
Received: 9 February 2026 | Accepted: 5 March 2026 | Published: 26 June 2026

THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC ETHICS, MORALS AND CHARACTER IN ADDRESSING THE CRISIS OF CHARACTER IN THE DIGITAL 4.0 ERA

Syahrul Nizam¹, Devi Nur Hidayah², Julayli Eki Syafitri³, Bagus Adi Pratama,⁴ Lili Ayu Ambarwati⁵, Tazkia Nazila Tsani⁶, Fakhri Muammar Fadhy⁷, Maulidia Anita Saqinah⁸, Kutniatus Zahro⁹

Authors' email addresses: 250210201036@mail.unej.ac.id,
250210201044@mail.unej.ac.id, 250210201039@mail.unej.ac.id,
250210201016@mail.unej.ac.id, 250210201037@mail.unej.ac.id,
250210201043@mail.unej.ac.id, 250210201011@mail.unej.ac.id,
250210201046@mail.unej.ac.id, 250210201031@mail.unej.ac.id

University of Jember, East Java, Indonesia **Abstract**

This study aims to analyse the role of Islamic ethics, morals and character in addressing the crisis of character in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The development of digital technology, social media and the tide of globalisation has brought about significant changes to patterns of behaviour in society, particularly in terms of social ethics and morals. This study employs a literature review (library research) using a descriptive qualitative approach, analysing various academic sources such as journals, books, articles, and previous research relevant to ethics, morality, Islamic ethics, Sufism, and the development of modern technology. The research findings indicate that technological progress has a positive impact in facilitating communication and access to information, but it has also given rise to various moral issues such as the spread of hoaxes, cyberbullying, hate speech, and a decline in communication ethics in the digital sphere. From an Islamic perspective, ethics serves as a rational guide in determining the right and wrong of an action; morality relates to social norms that develop within society; whilst akhlak is grounded in the values of the Qur'an and Hadith, which emphasise the development of human character and spirituality. Furthermore, Sufism plays a vital role in fostering self-control, honesty, responsibility and spiritual awareness amidst modern life. Therefore, strengthening akhlak education based on Islamic values is a crucial step in nurturing a generation of character, ethical conduct and the ability to utilise technology wisely in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Keywords: *ethics, morals, Islamic ethics, crisis of character, Fourth Industrial Revolution.*

INTRODUCTION

Ethics, morals and Islamic ethics are three important concepts relating to human behaviour in everyday life. These three terms are often used interchangeably as they all address the question of whether an action is good or bad. However, conceptually, ethics, morals and Islamic ethics differ in terms of their sources of values, approaches and scope. In modern life, discussions regarding ethics, morals and Islamic ethics have become increasingly important as technological developments and globalisation have brought about significant changes to patterns of social behaviour.

Ethics derives from *the* words '*ethiek*' (Dutch), '*ethics*' (English) and '*ethos*' (Greek), which mean human customs or behaviour. In the plural form, '*ta etha*' refers to the customs that, according to Aristotle, form the basis of the concept of ethics. Ethics is a branch of philosophy that examines human values, norms and behaviour based on rational considerations of right and wrong. Ethics is not merely concerned with rules of behaviour, but also critically examines how humans ought to act in social life. Within society, ethics serves as a guide for building good and harmonious social relationships. According to Himmawan et al. (2024), ethics is the discipline that examines human behaviour based on moral values, social norms, and human reason in determining whether an action is considered good or bad.

The term 'moral' or 'morality' derives from Latin: '*mos*' (singular) and '*mores*' (plural), meaning customs, habits, or behaviours prevalent within society. Morality relates to the rules of life and standards of behaviour that are generally accepted as guidelines for social life. It also reflects a person's inner state that drives certain actions in daily life. According to Suseno (1998), morality serves as a measure of a person's worth, both as an individual and as a member of society. Meanwhile, Ouska and Whellan (1997) explain that morality is a concept concerning good and evil that is inherent in human nature and forms the basis for action. Thus, morality is more practical in nature as it relates directly to the social norms and customs that develop within society. According to Arrafi et al. (2023) and Febriyanti and Dewi (2021), morality is one of the key foundations for shaping human behaviour in accordance with social and humanitarian values.

