



The Resilient Digital Self: An Islamic Educational Philosophy of Iqbal's Khudi for Interfaith Harmony

(Diri Digital yang Tangguh: Rekonstruksi Filsafat Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Khudi Iqbal untuk Membangun Harmoni Antaragama)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines digital interfaith tolerance in the contemporary cyber public sphere, where tolerance is frequently trapped in passive harmony that prioritizes conflict evasion rather than genuine character building. The issue is significant because mainstream digital literacy lacks a solid pedagogical foundation to protect students from polarizing threats such as cancel culture. **Purpose:** This study aims to formulate a conceptual framework for character education by utilizing Islamic Educational Philosophy and integrating Muhammad Iqbal's concept of selfhood as a primary foundation for cultivating the resilient digital subject. **Method:** This qualitative library research utilizes Islamic Educational Philosophy to develop a conceptual framework for character education and examines Muhammad Iqbal's concept of selfhood as a philosophical foundation for the resilient digital subject. **Findings:** The findings show that the internalization of *Khudi* values transforms students into proactive digital stewards (*khalifah*), equipping them with the capacity to create constructive counter-narratives and mitigate digital pollution. **Contribution:** As its primary scholarly contribution, this study proposes a novel philosophical-pedagogical framework for cultivating resilient digital citizenship grounded in Islamic Educational Philosophy. This conceptual framework provides a structural model for fostering an authentic and harmonious digital educational ecosystem.

Keywords: Passive Harmony, Khudi, Islamic Educational Philosophy.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji toleransi antaragama di ruang publik siber kontemporer, yang sering terjebak dalam harmoni pasif. Kondisi ini hanya mengutamakan penghindaran konflik dan belum mampu mendorong





pembentukan karakter yang sesungguhnya. Persoalan ini menjadi penting karena literasi digital arus utama belum memiliki landasan pedagogis yang kuat untuk melindungi peserta didik dari berbagai ancaman polarisasi, seperti cancel culture. **Tujuan:** Penelitian ini bertujuan merumuskan kerangka konseptual pendidikan karakter dengan menggunakan Filsafat Pendidikan Islam serta mengintegrasikan konsep selfhood Muhammad Iqbal sebagai landasan utama untuk membentuk subjek digital yang tangguh (resilient digital subject). **Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kepustakaan kualitatif dengan memanfaatkan Filsafat Pendidikan Islam untuk mengembangkan kerangka konseptual pendidikan karakter dan mengkaji konsep selfhood Muhammad Iqbal sebagai landasan filosofis bagi pembentukan subjek digital yang tangguh. **Temuan:** Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa internalisasi nilai-nilai Khudi mentransformasikan peserta didik menjadi pengelola ruang digital yang proaktif (khalifah), serta membekali mereka dengan kemampuan untuk menciptakan narasi tandingan yang konstruktif dan mengurangi polusi digital. **Kontribusi:** Sebagai kontribusi ilmiah utama, penelitian ini mengusulkan kerangka filosofis-pedagogis baru untuk membangun kewargaan digital yang tangguh berdasarkan Filsafat Pendidikan Islam. Kerangka konseptual ini menyediakan model struktural untuk membangun ekosistem pendidikan digital yang autentik dan harmonis.

Kata Kunci: Harmoni Pasif, Khudi, Filsafat Pendidikan Islam.

Introduction

Contemporary intellectual discourse frequently identifies a profound tension between the exponential increase in information volume in the digital era and the concurrent erosion of established value frameworks. This phenomenon has precipitated a fundamental crisis regarding the source and validity of meaning. This condition is not merely a theoretical problem in philosophy but a pressing context that shapes the lived experience of students in modern society (Anam, 2025a). Within the specific domain of the cyber public sphere, this crisis manifests as a complex challenge for digital interfaith harmony. The primary concern is how to foster genuine coexistence without losing ethical grounding. In response to this complexity, ideals such as global harmony and tolerance are aggressively promoted through digital media and cyberculture as vital strategies to maintain religious moderation in a digital society (Sulvinajayanti et al., 2024). However, the practical application of these ideals in cyberspace often defaults to a specific and prevalent condition termed here as passive harmony. Instead of fostering genuine character resilience, this superficial model of digital tolerance risks cultivating a generation characterized by ethical fragility when facing the realities of a pluralistic society.

