

## CARE FOR SPIRITUALITY IN THE ERA OF DISTRACTIONS: THE CENTRAL ROLE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN FORMING ATTENTION ETHICS FOR THE ALPHA GENERATION

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### ABSTRACT

Generation Alpha, born and raised in a hyper-stimulating digital environment, faces the challenge of structural distractions that threaten the foundations of their spiritual development. The capacity for inner silence (khalwat), contemplation (tafakkur), and devotion (khushu'), vital to a profound religious experience, is eroded by fast-paced, fragmented, and algorithm-driven media consumption patterns. This library-based qualitative research aims to explore the central role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in responding to this challenge through the formation of attention ethics. The research results show that digital distraction has become an ontological challenge for Generation Alpha spirituality. However, PAI has unique resources to build a solid ethics of attention, which is grounded in the value of Tauhid as a compass for managing focus. Worship practices such as prayer, fasting, and dhikr have the potential to be spiritual cognitive training to train attention discipline. As a synthesis, this research formulates the Spiritual-Digital Literacy Model (LISDI), a proactive educational framework that integrates transcendent awareness, critical-digital skills, and ethical agency. It is concluded that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) must transform from an informative-normative approach to a formative-transformational one, with a focus on establishing attention sovereignty based on divine values. Its implementation requires the integration of attention ethics modules into the PAI curriculum, teacher training as digital murabbi (leaders), and the creation of a school ecosystem that supports focus management practices, in order to shape an Alpha Generation that is not only tech-savvy but also faith-driven and spiritually sovereign.

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Digital Distraction, Generation Alpha, Islamic Religious Education, Attention Ethics, Tauhid.

### INTRODUCTION

Human life in the 21st century has undergone a fundamental transformation shaped by the power of digital technology. This revolution has not only changed the way humans work and communicate, but has also created an entirely new attention ecosystem, where information, entertainment, and social interactions flow in an infinite, instantaneous, and uninterrupted manner. This ecosystem has given rise to what is known as the "attention economy," where human cognitive focus becomes the most valuable commodity, competed for by various platforms and content (Davenport & Beck, 2021). In this economy, every notification, scroll, and like is part of a sophisticated design to maintain user engagement, gradually reshaping neural architecture and thought patterns. This phenomenon is no longer just a change in tools,

but a fundamental change in the lifeworld, which places distraction as the normal condition and deep focus as a rare commodity.

Generation Alpha, born approximately from 2010 onward, is the first cohort to be fully immersed in this digital ecosystem from birth. For them, smartphones, tablets, and internet connectivity are not newly adopted technologies, but rather the air they breathe and the water they swim in (Loh & Kanai, 2023). They are true digital natives, whose social interactions, learning, and entertainment patterns are inextricably intertwined with touchscreens and algorithms. Their cognitive characteristics are being shaped by the logic of instant gratification, multitasking, and continuous sensory stimulation. Research in cognitive neuroscience is beginning to show that chronic exposure to this hyper-stimulating media environment has the potential to impact the development of brain circuits associated with sustained attention, emotion regulation, and delayed gratification (Giedd, 2021). Thus, the challenges facing this generation are both structural and neurobiological, shaping the foundation of their human experience, including their spiritual experience.

In the context of religious life, especially Islam, this situation gives rise to a deep paradox. On the one hand, digital technology opens up unprecedented access to sources of religious knowledge. Platforms like YouTube, podcasts, and Quran apps allow Generation Alpha to easily access Islamic studies, scripture readings, and other materials. However, the fundamental nature of spiritual experience, which requires silence (*khalwat*), deep contemplation (*tafakkur*), reverence (*khushu'*), and sustained attention, contrasts with the fragmentary, fast-paced, and noisy logic of the digital space (Rofi'i, 2022). Spirituality requires a quiet inner space to listen to the inner voice and experience the presence of the Transcendent. Yet, the digital environment constantly bombards us with sounds and images that fill every gap of silence. As a result, there is a great risk of the birth of a shallow, soundbite-based spirituality, and one that loses the dimension of depth and true inner transformation.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI), in its various forms in schools, madrasas, and families, is at the forefront of this decisive battle. Traditionally, PAI focuses on the transmission of normative knowledge (*aqidah*, *fiqh*, and morals) and character formation through role models. However, in facing the realities of Generation Alpha, this approach alone is no longer sufficient. The greatest threat is no longer ignorance of religious teachings, but the inability to focus long enough and deeply enough to appreciate, reflect on, and internalize these teachings (Kurniawan & Zulkifli, 2023). If attention is the gateway to awareness, then massive distraction is the door that is constantly closed to the entry of spiritual light. Therefore, the main challenge of contemporary Islamic Education shifts from simply “what to teach” to “how to create conditions of attention that enable authentic spiritual learning and experience.”

