



Digital Self-Esteem and the Sustainability of Gen Z Muslim Lifestyles: Ethical Perspectives and Business Innovation

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the relationship between digital self-esteem and the sustainable lifestyle of Muslim Generation Z through the lens of Islamic ethics and digital business innovation. The rise of a digital consumerist culture highlights the tension between the desire for social visibility and the Islamic values of simplicity and responsibility. Using a qualitative descriptive approach through a literature review, this research examines national and international studies on digital psychology, Islamic business ethics, and sustainable lifestyle. The findings indicate that digital self-esteem plays a crucial role in shaping consumption behavior and social identity among Muslim Gen Z. Islamic ethical values such as *wasathiyyah* (moderation), *qana'ah* (contentment), and *amanah* (trustworthiness) serve as moral mechanisms for controlling digital consumption. Integrating Islamic ethics into digital business innovation has the potential to strengthen positive self-esteem, promote responsible consumption, and support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8, 12, and 13. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of developing an ethical and sustainable digital business ecosystem that aligns with Islamic spiritual values, fostering a generation of Muslim youth who are productive, ethical, and environmentally conscious.

Keywords: *digital self-esteem, Islamic ethics, Muslim Gen Z, sustainable lifestyle, digital business innovation.*

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has brought about a fundamental transformation in the identity construction and consumption patterns of Generation Z, particularly among Muslims who have grown up amidst the convergence of religious values and the dynamics of information technology. A noteworthy phenomenon is the emergence of the concept of digital self-esteem, namely self-esteem formed and influenced by interactions in cyberspace, which has significant implications for sustainable lifestyle choices. Initial observations indicate that Gen Z Muslims face a complex dilemma in balancing the demands of building a positive self-image on social media with the principles of modesty and environmental responsibility taught in Islamic teachings. On the one hand, the pressure to display a visually appealing lifestyle encourages consumptive behavior that potentially conflicts with sustainable values. On the other hand, awareness of environmental issues and Islamic ethical principles encourages some Gen Z Muslims to adopt more responsible and impactful consumption practices. This gap between digital aspirations and sustainable practices is an issue that requires in-depth study, particularly in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This issue becomes even more complex when linked to the development of digital businesses that utilize social media algorithms to influence young consumer behavior. Studies show that Generation Z is associated with low self-confidence and self-esteem (Ameen et al., 2022), which then impacts impulsive purchasing decisions as a psychological compensation mechanism. From an Islamic perspective, Gen Z Muslims utilize interactive content on social media to enhance their self-branding (Atika & Rafi'i, 2025). However, this practice often deviates from the Islamic principles of modesty (*zuhud*) and the prohibition of excess (*israf*). The phenomenon of fast fashion, unplanned online shopping, and excessive digital content consumption are indicators of a misalignment between spiritual values and actual behavior. Furthermore, although nearly a third of Gen Z Muslims are willing to reduce their air travel and 11% are willing to pay more for carbon offsets, the actual implementation of these commitments is unfortunately still limited. This situation raises fundamental questions about how digital business innovation can be designed with an ethical approach that not only drives economic growth but also strengthens spiritual identity and supports environmental sustainability.

Advances in technology have also caused the population composition of each generation to change. The composition of the baby boomer group is starting to decline. In terms of productive age and workforce composition, generations X and Y are the largest. Furthermore, a new generation is emerging, known as

Generation Z, entering the workforce. Research by Bencsik, Csikos, and Juhez (2016) indicates the entry of Generation Z into the generational group, as seen in the following table:

Perbedaan Generasi

Tahun Kelahiran	Nama Generasi
1925 – 1946	<i>Veteran generation</i>
1946 – 1960	<i>Baby boom generation</i>
1960 – 1980	<i>X generation</i>
1980 – 1995	<i>Y generation</i>
1995 – 2010	<i>Z generation</i>
2010 +	<i>Alfa generation</i>

These six generational groups have distinct characteristics. The youngest generation just entering the workforce is Generation Z, also known as the iGeneration or internet generation. Generation Z shares similarities with Generation Y, but Generation Z is capable of multitasking, such as using social media on a mobile phone, browsing on a PC, and listening to music on a headset. Everything they do is mostly connected to the virtual world.

