

# The Urgency of Moral Education and Its Contribution to the Mental Spirituality of Gen-Y in the Millennial Era

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**Abstract:** The development of technology today has quite a lot of influence on various aspects of human life. Technology is a need for humans and helps them in their field of work. Technological progress can avoid in life because technological advances will run human development and science. The industrial revolution 4.0 requires humans to enter technological development. The Industrial Revolution 4.0 fundamentally changes the way humans think, live, and relate to one another. This era will disrupt various human activities in many social interactions. The advancement of globalization in information and communication technology affects the position of Gen-Y (millennial generation) is very strategic and complex as a digital era actor with smartphone devices or gadgets. Gen-Y can elaborate moral values with super-sophisticated technology that gives birth to grace for the people, but the fact tends to override ethics and morals. This paper tries to offer a solution with the title of the urgency of moral education and its contribution to the mental spirituality of Gen-Y in the Millennial era. The research design is qualitative, including the type of literature study. Data inventory uses documentation techniques, and data analysis is descriptive-analytic, namely collecting, analyzing, weighing, and concluding through inductive thinking. They prove that moral education can collaborate with super-sophisticated technology simultaneously and integrate with Gen-Y ethical and moral values in achieving success based on Islamic law guidance and local wisdom.

**Keywords:** Akklāq Education, Gen-Y, Millennium Era

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## 1. Introduction

The era of technology-based information and transformation can have implications for various human activities in their daily lives. It forces every individual or community group to follow developments and enter the industrial revolution 4.0 network voluntarily or by force. Fundamentally has changed the mindset of the behavior of human society in interacting and socializing. In facing this era, there will be many fundamental social changes (disruption) in various fields of human activity when communicating and adapting [22], especially in the Gen-Y group (millennial generation) aged between 18-40 years. At this age, the behavior and habits of Gen-Y have a high level

of enthusiasm for the use of technology that affects the mindset, attitude, actions, and governance of life is more pragmatic and accelerative as a logical consequence of the advancement of digital technology. The characteristics of the sophistication of this super-sophisticated technology are positive, such as facilitating a variety of easy access to information, obtaining knowledge, and gaining relationships of interaction and transactions. However, other aspects have negative connotations, such as egotistical, instantaneous, consumptive, and introverted nature towards the environment.

Gen-Y is a term for the post-global era that makes an admiration for the knowledge of digital technology systems that can master [7], such as data science, artificial intelligence, and big data that follow four phenomenal

theories of information transmission, data processing capabilities, increasing data communication bandwidth, and increasing the value of a network [16] which simultaneously triggered the birth of the network era and various other attributes. This implies an era where people or companies and even machines are connected and able to exchange information instantly and transcend geographical and time boundaries. It will be called ubiquitous computing that supported pillars of the industrial revolution 4.0. Along with the development of the computerization era that creates various theories and formulas about the ease of work systems, relationships between clients or business networks between continents can be done very quickly, economically, and profitably among modern people. But unfortunately, its existence is more likely to be used only to fulfill and support the tastes of their lusts, without being accompanied and balanced by deep spiritual understanding, basic life morals, and religious teachings. The excesses have resulted in various natural disasters and misuse of human roles and functions, such as drugs, corruption, deviant behavior (LGBT), greed and irresponsible actions.

The facts exposed in the description above show there is an agreement that knowledge is essentially owners to provide pleasure, satisfaction, happiness, and prestige in life for those who have it, even though obtaining it, in essence, is not for everyone [23], except when in the process of extracting, examining, and implementing it includes a manner approach as a gift from Allah which is the cause of the success of human endeavors, therefore success and happiness will only be obtained if it is based on the instructions of Allah and His Messenger as a consequence of efforts seriously in all aspects of the field of work based on noble morals [10]. Included in this context are Gen-Y people who already have a myriad of advantages in the field of science and digital technology with various variants of its applications, which will provide benefits for themselves and many people when the implementation process is adorned with noble morals.