The philosophical antecedents of this challenge are located in the collapse of traditional metaphysical and moral certainties that once provided a coherent structure for social life. This collapse, often discussed in critical philosophy as the dissolution of absolute authority, signifies not merely a shift in religious belief but the disintegration of the entire valuational framework that students rely upon. In the context of navigating modern pluralism, this leaves a void where objective purpose was once presumed to exist. The absence of this transcendent anchor has led to a





state of profound disorientation. Critical scholars identify this condition as the central challenge of modernity and the breeding ground for ethical fragmentation and social alienation (Anam, 2025b, pp. 37–42). When this existential confusion intersects with the borderless reality of the cyber public sphere, digital interfaith interactions are left without a robust ethical anchor. Students are thrust into complex online religious discourses lacking the internal spiritual firmness required to engage with diversity authentically, leaving them highly susceptible to superficial compromises.

Scholarship affirms that this diagnosis of modern ethical fragility is fundamentally a crisis of character formation, addressing the lived experience of meaninglessness among the students. Critical critiques identify that modern secular morality, particularly its tendency to prioritize conflict avoidance above all else, acts as a primary force fostering a state of ethical passivity. In the context of the cyber public sphere, this manifests as a form of performative tolerance based on resignation, weakness, and a fear of engaging with difference, rather than a genuine appreciation of diversity (Lyuty, 2024; Stewart-Kroecker, 2023). Recent empirical studies highlight the paradoxical nature of the digital era. While digital platforms, including social media and podcasts, possess the potential to enhance mutual understanding, facilitate constructive interfaith dialogue, and disseminate values of solidarity (Muna et al., 2026; Prasetyo et al., 2024; Sulvinajayanti et al., 2025), they simultaneously function as arenas where religious tensions, identity conflicts, and superficial engagements frequently occur (Tariq, n.d.; Utari et al., 2025). Although digital media can be effective in promoting religious harmony, its success is heavily contingent upon digital literacy and the educational background of its students (Hameed & Adnan, 2024; Sulvinajayanti et al., 2025). Without a robust internal foundation, the digital space risks being reduced to an ecosystem of artificial interactions (Utari et al., 2025). Consequently, the prevalent interactions in these digital spaces often produce cosmetic harmony. This fragile ethical cohesion is driven by algorithmic visibility rather than profound theological or ethical commitment. This form of passivity is seen as a consequence of the collapse of robust values, leaving individuals susceptible to indifference and exhaustion rather than an affirmation of active ethical agency (Isaac & Platenkamp, 2018). Therefore, the contemporary digital literacy curricula in addressing digital interfaith relations often inadvertently promotes a safe but hollow harmony, failing to equip students with the internal resilience needed to navigate the complexities of a pluralistic digital society.

Despite these established lines of inquiry, a specific gap in the literature persists regarding the pedagogical integration of character resilience. Previous studies have predominantly examined digital tolerance, religious moderation, and the concept of Khudi separately. Research on digital interfaith relations tends to focus on media literacy and external regulatory adjustments in the cyber public sphere (Ahmad et al., 2023). Conversely, studies exploring Muhammad Iqbal





philosophy of Khudi extensively analyze it as a dynamic foundation for affirmative ethics and personal development (R. Amin et al., 2022; Pahutar, 2024). Furthermore, comparative studies have mapped the relevance of Iqbal in offering a theistic and socially integrated vision to overcome modern meaninglessness (Khan & Munawwar, 2024; Yilmaz, 2023). However, the literature has yet to critically synthesize these domains to address the specific pathology of passive harmony in digital educational settings.

To address this literature gap, this study integrates these isolated perspectives into a comprehensive philosophical pedagogical framework for Islamic education. The research operationalizes Muhammad Iqbal philosophy of the strengthened self or Khudi as a structural model for character reconstruction in the cyber public sphere. Specifically, this proposed framework operates through three systematic pedagogical phases. It begins with the establishment of internal ontological security, proceeds to the internalization of character resilience through Khudi, and culminates in the actualization of the student as a proactive digital steward or khalifah. By transforming relational character development from mere conflict avoidance into active ethical engagement, this structural model provides the essential operational scaffolding to foster and sustain an authentic digital interfaith harmony.