In response to this issue, this research was designed with the insight that the integration of knowledge, technology, and morality can be key to realizing an ethical and sustainable digital business model. The main foundation used is the perspective of maqasid sharia, which emphasizes the protection of religion (hifz al-din), life (hifz al-nafs), reason (hifz al-aql), descendants (hifz al-nasl), and property (hifz al-mal), which aligns with the principles of the SDGs. Islamic law (Maqasid al-Syariah) and the sustainable development goals share the same goal: achieving the perfection of sustainable human life (Harahap & Risfandy, 2023). The proposed problem-solving plan includes developing a comprehensive Islamic digital ethics framework, designing a digital business model that integrates sustainability values with strategies for strengthening positive self-esteem, and establishing an innovation ecosystem that facilitates Muslim entrepreneurs to create products and services that align with sharia principles and environmental concerns. This approach focuses not only on technological aspects but also on the dimensions of spiritual education and community empowerment to build collective awareness about the importance of responsible consumption.

Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze the relationship between digital self-esteem and sustainable consumption patterns among Gen Z Muslims in the digital era; identify ethical and psychological factors influencing Gen Z Muslims' purchasing decisions and lifestyles in the context of digital business; design a conceptual framework for digital business ethics based on Islamic values that supports the achievement of the SDGs, specifically SDG 12

(responsible consumption and production), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), and SDG 13 (addressing climate change); explore opportunities for digital business innovation that can strengthen Gen Z Muslims' positive self-esteem while encouraging sustainable consumption practices; and formulate strategic recommendations for business actors, policymakers, and Muslim communities in developing an ethical and sustainable digital economy ecosystem.

The theoretical basis for this research is based on several key concepts. First, digital self-esteem theory, which views self-esteem as a construct formed through interaction, validation, and social comparison in the digital space. Second, the concept of a sustainable lifestyle, which emphasizes consumption patterns that minimize negative impacts on the environment and society. Third, the principles of Islamic business ethics are based on the values of honesty (al-amanah), justice (al-'adalah), transparency (al-tabligh), and responsibility (al-mas'uliyah), so that adherence to Islamic ethics contributes to increased trust, customer loyalty, and sustainable business growth. Fourth, a theory of digital business innovation that integrates technology with a value proposition model centered on consumer needs and aspirations. Current literature on Islam and digital technology covers a wide range of topics, but what still needs to be developed from an Islamic perspective is a broader philosophical framework that takes into account the nature, needs, and affordability of contemporary digital technologies. Fifth, the SDGs framework as a global guideline for sustainable development encompassing economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The integration of these five theoretical elements forms a holistic conceptual basis for understanding the complex interactions between digital identity, consumption behavior, ethical values, and business innovation in the context of Gen Z Muslims.

This research is expected to provide a theoretical contribution by developing a conceptual model that integrates digital psychology, Islamic ethics, and sustainable business theory within a single comprehensive framework. From a practical perspective, the research findings are expected to serve as a reference for Muslim businesses in designing digital marketing strategies that are not only commercially effective but also ethically and environmentally responsible. The findings are expected to provide input for Islamic educational institutions and community organizations in developing digital literacy programs that strengthen spiritual identity while fostering awareness for sustainability. For policymakers, this research is expected to serve as a consideration in formulating regulations that encourage digital business practices aligned with Islamic values and the SDGs agenda. Ultimately, this research is expected to contribute to efforts

to create a digital economic ecosystem that not only provides material prosperity but also spiritual enrichment and preserves the environment for future generations, in accordance with the principle of khalifah fil ard (leader on earth), which is the responsibility of every Muslim.

