

Fitrah and Character Formation of Generation Z in the Society 5.0 Era

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Abstract: This study examines the role of the concept of *fitrah* in the formation of Generation Z character in the era of Society 5.0 which is characterized by the integration of digital technology and social life. The focus of the research is directed at the strategy of internalizing the values of religiosity, morality, and social responsibility in character education that is adaptive to technological developments. The methods used are qualitative-based literature through systematic literature review of national and international articles, analysis of classical Islamic texts, education policies, and empirical findings on the digital behavior of Generation Z. The results show three main challenges of Generation Z, namely *digital overexposure*, weakening of face-to-face social interaction, and value identity crisis. Fitrah-based education contributes to strengthening faith, morals, digital ethics, and social awareness by emphasizing a harmonious relationship with God, fellow humans, and nature. Thus, *fitrah* has the potential to become a strategic foundation for the development of a holistic character education model that is relevant to the vision of Society 5.0, where education policy needs to integrate the potential of fitrah with academic achievement and the formation of noble morals.

Keywords: Nature; Character; Generation Z; Society 5.0

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INTRODUCTION

The Society 5.0 era is marked by the acceleration of digitalization and social transformation that has had a significant impact on the mindset, value orientation, and behavior of Generation Z. As a generation that grew up in the digital ecosystem from an early age, Generation Z lives in an instant world with unlimited access to information, high intensity of mobile technology use, and dependence on digital platforms in shaping their identity and social relationships (Rosenberg, et al., 2025). This condition opens up great opportunities for the development of creativity and innovation, but at the same time presents serious challenges in the form of individualistic tendencies, fragmentation of values, and weakening moral and spiritual foundations (Yanitskij et al. 2019). In the context of Indonesian education, issues such as bullying, moral decadence, and juvenile delinquency are crucial problems that are increasingly emerging along with the massive penetration of digital technology. (Saidek, A.R., Islami, R. 2016) emphasizing that social change that is not balanced with strengthening character values has the potential to give birth to a moral crisis in the younger generation.

Empirical data shows a worrying condition The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) report noted that in 2018 there were 161 cases of bullying in schools, which included perpetrators and victims of brawls, bullying violence, and cases related to education policy (Fathoni et al. 2024). This number continues to increase until it reaches 226 cases in 2022 (KPAI, 2022). The national findings are in line with international reports. UNICEF (2021) reports that around 50% of students aged 13–15 years in Indonesia have experienced bullying, either in person or online. A survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2024) also revealed that almost half of Indonesian internet users have been victims *Cyberbullying*, with 31.6% of them choosing not to respond. This phenomenon shows that the intensity of Generation Z's interaction with the digital space has an impact on shifting social values, which is characterized by a decrease in empathy, an increase in consumptive behavior, and a weakening of religious and moral awareness (Rolando et al., 2024; Afni, 2023). This dynamic emphasizes the urgency of developing an educational model that is able to provide an effective response to the moral problems of Generation Z in the midst of the digitalization of Society 5.0.

In the Islamic perspective, the concept of *fitrah* is understood as the sacred nature of human beings that is the basis for the potential for faith, reason, and the tendency towards goodness. Drill (2017) and Bor and Şahin (2018) affirms that *fitrah* is an innate disposition that naturally directs humans to religious and moral values. Al-Khathabi, as stated by Santosa (2017), emphasizing that every child is born in a state of *fitrah* which if nurtured will foster righteous and moral behavior. This view places the spiritual dimension as the main foundation of character formation. Meanwhile, Al-Ghazali views that character is inherent, and education functions as a process of revealing, nurturing, and directing the innate potential to develop optimally. This perspective is in line with the findings of contemporary Islamic psychology that places *fitrah* as the basis of human moral and religious development (Husain et al., 2024). Quraish Shihab (2002) added that *fitrah* is an innate system created by Allah as a moral compass in humans,

which functions to guide humans in facing the changing times. The difference in emphasis of these figures shows the conceptual richness of fitrah: Al-Khathabi emphasizes the spiritual dimension, Al-Ghazali on the formation of character through education, and Quraish Shihab on the ontological framework of fitrah as an innate moral system.