Theoretical Framework

In the context of Islamic educational philosophy and religious moderation, Iqbal's philosophical project is best understood as a conscious "reconstruction of religious thought" designed to formulate a highly resilient self. His objective was to articulate a philosophy that is both spiritually satisfying and conducive to active, courageous participation in a pluralistic world (Pahutar, 2024; Yilmaz, 2023). This reconstructive endeavor aligns perfectly with recent empirical findings regarding digital behavior. Current studies consistently demonstrate that strong religious identity, deep spiritual literacy, and robust ontological security do not fuel online extremism; rather, they serve as the primary inner pedagogical anchors that promote constructive interfaith dialogue, regulate hostile behavior, and build resilience against viral polarization (Al Fajri, 2025; Iskandar et al., 2025; Purbiyati & Amelia, 2025). By moving beyond a purely defensive or reactionary posture, Iqbal's framework offers a forward-looking vision for human potential. It provides the coherent metaphysical grounding necessary for individuals to act as discerning agents of moderation, rather than reactive partisans, in an era characterized by profound digital uncertainty (Anam, 2024; Zega & Bilo, 2024).

The ontological foundation of this reconstructive project is the concept of *Khudi*, or the Self, which contemporary analysis identifies as a vital framework for reclaiming digital agency. Analytically, in direct response to the crisis of the hollowed-out digital subject, *Khudi* is defined as





an active and multidimensional principle involving the conscious understanding, organization, and commitment of the Self (R. Amin et al., 2022). Within Iqbal's metaphysical framework, this is not a fragile, self-contained ego easily crushed by algorithmic pressures or absorbed into online mob mentalities. Rather, the human self is conceptualized not as a static being to be molded passively by social media feeds, but as a dynamic process of continuous growth. Its purpose is to actualize its latent creative potential. This ontological structure posits a reality of ongoing creative processes, where the development of *Khudi* serves as the primary mode of active, resilient human participation, effectively rescuing the subject from algorithmic paralysis and digital apathy (Anam, 2024).

From this robust ontological foundation, a distinctly affirmative digital ethics emerges as a direct empirical antithesis to the algorithmic "culture of avoidance" evaluated in the preceding sections. The active development of *Khudi* inherently fosters competencies of dignity, coexistence, and positive digital action, effectively countering the passive, exhausted habit of "lurking" (Ahmad et al., 2023; Pahutar, 2024). Crucially, this self-realization is not directed toward egoistic isolation within curated echo chambers. Instead, as recent empirical studies on students digital behavior confirm, cultivating strong spiritual anchors and ontological security orients individuals toward communal values, enabling them to act as proactive agents of moderation rather than reactive partisans (Iskandar et al., 2025; Nurwahidin et al., 2025). This constitutes a form of digital life-affirmation that is deeply rooted in ethical and social responsibility, integrating personal character resilience with a steadfast commitment to the collective health of the cyber ecosystem (Hidayat & Alamsah, 2024; Khan & Munawwar, 2024; Purbiyati & Amelia, 2025).

Methods

This study employs a qualitative library research design, utilizing a philosophical-pedagogical approach to address core issues in digital interfaith harmony within the cyber public sphere. Unlike field research that relies on empirical data from specific physical locations, this research locates its inquiry within the textual and conceptual discourse of modern Islamic educational philosophy applied to the phenomenon of digital interactions (George, 2008). The study is "situated" within the contemporary academic debate regarding the efficacy of tolerance education models in digital pluralistic societies. By adopting this design, the research aims to explore, analyze, and synthesize theoretical concepts to construct a new framework for character education. The primary objective is not merely to describe existing digital phenomena, but to critically evaluate the foundational ethics of "passive harmony" and propose a reconstructive model based on Muhammad Iqbal's thought that is applicable to the development of the Resilient Self.





Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques, gathering authoritative sources relevant to the research variables: tolerance, selfhood (*Khudi*), and digital interfaith relations. The data sources are categorized into two tiers. Primary data sources include the magnum opus of Muhammad Iqbal, specifically *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* and *Asrar-i-Khudi (The Secrets of the Self)*, which provide the ontological basis for the proposed ethical framework. Secondary data sources consist of contemporary academic literature, including reputable journal articles, books on digital education, and critical empirical studies regarding "passive tolerance," performative tolerance, and student resilience from the last decade (2016–2026). These materials were selected based on their relevance to the challenges of digital interfaith harmony, ensuring that the philosophical insights are grounded in the current realities of the cyber public sphere.