METHOD

This research methodology uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature review as the primary method. The research focuses on the theme "Knowledge, Technology, and Morality for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" with the subtheme of Economy, Innovation, and Digital Business. Data were collected through a review of relevant literature, including books, scientific journals, articles, and other reliable sources that discuss the relationship between knowledge, technological development, and moral values in supporting the achievement of the SDGs, particularly in the context of the digital economy and business innovation. The analysis was conducted systematically to describe and explain the relationship and ethical implications in the development of sustainable digital businesses. This approach is expected to provide an in-depth picture of how the integration of knowledge, technology, and morality can encourage innovation and business practices in accordance with the principles of sustainability. The selection of a qualitative descriptive method with a literature review allows researchers to explore conceptual and theoretical insights as a basis for understanding the theme being studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Result Research

Based on a review of previous research and its comparison with the current study, several differences were found, as follows:

Table 1. Previous Research Results and Current Research Gap

No	Researcher & Research Title	Key Findings of Previous Research	Relation to Current Research	Current Research Gap
1	Hidayatul Fitri, Dyta Setiawati Hariyono, Ghea Amalia. (2024). "The Influence of Self-Esteem on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in Generation Z	Self-esteem has a significant negative effect on FOMO; individuals with high self-esteem tend to be less affected by digital social pressure.	This study supports the concept that balancing digital self-esteem is important for developing healthy consumption behaviors and lifestyles.	Previous research has not linked digital self-esteem with Islamic ethics and the sustainability of Gen Z Muslim lifestyles.

	Social Media Users."			
2	Anugrahi Putri Ziyadatin Ilmi, Silvi Indah Nurvita Sari, Hikmatus Sa'diyah, Ananta Delyana Mafikah, Rika Nur Amelia, Eny Latifah. (2025) "Consumer Behavior According to Islamic Business Ethics."	Islamic business ethics emphasizes the values of adl (justice), wasathiyyah (moderation), and amanah (honesty) as drivers of consumer behavior.	This is relevant in providing a moral basis for Gen Z Muslims' digital consumption behavior.	Studies still focus on physical consumption and have not yet addressed digital consumption behavior and its relationship to digital self-esteem and online business innovation.
3	Aufizzahra As Syafiyah, Niken Hartati. (2025) "When Self-Esteem Depends on Love: A Systematic Review of Relationship-Contingent Self-Esteem in the Digital Era."	Relationship-Contingent Self-Esteem (RCSE) makes individuals dependent on digital validation from their social relationships; low self-esteem increases stress and compulsive online behavior.	This study explains the psychological aspects of digital self-esteem that are relevant to understanding Gen Z's online behavior.	It does not link spiritual dimensions or Islamic morality to establishing digital psychological balance.
4	Adinda Ranita Putri & Farah Aulia. (2024) "The Relationship between Hedonistic Lifestyle and Self-Esteem in Generation Z College Students."	The positive relationship between a hedonistic lifestyle and self-esteem suggests that some Gen Zers measure their self-worth through material symbols.	It provides empirical context that Gen Zers' digital consumption behavior is influenced by social image and the desire for self-validation.	It does not yet address ethical solutions or Islamic spiritual values to balance digital hedonism and lifestyle sustainability.
5	Andi Tia Irawan, Farrel Maulana Abrar,	The majority of adolescents aged 18-23 have good	It provides an empirical basis for the state of	It is still general in nature and does not yet link

<p>Arsya Listya Eka Pramudita, Putri Nasywa Khairunisa, Hanifah Huwaida, Joko Tri Nugraha. (2024) "Self-Esteem Analysis in Adolescents Aged 18-23."</p>	<p>self-esteem; they feel satisfied, useful, and confident in their abilities. However, some feel undervalued in social communication.</p>	<p>adolescent self-esteem in the digital era, relevant to the formation of Gen Z Muslim identity.</p>	<p>self-esteem with digital dynamics, Islamic values, and ethical implications in lifestyle and digital business innovation.</p>
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B. Discussion

