et al., 2024; Suryana & Handoko, 2023) emphasize the importance of iterative processes in program development, actively incorporating youth feedback to ensure relevance and efficacy.

Furthermore, collaborations between educational institutions, community leaders, and technology providers can create conducive environments for cultivating critical digital literacy. Such collaborations open pathways for a healthier digital ecosystem where Islamic values, ethical principles, and technological innovation complement one another. Muslim youth's digital participation represents a critical phenomenon for understanding how young generations negotiate identity and social engagement in the digital age. The major challenges they face include limited digital literacy, the commodification of religion, and infrastructural inequality. To overcome these, a holistic framework integrating education, critical awareness, and Islamic value-based social engineering is needed. Through this approach, Muslim youth's digital participation can evolve from mere presence into a sustainable vehicle for social transformation. By embedding Islamic ethics into digital literacy, strengthening infrastructure, and fostering cross-sector collaboration, we can enrich the digital experiences of Muslim youth while empowering them to contribute meaningfully to broader social transformation in the digital era.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the digital participation of Millennial and Gen Z Muslims cannot be understood merely as a passive adoption of global trends, but rather as a dynamic process of negotiation between the logic of digital technology, which emphasizes speed, efficiency, and individualism, and the socio-cultural and religious values that shape their identities. The findings highlight the emergence of new forms of citizen engagement and digital philanthropy, such as the #SedekahOnline campaign, faith-driven crowdfunding, virtual volunteering, and digital petitions. These practices demonstrate how digital spaces have become arenas for the contestation of values as well as the reconfiguration of solidarity (*ukhwah*), community ethics (*ummah*), and spiritual obligations (such as *zakat* and *sadaqah*) within the framework of contemporary participation. The main contribution of this study

lies in its attempt to fill a gap in the literature by positioning socio-cultural and religious dimensions as central analytical lenses for understanding Muslim youth's digital participation. In doing so, it enriches academic discourse that has predominantly viewed technology in linear terms, either as an enabler of participation or as a source of risk. This approach opens pathways toward a more contextual and culturally sensitive understanding of digital engagement within the broader fields of digital society studies, youth studies, and Islamic philanthropy.

Nevertheless, this research has certain limitations, primarily due to its exploratory nature and focus on mapping participatory forms. Variations in experience based on geographical, socio-economic, and sectarian factors have not been examined in depth. Therefore, future research should employ empirical and comparative approaches. Critical questions for further investigation include: the role of social media algorithms in shaping the visibility of Islamic philanthropic campaigns; the potential of Islamic fintech and blockchain technologies in enhancing transparency; the sustainability of emerging digital participation models; and strategies to prevent the commodification of religion so that spiritual authenticity can be preserved. Addressing these questions would constitute a strategic step toward building a digital participation ecosystem that is not only innovative, but also ethical, inclusive, and meaningful for Muslim youth in the digital era.

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Contributors

Nur Faizah

ORCID:  <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8200-8878>

Email: nurfaizah@iainsorong.ac.id

Shahid Manalundong

ORCID:  <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9873-2274>

Email: shahid.manalundong@msumain.edu.ph

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