To synthesize the conceptual findings previously dispersed across multiple thematic discussions, the results of this study culminate in a clearly identifiable pedagogical framework. This framework summarizes the contemporary digital crisis and its educational resolution through a sequential progression. The trajectory of character degradation begins with algorithmic safetyism, which subsequently breeds ethical fragility, leading ultimately to a state of profound ontological insecurity among students. Because Islamic educational systems can no longer rely on superficial netiquette to counter this systemic crisis, a structural intervention is strictly necessary. Addressing this ontological insecurity requires a pedagogical pivot toward an active reconstruction through *Khudi*. By internalizing this framework, the educational process effectively transforms vulnerable individuals into the Resilient Digital Subject. Ultimately, this structural synthesis provides the critical internal scaffolding required to sustain authentic interfaith harmony and active digital stewardship.

Results

Discourse of "Passive Harmony" in Digital World

This analysis begins by isolating its object of critique within the context of the cyber public sphere: the phenomenon of "passive harmony." Pedagogically and ethically, this term is defined here not merely as an educational challenge, but as an ethical disposition that operationally prioritizes the absence of conflict and the avoidance of decisive value judgments above all else. In the digital landscape, this disposition manifests as "performative tolerance." It is a form of interaction predicated not on strength or deep understanding, but on a pervasive indifference toward the "Other." On social media platforms, this tolerance is frequently reduced to algorithmic gestures—such as clicking 'like', 'sharing' a post, or leaving normative comments—that require no genuine theological or ethical commitment, serving merely to avoid digital friction. This condition





reflects a flight from the axiological confrontations that define a robust ethical life, instead favoring a state of minimal friction and existential quietude (Li, 2021). As an analytical target, this performative approach represents an observable symptom of a broader crisis in interreligious discourse. It suggests that current digital engagements often condition students to tolerate differences simply by ignoring them behind screens, rather than engaging with them constructively. Consequently, this "tolerance of indifference" produces a "cosmetic harmony"—a fragile social bond that snaps easily under the pressure of actual identity polarization, revealing the urgent need to systematically investigate the underlying character and ethical weakness of this online behavior.

A direct theoretical link can be established between this condition of passive harmony and what critical theorists historically identified as the "pedagogy of avoidance"—a stagnant morality that fears the complexity of life and prioritizes the superficial mitigation of suffering (Lyuty, 2024; Stewart-Kroecker, 2023). In the contemporary cyber public sphere, this avoidance is no longer primarily driven by formal educational curricula, but is systematically facilitated by the very architecture of social media platforms. The technological affordances of digital media—specifically the ability to effortlessly mute, block, or unfollow dissenting voices—have generated a prevailing culture of 'digital safetyism' among the students (Elsaesser et al., 2021; Roldan et al., 2024). Driven by engagement-maximizing algorithms, these features routinely steer students into homogeneous religious "content bubbles" where exposure to diverse theological viewpoints is severely restricted, thereby reinforcing in-group identities while keeping interreligious boundaries rigidly intact (Ahmmad et al., 2025; Novak et al., 2022).

Consequently, when students encounter digital pluralism, the primary motivation for maintaining harmony is frequently rooted in defensive fear rather than genuine dialogical engagement. Recent empirical scholarship indicates that the pervasive threat of 'cancel culture' and the intense social pressure for perfect online conduct create a profound chilling effect, compelling students to resort to self-censorship and strategic silence to avoid collective outrage or social sanctions (Aguiar et al., 2025; Greig & Hogg, 2025). Rather than providing the philosophical tools to understand why profound religious differences exist, this digital ecosystem conditions students to fear conflict and retreat into echo chambers. According to this evaluation, this algorithmically enforced morality does not ennoble the digital subject but rather weakens them, systematically undermining the cultivation of individual strength and critical thinking. By normalizing conflict evasion as a virtue, this digital safetyism functions as a primary vector for ethical fragility, producing a generation fundamentally ill-equipped with the internal resilience required to navigate the complexities of true pluralism.