The results of the literature review indicate that digital self-esteem and Islamic ethics have a significant relationship in shaping the behavior and lifestyle of Generation Z Muslims in the social media era. Research by Fitri et al. (2024) revealed that individuals with high self-esteem tend to be more resilient to digital social pressures and are less easily influenced by the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) phenomenon. This finding confirms that balanced self-esteem plays a crucial role in maintaining psychological stability amidst an increasingly strong culture of online validation. However, this study did not address the spiritual dimension of Islam, even though religious values have the potential to be a protective factor against digital social dependency.

Research by Ilmi et al. (2025) adds the perspective of Islamic business ethics as a driver of consumer behavior through the values of 'adl (justice), wasathiyah (moderation), and amanah (honesty). These values can serve as a moral basis for the Muslim generation in regulating digital consumption patterns to avoid falling into an excessive lifestyle. However, this research is still limited to conventional physical consumption and has not addressed the increasingly complex digital consumption behavior associated with the formation of digital self-esteem and social identity in cyberspace.

Meanwhile, Syafiyah and Hartati (2025), in their study on Relationship Contingent Self-Esteem (RCSE), highlighted that dependence on digital validation can lead to psychological stress, compulsive behavior, and emotional imbalance. This phenomenon strengthens the understanding of how social media shapes self-image and social perception among Gen Z. However, this research also failed to consider Islamic moral values as a spiritual approach to balancing digital social pressures and maintaining individual psychological stability.

Research by Putri and Aulia (2024) found a positive relationship between a hedonistic lifestyle and self-esteem in Gen Z college students. Most individuals

in this group tend to measure their self-worth through material symbols, visual images, and public recognition on social media. These findings provide an empirical indication that digital consumer behavior is not only economic but also psychological. However, an Islamic ethical approach has not yet been utilized as a normative solution to control hedonistic behavior and establish more sustainable consumption patterns. Furthermore, research by Tia Irawan et al. (2024) provides an important empirical contribution by showing that the majority of adolescents aged 18–23 have good self-esteem; they tend to be satisfied with themselves, feel useful, and confident in their abilities. However, some respondents felt underappreciated in social communication, indicating psychological vulnerability in late adolescence. These findings are relevant to the context of Gen Z Muslims who are forming their identity amidst the digitalization era. However, Irawan et al.'s research is still general in nature and has not yet examined the dimensions of digital self-esteem or the role of Islamic ethics in shaping digital identity resilience among young Muslims.

Overall, the reviewed literature reveals two major trends. First, digital self-esteem plays a significant role in influencing Gen Z's behavior, self-expression, and digital consumption. Second, Islamic ethical values such as moderation, responsibility, and justice serve as moral control mechanisms that can counterbalance the negative impacts of digital culture. However, to date, there has been little research integrating these two aspects conceptually or empirically. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by combining positive psychology and Islamic ethics as a theoretical framework for understanding the formation of digital self-esteem and sustainable lifestyles among Gen Z Muslims.

1. The Concept of Digital Self-Esteem and the Formation of Self-Identity among Gen Z Muslims

a. The Concept of Digital Self-Esteem

The concept of digital self-esteem refers to how individuals, particularly the younger generation, evaluate themselves through activities and interactions in digital spaces. According to Seli Pratiwi (2024), self-esteem is an individual's assessment of themselves, encompassing perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about their abilities and worth. In the digital era, this factor is increasingly complex because self-perception is largely shaped through social media, which has become a primary platform for seeking social validation and building self-image.

Platforms like Instagram and TikTok often become arenas for social comparison, where teenagers compare their appearance, achievements, and lifestyles with those of others. When individuals feel unable to meet seemingly

perfect digital standards, their self-esteem can decline. Conversely, for adolescents with a positive outlook and good digital literacy, social media can be a space to express their potential and strengthen their self-confidence.