In addition to ethics and morality, Islam also recognises the concept of akhlak as a guide to human behaviour. Akhlak derives from the Arabic word *khuluq*, which means a person's disposition, nature, conduct, or character. Akhlak relates to human behaviour that stems from religious values and divine teachings. In Islam, akhlak is a crucial aspect as it concerns both a person's relationship with Allah SWT and their relationships with fellow human beings. Akhlak emphasises not only outward behaviour but also the development of one's inner and spiritual character. According to Mu'thi and Abdul (2023), ethics is more philosophical and rational in nature; morality is more closely related to the social values that develop within society; whilst akhlak is grounded in religious values that emphasise the development of human character and spirituality.

Technological developments in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are characterised by advances in the internet, social media, artificial intelligence and the

digitalisation of communication, which affect almost every aspect of human life. These advances have brought about various positive impacts, such as easier access to information, faster communication, and developments in education and the digital economy. The results of the Indonesian Internet Penetration Survey, released by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), show that the number of internet users in Indonesia in 2025 will reach 229.4 million people, or around 80.66 per cent of the total national population. This figure represents an increase compared to the previous year and indicates that the internet has become an integral part of Indonesian society. However, on the other hand, technological development has also given rise to various moral and social issues, such as the spread of hoaxes, *cyberbullying*, hate speech, a decline in communication ethics, and an increase in individualistic behaviour within society. These phenomena demonstrate that technological progress is not always matched by moral and character development (APJII, 2025).

This situation highlights a gap between technological progress and the development of human character. The growing number of internet users in Indonesia not only opens up opportunities for progress in education, the economy and communication, but also increases the risk of various behavioural deviations in the digital space if not balanced by ethical awareness and moral responsibility. Easy access to information, without the ability to critically filter it, can trigger the spread of misinformation, social conflict, and a decline in the quality of interpersonal interactions. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen ethical, moral and character values as the foundation for utilising technology wisely and responsibly.

According to Munawir, Salsabillah and Rosyidah (2024), technological developments in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution have a positive impact on improving access to education and communication, but may also lead to a decline in moral values if not balanced by a strong education in character and ethics. Furthermore, Rahayu and Nawawi (2024) explain that Islamic ethical values are of significant relevance in shaping digital ethics, particularly in fostering honesty, responsibility, and wisdom in the use of social media.

From an Islamic perspective, the development of moral character is also closely linked to the teachings of Sufism, which emphasise the purification of the soul and self-control. According to Jariyah and Mujab (2025), Sufism plays a vital role in shaping human character through spiritual values such as patience, sincerity, humility and responsibility. These values form an essential foundation for developing individuals who are not only

intellectually intelligent but also possess strong spiritual and moral depth amidst the development of modern technology.

Based on this discussion, a study of ethics, morals and Islamic ethics is crucial to understanding how these values can be applied in modern life, particularly in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Based on this description, this study aims to analyse the role of Islamic ethics, morals and character in addressing various moral and social challenges in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, as well as their relevance in shaping a society characterised by ethical conduct, responsibility and wisdom in the use of digital technology.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using *the library research* method. This method was chosen because the study aims to examine, analyse and synthesise various scientific sources relevant to the topic of Islamic ethics, morals and conduct in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, without conducting direct field data collection. The data sources used in this study are secondary in nature, comprising national and international scientific journals, reference books, scientific articles, and previous research findings relating to the themes of ethics, morals, Islamic ethics, Sufism, character education, and the development of modern digital technology.

Data collection was carried out through a systematic literature review of various scientific databases and relevant, reliable bibliographic sources. These sources were then selected based on their relevance to the topic, the novelty of the research, and the quality and credibility of the publications. Once the data had been collected, analysis was conducted by critically reading, noting, comparing and interpreting the content of these various literary sources. The analysis focused on a conceptual understanding of the differences and interrelationships between Islamic ethics, morals and akhlak, as well as their relevance in addressing the crisis of character in the digital age. The results of the analysis were then synthesised into a comprehensive study that can contribute to strengthening akhlak education based on Islamic values amidst the changing times.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Relationship between Technology, Globalisation and Modern Human Morality