A number of contemporary studies have strengthened the strategic role of fitrah-based education in shaping students' character (Lutfiyani 2016; Fathurahman 2020; Tullah and Ar-raniry 2023; Harris 2023). However, most of these studies still stop at the normative level and have not integrated much of the concept of fitrah with the reality of the digital ecosystem faced by Generation Z. In fact, this generation faces new challenges such as digital literacy, mental health, identity crisis, and social media ethics that are increasingly complex (Zanina et al., 2023; Sakban et al. 2024). Furthermore, in the context of Society 5.0, Generation Z's religious experience has also undergone a transformation due to the influence of algorithms and digital platforms. Ahmadvand (2025) Introducing the concept *Digital discipleship* and *Algorithmic Faith*, which shows that the formation of religiosity of the younger generation is now heavily influenced by digital content and recommendation systems based on artificial intelligence. This condition demands an approach to Islamic education that is not only normative, but also adaptive and contextual to digital reality.

Thus, this study offers *novelty* in the form of integrating the concept of fitrah in Islam with character education strategies that are responsive to the challenges of Society 5.0. The concept of fitrah is not only positioned as a normative theory, but is processed through literature analysis into thematic categories such as faith, reason, sociality, and aesthetics which are then mapped to the needs of Generation Z characters in the digital era. This approach allows Islamic education not only to emphasize external behavior change, but also to encourage fitrah-based internal transformation as a moral compass. Thus, this research contributes to the formulation of a fitrah-based Islamic education model that is relevant, adaptive, and oriented towards the formation of a young generation with Islamic character in the midst of the rapid flow of digitalization.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review design *Literature Review* (Sigh, 2017). The selection of this design is based on the conceptual research objective, namely to formulate a relevant fitrah-based Islamic character education model in the context of generation Z in the era *Society 5.0* (Rolando et al., 2024, Afni, 2023). Thus, this research is not oriented to collect field data, but to explore, analyze, and synthesize text sources that are considered authoritative and relevant (Moleong, 2017). The research data sources consist of: Primary source, namely the Qur'an and Hadith which are directly related to the concept of fitrah and character education. Secondary sources, including classic and contemporary works by scholars, academic books, national and international journal articles, proceedings, and official reports of institutions such as KPAI, UNICEF, and APJII. To maintain accuracy, researchers set inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria include: (1) resources relevant to the theme

of fitrah, character education, generation Z, and digitalization (Nata, 2005). (2) published between 2000–2025, except for classical texts that have significance; (3) published academically or institutionally. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria are: (1) sources that do not have direct relevance; (2) popular articles without an academic basis; and (3) documents that cannot be accessed in their entirety.

The literature search process is carried out systematically through various databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, Indonesia OneSearch, Garuda, Neliti, as well as the official websites of national and international institutions. The keywords used include: "*fitrah*", "*character education*", "*Generation Z*", "*Society 5.0*", and "*digitalization of education*". The literature selection process follows stages: identification, screening by title and abstract, feasibility assessment based on full text, and final selection of appropriate sources. The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The steps include: (1) Open coding to mark the main ideas of the text. (2) Thematic grouping based on similarity of concepts, such as the theme of fitrah, Islamic character, digital challenges, and educational strategies. (3) Conceptual synthesis to connect the themes into a whole frame of thought. (4) Formulation of a fitrah-based character education model that is adaptive to the digital era.

To increase credibility, this study applied source triangulation (comparing the results of sacred texts, classical works, modern literature, and policy reports) as well as limited peer review with Islamic education experts to validate the consistency of the analysis results. Because this research is based on a literature review, it does not involve human subjects, so it does not require a participant's ethical procedure. Nevertheless, the principles of academic ethics are still upheld through correct citations and appreciation for the scientific work used. The limitation of the research is the dependence on textual data so that the results are conceptual. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to be further validated through field research in the next study.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literature analysis was carried out on journal articles, books, and Islamic interpretations that are relevant to the theme of fitrah, character education, and the context of Generation Z in the Society 5.0 era. The analysis process using the *Thematic content analysis* (Braun & Clarke, 2019), resulting in several main themes that illustrate the interconnectedness between fitrah, Islamic character education, and the challenges of contemporary digital society. Of the 28 sources examined, there were 12 articles that contained direct discussions of nature-based education, 9 articles on digital character education, and 7 empirical research on the behavior and characteristics of Generation Z. The analysis yielded eight main themes according to classification *Human Nature* (Santosa 2017) which is then mapped to its relevance in the formation of the character of Generation Z.

The Concept of Fitrah

Etymologically, the word *fitrah* comes from the Arabic *fathara* (فطر) which means "to create without example" or "the beginning of creation". In the Qur'an, this term is associated with the purity and original state of human beings from

birth (QS. Ar-Rūm: 30). The verse affirms that man was created with the right religious potential (*dīn al-qayyim*), which cannot be changed because it is a decree of Allah. Thus, fitrah is understood as an innate spiritual and moral that is the basis of the orientation of human life.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ
لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Meaning: "So turn your face straight to the religion (of Allah); (abide by) the nature of Allah who has created man according to that nature. There is no change in the nature of Allah¹. (That is) the right religion; but most people don't know it." (QS. Ar- Ruum 30:30).