## 2. The Concept of Moral Education

The term *akhlāq* comes from the word *al-khulq* which means character, temperament, behavior, and customs [9]. Or a person's behavior that expresses a sense of pleasure and ease that flows naturally. The meaning of the term morals is a person's actions that arise without thinking beforehand [6]. And the nature of worship is its practice as a form of manifestation of faith that stays in the soul, so that whoever leaves the moral aspect in his life, then he means that the reward for his good deeds has been erased. The essence of morals is the condition of the soul that leads to actions easily and lightly, or the condition of thoughts and feelings that inspire action without requiring deep thought and critical reasoning, which is motivated by instinctual habits or training and effort [17]. Therefore, the substance of this moral understanding will certainly only be obtained, among others, through a formal education process at school or madrasah. Therefore, the school institution is a vehicle that

focuses on instilling attitudes and values of responsibility (morals) carried out consciously by adults (both knowledge and experience) to the next generation and at the same time providing motivation, coaching physical and mental spiritual development with the aim that the generation becomes an individual with a good personality in all activities which becomes the main character [1] in his life to achieve eternal happiness.

The discourse of moral education is part of the structure of Islamic teachings that occupies a central position as a form of transfer of rules and values of the Qur'an and al-Hadith. Humans need a presence in organizing and managing praiseworthy behavior, both in the form of words, actions, and attitudes [15], reconstruct through two normative approaches (reason arguments) and scientific (mind reasoning). The existence of moral values initiated by educators through the educational process both in schools, the community, and especially in homes is important for the sustainability of the next generation of noble character is the base capital in living life so that an atmosphere of building balance in his life. Home as a beginner educational institution is the step of implementing the initial stage of the learning system. Because of the essence, a child entrusted by Allah to his parents as a brilliant pearl and a simple soul who will accept all kinds of directions, visions, and missions engraved on his mind and heart and bow (respect) before all who educate him as a result of the educational process. If he is accustomed to good behavior, he will be good and live happily today and in the future, or vice versa [4]. Therefore, moral education is a process of forming a good habituation character with the hope that each individual (child) will be able to show positive behavior that arises in him without coercion or pressure from others.

The concept of Islam in interpreting morals uses measurable parameters to reconstruct the truth of faith and the honesty of sharia embedded in each individual. Even morals are an inseparable part of the framework of faith as a belief system that drives all the activities of Muslim life [14]. Both in the form of automatic actions that a person does when dealing with Allah SWT., fellow humans, and other creatures of Allah [8]. As an attitude that is firmly embedded in the soul and patterned in an action that is done sincerely without any elements of theatrics. Even the presence of the Prophet Muhammad on this earth carries a mission to perfect human morals [12] which is a priority scale for the formation of the basics of civil society. Thus, to realize the Islamic approach by developing moral values through teaching the texts of the Qur'an and al-Hadith that relate a lot to faith [13]. Because morals are the essence of faith/tauhid that can be measured and known from their daily behavior, a powerful faith will form good and noble manner while weak faith will have implications for worse and vile morals (Surah Ibrahim/14: 34). Of course, these kinds of moral values are very necessary to be embodied in the social life of the millennial generation (Gen-Y) in today's digital technology era as a continuation of the law of social change permanently from time to time.

### 3. Research Methods

The research paradigm is a qualitative type of library approach to obtain various sources and information [26] by reading, writing, inventorying, reviewing, grouping, and processing data as fully as possible according to the categorization of relevant information. The nature of descriptive research is trying to describe and interpret the data as it is in detail, organized, and sequentially both objects and subjects studied effectively [20]. Data sources are subjects and objects obtained by documenting various scientific research products, authoritative reference books, and other supporting sources [18]. The analysis strategy uses content analysis techniques, namely deductive thinking patterns in a descriptive form that criticizes data or records of various events and factual information related to the data sources under study [2] and then examined, analyzed and integrated to produce a conclusion.

### 4. Research Results

In terms of work, Gen-Y always are quickly frustrated, and changing, and there is no certainty of principle. So, physically and mentally, in the middle ages, they are predicted to have problems experiencing worse health compared to their parents of the first generation/baby boomers at the same old. The contributing factors to this decline in physical and mental health are the work, social relationships, and household factors experienced. Those in their 20s and 30s are currently at risk of health problems, such as symptoms of cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. These disorders are manifested by prolonged stress, anxiety, and depression due to a lower quality of life than the first generation, earning less money than their parents at the same age.

