

**PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC ETHICS ON DIGITAL AGE AMONG
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILORIN, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA****Aliyu YUNUS**

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Abstract

Computers (desktop, laptop and tablet), mobile devices (smart phones) and the applications installed on them, are surrounded by students. These technologies and applications are influencing the ways learners think and behave. It is discovered that the students spend more time while using digital tools and most especially on social media. It is further emphasised that during this process, they view pornography, spread information which are against the ethical principles of Islam, engaging in fraudulent acts (cybercrime), intruding on other's privacy, stalking of individuals and lots of acts which are not in conformity with Islamic ethical principles. It is also believed that they are more willing to create online learning communities and take active roles in these communities which cause a lot of damages. This study assessed Islamic ethics and digital age among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. Descriptive survey was adopted for this study. Questionnaire was used to collect data from one hundred (100) Islamic Studies students in a senior secondary school in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. Validation of the instrument was done by three (3) experts in order to ascertain the validity of the questionnaire. A test re-test method was used for the reliability of the questionnaire which showed co-efficient of 0.74. The data collected were analysed using percentage to answer the research question 1. T-test was used to test hypothesis one while t-test statistics was used to test hypothesis one and Analysis of Variance was used to test the second hypothesis. However, the findings revealed that Islamic ethics help in regulating students' behaviour at this digital age. It was further asserted that lack of Islamic ethics easily makes students to involve in cybercrime at this digital age. It was recommended that Parents should endeavour to enroll their children in Islamic schools right from their childhood, in order to acquire adequate knowledge of Islamic ethics. Also, Government should organize lectures and symposium to enlighten both teachers and students in using digital tools in accordance with Islamic ethics.

Keywords: *Ethics, Islamic Ethics, Digital Age, Learning*

Introduction

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the morality of human action. It is said that Human being is expected to exhibit good character and moral values that are essential steps to develop and implement the ethical process. The spread of digital technology in our daily life, its use and impact on organisation and individual, increase ethical question about its roles in our society. The use of digital technologies can bring crucial benefits to people and the world in general. It is viewed that digital technologies provide and contribute to the economy in regard to employment, value-added and output improvements where every individual has access to it. Digital age involves the use of the Internet, social media, modern technology and other digital devices which are highly essential for development and rapid growth of nations, schools and religious organisations.

The word Ethics is derived from the Greek word *ethos*, which means ‘character’ or ‘custom’ (Ahmet & Akdogan, 2012). It is further emphasised that ethics is a normative science that dealt with norms or standard of human behaviours. Khan, Zahid, Aslan, Zangot and Arshad (2017) avowed that ethics is a section or wing of philosophy that exhibits human conduct and behaviour in any particular or given society. In addition, Hashi (2011) identified that ethics is related to customs, traditions as well as beliefs and worldviews. Thus, ethics consists of good moral and behaviour that every society or community is expected to exhibit in a polite way. It is further admitted that such moral must be unanimously acceptable by the society.

According to Hashi (2011), Islamic ethics is the ethical system formed by the Quranic teachings which were explained by the Prophet (S.A.W.) through action and words. Rahim (2013) explained that Islamic ethics is viewed as *akhlaq* (plural of *khuluq*) which means character, nature, and disposition. He further affirmed that numerous obstacles facing Muslims around the globe is connected to the lack of the spiritual dimension of life. It was further identified that such challenges can be removed by exhibiting the ethical conduct.

Islamic Ethics is known to be one of the foundations of Islam and is also recognised as basis of a community’s strength (Laeheem, 2018). He further acknowledged that Islam as a religion, has laid down essential Islamic ethics which spelt out legal lifestyle for Muslims with operational ethical system. Thus, Islam, as a religion which is majorly concerned with the welfare of individuals and the society at large supports ethically good behavior as long it is not against the rules and teaching of the religion and oppose anything which is harmful and would be basically, consider ethically bad. Therefore,

Muslims are enjoined to be of good virtues and must possess the fundamental features of Muslims as they were demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) which are piety and humility. According to Abdur Razzaq (2012), a Muslim is expected to be humble with God and also, to his fellow beings.

However, Islam, as a religion prioritises ethical values on all aspects of human life. According to Ibrahim *et al.* (2019), Islam takes ethical values important in all aspects of human life. They further explained that all Muslims should always refer to all the sources of Islamic legislation and teachings in their everyday dealings. Masum (2013) also posited that Islam strongly teaches Muslim to adhere strictly to the ethical and moral conduct of human behaviour as spelt out in the Holy Quran: “You are the best nation that has been raised up for mankind; You enjoin right conduct, forbid evil and believe in Allah.” (Q3:110). In light of the above, it may be observed that Muslims are to exhibit good moral character and stay away from anything bad and evil.