The scholars give different emphasis on the meaning of fitrah. Al-Khathabi highlights the dimensions of purity and morality from birth, Al-Ghazali emphasizes character as an inherent potential that needs to be directed through education, while Quraish Shihab interprets fitrah as an innate system that functions as a human moral compass. Ibn Kathir added that fitrah is closely related to monotheism, which is the natural tendency of man to acknowledge the oneness of Allah. This difference in perspective shows the breadth of the meaning of fitrah which includes spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects.

In the context of Islamic education, fitrah is seen as a basic potential that must be developed so as not to deviate due to environmental influences. A number of contemporary studies confirm that fitrah-based education plays an important role in character formation (Lutfiyani 2016; Fathurahman 2020; Tullah and Ar-raniry 2023; Harris 2023). However, the integration of this concept with modern challenges, especially the digital era and Generation Z, is still limited. Therefore, this study seeks to formulate a fitrah-based education model that is relevant to the character needs of the younger generation in the Society 5.0 ecosystem.

¹ Fitrah Allah: Meaning Allah's creation. Humans were created by Allah to have a religious instinct, namely the religion of monotheism. If there are people who are not monotheistic, then it is not natural. They are not monotheistic religions, it is only because of the influence of the environment.

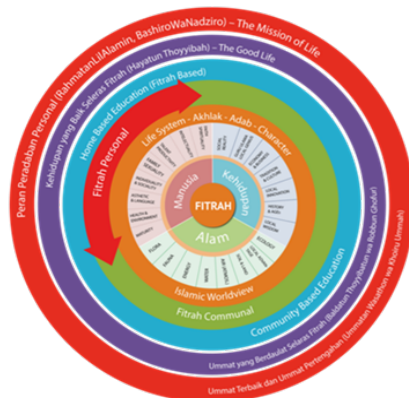


Figure 1. The living system encompasses all the potential of Fitrah

According to Malik Bennabi, the process of forming civilization, even though there are 3 main factors: humans, land (Nature Nature), and time (Life Nature), other factors are still needed as catalysts that can process and arrange these three elements to make it a civilization (Santosa 2017). The casualty referred to in this context is Religion. (Life System) religion or "religious thought" is what always exists behind the birth of a civilization in history. The living system is a legal tool and guidance that Allah gives to humans in carrying out their personal and communal roles on earth, so that the role runs according to its mission and is completed on time according to the intention of Allah SWT. Morality, spirituality, truth, and purity are the dominant of the life system, moving life to move and encompass all existing Fitrah, therefore the life system must be in harmony with human nature.

Fitrah is *Islamic Concept of human nature*. Since birth, humans have brought the principle of goodness to undergo the role of civilization in order to achieve the creator's intention to become a servant of Allah and caliph on earth. In his book, fitrah based education classifies fitrah in humans into eight aspects of fitrah, which are as follows: (Santosa 2017).

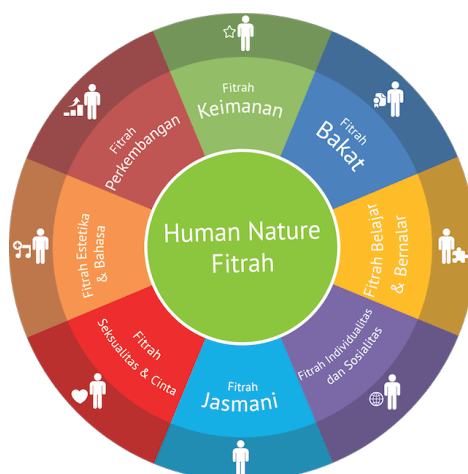


Figure 2. Classification of Fithrah

Table 1. Fithrah Classification

Aspects of Fitrah	Developmental Focus	Educational Implications	Relevance for Gen Z (Society 5.0)
Faith	Spiritual potential and tauhid	Integration of digital da'wah, habituation of worship	Digital religiosity, Islamic morality
Learn & Reason	Natural cognitive boost	Critical literacy of the Qur'an, Islamic thinking	Ability to sort digital information
Talent & Leadership	Unique potential & leadership	Mentoring, Islamic digital leadership	Collaborative, ethical leadership
Development	Golden age	Self-regulation, healthy digital literacy	Self-identity, mental health
Sexuality & Love	The role of gender and affection	Islamic sex education, digital manners	Prevention of pornography & promiscuity
Aesthetics & Language	Love of beauty & language	Digital Islamic art, Qur'anic literacy	Islamic creativity, visual da'wah
Individuality & Sociality	Self-Balance & Social	Collaborative learning, ukhuwah	Social media etiquette, empathy
Physical & Sensory	Trust takes care of the body	Healthy lifestyle, screen time management	Balanced physical-mental health