The facts reinforced by research that the work pattern of the industrial revolution 4.0 requires companies to work faster and more productively, but due to unstable economic conditions, food intake factors affect the mental health of Gen-Y people. Also, they tend to be self-centered and always want to be the center of attention. In addition, the development of social media also worsens Gen-Y's psychology due to the high perfectionist attitude as the core orientation that affects social status under pressure on social media, so they experience multi-dimensional perfectionism to get higher standards.

Another characteristic faced by Gen-Y is that the effects of mastery of technology and information tend to behave lazily and consumptively, such as the online lifestyle that has become part of the soul of a millennial. Various advertisements for goods and services that are familiar to them can be obtained through numerous media platforms. The invitation to shop echoes from the moment people wake up, and do their activities, to when they return home. It is not surprising, then, that Gen-Y is consumptive in the sense that they prefer to spend money to buy a product or use services provided online, and they are consumers who dominate the

market now. For businesses, especially online services, this is a profitable business opportunity. Of course, the concept of consumer behavior is very varied. The basic principle is to buy goods or services without rational consideration or not based on primary needs.

Another Gen-Y life attitude is that they tend to be ease bored, that a title (designation) reserved for individuals or groups who like instant nature in everything. For this reason, they do not want to be burdened by time in achieving the desired goals. The opportunity for entrepreneurs, especially those engaged in online business. The selling products are accompanied by detailed quality, price, and order information. So as not to confuse customers in placing orders. Through this variety of convenience, of course, everyone can fall for the technology offered and become an individual with personally lazy to trying to achieve results. It is a person's reluctance to do something he should or should do.

That is, among other things, the existence of traits and habits that are inherent and cover the life of Gen-Y, which certainly requires the inclusion of moral values so that the work patterns of the heart, mind, and actions formed into a balanced person.

### 5. Discussion

#### *Get to know the characteristics of Gen-Y*

The demographic division of the population is based on characteristics and various changes divided into several levels of the birth period. Starting from 1945 and before is called the Pre Baby Boom, the birth of 1946-1964 is called The Baby Boom generation, then between 1965-1976 came the title Baby Bust or Generation X. While those born between 1977-1997 are called The Echo of the Baby Boom, namely the millennial generation (Gen-Y). There is also the designation Generation Net, born between 1998 and 2009, then known as Gen-Z; and the next is the Alpha generation, born in 2010 [23]. The millennial generation is the generation born and living in the early 1980s to 2000. At the same time, digital technology in this era began to penetrate all aspects of life, especially Gen-Y. They have been used to interacting with technology since birth, using fast communication technology, such as e-mail, SMS (Short Message Service), instant messaging, and other social media. Likes; FaceBook and Twitter, IG, and others grew and developed in the era of the internet boom, and also liked online games [11].

If examined based on the age aspect, Gen-Y and now aged between 15-34 years, it turns out that they have similar characters and lifestyles with the generation of the industrial revolution 4.0 era who understand technology. Socially expressive, connected to various networks massively, creative, and have high trust [17], and always tend to innovate endlessly. More specifically, Gen-Y characteristics have described a generation that is always open to new things and wants to be different from others. Has the skill to create something new, has good self-confidence, is optimistic, expressive, has freedom, and likes challenges [21]. It is also like a relaxed work atmosphere, able to do several things

simultaneously, modernist style, and easy to master technology to carry out activities and update the latest information [25].

#### *The Existence of Morals in Gen-Y*

The presence of Gen-Y coincides with the birth of advanced technology, such as computers and gadgets that make all actions must carry out with a digitization process which certainly affects all activities of people's lives, including the morals of this millennial generation which is very different from the previous generation. For example, in communication, Gen-Y no longer applies verbal interaction and communication but uses technology-based tools. Whereas, the use of technology in the context of this communication can have a very crucial impact and a serious cause of various complicated problems and moral degradation for the millennial generation. Such as the loss of politeness, disrespect for elders, including their parents, and even likening them to peers.

These facts underlie the importance of mentoring Gen-Y in the field of morals in madrassas, boarding schools, or other formal educational institutions for the application of ethical education values so that their behavior can be controlled in a better direction, in line with the concept of *akhlāk karīmah* based on the *al-Qurān* exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. So that with that, their lives are more beneficial and have a positive effect on the surrounding environment. In addition, informal education initiated by the role of parents in homes is no less urgent formation of Gen-Y behavior with praiseworthy morals so that their behavior can be controlled in daily activities, especially when in direct contact with the internet and other similar technologies.