The digital age, on the other hand, is also being referred to as the Information Age. It is a historic period in the 21st century which is characterised by the prevalence of the use of technology throughout the world. According to Statti and Torres (2020), digital age is referred to as the time-frame in which personal computers and other subsequent technologies were introduced to provide users the ability to easily transfer information from one person to another. It is therefore important to mention here that Muslims are part of the users of the digital tools in which they are conversant with and they make use of them in their day-to-day activities such as propagating Islam, teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic studies in institution of learning as well as promoting their businesses (Statti & Torres 2020). Thus, Muslims are expected to make use of these tools judiciously and effectively in order to share ideas and inspiration amongst the Ummah in accordance with the Quranic teachings and Sunnah which are the primary sources of shariah in Islam.

Similarly, digital age involves the use of the Internet, social media, modern technology and other digital devices which are highly essential for the development and rapid growth of nations, schools and religious organisations (Elaturoti 2020). Razak, Othman, Hamzah and Zulkifli (2014) are of the view that the use of the above cannot be underemphasised when it comes to implementing educational policies, goals and objectives in the educational sector and propagation of religious beliefs by religious organisations. Furthermore, it is known that religion, media, peer groups and the society are essential agencies of civilisation and socialisation during this digital age (Genner & Suss

2017). As regards to the above, the agency of socialization plays a vital role on the use of the digital tools amidst secondary school students especially in the school itself and peer groups. Thus, there may be a need for Muslim students to be conscious of the ethical principles and conduct while making use of the above so as to ensure the usage is in accordance with the Islamic ethics which are sourced from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (S.A.W)

The use of digital tools in the educational sector is very important for effective teaching and learning within a short period of time if properly and efficiently used (Muttaqin 2020). In addition, gaining access to the digital tools is very easy for the students and this will enhance their learning ability. Almasi, Machumu, and Zhu (2017) were of the view that they can access the digital tools through their phones and personal computer and that these digital tools are being used as the source of learning and teaching materials.

However, the usage of these digital tools is very known to have numerous advantages when it comes to teaching and learning process. For instance, Tutkun (2011), explained that providing digital tools for teaching and learning processes have some advantages for the students such as active participation of the students during the learning process, it makes the students more independent, increase in learning skills of the students, getting relevant materials related to their course of study and many more. Thus, making use of digital tools of the present digital age eases learning process and makes learning efficient.

Unfortunately, it is viewed that secondary school students seem to make use of the digital tools wrongly and open door for computer-related crimes by the users. According to Masum (2013), the rapid growth of digital tools has become the backbone of the present generation's lifestyle and this has given them the chance to misuse it and open door for computer-related crimes by the users such as fraud, theft, forgery and mischief. Based on the above, it might be observed that the emergence of digital age and the utilisation of its tools may give room to Muslim secondary school students during the process of the usage both consciously and unconsciously in an unethical manner.

However, gender and age are variables to be discussed in the study. Harris and Glasser (2006) affirmed that female students are conversant in using social media to search for vital information likewise male students. It is further revealed that both females and males make use of internet. Nuriman and Fauzan (2017) revealed that significant differences between male and female students

are positively related in their behaviour. They pointed out that both are well trained in using digital tools in a positive way due to Islamic moral values they acquired. Similarly, age is one of the factors that impacts students' behaviour with their level of experience while making use of digital tools (Zaphiris & Sarwar 2006). In addition, as the age of individual increases, there are always changes in the development process of that particular individual which affects all aspects of human's life. Therefore, there may be a need to examine the differences in the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age among secondary school students based on age.

It was discovered that the students spend more time while using digital tools and misuse them at the same time. Masum (2013) reported that students spend at least 7 hours in a day most especially on social media. He further emphasised that during this process, they view pornography, spread information which are against the ethical principles of Islam, engaging in fraudulent acts (cybercrime), intruding on other's privacy, stalking of individuals and lots of acts which are not in conformity with Islamic ethical principles. From the foregoing, it is obvious that Islamic ethical principles of using digital age and its tool are not being followed and emulated by Muslim secondary school students which will jeopardise their chance of attaining academic success and exhibit moral codes as expected from them as Muslim Students.

In another development, Folami, Musolihu & Balogun (2020) researched on effects of social media on morality of Muslim students in Nigeria and the outcome of their research was that social media has both positive and negative effects on morality of Muslims students. Also, Asadullah, Yerima and Aliyu (2014) discovered that Islamic ethics gives guidelines on the use of information and communication technology.