Character

Character education is essentially a systematic process of personality formation through the internalization of moral values that are reflected in real behavior, such as honesty, responsibility, social concern, and personal integrity (Munir 2010). In the perspective of modern education, character is understood not only as a set of behavioral norms, but as an integrated integration of values, attitudes, and habits that shape an individual's identity in an ongoing manner. In line with this, Samani and Hariyanto (2012) view character as a basic value that shapes a person that develops through the interaction between hereditary factors and the social environment. This view is in line with the findings of contemporary research that affirm that effective character education must touch the internal (value awareness) as well as the external (social practice) dimensions of students (Lickona 2018; Kristjánsson, 2020).

In the Islamic tradition, character education is synonymous with moral education which is rooted in the development of the soul (*Tazkiyat al-nafs*). Al-Ghazali in *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* affirms that morality is a quality that resides in the soul from which actions are born easily and spontaneously without the need for long rational considerations. This conception shows that morality is not just the result of indoctrination, but a manifestation of internal character that has been deeply internalized. Al-Ghazali's perspective is in line with the study of contemporary moral psychology which emphasizes the importance of value habituation and the formation of moral dispositions from an early age (Nucci, L., Narvaez, D., & Krettenauer 2018). Thus, character can be understood to have two main dimensions: the innate dimension that comes from human nature and the dimension of actualization that develops through education, example, and life experience (Bor 2017; Bor and Şahin 2018). The Qur'an explicitly affirms the Prophet PBUH as a perfect example in noble morals (Q.S. Al-Ahzab: 21) and places the majesty of the Prophet's morals as the highest moral standard (Q.S. Al-Qalam: 4). This shows that character education in Islam does not stop at the

transmission of moral knowledge, but emphasizes the process of internalizing values through example (*Uswah Hasanah*), habituation, and practical experience. This exemplary-based education model is seen as effective in shaping character because it is able to touch the affective and spiritual dimensions of students directly (Halstead 2004; Şahin 2018).

In the context of Generation Z living in the digital ecosystem Society 5.0, character education faces increasingly complex challenges. This generation grew up as a *Mobile Natives* who intensely interact with digital technologies, social media, and algorithmic systems that indirectly shape their values, identities, and moral orientations (Rosenberg et al., 2025). Studies have shown that the intensity of digital interaction has implications for increasing individualism, digital ethical problems, and weakening of moral sensitivity and social empathy (Yanitskij et al. 2019; Sakban et al. 2024). In this situation, character education that only emphasizes cognitive and regulatory aspects becomes inadequate. Therefore, nature-based character education is very relevant as an approach that places moral and spiritual values as the internal foundation of student development. Fitrah is positioned as an innate moral compass that is able to guide Generation Z in utilizing technology ethically and responsibly. This approach is in line with Ahmadvan's findings (2025) which emphasizes the need for a religious education framework that is able to respond to the phenomenon *Digital discipleship* and algorithm-based religiosity. By integrating nature into character education, Islamic education is not only oriented towards the formation of external behavior, but also on internal transformation that allows Generation Z to grow as knowledgeable, technological, and noble people in the midst of the rapid flow of digitalization of Society 5.0.

Table 2. Implementation of Character Education Values

Character Value	Description	Implementation
Discipline	The feeling of obedience and obedience to the values that he believes in and is his responsibility.	- Arrive on time to school or office.- Complete tasks on schedule.- Comply with existing regulations.
Creative	A mental process that involves the emergence of new useful ideas.	- Create innovative projects at school or work.- Develop new solutions to everyday problems.
Self-Sufficient	A person's condition can stand alone or not depend on others.	- Managing study time without the help of others.- Doing assignments without asking for help unless necessary.
Religious	Carrying out the religious teachings that are adopted as a guideline for life.	- Carry out regular worship.- Participate in religious activities in schools, communities, or places of worship.
Honest	Behave positively by saying and acting according to facts.	- Not cheating during the exam.- Admitting mistakes that have been made.- Act according to the rules without manipulation.
Tolerance	The ability to appreciate and respect differences in all aspects of life.	- Respect for differences in religion, culture, and opinion.- Do not impose personal views on others.
Curiosity	Always want to know something to develop your potential.	- Ask about new things that you don't understand.- Read books, articles, or other sources of information.