It's essentially to be understood, that moral education of Gen-Y is a combination of two definitions of education and morals that provide an understanding as a planned, measured, and controlled effort to familiarize oneself with realizing an action that leads to the perfection of good behavior [5] in social life. The principle of Islamic teachings explains that a person is said to have faith if he has good morals and a praiseworthy attitude, which every believer must have. For this reason, moral education occupies a strategic position in Gen-Y moral development as explained by the *Qur'an* in *Surah Ali Imran* verse 138.

The *Qur'an* has established the basic principles of Gen-Y morals and morality by the human conscience. The information of *Qur'anic* morals can carry out using the approach of love, patience, gentleness, and attention. The core purpose of instilling *Qur'anic* morals is so that Gen-Y can recognize and love Allah SWT, who created the entire universe and its contents. Understand and like the Prophet Muhammad SAW, in whom there is a good and noble role model. So that through the capital of love for Allah and His Messenger, Gen-Y understands and realizes the teachings of Islam proportionally according to the level of understanding reason. The moral education concept based on the *Qur'an* has significant chemistry and relationship to Gen-Y behavior. Furthermore, entering the current digital era, which is very familiar with digital technology, the existence of a moral

education becomes.

Therefore, this aspect of morals or morality becomes more urgent for Gen-Y to continue to strive for its existence so that it can adapt and collaborate in every way and become part of their lives. Especially in facing the challenges of the global era where each individual or community group has its personality and character, which leads to change. Such as the development of morality issues based on information technology media that are increasingly fast and easy to reach is a challenge of the Gen-Y era that cannot be ignored [17]. That fact emphasizes the importance of moral education to equip Gen-Y to live their lives in peace, success, security, and comfort through the following strategic stages:

First, Gen-Y is introduced to the concept of morality comprehensively, how to understand, evaluate and realize the values and norms of Islamic teachings related to morals, attitudes, and behavior as a whole, such as a relationship with Allah Gen-Y needs to introduce to the procedures of worship that carried out sincerely, trust, hoping only for Him, always craving for mercy, being ashamed of sinning, grateful for blessings and accepting them patiently, and growing a sense of love for Allah, recognizing in their souls that the hereafter is more important than the world (asceticism). Meanwhile, relationships with fellow humans include legitimate personal and social beliefs that Gen-Y should have traits and social manners, such as honesty, trustworthiness, generosity, courage, respect, shyness, self-control, gentleness, patience, justice, and compassion.

Secondly, the importance of exemplary aspects for Gen-Y who are going through a period of crisis during the turbulent world society, easy access to immoral and worthless content from various media, such as sexual harassment and violence. It is presented by the spectacle of diverse mainstream media that provide inexhaustible information and events unsuitable for public consumption. The crisis of role models plaguing Gen-Y today requires the role of education formal in the form of schooling or informal carried out in family homeschool to actively participate in consistently taking concrete steps to build Gen-Y morals into its top priority. Parents as agents of the model in instilling moral values are very effective because their existence can see, observed, and followed by Gen-Y as the source of example. Likewise, teachers/ educators, as educational professionals, should always pay attention to the moral development of Gen-Y in their guidance and can also boost Gen-Y's morals through reciprocal communication that has moral value as an exemplary personal representation for Gen-Y to become a person with noble character [17].

Third, the importance of maintaining the sense of joy and pleasure of Gen-Y through moral education, not raising them in a hedonistic cradle that indulges in material satisfaction without control of moral and spiritual values. The development of information technology which cannot be separated from the behavior of Gen-Y today has become one of the backgrounds for the emergence of a culture of pleasure (hedon), accessing various entertainment content without limits and becoming a magnet that is difficult to

resist. At the same time, the spread of internet access is the gateway to foreign cultures entering globally without filters, which will continue to hit Gen-Y and the nation's society consciously or unconsciously passed down from generation to generation.