Not only the above, Ibrahim (2017), examined the development of an instructional video on Islamic ethics and its effects on secondary school students' willingness towards the observation of Islamic ethics, intrinsic motivation and cognitive load in Nigeria. The outcome of his research is that using the tool to explain Islamic ethics helps the students to show willingness to follow the Islamic ethics. However, none of the above studies made findings about Islamic ethics and digital age among secondary school students Thus, this is the gap this study intends to fill.

The purpose of the study is to assess Islamic ethics and digital age among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in the course of this study:

1. What are the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age as perceived by secondary school students in Ilorin.?
2. Is there any significant difference in the perceived influence of Islamic ethics on digital age among secondary school students based on gender?
3. Is there any significant difference in the perceived influence of Islamic ethics on digital age among secondary school students based on age?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the course of this study:

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age as perceived by secondary school students based on their gender.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age as perceived by secondary school students based on their age.

Methodology

This study was carried out using the survey type of descriptive research because it gives researchers the room to have direct contact with sampled population which has features or qualities which are relevant to the particular findings. The population for this study comprised all senior secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State with total number of 409 students. Ilorin consists of 3 Local Government areas which are Ilorin East, Ilorin South and Ilorin West. The target population consisted of public Senior Secondary School students in Ilorin East, Ilorin South and Ilorin West LGAs. Stratified sampling technique was used to select 4 schools out of 79 secondary schools in the Ilorin East, 7 schools out of 145 secondary schools in the Ilorin East and 9 schools out of 185 secondary schools in the Ilorin West making a total number of 20 schools. Also, 5 students each was selected using random sampling technique from each of the 20 selected schools making a total number of 100 respondents. The sample drawn from the population is deemed fit to be a true representation of the entire population. Nevertheless, the major instrument used for this study was a researcher-designed questionnaire. the questionnaire used to collect data from respondents consisted of two sections. Section A contained personal information of the respondents while Section B contained

relevant items on influence of Islamic ethics on digital age as perceived by secondary school students in Ilorin. Participants responded based on a four-point rating scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The data collected were analysed using percentage to answer the research question 1. Inferential statistics of t-test was used to test hypothesis one while t-test statistics was used to test hypothesis one and Analysis of Variance was used to test the second hypothesis. A test re-test method was used for the reliability of the questionnaire which showed co-efficient of 0.74.

Research Question 1: What are the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age as perceived by secondary school students in Ilorin.?

Table 1:

Table showing Influence of Islamic Ethics on Digital Age among Secondary School Students in Ilorin, Kwara State

| S/N | Items | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Remark |
|-----|--|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|----------|
| 1. | Islamic ethics help in regulating students' behaviour at this digital age | 64 (64%) | 26 (36%) | 3 (3%) | 7 (7%) | affirmed |
| 2. | Students with adequate Islamic ethics find it easy to differentiate between bad and wrong acts at this digital age | 71 (61%) | 23 (23%) | 4 (4%) | 2 (2%) | affirmed |
| 3. | Islamic ethics guide students to abide by school rules and regulations at this digital age | 53 (53%) | 35 (35%) | 7 (7%) | 5 (5%) | affirmed |
| 4. | With Islamic ethics, students are likely to utilise social media for lawful purposes | 55 (55%) | 29 (29%) | 10 (10%) | 6 (6%) | affirmed |
| 5. | Lack of Islamic ethics easily make students to involve in cybercrime at this digital age | 59 (59%) | 32 (32%) | 7 (7%) | 2 (2%) | affirmed |
| 6. | Islamic ethics help me to use social media platforms for academic purposes | 37 (37%) | 51 (51%) | 9 (9%) | 3 (3%) | affirmed |
| 7. | The knowledge of Islamic ethics makes students to stay away from examination malpractices | 65 (65%) | 25 (25%) | 9 (9%) | 1 (1%) | affirmed |

Table 1 shows the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. As shown in the Table, 64% of the respondents agreed that item 1 (Islamic

ethics help in regulating students' behaviour at this digital age). 26% agreed, 3% disagreed while 7% strongly disagreed. 71% of the respondents agreed that item 2 (students with adequate Islamic ethics find it easy to differentiate between bad and wrong acts at this digital age), 23% agreed, 4% disagreed, while 2% strongly disagreed. 53% of the respondents agreed to the item 3 (Islamic ethics guide students to abide by the school rules and regulations at this digital age), 35% agreed, 7% disagreed while 12% strongly disagreed. 55% of the respondents agreed that item 4 (with Islamic ethics, students are likely to utilise social media for lawful purposes), 29% agreed, 10% disagreed while 6% strongly disagreed. 59% of the respondents agreed that item 5 (lack of Islamic ethics easily make students to involve in cybercrime at this digital age), 32% agreed, 7% disagreed while 2% strongly disagreed. 37% of the respondents agreed that item 6 (Islamic ethics help me to use social media platforms for academic purposes), 51% agreed, 9% disagreed while 3% strongly disagreed. 65% of the respondents agreed that item 7 (the knowledge of Islamic ethics makes students to stay away from examination malpractices), 25% agreed, 9% disagreed while 1% strongly disagreed.