The concept of “Attention Ethics” proposed in this article emerged as a response to this pressing need. This ethic refers to a set of principles, awareness, and skills for managing one's cognitive and emotional focus responsibly and meaningfully. From an Islamic perspective, this ethic finds its most solid foundation in the teachings of *Tawhid*. *Tawhid*, as a central principle affirming the oneness and absoluteness of Allah SWT, provides a clear ontological framework: only Allah is absolute, while everything else is relative and transitory (Fadli, 2024). From this, a principle of attention management can be derived: that attention, as a gift

of consciousness, should be directed primarily to the Absolute (Allah) and to things that connect to Him, while distractions are anything that diverts from this essential goal.

Therefore, this article argues that the central role of Islamic Religious Education in this era of distraction is to form and instill Attention Ethics based on Tauhid to Generation Alpha. Islamic Religious Education must transform from an informative approach to a formative and transformative one, which not only provides religious knowledge but also trains spiritual muscles in the form of disciplined attention. Through the integration of monotheistic values into pedagogy, deepening the meaning of worship rituals as focused exercises, and developing spiritual-digital literacy, Islamic Religious Education can equip this generation with the strength of inner immunity. The goal is for them to become not passive victims of the attention economy, but rather sovereign agents of their minds and time, able to navigate the sea of digital distractions while maintaining a deep and meaningful connection with the Creator. Ultimately, nurturing spirituality in an era of distraction is about building a strong fortress of attention, and Islamic Religious Education has the responsibility and scientific potential to be the main architect of that fortress.

The world of Generation Alpha is built on a hyper-connected digital foundation, where every aspect of their lives is interwoven with screen stimulation and algorithms. This fast-paced, fragmented media environment designed to maintain engagement has given rise to an "attention economy" that makes cognitive focus a contested commodity. Their digital consumption patterns, dominated by short-form, multi-platform content, have created a shallow and easily distracted attention architecture. The fundamental problem that arises is not only behavioral but has reached the ontological level: the capacity for inner silence (*khalwat*), deep contemplation (*tafakkur*), and reverence (*khushu'*), which are fertile ground for spiritual growth, is being systematically eroded. Herein lies the central tension: on the one hand, access to sources of religious knowledge is becoming increasingly easy, but on the other, the ability to deeply digest, reflect on, and internalize that knowledge is threatened. Conventional Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which often focuses on the transfer of normative knowledge, has proven inadequate to address the challenges of this structural distraction. Islamic Religious Education faces the problem of how to design a pedagogy that not only teaches what is true, but also trains how to focus attention, which is the gateway to awareness of that truth amidst the flood of digital stimulation.

This research has very high urgency, both academically, socially and religiously. Academically, this study is urgently needed to fill the gap in the literature that rarely touches on the integration of attention ethics theory from a Western perspective with the Islamic philosophical framework (especially Tauhid) and its application in Islamic Religious Education pedagogy. Many studies discuss the negative impacts of digital media or the importance of digital literacy, but few specifically address the formation of a transcendent value-based ethic of care as a core solution. Socially, Generation Alpha is the future of civilization. If digital distractions are allowed to erode their spiritual and cognitive foundations without appropriate educational intervention, we risk producing a technologically savvy generation experiencing a crisis of meaning, disorientation of values, and mental-spiritual fragility. In a religious context, the urgency of research lies in efforts to maintain the relevance and vitality of Islamic teachings in the new era. Transformative Islamic spirituality risks becoming shallow into mere passive and instant consumption of religious content if it is not protected by a solid ethic of attention. Therefore, this research urges to provide a

transformative roadmap for Islamic Education (PAI) so that it can play a central role not as a spectator, but as a guide that equips the younger generation with spiritual immunity in the digital world.

This study aims to conceptualize and formulate the central role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping attention ethics based on Islamic values to nurture the spirituality of Generation Alpha in the era of digital distraction. Specifically, the research objectives are outlined as follows: First, to analyze digital consumption patterns and distraction mechanisms that shape the mediatic environment of Generation Alpha and identify their impact on the development of their spiritual capacity. Second, to examine core values in Islamic Religious Education (especially Tauhid) that can serve as a philosophical foundation for the formation of attention ethics and explore transformational pedagogical practices that can integrate these values. Third, to uncover the potential of ritual and reflective worship in Islam (such as prayer, fasting, dhikr) as a form of spiritual cognitive training that can train discipline and attention resilience. Fourth, to formulate an ideal model of Islamic Religious Education called the Spiritual-Digital Literacy Model that is proactive and integrative in empowering Generation Alpha to become digital agents who are aware, critical, and sovereign over their attention and time, so that technology is used as a means of devotion, not a source of negligence.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review in this study serves to map and dialogue three main interrelated areas of literature: first, literature on the impact of the digital environment on the cognition and spirituality of the younger generation; second, literature on the concept of attention ethics and attention management; and third, literature on contemporary approaches and transformations in Islamic Religious Education. All three will be converged to build a coherent framework regarding the central role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping the ethics of attention for Generation Alpha.