The development of digital technology and globalisation has brought about significant changes to the way people understand ethics and morality in modern life. Digital ethics has emerged as a branch of contemporary ethics that examines human behaviour in the use of technology, social media, artificial intelligence, and digital communication. In modern society, technology is not merely a means of communication but also influences individuals' ways of thinking, culture, and moral values. Recent research indicates that technological developments can have both positive and negative impacts on societal morality, particularly amongst the younger generation. Uncontrolled use of social media often gives rise to individualistic behaviour, a decline in social empathy, and an increase in the spread of hate speech and disinformation. Therefore, digital ethics must be strengthened so that society can use technology responsibly and ethically. Values such as honesty, responsibility, courtesy, and respect for privacy are key principles in modern digital ethics. In the context of globalisation, society is required to preserve its moral and cultural identity amidst an increasingly unregulated flow of global culture. Consequently, digital ethics plays a vital role in maintaining a balance between technological progress and modern human morality (Himmawan et al., 2024; Rahayu & Nawawi, 2024; Munawir et al., 2024).

The Concepts of Ethics, Morality and Character in Islam

From an Islamic perspective, work ethics are not merely understood as an endeavour to gain material profit, but also as a form of worship and a moral responsibility towards Allah SWT. Values such as trustworthiness, honesty, discipline, and responsibility are integral to building an individual's character with integrity. Good moral character will encourage a person to work professionally whilst maintaining harmonious social relationships with others. Therefore, the application of Islamic work ethics is a vital endeavour in shaping a moral and principled society amidst the changing times (Mu'thi & Abdul, 2023; Muhajir et al., 2024; Anshori & Mariah, 2025).

Ethics of Cross-Cultural Communication

In the era of globalisation, cross-cultural interactions are on the rise, giving rise to ethical challenges in global communication. Cultural differences often lead to differing

perspectives on moral values, etiquette and social behaviour. Recent research on cross-cultural communication diplomacy indicates that modern societies need to understand cultural relativism in order to appreciate differences in values between nations. Eastern cultures tend to emphasise politeness, social harmony and indirect communication, whilst Western cultures are more open and individualistic in expressing opinions. These differences often lead to conflict if not accompanied by a sound understanding of communication ethics. Therefore, cross-cultural communication ethics are vital for fostering tolerance, cooperation and mutual respect in international relations. Morality in global communication relates not only to language, but also to respect for the cultural identities and social values of other societies. By understanding cross-cultural ethics, individuals can avoid discrimination, stereotypes and misunderstandings in global social interactions. This demonstrates that modern ethics are no longer local in nature, but have evolved into universal values that support life in multicultural societies (Kusumastuti et al., 2025; Yu et al., 2022; Ji et al., 2021).

Cultural Ethics and Social Integrity

Culture exerts a significant influence on the formation of an individual's integrity and moral behaviour in social life. Recent research indicates that national cultural values can influence the way a person makes ethical decisions in both the workplace and society. In Eastern cultural contexts, values such as collectivism, respect for hierarchy, and social loyalty tend to shape behaviour that prioritises group harmony. Conversely, Western cultures place greater emphasis on personal integrity, individual freedom, and personal responsibility. Research on the relationship between culture and integrity in the workplace indicates that cultural differences influence moral standards as well as how individuals perceive honesty and responsibility. Social integrity is crucial as it relates to trust, the stability of social relationships, and the quality of life within society. In the modern workplace, individuals are expected to uphold moral standards whilst adapting to global cultural diversity. Consequently, moral education and character building are essential for maintaining a balance between local culture and the demands of globalisation. Thus, culture and morality are interdependent in shaping a harmonious and principled social life (Hofstede, 2011; Wardhani et al., 2024; Suastra et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The Digital 4.0 era presents both opportunities and challenges for human life. Amidst the rapid development of information technology, various signs of a crisis of character have emerged, such as the spread of fake news, cyberbullying, consumerist behaviour and a decline in communication ethics. These conditions demonstrate that technological progress must be balanced by the strengthening of character values so as not to have a negative impact on individuals or society.