Caring for the Environment	Have a sense of responsibility and concern for environmental sustainability.	- Get used to disposing of garbage in its place.- Participate in reforestation or recycling activities.
Responsibilities	A person's awareness of the obligation to bear the consequences of the actions that have been taken.	- Complete tasks properly and on time.- Responsible for the cleanliness and orderliness of the environment.

Characteristics of Generation Z

Generation Z (Gen Z), often called *Zoomers*, is a demographic group born in the mid-1990s to early 2010s and demographically the majority are children of Generation X. Gen Z is known as the first generation to grow up with access to the internet and digital technology from an early age, so it is often categorized as *Digital Natives*. Since childhood, they have been accustomed to interacting with digital devices such as smartphones, the internet, and social media, which significantly shape their mindset, learning style, and value orientation (Rosenberg et al., 2025). The lives of Gen Z are heavily influenced by digital technology that not only serves as a means of communication, but also as the main space for the formation of social and cultural identities. Cross-country studies show that the intensity of mobile technology use makes Gen Z as *Mobile Natives*, which is a generation that relies on mobile devices in almost all aspects of life, including education, social relations, and self-expression (Rosenberg et al., 2025). This condition has an impact on the emergence of distinctive characteristics such as a preference for visual and interactive learning, instant communication, and a high tendency to multitask. (Seemiller, C., & Grace 2019).

Furthermore, massive digital transformation has also affected the value structure and moral orientation of Gen Z. Research by Yanitskij et al. (2019) reveals that Gen Z shows a shift in values towards independence, individualism, and the search for personal meaning, although they still maintain concern for certain social issues. On the other hand, the high dependence on the digital space also raises new challenges, such as identity fragmentation, a decline in the quality of face-to-face social interaction, and vulnerability to the influence of global values that are not always in line with local and religious norms (Sakban et al. 2024). In the context of education, the characteristics of Gen Z demand an adaptive and contextual pedagogical approach. Their way of learning tends to be collaborative, technology-based, and emphasizes practical relevance, in contrast to previous generations who were more accustomed to linear and textual learning patterns.

Therefore, education for Gen Z is not only required to master the cognitive aspects and skills of the 21st century, but also needs to pay attention to the dimensions of character formation and moral values so that technological developments do not lead to the degradation of ethics and spirituality (Kristjánsson 2020; Halstead 2004). Thus, Gen Z has unique characteristics that distinguish them from previous generations, both in the way they learn, communicate, and build social identity. The intensity of interaction with digital technology makes them an adaptive and innovative generation, but at the same time vulnerable to value and moral crises. This condition emphasizes the urgency of developing educational models, especially character education and Islamic

education, which are able to integrate digital skills with strengthening moral and spiritual values as the foundation for the formation of Gen Z's personality in the Society 5.0 era.

Table 3. Characteristics of Generation Z

Characteristics	Description	Implications in Life
Tech-savvy	The generation that is used to technology from an early age, quickly adapts to science and technology.	- Reliable in the use of technology and computerization. - Quickly access information and complete digital-based tasks.
Likes to communicate	Actively communicate through social networks, but sometimes lacks ethics.	- It is easier to build global connections, but it needs to strengthen digital ethics.
Ignoring Privacy	Tends to share personal life on social media.	- It is important to educate about the limitations of digital privacy and security.
More Independent	Able to make their own decisions and learn independently.	- Improve adaptability, but need guidance for mature decisions.
More Tolerant	Accepting differences and respecting diversity with openness.	- Improve inclusivity and collaboration in diverse environments.
Full of Ambition	Focus on self-development, career, and success, often with an individualistic nature.	- Goal-oriented, but needs to be directed to keep paying attention to social interests and life balance.
Smart and Fast Learning	It's easy to learn new things, especially technology-based.	- Be an innovator and pioneer in various fields.

Educational institutions must prepare Generation Z with an approach that is in accordance with the times. Technology, especially social media, can be used for learning, but it must be supervised to keep students productive and maintain good character, such as honesty and cooperation. The use of technology in learning, such as group learning on platforms such as *WhatsApp* or *Facebook*, can facilitate students to learn anytime and anywhere, with supervision from teachers. In addition, the learning method should help students connect global information and filter out the unhelpful, while instilling character education that will affect their lives. With this approach, Generation Z can develop into productive individuals with good character, as well as potentially develop technology for the betterment of the nation.