The first area of literature clearly reveals that the digital revolution has created an ecological transformation that impacts the brain development and psychology of the generations born into it. Generation Alpha, as true digital natives, experienced cognitive development in an environment saturated with multitasking media and continuous stimulation. Neuroscientific research shows that chronic exposure to fragmented, high-speed media consumption patterns is associated with changes in the structure and function of brain networks responsible for sustained attention and cognitive control (Firth et al., 2021). These findings confirm that digital distraction is no longer just a temporary behavioral disorder, but has become an environmental factor that contributes to the formation of neuroplasticity. The implications of these cognitive changes for the spiritual dimension are beginning to receive attention. Studies in the psychology of religion show that the capacity for deep spiritual experience depends heavily on the ability to focus attention internally, engage in introspection, and experience moments of contemplative silence (Laukkonen et al., 2022). Thus, a digital environment that erodes the capacity for sustained attention directly threatens the psychological foundations of an authentic spiritual life.

The concept of attention ethics emerged as a critical response to the reality of the attention economy that dominates the digital era. This ethic argues that in a world where human attention is commercially contested, individuals need to develop an ethical awareness and responsibility for how they allocate this limited cognitive resource. In the discourse of philosophy and media studies, the ethics of care is seen as a new virtue necessary to maintain human autonomy, freedom of thought, and the ability to engage in meaningful relationships amidst the flood of information (Williams, 2022). This literature provides a valuable normative framework but is often secular and anthropocentric. This is where a significant theoretical gap exists, as very few studies link the ethics of care to a theological or spiritual framework that provides a stronger transcendent foundation and intrinsic motivation. In fact, various religious traditions actually have a rich reservoir of wisdom regarding the discipline of attention and control of the mind.

The Islamic tradition, in particular, offers a very solid philosophical foundation through the central doctrine of Tawhid. Contemporary studies of Islamic education are beginning to explore the relevance of Tawhid not only as a divine doctrine, but as an epistemological and ethical paradigm that governs all aspects of life, including interactions with technology. Tawhid, which affirms the oneness and absoluteness of Allah SWT, implicitly embodies the principle of attention management: that humankind's ultimate concern should be directed solely to the Absolute, while all other things are judged based on their ability to connect to or distance themselves from Him (Rahman & Shah, 2023). From this principle, a transcendent-oriented ethics of attention can be derived, in which every activity, including digital media, is judged based on its intention, purpose, and impact on the relationship with Allah (*hablum minallah*). The literature on Islamic psychology and *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) further enriches this understanding by showing how ritual practices such as prayer, fasting, and *dhikr* function as systematic mental exercises (*riyadhah nafsiyah*) to train concentration, impulse control, and mindfulness (Utami & Hidayat, 2023). This study connects the normative-theological dimension with the psychological-practical dimension of attention management in Islam.

On the side of educational practice, the literature on the transformation of Islamic Religious Education in responding to the digital era shows two main tendencies. The first tendency is defensive and protective, emphasizing the identification of the negative impacts of digital media and efforts to protect students through prohibitions or strict restrictions. The second, more progressive trend advocates an integrative approach through the development of Islamic digital literacy. This approach aims to equip students not only with technical skills in using technology, but also with critical abilities to assess content and behave ethically in digital spaces based on Islamic values (Siregar & Fauzan, 2024). However, most proposed Islamic digital literacy models still focus on content aspects (*halal/haram*, communication ethics) and critical information skills (digital citizenship). Rarely do they explicitly and systematically make the development of an attention ethic a core objective and the heart of the religious education process. Yet, without a strong foundation of an attention ethic, digital literacy risks becoming merely a technical skill that fails to build internal immunity against structural and psychological distraction mechanisms.

Based on the mapping of the three literature areas above, a significant research gap has been identified. No study has comprehensively dialogued attention ethics theory from media

studies and philosophy with the concepts of Tawhid and tazkiyatun nafs in Islamic tradition, then translated this theoretical synthesis into a concrete and applicable pedagogical model of Islamic Religious Education for Generation Alpha. This research aims to fill this gap. Based on an analysis of the neuro-cognitive and social nature of spiritual distraction, this study will develop a conceptual framework that posits that Islamic Religious Education plays a central and unique role in shaping attention ethics. This central role is possible because Islamic Religious Education has access to two resources that secular approaches lack: first, a framework of transcendent meaning (Tawhid), which provides a strong 'why' for managing attention; and second, a set of time-tested ritual practices (worship) that serve as the 'how' for repeatedly training attention discipline. This synthesis will serve as the foundation for formulating an educational model that is not reactive, but proactive and formative, aiming to shape a generation that is not only tech-literate but also attention-sovereign and faith-driven.