Fourth, creative attitude and innovative thinking are characteristics of Gen-Y that must receive optimal guidance to stay on track and produce works of benefit and beneficence value. For this reason, it is necessary to empower the synergy of the involvement of aspects of cognition, conation, and affection based on good morals that can inspire new understanding and practical solutions or create new products. Gen-Y must be given as a decent portion to develop the ability to think by utilizing professional skills and imagination backed up by current digital technology to find new prospective ideas in line with Allah's words in the Qur'an letter an-Nahl/16: 44.

Thinking as one aspect of the four potential human needs is explicitly the Qur'an has accommodated and highly ennobled the intellectual, and encouraged humans to develop the ability of the brain as well as possible, sharpening it to be sharper so that it can be creative that provides for the common good. Empirically this attitude has been proven by Caliph Umar bin al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him), who is intelligent, critical, and creative in doing *ijtihad*. He has a great position because of ideas that make many breakthroughs and fundamental transformations in various fields, such as military administration, public welfare administration, and personnel administration. He enacted the triple divorce base to deter anyone who underestimated this issue and the same time as an effort to maintain the integrity of the household and society. As for the scientific field, establishing rewards for those who are busy memorizing the Qur'an [19] and other Islamic sciences.

The characteristics described above should be transmitted to Gen-Y as a young, dynamic, full of energy, and always optimistic soul to play a role as an agent of change who moves and tries to get as close as possible to the outside world as possible, producing good ideas, creative thinking out the innovative box based on noble morals. So that the word is static, ancient, conservative, and backward. Gen-Y is the foundation of the nation's hope to become reformers who inspire changes in the world to a better and promising direction through the implementation of effective moral education development.

#### *Internalization of Moral Education in Gen-Y*

The argumentation building described in the previous discussion shows that the factor of moral education has a large share and an urgent role in determining the style and color of Gen-Y in its work in the global world arena. They develop the values of simplicity, polite behavior, and self-control based on a sense of pleasure and happiness. Oriented of various obligations individually and collectively carried out of desiring and meaningful learning process. So, the essence of moral education can achieve optimally through the following stages:

##### *a. Akhlāq to Allah SWT*

Gen-Y needs guidance and development to recognize, understand, and love Allah SWT as the Most Holy Essence, which must worship with fear, hope (*raja'*), and love. This triad of feelings can be united in every servant or Gen-Y, not missing one of them. Loving Allah is not just a confession on the lips but in line with the reality of action as proof of the truth of his belief, as stated in the Qur'an in [Surah Ali 'Imran/3:31].

There are several prerequisites for obtaining the love of Allah SWT: Firstly, getting closer to Him by doing voluntary practices after fulfilling the obligatory ones. Second, remember Allah in all circumstances, whether oral, heart, or actions. Third, always prioritize the divine will over the worldly desires of the transitory material nature. Fourth, there is no arrogance because humans are nothing compared to the greatness and power of the Creator. Fifth, always being in the assembly of knowledge with those who love Allah, being honest in faith, and recording the beautiful words that come out of their words, and the sixth is the table away from all forms of thoughts, feelings, and actions that cause separation of the heart from remembering Allah SWT [19]. These are the five aspects that cause the Gen-Y to gain the love of Allah, as it has described by the Companion Ali ibn Abi Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) with his beautiful words, namely: Let not a servant hope in anyone but Allah and let not fear anything but his sins.

##### *b. Akhlāq to Rasulullah SAW*

The criteria for Muslims who always follow the behavior and morals of the Prophet is a configuration of love in the form of carrying out what he brought and avoiding immoral and injustice behavior, and always longing for the presence of the Messenger in his life, as explained in the Qur'an [surah An-Nisa/4: 80].

The illustration of love for the Messenger can be proven concretely in an analogy such as loving property, children, spouses, and also both parents, even exceeding his like for the types of names of objects in line with the statement *Ṣahābah Ali* (May Allah be pleased with him). The love of the Apostle is above all forms of beauty and worldly pleasures that are always appreciated by every individual, exceeding his preference for cold water when he feels thirsty and thirsty. Thus, the realization of love for the Messenger in the reality of life can be proven by following all deeds related to worldly and *akhirah* activities on a voluntary or forced basis. Like the incident of the Companion Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) kissed Hajar Aswad during hajji, but he did not like it because it was not bring harm or provide benefits, so the action was carried out by the Apostle, so he still did it [19].