Society 5.0

Society 5.0 is a concept of a future society pioneered by the Government of Japan and officially introduced in 2019 as a continuation and critical correction to the Industrial Revolution 4.0. If the Industrial Revolution 4.0 emphasizes more on the aspects of automation, efficiency, and digitalization of the production system, then Society 5.0 carries a paradigm *human-centered society*, which is a society that places humans as the main subjects in the use of technology (Fukuyama 2018; Shiroishi et al., 2019). This concept seeks to integrate the virtual world (*Cyberspace*) and the real world (*Physical space*) harmoniously to form *Smart Society* which is not only technologically superior, but also oriented towards human well-being (*well-being*). Within the framework of Society 5.0, technologies such as artificial intelligence (*Artificial Intelligence/ AI*), *Internet of Things* (IoT), big data, and cyber-physical systems are used to respond to various social problems,

including education, health, social inequality, and human value crises (Skobelev, P., & Borovik 2017; Deguchi et al., 2020) with a technology-centric approach, Society 5.0 emphasizes the integration between technological innovation and human values, so that digital progress does not alienate humans from their ethical, social, and spiritual dimensions.

For the world of education, especially Islamic education, Society 5.0 presents strategic opportunities as well as multidimensional challenges. On the one hand, digital technology opens up wide access to Islamic scientific resources, strengthens collaborative learning, and allows personalization of learning according to the characteristics of students, including Generation Z as *Digital Natives* (Deguchi et al., 2020; Rosenberg, Blondheim, and Sabag-Ben Porat 2025). This transformation has the potential to improve the quality of Islamic learning that is more adaptive, inclusive, and contextual. However, on the other hand, the unlimited intensity of digital interaction also carries serious risks in the form of penetration of global cultural values that are not always in line with Islamic values, increasing individualism, identity fragmentation, and moral and spiritual crises among the younger generation (Yanitskij et al. 2019; Sakban et al. 2024). Phenomenon *massification of values* and the dominance of algorithms in shaping students' preferences and behaviors shows that technology is no longer neutral, but has constructive power on morals and a way of life (Ahmadvand 2025).

It is in this context that fitrah-based Islamic education becomes very relevant as a moral-spiritual foundation in facing Society 5.0. Fitrah is understood as an innate human potential that leads to faith, goodness, and ethical awareness, so that it functions as a *Inner Moral Compass* that guide individuals in using technology responsibly (Bor 2017; Bor and Şahin 2018). By making fitrah the basis for character education, Islamic education is not only oriented to mastering technology and competence in the 21st century, but also to the formation of knowledgeable, ethical, and moral people in the midst of increasingly complex digitalization flows.

Relevance of Changes in the Era of Society 5.0 Islamic Education Perspective

The Society 5.0 era brought fundamental changes in the social order by making digital technology an inseparable part of human life. This concept places humans at the center (*human-centered society*) in the use of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and the Internet of Things to solve social problems in a sustainable manner (Deguchi et al., 2020). This transformation not only has an impact on the economic and industrial sectors, but also significantly changes the pattern of education, social relations, and the formation of the values and character of the younger generation (Fukuyama 2018). For Islamic education, Society 5.0 presents a strategic opportunity to expand access to Islamic scientific resources, develop technology-based pedagogic innovations, and strengthen dialogue across cultures and civilizations through the global digital space. Technology enables personalization of learning, cross-regional collaborative learning, and the integration of Islamic values in digital platforms that are more adaptive to the character of Generation Z as *Digital Natives* (Deguchi et al., 2020; Rosenberg et al., 2025). In this context, Islamic education has great potential to

appear more inclusive, responsive, and relevant to the needs of the global community. However, these changes also pose serious challenges. Various studies show that the intensity of the use of digital technology has implications for increasing individualism, reduced social empathy, and the occurrence of moral and spirituality crises among the younger generation (Yanitskij et al. 2019; Sakban et al. 2024).