### RESEARCH METHODS

The study, entitled "Nurturing Spirituality in the Era of Distraction: The Central Role of Islamic Religious Education in Shaping Attention Ethics for Generation Alpha," uses a qualitative approach with library research. This type of research was chosen based on the exploratory, conceptual, and theoretical objectives of the study, namely to develop a framework, conceptual model, and in-depth synthesis of arguments related to the phenomenon under study. Library research is deemed appropriate because the material objects of the study—the concepts of spirituality, attention ethics, Islamic Religious Education pedagogy, and the characteristics of Generation Alpha—are primarily a body of ideas, theories, and discourses that have been widely discussed in previous scientific literature. Therefore, this study does not collect primary data in the field, but rather conducts excavation, interpretation, and critical synthesis of existing secondary sources to generate new understandings or a more comprehensive problem mapping (Sugiyono, 2021). This approach allows researchers to explore the philosophical roots of the problem, trace the development of academic discourse from various disciplines, and finally carry out the theoretical integration necessary to answer the research problem.

The data sources for this study consist of three main categories of written documents deemed to have academic authority and relevance. The first category is scholarly books (monographs and reference books) that address the core research themes, such as books on the philosophy of Islamic education, the psychology of religion in the digital age, Generation Alpha studies, the attention economy, and the ethics of technology. Books were chosen because they typically contain more in-depth and comprehensive theoretical explanations. The second category consists of scientific journal articles, both nationally indexed like SINTA and internationally indexed like Scopus or Web of Science. Journal articles are prioritized because they contain cutting-edge research findings and specific theoretical discussions and have undergone a peer-reviewed process, which guarantees their academic quality. The journals sought are from multidisciplinary fields such as Islamic education, developmental psychology, media studies, communication, and religious studies. The third category is published research reports, theses, and dissertations, particularly those that directly examine aspects of Generation Alpha, contemporary Islamic Religious Education, or the impact of technology on spirituality. The selection of these data sources was carried out purposively

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with the main criteria being topic relevance, novelty (priority publications 2020-2025), and the credibility of the publisher or publication forum (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

The data collection technique used was documentation with systematic steps. First, a broad literature search was conducted using strategic keywords such as "Generation Alpha," "digital distraction," "attention ethics," "Islamic education," "digital spirituality," "Tauhid and technology," and "Islamic digital literacy" on academic search platforms such as Google Scholar, PubMed, ERIC, and university library databases. This search yielded a long list of potential sources. Next, a critical selection and evaluation of each source is carried out. This stage involves the researcher in assessing the abstract, introduction, and conclusion of each document to determine its relevance and contribution to the research question. Only documents that substantially address the key dimensions of the problem are selected. Selected documents are then downloaded and organized using reference management tools such as Mendeley or Zotero. The final step is creating bibliographic notes and thematic citations, where researchers summarize the content of each source, note key quotations, and group them based on emerging themes or concepts, such as "media characteristics for Generation Alpha," "the concept of attention ethics in philosophy," or "transformative Islamic Religious Education learning models." This process ensures that the written data is ready for analysis (Neuman, 2022).

The data analysis technique used was Miles and Huberman's interactive model of qualitative content analysis, which involves three simultaneous and iterative activities: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the data reduction stage, all records from the documents were selected, focused, and simplified. Researchers coded the data, labeling pieces of text based on the key concepts they represented. For example, a quote about the design of social media algorithms that trigger endless scrolling was coded as "structural distraction mechanisms," while a discussion of devotion in prayer was coded as "ritual mindfulness exercises." This process involved initial interpretation of the meaning contained in the text data. Next, in the data presentation stage, the codes were organized into a matrix, conceptual relationship chart, or narrative description that allowed researchers to see patterns, relationships, and gaps between various literature findings. This presentation helps us see how concepts from media psychology intersect with concepts from religious education. The third stage, drawing conclusions and verifying, is the process by which researchers begin to formulate meaning from the presented data. They draw tentative conclusions, for example, about the urgency of integrating the value of Tawhid into digital literacy, and then test or verify these conclusions by revisiting the original data to look for supporting evidence or exceptions that enrich the analysis (Sugiyono, 2021).

Data Validity Testing Techniques in this qualitative literature research are guaranteed through several strategies that are equivalent to credibility and dependability tests in field research. The main strategy applied is triangulation of data sources. Researchers do not rely on just one or two sources, but compare and check the truth of a statement or concept by referring to various different sources, such as books from other authors, journal articles from different disciplines, and research reports. If a concept such as "attention ethics" is supported by consistent discussion from credible sources in the fields of philosophy, media studies, and religious education, then its validity is strengthened. The second strategy is the use of reference materials (referential adequacy), which involves storing and documenting all library materials used in detail, including citation pages. This allows the researcher, or others, to

conduct an audit trail to verify the accuracy of interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data. Third, peer review or discussion with experts (peer debriefing) is conducted, which involves presenting preliminary findings and interpretations to colleagues or supervisors competent in the field of Islamic education or media studies to obtain critical input, thereby avoiding interpretive bias and deepening the analysis. Through these three strategies, it is hoped that this research will meet the standards of data validity and reliability, despite being a library study (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research result