Living constantly within this algorithmically enforced safetyism creates a specific inner state among today's students. Previous studies describe this as "affective exhaustion," where students chase trivial online interactions because they lack the energy for meaningful action (Isaac & Platenkamp, 2018). In digital education studies, this is widely known as 'social media fatigue'—a deep sense of burnout caused by information overload, algorithmic pressure, and constant exposure to conflicting values on their feeds (Qin et al., 2024; Sheng et al., 2023). This exhaustion closely mirrors "foundational disorientation," a state where students feel their core moral compass and sense of life purpose have collapsed under the weight of constant digital exposure (Anam, 2025b). Without a strong internal anchor, students are bombarded by sensationalized religious and political content. This eventually leads to 'crisis fatigue' or a 'moral repetition effect,' which simply numbs their emotional responses (Samet, Uri, 2025).

As a result, the digital public sphere is often filled with a "hollowed-out subjectivity," marked by moral apathy and a desire to withdraw. Tired students frequently shift to 'lurking'—logging in just to scroll and consume content without joining meaningful conversations, using minimal engagement as a defense mechanism (Fernandes & Oliveira, 2024; Qin et al., 2024). In online interfaith interactions, students might seem tolerant simply because they avoid arguing. However, this silence usually comes from digital exhaustion ("I am too tired to care about what you believe") rather than genuine respect ("I disagree, but I honor your dignity"). This creates a educational ecosystem of quiet desperation, where the energy to build deep religious understanding or positive interfaith projects is almost gone. Ultimately, this "apathy disguised as cosmetic harmony" is highly dangerous. It relies on the fragility of digital numbness and completely lacks the emotional and ethical glue needed to keep communities together during real, offline crises (Senoprabowo et al., 2025).

A critical tracing reveals that this morality of avoidance is not a recent invention, but the culmination of a long historical trajectory in modern thought. It is inherited from rationalist traditions that increasingly prioritized procedural safety over substantive truth, effectively devaluing rigorous engagement with reality (Lyuty, 2024; Stewart-Kroecker, 2023). However, in the contemporary digital era, the inner state driving this avoidance is no longer just abstract rationalism; it is a highly reactive, 'inner state' enforced by the architecture of social media. Recent pedagogical studies on digital religion demonstrate that this defensive posture is a direct response to the brutal nature of online social sanctions. In digital interfaith discourse, religious students who attempt to engage in *Tahqiq*—critical theological verification and deep debate—are frequently targeted by online mobs and stigmatizing labels. They are rapidly framed as "intolerant," "aggressive," or even "radical" merely for asserting strong theological boundaries (Missier, 2025; Nurfitri, 2025). This environment of digital vigilantism and cancel culture replaces healthy





dialogue with mass digital punishment, creating an intolerant climate that limits deep religious exploration (Naamy, 2022; Yaqinah & Antok, 2024).

This digital ecosystem completely inverts the noble values of resilience and intellectual courage. Seeking deep theological truth is recasted as a "divisive" or "aggressive" act, while passive silence and weak compromise are elevated to the status of digital "virtue." Faced with the constant threat of algorithmic outrage and cancel culture, students naturally retreat into a "spiral of silence" (Aguiar et al., 2025; Kozhoridze, 2025). Educational observations indicate that this defensive retreat systematically forces students to choose the safety of superficial, cosmetic harmony over the risk of defending authentic beliefs (Kozhoridze, 2025; Van Grunsven & Marin, 2024). Consequently, as recent studies note, students fail to cultivate a strong sense of confidence in their own digital agency and ontological identity (*Khudi*), operating instead under the constant, algorithmically amplified fear that any firm assertion of truth will be punished as an act of intolerance (Nurfritria, 2025; Yaqinah & Antok, 2024). Ultimately, the current literature exposes a critical paradox within this digital ecosystem: in the very attempt to protect communal harmony through the avoidance of deep theological engagement online, the cyber public sphere inadvertently produces a generation too fragile to sustain actual, resilient pluralism (Missier, 2025; Shamim, 2024).