In addition, the gap in access to and technological literacy has the potential to widen educational inequality, while excessive exposure to the digital world has an impact on the degradation of students' physical, mental, and social health (Zanina et al., 2023). This phenomenon shows that technology, if not accompanied by a strong value framework, can erode the humanitarian dimension in education. From the perspective of Islamic education, the challenge emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between mastery of technology and strengthening moral-spiritual values. It is not enough for Islamic education to adapt technically, but it needs to develop an integrative approach that makes prophetic values such as example, justice, compassion, and moral responsibility the foundation for the use of technology (Halstead 2004; Bor and Şahin 2018). This approach is in line with the concept *human-centered society* which places human beings not as technological objects, but as moral subjects who control the direction of their use. Therefore, Islamic education in the era of Society 5.0 is required to formulate strategies that are able to integrate digital innovation with the strengthening of Islamic morals and character. Fitrah-based education becomes relevant as a moral-spiritual foundation that functions as a *Inner Compass* for students in facing the complexity of the digital world. With this approach, Islamic education is expected not only to produce a technologically capable generation, but also to have a strong moral integrity, social awareness, and spirituality in the midst of changing times (Bor 2017; Bor and Şahin 2018; Deguchi et al., 2020).

Table 4. Opportunities, Challenges, and Strategies

Opportunities	Challenge	Strategies for Strengthening Character Education
Accessibility of Islamic information – Digitization facilitates access to the Qur'an, tafsir, hadith, and Islamic literature, as well as expands the reach of education.	Validity of content – Unfiltered information causes hoaxes and distortions of Islamic teachings.	Curriculum integration – Combining character education and digital literacy in technology-based learning.
AI-based education – AI supports personalized learning according to students' learning styles, as well as solutions to fiqh problems.	Moral crisis – Plagiarism, academic falsification, and reduced respect for teachers.	Digital literacy – Equips students with the ability to sort information, digital ethics, and moral awareness.
Innovation of learning methods – VR/AR allows simulation of Islamic worship and history; Digital applications support religious practices.	Separation from reality – Technology addiction weakens social interaction and empathy.	Learning innovation – Involving students in creating Islamic content (anti-hoax, anti-bullying, digital da'wah).
Connectivity between people – Strengthening interreligious and intersectorian dialogue, increasing tolerance and unity.	Technology gap – Educators' human resources are uneven in digital literacy; access to technology is not equal.	Multi-actor collaboration – Teachers, parents, the community, and the government work together to instill the values of Islamic character.

Strengthening research culture – Technology supports broader, faster, and more collaborative global Islamic research.	Physical & mental health – Excessive screen time decreases the quality of life of students.	Lifestyle balance – Time management, digital health, and Islamic sportsmanship education.
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Implementation of the Concept of Fitrah in Shaping the Character of Generation Z in the Society 5.0 Era

The Society 5.0 era is a concept of a future society that integrates cutting-edge technologies—such as artificial intelligence (*Artificial Intelligence/AI*), the Internet of Things (IoT), and big data—into all aspects of human life with the ultimate goal of creating a human-centered society (*human-centered society*). In contrast to the technology-centric paradigm of the previous era, Society 5.0 places humans as moral and ethical subjects in the use of technology to solve social problems and improve the quality of life (*well-being*) (Deguchi et al., 2020). In this context, education has a strategic role as the main space for the formation of the character and values of the young generation so that technological advances do not erode the human dimension. Generation Z, as a generation that grew up in the digital ecosystem from an early age, faces a social reality characterized by the acceleration of information, limitless virtual interaction, and the dominance of algorithms in shaping preferences and behaviors.

Research shows that this condition not only affects the way we learn and communicate, but also shapes the value orientation, self-identity, and moral character of Generation Z (Rosenberg et al., 2025; Yanitskij et al. 2019). Therefore, character education for Generation Z in the Society 5.0 era requires an approach that is not only technologically adaptive, but also able to strengthen moral and spiritual foundations internally. One of the relevant approaches in this context is the concept of fitrah in Islam. Fitrah refers to the natural state of human beings that is holy from birth and includes innate potentials in the form of tendencies to faith, truth, and goodness. Theoretical study of Drill (2017) and (Bor and Şahin 2018) affirms that nature is not just a normative theological concept, but an active disposition that is the basis of human religious and moral development throughout life. Thus, fitrah provides a strong Islamic anthropological framework for understanding human character as moral and believing beings.