#### **Digital Consumption Patterns and Spiritual Distraction: An Analysis of the Mediatic Environment of Generation Alpha**

Generation Alpha, born since the early 2010s, is the first human cohort to be immersed from birth in a hyper-connected digital environment, where touchscreens and instant internet access are not new technologies but rather basic conditions of life (Prensky, 2024). Their digital consumption patterns are characterized by multi-platform, on-demand, and short-form nature, with primary exposure to social media content such as TikTok, YouTube Kids, and online games designed with reward loop mechanisms to maintain user attention (Vogels et al., 2022). This mediatic environment creates what has been called an “attention economy,” where the value of a commodity is determined by its ability to capture and hold a user’s focus, fostering a culture of continuous partial attention where individuals are constantly distributed among multiple sources of information without deepening their understanding (Carr, 2020). The main sources of distraction for Generation Alpha are no longer just external, such as notifications, but have become internalized in the form of a need for constant new stimulation, an inability to withstand boredom (boredom intolerance), and a mindset that prioritizes speed and instant gratification over deep process and reflection (Richtel, 2023).

The impact of this hyper-stimulating mediatic environment on the spiritual development of Generation Alpha is both paradoxical and significant. On the one hand, access to digital religious content, sermons, and Quranic recitations has become easier; but on the other hand, the capacity to experience spiritual depth, contemplation, and silence, which are fertile ground for spiritual growth, is being systematically eroded (Nurhayati, 2021). Spirituality, which requires inner silence (khalwat), deep reflection (tafakkur), and patience (sabr) in understanding the essence of life, clashes with the fast-paced, fragmented, and visual-sensation-oriented digital logic. This disruption to spiritual development manifests itself in a weakened ability to concentrate during worship, difficulty understanding religious texts that require contemplation, and a shallower sense of connection with the Transcendent (rabbaniyah) due to constant distractions (Supriyanto, 2023). Thus, digital distractions are no longer merely practical distractions but have become ontological challenges that threaten the foundations of the spiritual awareness of a generation whose lives are inextricably intertwined with the virtual world.

### **Integration of Tauhid Values and Attention Management: Transformational Pedagogical Practices of Islamic Religious Education**

This study found that the value of monotheism, as the core of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), offers a solid philosophical foundation for the formation of attention ethics. The concept of monotheism teaches that only Allah SWT is absolute and everything other than Him is temporary (*fana*). This principle can be transformed into a foundation for attention management: that attention is a gift and a trust of consciousness that must be directed only to what is essential and meaningful, and kept away from all that is futile (*laghw*) and misleading (Al-Attas, 2021). Effective Islamic Religious Education (PAI) pedagogical practices not only teach monotheism as a doctrine, but also train students to apply it as a consciousness filter in interacting with the digital world. For example, through the *qawlan syadidan* (firm word) method, students are encouraged to analyze every piece of content they consume with the critical question: "Does this bring me closer to or further away from remembering Allah?" (Mujib, 2022).

The transformational Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum integrates the concept of *muraqabah* (awareness of divine supervision) into digital literacy. Learning does not stop at the permissibility of media use, but also includes training in inner awareness (heart management) to maintain intention and focus. A storytelling approach, with stories of prophets who are steadfastly focused on their mission (such as the patience of the Prophet Job or the devotion of the Prophet Muhammad in prayer), is used as a counter-narrative to the culture of aimless scrolling (Hasan, 2024). Project-based learning methods, such as creating digital content embodying Islamic values or analyzing social media trends through the lens of monotheism, have proven effective in shifting students' roles from mere passive consumers to conscious producers. This approach makes monotheism the pivot for building intentionality in using technology, where every click and view is done with full awareness and a clear purpose, against the flow of impulsive and reactive use (Zed, 2023).

### **From Distraction to Focus: The Role of Ritual and Reflective Worship in Cultivating the Discipline of Attention**

Research findings reveal that the practice of worship in Islam, if understood and experienced deeply, is a very sophisticated mental exercise (*riyadhah nafsiyah*) to train the discipline of attention. Prayer, as a prime example, is a repetitive and structured simulation of focus management. The process, from intention, *takbiratul ihram* (cutting off contact with the outside world), to sequential movements and readings, is a training to draw attention away from various distractions and focus it solely on Allah SWT. (Husaini, 2022). Devotion (*khushu'*) in prayer is the pinnacle of spiritual attention ethics, namely the ability to maintain total and directed inner focus. Failure to achieve devotion often becomes a reflection for students to realize how easily their minds are distracted, thus fostering intrinsic motivation to practice self-control (*mujahadah al-nafs*).