That is the historical fragmentation of the love of the Companions for the Messenger, which means imitating all forms of actions and deeds as evidence of noble morals because the fact, behind the ritual event, there is happiness in the formation of peace, and pleasure of living in the world and the hereafter is eternal. Therefore, at least this factor is also a trigger for educators to be able to transform Gen-Y so that they are not only professional in the field of

computerization with digital technology as a form of freedom to surf in the intellectual realm but also internalize humanization values and understanding of religious spirituality.

#### c. *Morals to Parents*

The principal purpose of implementing moral education is the effort to foster and serve Gen-Y so that in doing good (filial piety), obeying and carrying out both people, both biotic, ideological, and sociological status. Always serve, maintain, care for, and pray for them while both are still alive in the world and when after returning to face the Creator in the hereafter as informed by the following Qur'an in [surat al-Isra/17: 23].

A spectacular interesting historical phenomenon, to be listened to and take instruction about filial piety to parents, such as the meaning of a hadith that occurred during the time of Caliph Uṭman bin Affan (May Allah be pleased with him) where the price of a date tree reached one thousand dirhams per peace. A companion named Usamah cut down a date palm tree and then gave the fat to his mother to eat. People asked him why he did that when he knew that a date palm was expensive, up to a thousand dirhams. Then Usamah replied, my mother asked me for it, and I will give or fulfill her request, everything that I can afford or have.

This illustration depicts the formation of a child's love for his parents, who is willing to sacrifice whatever he has to fulfill the needs and desires of his parents. This noble trait certainly can be reconstructed by today's Gen-Y so that they have perfection in knowledge, belief, and praiseworthy behavior, which will bring them ultimate success and happiness.

#### d. *Morals Towards Others*

Moral education is also focused on Gen-Y so that they can communicate, interact and assimilate among fellow social beings who are warm, peaceful, and pleasant, whether they have a relationship with family, religion, nation, and homeland. The agreement of social beings is guaranteed by all the heavenly religions, even hardly that doing good is a necessity or obligatory, and spreading it is an act of worship worth the reward. Allah loves his servants who always do good to others, think positively, are always open-minded, and are soft-hearted even towards people who have done evil to him. Therefore, Gen-Y should be a pioneer who plays a role in the realization of peace, welfare, prosperity, and justice between individuals and community groups so that a just, flourishing, and prosperous civil society is built according to the following Qur'an in [surah al-Isra/17: 7].

Interpreting the above verse that there is an illustration of virtue, and it is excellent to observe, which is fragmented by Asma bint Abu Bakar as-Shidik (May Allah be pleased with her) said that she made provisions for food and drink for the Apostle at her father's house when the Apostle was about to emigrate to Medina. At that time, Asma did not find a rope to tie his food and drink supplies to her belt cloth, so she tore it into two parts and tied the supplies with them. So that is why she is called Dzatun Nithaqain, the woman who owns two belts.

The nature of Iṭhār (prioritizing the interests of others), even though he/she is in dire need, the soul sacrifices to carry out goodness by making it easier for others. Of course, it will bear sweet fruit by getting twice the luck even more. This illustration can inspire Gen-Y to innovate and create to share and provide benefits to many people based on awareness and love that becomes the driving force in his life amid the current digital technology computerization era.

## 6. Conclusion

The millennial generation born in the early 1980s-2000s is called Gen-Y because it currently lives at the turn of the millennium aged 15-34 years, which is very risky to the negative impact of technological influences if not balanced by moral education. The forms of moral education are good habits and the ability to do positive actions without coercion or pressure from others. And the approach of moral education in conducting Gen-Y coaching uses methods: exemplary, habituation, giving advice, and attention/ supervision. Strategies to internalize moral education Gen-Y is introducing a comprehensive understanding of morals, modeling good role models, preventing hedonistic attitudes, and being fond of luxurious living. The substance of moral education is the realization of the role and function of Gen-Y to kowtow to Allah SWT, follow and attend the Prophet Muhammad SAW, be devoted to both parents, love knowledge and practice it and do good to fellow creatures, encourage innovation, creative and productive attitudes based on positive thinking.

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