H0 1: There is no significant difference in the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age as perceived by secondary school students based on their gender t-test was used to test hypothesis one.

Table 2: Difference in the Perceived Influence of Islamic Ethics on Digital Age as Perceived by Secondary School Students Based on their Gender.

| Gender | N | \bar{X} | SD | Cal. t-value | p-value | Decision |
|--------|----|-----------|------|--------------|---------|-----------------------------|
| Female | 65 | 2.52 | 0.56 | | | |
| | | | | 1.74 | 0.061 | Ho ₁ Accepted |
| Male | 35 | 2.61 | 0.95 | | | |

Table 2 shows the yielded t-value (1.74) and the p-value (0.061) which is greater than the level of significance (0.05). Hence, hypothesis one is accepted. This signifies that there was no significant difference in the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age as perceived by secondary school students based on gender.

H0 2: There is no significant difference in the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age as perceived by secondary school students based on their age.

Table 3: Difference in the Perceived Influence of Islamic Ethics on Digital Age as Perceived by Secondary School Students Based on their Age

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p-value | Decision |
|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------|------|---------|--------------------------|
| Between Groups | 15.151 | 5 | 2.828 | .224 | .003 | Ho ₂ Rejected |
| Within Groups | 97.311 | 95 | .854 | | | |
| Total | 112.462 | 100 | | | | |

***Significant @ $p > .05$**

Results in Table 3 showed the calculated f-value (.224), while the p-value (.003) is less than the level of significance (.05). Therefore, the hypothesis two is rejected. This implies there was significant difference in the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age as perceived by secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on age.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study Reveals the perception of secondary school students in Ilorin on the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age. It was revealed that Islamic ethics help in regulating students' behaviour at this digital age; students with adequate Islamic ethics find it easy to differentiate between bad and wrong acts at this digital age; Islamic ethics guide students to abide by the school rules and regulations at this digital age; with Islamic ethics, students are likely to utilise social media for lawful purposes; lack of Islamic ethics easily make students to involve in cybercrime at this digital age; Islamic ethics help me to use social media platforms for academic purposes; and the knowledge of Islamic ethics makes students to stay away from examination malpractices.

The results of hypothesis one revealed that there was no significant difference in the perception of students on the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender. This finding agrees with the finding of Nuriman and Fauzan (2017) who emphasised that both male and female students are positively related in using digital tools in accordance of Islamic way. They pointed out that both are well trained in using digital tools in a positive way due to Islamic moral values they acquired. This finding is also in line with Harris and Glasser (2006), who submitted that female students are conversant in using social media to search for vital information likewise male students. It is further revealed that both females and males make use of internet.

Nevertheless, the results of hypothesis two showed that there was significant difference in the perception of students on the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on age. This finding is in consonance with the Zaphiris & Sarwar (2006) who emphasised that age is one of the tools that influences students' behaviour with their level of experience whenever they are making use of digital tools. It is further admitted that age of individual is associated with human development process which affect all aspects of human's life.

Not only that, it is believed that the digital tools are making drastic changes in all domains of life. It makes muddled nature of these changes that affect all socio-economic structures of the society. This is in line with Odabapý, (2006) submission who emphasised that the age we live in shows fundamental differences in how the society functions as a whole in that the world is connected through digital means in an unprecedented scale. He further affirmed that the digital tools are inciting drastic changes in people's life and chaotic nature of these changes pressurized by the impact of the digital connective technologies are disrupting the very fabric of socio-economic structures of the society, which initiate transformational processes in attempts to better suit to the needs and the requirements of the digital.

Conclusion

Islamic ethics help in regulating students' behaviour at this digital age; students with adequate Islamic ethics find it easy to differentiate between bad and wrong acts; Islamic ethics guide students to abide by the school rules and regulations at this digital age; with Islamic ethics, students are likely to utilise social media for lawful purposes; lack of Islamic ethics easily make students to involve in

cybercrime at this digital age; Islamic ethics help us to use social media platforms for academic purposes; and the knowledge of Islamic ethics makes students to stay away from examination malpractices among other vices. The findings of this study showed that there was no significant difference in the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on gender. Also, the findings of this study showed that there was significant difference in the influence of Islamic ethics on digital age among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State based on age.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the followings were recommended:

1. Parents should encourage students to use digital tools appropriately in accordance with Islamic ethics and stay away from Examination malpractices and Cybercrime.
2. Government should provide more Internet Facilities in Schools so as to improve students' access to digital facilities in order to improve their academic performance.

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