In the context of Gen Z Muslims, digital self-esteem is not only related to social perceptions but also to spiritual values. Their digital identity is built not only on public recognition (likes and followers), but also on an awareness of moral and Islamic values that guide their behavior.

b. Formation of Gen Z Muslim Self-Identity in the Digital Space

Mutya Ananda et al., (2024) explain that Generation Z's self-identity is formed through intense social interactions online. Social media allows them to present various versions of themselves, experiment with communication styles, and receive feedback from others. This process is known as digital identity formation, which is the formation of self-identity based on self-representation in digital media.

Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is uniquely characterized by being open, expressive, and highly connected to technology. They use social media not only for entertainment but also as a means of self-actualization and strengthening social and religious values. In the context of Gen Z Muslims, digital media has become a space for more personal expressions of religious identity, such as through creative da'wah content, digital modest fashion, and participation in online spiritual communities.

However, this dynamic also creates an identity paradox. On the one hand, social media expands the space for actualization and religious expression. On the other hand, social pressures and digital culture create identity conflicts between Islamic values and global popular culture. This situation forces Gen Z Muslims to continuously negotiate their identities between being modern and being religious in the virtual world.

2. Islamic Ethics as a Control Mechanism for Digital Behavior and Consumption

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to the way people interact, work, and build consumer lifestyles. The emergence of digital self-esteem and online consumerism demonstrates that social identity and behavior are now largely shaped by the digital space. However, on the other hand, the flow of digitalization also gives rise to ethical risks such as misuse of information, impulsive behavior, and loss of self-control due to excessive consumption. In this context, Islamic ethics exists as a self-control mechanism that guides individuals to use technology and consume responsibly, proportionally, and with religious value.

a. Islamic Ethics and Self-Control in the Digital Era

Amri Yahya (2024) emphasized that Islamic ethics plays a crucial role as a self-control mechanism for digital technology users. This ethics is based on basic moral principles such as patience, tolerance, and wisdom (hikmah), which form an internal control over online behavior. The value of patience serves as a moral bulwark against being easily provoked by provocation or hate speech on social media. Tolerance fosters awareness of respect for differing views, preventing disinformation and digital polarization (echo chambers). Meanwhile, wisdom directs users to sort and filter information with critical reasoning and noble morals. This principle of self-control is reflected in the words of Allah SWT:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ ۖ وَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ. فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۗ

It means: "As for those who fear the greatness of their Lord and restrain themselves from their desires, indeed, Paradise will be their abode." (Surah An-Nazi'at: 40-41)

This verse explains that those who fear Allah and are able to control their desires, which is part of self-control in the digital age, are promised Paradise as their place of return. Controlling these desires is key to preventing someone from falling into bad behavior that often arises in digital activities, such as negative emotions, excessive consumption, or hedonistic behavior. This verse reminds us of the importance of awareness (taqwa) as the primary driver of self-control, including in facing temptations and challenges in the digital world.

Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ بِالصُّرْعَةِ ، إِنَّمَا الشَّدِيدُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ

The Most High and the Most Merciful "The strong person is not the one who always defeats his opponent in a fight, but the strong person is the one who controls himself when he is angry." Hadith narrated by al-Bukhari no. 5763 and Muslim no. 2609.

This hadith emphasizes that true strength is not physical, but rather the ability to control oneself, especially in difficult situations or provocations, which is highly relevant to facing the challenges of social media and today's digital lifestyle.