Educational researchers have noted that a critical paradox lies at the heart of this passive moral system: a framework of harmony based merely on silence and conflict avoidance is inherently unstable and ultimately self-destructive (Huddleston, 2024; Richardson, 2020). Recent empirical research in digital pedagogy clearly demonstrates how this instability operates in reality: the "cosmetic harmony" fostered by passive tolerance shatters almost immediately when confronted with offline identity politics or real-world religious provocations that go viral online (I. Abdullah et al., 2024; Ichsan et al., 2020). Observational studies reveal that offline tensions do not merely echo online; rather, algorithmically amplified provocations rapidly restructure online discourse, turning superficial digital coexistence into overt polarization and intergroup hostility (Bhatia, 2019; Bliuc et al., 2019). In this ecosystem, researchers observe that emotions like fear and perceived threat become the affective "glue" for conflict, while digital actors weaponize religious symbols to construct hyperreal identity binaries that stigmatize out-groups (Abdel-Fadil, 2017; Hariyanto et al., 2024). Consequently, contemporary data show that a ethical cohesion built on mere avoidance lacks the necessary resilience to withstand algorithmic polarization, resulting not in sustained peace, but in an accelerated spread of cynicism and offline violence (Schutte et al., 2025).

Empirical studies indicate that this algorithmically enforced "passive harmony" is not a stable educational environment, but rather a highly precarious state of "soft" cohesion that is easily punctured by offline political stakes and mediatized provocations (Ichsan et al., 2020). Having





observed how quickly surface-level coexistence degrades into overt polarization through affective amplification and the weaponization of religious symbols, the pedagogical literature makes it increasingly evident that an avoidance-based framework is fundamentally inadequate for sustaining genuine interfaith relations (Abdel-Fadil, 2017; I. Abdullah et al., 2024; Hariyanto et al., 2024). This documented systemic fragility inevitably necessitates the consideration of an alternative, more resilient paradigm. Addressing this empirical reality of digital vulnerability, theorists contrast the current state of precarious avoidance with the urgent need for an "active transformation"—a counter-movement that refuses to passively accept algorithmically driven apathy, but rather functions as a vital transitional force to rebuild the digital agency and resilience of students (Lyuty, 2024).

Building upon this call for active transformation, it becomes clear that consciously dismantling these fear-based digital values is a necessary prelude to sustaining a genuinely diverse cyber society. Because the contemporary cyber public sphere systematically produces spiritually fragile and defensive subjects, Islamic educational frameworks can no longer rely on merely teaching passive "digital ethics" or superficial netiquette. Instead, addressing this algorithmic crisis requires a profound ontological intervention. This conceptual pivot—from a passive acceptance of digital safe spaces to an active, courageous engagement with online reality—provides the necessary bridge to explore the constructive alternative offered by Muhammad Iqbal. By shifting the pedagogical focus from mere algorithmic survival to the active flourishing of digital agency, educational theorists suggest preparing the ground for the introduction of *Khudi* (selfhood) as a robust pedagogical solution (Demirel Ucan & Wright, 2019). Ultimately, to withstand the polarizing storms of the digital age, the cultivation of a "Resilient Self" grounded in *Khudi* emerges as the critical internal scaffolding required to forge authentic interfaith harmony.

Table 1. The Pedagogical Framework of the Resilient Digital Subject

Conceptual Dimension	From: The Fragile Digital Subject (Passive Harmony)	To: The Resilient Digital Subject (Active Khudi)
1. Essential Components (Learner Characteristics)	Fragile Identity: Students who lack self-confidence, fear online judgment (cancel culture), and rely heavily on digital "safe spaces" or algorithmic bubbles.	Resilient Identity (<i>Khudi</i>): Students with strong self-awareness, emotional courage, and the critical thinking skills (<i>Tahqiq</i>) to evaluate information independently.
2. Educational Processes (Instructional Strategies)	Avoidance-Based Learning: Teaching students to avoid difficult conversations, encouraging self-censorship, and focusing only on superficial online manners (<i>netiquette</i>).	Active Engagement Learning: Facilitating open interfaith dialogues, teaching students how to handle disagreements constructively, and building courage to face digital diversity.
3. Expected Outcomes (Pedagogical Goals)	Superficial Tolerance: A fragile online coexistence where students simply ignore differences, making them highly vulnerable to real-world polarization.	Authentic Digital Citizenship: Proactive students who can confidently navigate digital differences, counter online hostility, and build genuine interfaith harmony.