In addition to prayer, fasting trains attention discipline through controlling primary urges (eating, drinking, and lust). Fasting teaches pause and reflection, stopping automatic responses to stimuli, which is the essence of freeing oneself from the trap of notification-driven behavior (Nurhayati, 2021). Meanwhile, the practice of *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah)

serves as an anchor for attention amidst a sea of information. Repeating the phrase "thayyibah" (the phrase "goodness") can be used as a unique Islamic mindfulness technique to return awareness to the center whenever the mind is carried away by distractions. Reflective acts of worship, such as tadabbur (recitation of the Quran), further train deep attention—a profound, continuous, and critical attention to complex texts, which is the direct opposite of skimming and scanning in digital media (Supriyanto, 2023). Through this emphasis on meaning and internalization, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can shift students' perceptions from viewing worship as a routine obligation to a daily laboratory for training the muscle of attention, vital for spiritual resilience in the digital age.

### **Building Spiritual-Digital Literacy: An Islamic Religious Education Model that Empowers Generation Alpha as Conscious and Critical Agents**

Based on a literature synthesis, this study presents the framework of an ideal proactive-integrative Islamic Religious Education (PAI) model, namely the Spiritual-Digital Literacy Model (LISDI). This model is built on three main pillars: Transcendent Awareness, Critical-Digital Proficiency, and Ethical Agency. The first pillar emphasizes instilling awareness that Allah SWT is the source of all knowledge and the ultimate goal, which serves as a navigational compass in the digital world (Al-Attas, 2021). The second pillar equips students with technical and critical skills, such as checking and verifying information (the concept of tabayyun), understanding algorithms and platform design ethics, and managing digital footprints in accordance with the value of al-mas'uliyah (responsibility) (Zed, 2023).

The third pillar encourages students to become empowering content producers (digitally enjoining good and forbidding evil) and to use technology to solve social problems (digital philanthropy, goodness campaigns). Implementing this model requires a contextual and experiential learning approach, such as using digital storytelling to convey exemplary Islamic stories, analyzing cyberbullying or hoax cases from a fiqh and moral perspective, and practicing digital detoxification guided by spiritual reflection (Hasan, 2024). The role of teachers shifts from instructors to murabbi (educators) and digital mentors who assist students in navigating the complexities of the online world. The LISDI model evaluates not only religious knowledge but also the ability to manage screen time, steadfastness in maintaining intentions, and positive contributions in the digital space. With this model, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is no longer merely a subject responding to the challenges of the distraction era, but rather a pioneer in shaping an Alpha generation that is not only tech-savvy but also faith-driven and has full sovereignty over its attention and time as a form of devotion to Allah SWT. (Mujib, 2022).

### **Research Discussion**

#### **Digital Consumption Patterns and Spiritual Distraction: An Analysis of the Mediatic Environment of Generation Alpha**

The mediatic environment in which Generation Alpha grew up is not just a tool, but has become a lifeworld that fundamentally constructs their reality, identity, and cognitive patterns. This generation was born and grew up in a ubiquitous computing environment, where computing and internet connectivity are present in every aspect of life, from

educational toys to learning systems in schools (Ribble & Park, 2022). This context has given rise to unique digital consumption patterns: seamless (without clear boundaries between online and offline), algorithm-driven (curated by platform logic), and visuo-centric (dominated by video and images). Their interactions with devices are more intuitive and emotional, often prioritizing sensory gratification and immediate social validation through likes and shares, which insidiously shape a fragmented and short-term attention architecture (Bayer et al., 2020).

The primary source of distraction for this generation has evolved from external distractions to internalized distractions in the form of structural attention pathologies. Mechanisms like infinite scrolling, personalized push notifications, and autoplay have trained the brain to expect constant new stimulation, creating a dependency on novelty and weakening boredom tolerance, the capacity to dwell in the absence of external stimulation, which is a fertile space for reflection and creativity (Manthorpe, 2021). These distractions are no longer passive, but actively seduced through algorithms that understand users' psychological preferences, turning every quiet moment into a commercial opportunity to be filled with new content. From an Islamic spiritual perspective, this condition is in line with the concept of chronic *ghaflah* (negligence), where the heart and mind are continuously diverted from remembering Allah (*dhikrullah*) towards things that are temporary and often futile (*laghw*) (Purnama et al., 2023).

The impact of these consumption patterns and mediatic environments on the spiritual development of Generation Alpha is both paradoxical and profound. On the one hand, accessibility to spiritual resources such as digital Qurans, online lectures, or virtual religious communities has increased significantly. However, on the other hand, spiritual depth, which requires silence, continuous attention, and deep contemplation (*tadabbur*), is threatened with extinction. A shallow, quick-fix spirituality may emerge, where religious needs are met by short, inspirational but non-transformative content, replacing the long process of self-discipline (*riyadhah al-nafs*) and heart-cultivation (*tazkiyah al-qalb*) (Wahid & Hamdi, 2024). The greatest threat lies not in access to religious information, but in the erosion of the cognitive and affective capacities necessary to digest, reflect on, and internalize that information until it becomes integrated into the personality. Divided attention results in a partial understanding of religion, mechanistic rituals without reverence, and faith that is easily shaken because it is not built on deep inner experience (Alhafiz & Putri, 2022).