Furthermore, empirical research in contemporary Islamic psychology shows that fitrah has dimensions that can be measured and developed through education. Husain et al. (2024) Identify that fitrah includes aspects of happiness, moral honesty, piety, innate goodness, and faith in God. These findings strengthen the argument that fitrah can be used as an operational basis in character education, not only as an ideal concept, but as a basis for systematic and sustainable value development. In the context of Society 5.0, the implementation of the concept of fitrah in Generation Z's character education is becoming increasingly relevant. Fitrah functions as *Inner Moral Compass* which guides students in dealing with the complexities of the digital world, including ethical challenges in social media, individualism, and crisis of meaning. This approach is in line with criticism of algorithm-based religiosity and morality that tend to shape external behaviors without strengthening internal awareness (Ahmadvand 2025). By integrating fitrah into Islamic education, the process of

character formation is not only directed at behavioral compliance, but at an internal transformation rooted in the awareness of faith and morals. Thus, the implementation of the concept of fitrah in shaping the character of Generation Z in the Society 5.0 era requires a holistic and integrative Islamic education model. Education is not only oriented towards mastering technology and skills in the 21st century, but also on strengthening spiritual, intellectual, and moral potential as the basis for the formation of knowledgeable, ethical, and moral human beings. This approach is expected to be able to make Generation Z an active subject of Society 5.0 who is not only digitally capable, but also morally and spiritually mature (Deguchi et al., 2020; Bor and Şahin 2018).

Table 5. The Concept of Fitrah in Shaping the Character of Generation Z in the Society 5.0 Era

Aspects of Islamic Fitrah	Description	Implementation in Era Society 5.0	Impact on Generation Z Characters
The Nature of Faith	Awareness to know Allah as God Almighty and worship Him.	- Utilizing technology such as digital Qur'an applications, online studies, and social media for Islamic education.	- Generation Z becomes religious, has noble morals, and is oriented towards Divine values in every action.
The Nature of Learning and Reasoning	The potential for critical, logical, and truth-seeking thinking that is in line with Islamic teachings.	- The use of AI and big data to support Islamic learning and instill Islamic thinking principles (fiqh, morals).	- Generation Z grew up as critical, analytical, and decision-making individuals based on Islamic principles.
Traits of Talent and Leadership	The potential of humans to become leaders and bring goodness to community life.	- Using social media and collaboration platforms to promote kindness and tolerance based on Islamic values.	- Generation Z becomes collaborative, caring, and responsible for the welfare of the people.
Developmental Traits	The mandate to maintain the health of the body as part of worship to Allah.	- The use of Islamic health applications that teach a healthy lifestyle according to sharia (halal diet, exercise, hygiene).	- A generation that is physically healthy, maintains cleanliness, and is disciplined in living an Islamic lifestyle.
The Nature of Sexuality and Love	The duty of man as a caliph on earth is to create and produce useful works.	- The use of Society 5.0 technologies such as IoT and blockchain to build an Islamic economy and sustainable solutions.	- Generation Z becomes productive, innovative, and contributes to the benefit of humanity in accordance with Islamic values.
The Nature of Individuality and Sociality	The potential of humans to always feel connected to Allah through prayer, dhikr, and other worship.	- Increasing spirituality through Islamic digital platforms, such as live streaming of lectures and automatic dhikr applications.	- A generation that has spiritual closeness, inner serenity, and resilience to life's challenges.
Aesthetic and Language Traits	The tendency to love beauty is in accordance with sharia principles.	- Develop Islamic art creativity through Islamic digital design (calligraphy, Islamic animation, etc.).	- A generation that is creative, aesthetic, and utilizes art as a medium of da'wah.
Physical and Sensory Traits	The potential to maintain physical and sensory health as a form of gratitude to Allah.	- Utilizing wearable technology for health monitoring and AI-based worship reminder applications.	- Generation Z grows up to be healthy, resilient, and consistent individuals living an Islamic lifestyle according to sharia guidance.

In this table, the concept of fitrah is described as an important foundation in shaping the character of Generation Z in the Society 5.0 Era. By integrating spiritual, moral, and intellectual values in education, Generation Z can grow into individuals with noble character, insight, and able to face global challenges without losing their Islamic identity. Fitrah-based education, supported by technology that is used wisely, will produce a generation that is not only intelligent, but also has character in accordance with Islamic values.

CONCLUSION

Fitrah-based education offers relevant pedagogical strategies to shape the character of Generation Z in the Society 5.0 era. By using *fitrah* as a conceptual framework, Islamic education is able to integrate spiritual and moral values with 21st century skills, so that students are not only digitally intelligent but also have a moral compass in the form of religiosity, responsibility, and social ethics. The urgency of this approach lies in its ability to respond to character crises, hoax risks, and identity challenges in the digital era. The implication is that for educators this approach becomes a reference in designing integrative curriculums, for policymakers to demand regulatory support and teacher training, and for the community to emphasize the importance of the role of families and communities. Thus, *fitrah-based education* can be positioned as a viable Islamic education strategy, adaptive, and contribute to the formation of a generation with Islamic character in the midst of global digitalization.

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