Islamic ethics, morals and values play a vital role in addressing this crisis of character. Ethics provide guidelines for good behaviour; morals serve as a standard for judging right and wrong; whilst Islamic values provide a spiritual foundation rooted in the Qur'an and the Hadith. Values such as honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, patience and tolerance are key principles that are relevant to apply in digital life.

Therefore, character building through the integration of Islamic ethics, morals and values must be carried out on an ongoing basis through the family, educational institutions, the community and the digital environment. In this way, the younger generation will not only be able to make the best use of technology, but will also possess strong character and integrity, and be able to contribute positively to the advancement of civilisation in the digital age.

REFERENCES

- Arrafi, M., Rahmawati, N., & Prasetyo, A. (2023). Konsep moralitas dalam kehidupan sosial masyarakat modern. *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial dan Humaniora*, 5(2), 45–56.
- Andini, R. (2023). *Relativisme budaya dan universalisme moral dalam masyarakat multikultural*. *Jurnal Filsafat Nusantara*, 9(2), 112–125.
- Aulia, N., & Ramadhan, F. (2024). *Etika komunikasi lintas budaya Timur dan Barat di era globalisasi*. *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora*, 12(1), 45–57.
- Azizah, L., Prasetyo, H., & Nugraha, A. (2024). *Individualisme dan kebebasan individu dalam perspektif budaya Barat modern*. *Jurnal Kajian Budaya Global*, 7(1), 21–34.
- Bernanda, R., & Wakhudin, M. (2023). *Nilai moral dan tradisi masyarakat Timur dalam perspektif pendidikan karakter*. *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial*, 15(3), 201–214.
- Hofstede, G. (2011). *Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context*. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1), 1–26.
- Kusumastuti, D., Rahmawati, I., & Fadilah, N. (2025). *Perbandingan nilai etika dan moral dalam budaya Timur dan Barat di era globalisasi*. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, 10(1), 30–47.
- Mu'thi, A., & Abdul, K. (2023). Perbedaan konsep etika, moral, dan akhlak dalam perspektif Islam. *Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 7(2), 101–113.

- Muhajir, A. A., Sitika, A. J., & Fatah, A. F. (2024). Akidah tasawuf (akhlak, moral dan etika). *Jurnal Penelitian Tarbawi*, 6(1), 33–42.
- Munawir, M., Salsabillah, P., & Rosyidah, R. (2024). Membentuk akhlak di era Revolusi Industri 4.0 dengan peran pendidikan agama Islam. *Al-Qalam: Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Pendidikan*, 12(1), 61–73.
- Muniir, M. M., Yusuf, M. S., & Abdillah, M. R. (2026). Akhlak mahmudah: Hubungan akhlak dengan iman dan Islam serta pembentukan akhlak perspektif tasawuf akhlaki. *Jurnal Teologi Islam*, 2(1), 117–126.
- Suastra, I., Dewi, P., & Laksana, B. (2024). *Kolektivisme dalam budaya Timur dan pengaruhnya terhadap perilaku sosial masyarakat*. *Jurnal Antropologi Indonesia*, 19(2), 120–133.
- Wardhani, T., Pramono, E., & Sari, M. (2024). *Dimensi budaya Hofstede dalam analisis etika lintas budaya*. *Jurnal Komunikasi Antarbudaya*, 5(1), 66–81.
- Yu, X., Chen, Y., & Li, Z. (2022). *Eastern and Western cultural values in social interaction*. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 14(3), 201–214.
- Ji, L., Zhang, Z., & Guo, H. (2021). *Cultural perspectives between Eastern and Western societies in the globalization era*. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Communication*, 9(2), 55–66.
- Ouska, G., & Whellan, J. (1997). *Moral development and social behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Rahayu, P., & Nawawi, M. L. (2024). Relevansi nilai-nilai akhlak Islami dalam membentuk etika digital. *TAUJIH: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 5(2), 90–102.
- Suseno, F. M. (1998). *Etika dasar: Masalah-masalah pokok filsafat moral*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- Yu, X., Chen, Y., & Li, Z. (2022). *Eastern and Western cultural values in social interaction*. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 14(3), 201–214.
- Ji, L., Zhang, Z., & Guo, H. (2021). *Cultural perspectives between Eastern and Western societies in the globalization era*. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Communication*, 9(2), 55–66.