Based on this verse and hadith, Islamic ethics encourages the younger generation to develop self-control and maintain self-esteem, as well as a lifestyle oriented toward sustainability and spiritual values, so that digital activities do not undermine morals but become a field of charity and positive contributions.

b. Islamic Ethics in Consumption Control

Consumption in Islam is not merely the fulfillment of material needs, but a means of worship to achieve *maslahah* and *falah* (well-being in this world and the hereafter). According to Atika Rizki, Abdul Wahab, and Rahman Ambo Masse (2023), Islamic consumption theory emphasizes four main values:

- 1) Modest living (*qana'ah*) as a form of self-control from wastefulness and hedonism;
- 2) *Halalan thayyiban*, which means ensuring that all consumption comes from halal sources and brings goodness. Goodness;
- 3) Gratitude, which cultivates spiritual awareness of God's blessings;
- 4) Generosity, which involves using consumption as a means of sharing one's wealth for social benefit. Allah SWT says:

وَلَا تُبْذِرْ تَبْذِيرًا ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ الْمُبْذِرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ
كَفُورًا ﴿٢٧﴾

This means: "Do not squander (your wealth) wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of Satan, and Satan is ungrateful to his Lord." (Quraish Shihab, verses 26–27)

Quraish Shihab (2012) interprets the above verse as a moral warning to prevent humans from falling into wasteful behavior that resembles Satan's in its disobedience and denial of God's blessings. He emphasizes that wastefulness reflects disobedience and ingratitude to God. Therefore, Islam emphasizes the principle of balance (*wasathiyah*) in the use of wealth and resources. Yusuf al-Qaradawi (2022) also emphasizes that controlling consumption does not mean rejecting worldly pleasures, but rather enjoying them moderately and responsibly.

Thus, the values of contentment, gratitude, and trustworthiness form the basis for ethical and moderate consumption behavior. Al-Isra' verses 26–27 can be viewed as the foundation of Islamic ethics to encourage consumption behavior that is just and sustainable, and in accordance with the objectives of the *maqāshid shari'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law) in safeguarding wealth (*hifz al-māl*) and realizing social welfare.

3. Ethical Digital Business Innovation as a Supporter of Sustainable Muslim Lifestyles

Business ethics are currently a key factor in guiding innovation that not only meets market demand but also responds to global social and environmental challenges. The shift from a shareholder-focused economy to a stakeholder-

focused economy demonstrates that companies have significant social obligations, including building a sustainable and ethical consumer culture.

In the context of Gen Z Muslims who frequently use social media as a space for self-expression and interaction, ethics is a crucial foundation for encouraging business innovation that aligns with Islamic values. Innovation based on ethical motivations, such as the development of environmentally friendly products that comply with halal standards, can increase the digital confidence of this younger generation by providing them with healthy, dignified, and sustainable lifestyle options.

Ethical business practices also contribute to mitigating the negative impacts of social media, such as impulsive consumption behavior often fueled by advertisements and viral trends. Conversely, ethical innovation in business models and products can produce solutions that encourage Gen Z to make more responsible consumption choices and maintain a balance between material needs and spiritual values.

Business awareness of ethics not only avoids reputational and legal risks but also paves the way for meaningful and sustainable value creation. By adopting principles of fairness, honesty, and social responsibility in product innovation and marketing strategies, businesses can create a strong Muslim consumer community that is responsive to the challenges of the modern era. Overall, ethics as a driver of innovation in the business world paves the way for a sustainable lifestyle and positive digital self-esteem for Gen Z Muslims, by linking religious values, social responsibility, and future-oriented creative innovation.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study suggests that digital self-esteem is a crucial factor in shaping the consumption behavior and social identity of Generation Z Muslims in the digital era. Islamic ethical values such as moderation, honesty, and responsibility act as moral control mechanisms that balance the potential negative impacts of digital culture that tends towards consumerism and hedonism. The integration of these ethical values into digital business innovation contributes to strengthening positive self-esteem and encouraging sustainable consumption practices that align with sharia principles and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). These findings imply the importance of business actors, policymakers, and Muslim communities in developing a digital economic ecosystem that focuses not only on material gain, but also on spiritual well-being and environmental preservation. This research also opens up opportunities for further, more in-depth studies on the application of Islamic digital ethics in Gen

Z Muslim business practices and digital consumption. Thus, this research provides conceptual and practical contributions in supporting the sustainability of ethical lifestyles and digital business innovation.

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