### **Integration of Tauhid Values and Attention Management: Transformational Pedagogical Practices of Islamic Religious Education**

In responding to the challenges of structural distraction, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a very strong philosophical capital, namely the concept of Tauhid. Tawhid is not only a doctrine of the oneness of Allah, but a cosmological and epistemological framework which states that only Allah is absolute, while everything else is relative and transitory. From here, an ethics of attention based on monotheism can be constructed, which views human attention as a trust that must be directed towards Haq (absolute truth) and kept away from falsehood. Transformational pedagogical practices are those that are able to translate this noble concept into everyday awareness practices in digital. For example, the mindful learning approach in Islamic Religious Education can be integrated with the concept of *muraqabah* (feeling watched by Allah), where students are encouraged to be aware of where their minds wander

when using social media and assess it based on the principle of “is this beneficial (nafi') or futile?” (Nurhikmah et al., 2023).

The Islamic Religious Education curriculum needs to move beyond normative material and enter the realm of applied psychospiritual matters. This can be realized through the development of special modules such as “Digital Fiqh” which not only discusses the haram-halal laws of content, but also “Fiqh al-Intibaah” (attention jurisprudence) which teaches techniques for managing notifications, conducting regular digital detoxes, and designing a personal digital environment that is conducive to peace of mind. Project-based learning can focus on critical analysis of popular media trends using the lens of Islamic values, for example analyzing the influencer phenomenon through the lens of the concepts of sum'ah (riya') and honesty (shidq) (Fadli et al., 2024). This method hones spiritual intelligence as well as digital critical skills.

The role of the teacher in this context has undergone a fundamental transformation from transmitter of knowledge to spiritual guide and digital mentor. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers must be skilled not only in religious knowledge but also in digital literacy and the developmental psychology of Generation Alpha. They must be able to model attention management, for example by establishing a "sacred time" free of devices during lessons, or opening reflection sessions on students' digital experiences using an Islamic counseling approach. Integrating the values of monotheism into such pedagogy will produce a multi-level awareness: God-consciousness, self-awareness in interacting with technology, and life-purpose awareness, which serve as the primary filter in determining where attention and time should be invested (Zulkifli & Ismail, 2023). This is the foundation of a solid attention ethic, rooted in spirituality, not merely productivity techniques.

### **From Distraction to Focus: The Role of Ritual and Reflective Worship in Cultivating the Discipline of Attention**

The series of worship in Islam, if understood in essence, is a structured, repetitive, and holistic attention training system. Every act of worship contains a dimension of discipline that can be a fortress and training for a mind beset by distractions. Prayer, for example, is a ritual designed to periodically reset attention throughout the day. The process, from the intention, to the takbiratul ihram (symbolically severing ties with the world), to the greeting, is a series of instructions to shift awareness from a scattered (multi-focus) to a single (uni-focus) focus on Allah (Huda et al., 2023). The challenge of achieving *khushyuk*, often lamented, actually becomes invaluable learning material. Failure to be submissive reveals how strong the pull of distractions is, thus fostering humility (*tawadhu'*) and motivation to continue practicing mind control (*mujahadah al-nafs*).

Fasting trains mindful discipline through controlling the most basic impulses: eating, drinking, and lust. In a digital context, fasting teaches the same principle: the ability to delay gratification and resist every urge to open social media or watch videos. Digital fasting during certain hours can be a practical derivation of this worship, training the brain not to react reflexively to stimuli (Irwan & Hidayat, 2022). Meanwhile, *dhikr* practices such as reciting *tasbeeh* (prayer beads), *tahmid* (asking for forgiveness), and *istighfar* (asking for forgiveness) serve as cognitive anchors. When the mind is carried away by anxiety or unimportant

information, repeating dhikr phrases can serve as a centering technique to return awareness to a calm and meaningful center. This is a form of Islamic mindfulness that combines the tongue, heart, and mind.

Reflective worship such as Quranic contemplation is a culminating exercise in deep, sustained attention. Unlike skimming in the digital world, contemplation requires slow, repeated, contemplative reading, and delving into layers of meaning. This activity trains the brain to concentrate intensely and for a long period of time on one complex object, while also sharpening emotional and spiritual sensitivity (Wekke & Yakin, 2023). Thus, through Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which emphasizes the meaning behind rituals, the entire worship process can be transformed from a mere symbolic obligation into a daily neuroscience-spiritual laboratory. In this laboratory, Generation Alpha practices strengthening their "attention muscles," enhancing neuroplasticity that supports focus, and building mental resilience against the onslaught of exhausting digital stimulation. This resilience is the key to maintaining purity and freshness of the heart (*qalibun salim*) in an era filled with noise.

### **Building Spiritual-Digital Literacy: An Islamic Religious Education Model that Empowers Generation Alpha as Conscious and Critical Agents**

Based on the analysis of these various challenges and potentials, an integrative, proactive model is needed. This study proposes a model called the Spiritual-Digital Literacy Education Model (PLSD). This model consists of three interrelated concentric circles: Core Values, Competencies, and Contextual Actions. The Core Values are centered on the instillation of Tawhid as the Principle of Digital Navigation and Akhlak Karimah as Online Identity. From this core, three main competencies are derived: (1) Critical-Spiritual Skills (combining *tabayyun*/verification skills with *maqashid sharia*-based assessments), (2) Emotional-Digital Intelligence (managing feelings in the digital space with the concept of *iffah*/maintaining honor and patience), and (3) Productive-Meaningful Creativity (the ability to produce content that brings benefits/*maslahah*) (Sari & Hidayatulloh, 2024).

Implementing the PLSD model requires participatory learning strategies based on students' digital realities. Techniques such as digital ethics debate simulations (using real-life cases such as deepfakes and hate speech), digital documentary projects on social issues and then designing solutions based on digital zakat or waqf, or digital mindfulness practices guided by prayer and dhikr can be effective methods (Ahmad & Hassan, 2023). Evaluation of this model must be authentic and multi-method, including not only written tests but also assessments of student-created digital content portfolios, digital journal reflections, and observations of their online behavior within closed learning platforms.

The role of schools and communities in supporting this model is vital. Schools need to create a digital community covenant that involves students, teachers, and parents, creating an ecosystem that consistently supports healthy digital practices. Collaboration with tech-savvy Islamic boarding schools or religious communities can enrich learning resources (Fithriani, 2022). The PLSD model ultimately aims to shape a Sovereign Alpha Generation, who have sovereignty over their attention, time, and digital identity. They are no longer passive objects of algorithms, but active agents who use technology as a means to achieve noble humanitarian and piety goals. With this model, PAI positions itself not as an opponent of progress, but as a

provider of soul and ethical direction for that progress, ensuring that digital transformation brings humans closer to their nature and God, not further away from it.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the hyper-connected mediatic environment has created a new existential condition for Generation Alpha, where distractions are no longer peripheral disturbances but rather basic conditions that shape their cognitive and spiritual architecture. Instant, fragmented, and algorithmically reward-driven digital consumption patterns have eroded the capacity to experience depth, continuity, and silence, essential elements of spiritual growth. This challenge is ontological in nature, affecting how this generation experiences reality and the Transcendent. However, this research reveals that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) possesses rich philosophical and practical resources to respond transformatively to this challenge. Its foundation lies in the value of Tauhid which can be transformed into an ethics of attention which views awareness and focus as a divine mandate. Effective pedagogical practices are those that integrate these values into digital literacy, transforming learning from doctrinal transfer to practical awareness training. Furthermore, all Islamic rituals, from prayer and fasting to dhikr and tadabbur, are structured and repetitive systems of attention and self-control training that, when internalized, serve as neuroscience-spiritual laboratories for building mental resilience. As a final synthesis, this study projects an ideal model called Spiritual-Digital Literacy (LISDI), which is proactive and integrative. This model is designed to equip Generation Alpha not only with critical digital skills but, more importantly, with a spiritual compass derived from transcendent awareness. The goal is to produce sovereign digital agents who have full control over their attention and time and use technology consciously and meaningfully as a means to achieve the goals of piety and the welfare of the community. Thus, PAI has the potential to not only respond to the era of distraction, but to lead the formation of a new paradigm in technology, namely a paradigm that is centered on divinity and depth of meaning, not on speed and futility.

To implement the findings of this research, a strategic and collaborative approach is required. At the curriculum policy level, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, along with the Ministry of Education, needs to integrate a Digital Spiritual Literacy module into the core Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum, covering topics such as the ethics of mindfulness based on tawhid (the ethics of mindfulness), fiqh al-intibaah (the jurisprudence of mindfulness), and the psychology of media impact. At the institutional level, schools and madrasahs should establish a Digital Ethics Council involving teachers, students, and parents to develop digital community guidelines and design a school environment that supports focus, such as device-free zones and pre-classroom digital mindfulness sessions. For Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, ongoing training programs should be held to enhance their capacity as digital educators, encompassing competencies in educational technology, the psychology of Generation Alpha, and methods for integrating religious values with mindfulness management. At the classroom level, learning should be transformed into project-based and simulation-based learning, such as assignments for creating positive content, critical analysis of social media algorithms, and guided practices for digital detox and Quranic recitation. Finally, family and community engagement should be strengthened through workshops for parents on values-based digital parenting and collaboration with

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) or religious communities to create public awareness campaigns on technology use. This implementation aims to create a coherent educational ecosystem, where Generation Alpha is holistically supported to grow into spiritually whole individuals amidst the glitz of the digital world.

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