Discussion

Reconstructing Authentic Tolerance: Khudi as the Foundation for the Resilient Digital Subject

The preceding philosophical-pedagogical analysis of “passive harmony” as a condition of ethical fragility necessitates an inquiry into a viable reconstructive alternative for the cyber public sphere. While the critical deconstruction of digital safetyism serves as a necessary force to expose the vulnerability of modern avoidance strategies, dismantling fear alone does not provide a constructive ethical framework for students. To survive in an era of algorithmic valuational uncertainty, a pedagogical intervention requires a model that actively rebuilds the ontological security of the digital subject. Consequently, this analysis turns to the philosophical framework of Muhammad Iqbal. Although historically responding to the crisis of modern scientific orientation, Iqbal offers a pathway of reconstruction rooted in a revitalized metaphysical tradition that precisely answers the modern need for a resilient, secure identity in a polarizing world (Rahman, 2025). His work presents a structured response to the ethical vacuum identified in critical digital theory, directing it toward a project of character affirmation and spiritual renewal suitable for navigating contemporary social media ecosystems.

The theoretical framework of *Khudi* provides the basis for reconstructing a concept of authentic digital tolerance suitable for the modern cyber public sphere. In this pedagogical model, tolerance is not defined as a passive disposition born of weakness, moral indifference, or the pragmatic use of the “mute” or “block” button to merely avoid online conflict—traits often characterizing superficial approaches to digital multiculturalism. Rather, authentic tolerance is positioned as an active expression of *Khudi*: a state where the digital subject has achieved a level of ontological security and internal strength so they are no longer threatened by ideological differences in comment sections (H. Abdullah, 2025; Kinnvall, 2004). It is a active moral virtue that can only be exercised from a position of profound self-affirmation. When students cultivate a secure religious identity first, empirical observations indicate they develop the capacity to engage constructively with “the Other” without the defensive fear of losing their own identity to viral polarization (Elwert et al., 2020; Zega & Bilo, 2024).

This perspective is fundamentally derived from Iqbal’s ontology of interconnectedness, which in contemporary terms functions as the ethical foundation for a shared cyber ecology. Within this digital ecosystem, a strengthened Self recognizes its mutual responsibility within a vast web of online existence. Rather than viewing the internet as an arena for zero-sum identity conflicts, a digitally resilient subject understands that their own pedagogical and spiritual well-being is inextricably linked to the health of the broader online community (Azisi et al., 2023; Sulvinajayanti et al., 2024). Consequently, a students with a developed *Khudi* recognizes that





engaging in toxic behavior, launching digital attacks, or withdrawing into isolated echo chambers ultimately diminishes their own digital reality. Thus, Iqbal's philosophy effectively transforms digital tolerance from a mere algorithmic requirement or platform policy into an ethical necessity for a flourishing cyber ecosystem, providing a robust pedagogical grounding for ethical cohesion that is often missing in secular digital literacy programs (Anam, 2024; Jakiyudin, 2023).

Recent Educational observations of online interfaith interactions demonstrate that without a secure spiritual foundation, digital religious engagement frequently degenerates into profound topic-sentiment polarization. In digital spaces such as YouTube, interreligious debates are often weaponized merely to uplift the in-group and delegitimize the out-group in a superficial battle for moral authority, effectively reducing faith to algorithmic tribalism (Grigoropoulou, 2020). As a direct alternative to this digital ethical disorientation, the Iqbalian foundation for an affirmative ethics centers on the cultivation of a spiritually and communally secure Self. This reconstructive model culminates in the paradigm of the "Perfect Man" (*Insan-i-Kamil*), a resilient subject who achieves excellence not through the solitary, defensive existential assertions characteristic of social media's hyper-individualism, but through profound internal growth and ethical service to the broader community (Khan & Munawwar, 2024; Yılmaz, 2023). This ideal highlights a fundamental divergence from the egoistic and anthropocentric models of self-development that currently dominate the cyber public sphere. Ultimately, by reconstructing rather than rejecting metaphysical anchors, Iqbal's philosophy provides the durable pedagogical and ethical foundation required to navigate, and potentially heal, the fractured modern digital ecosystem (Khan & Munawwar, 2024).

Pedagogical Implications of the Resilient Subject in the Cyber Public Sphere

A critical evaluation of current digital literacy programs reveals a shared concern: the ethical fragility and passive resignation of modern students in the face of algorithmic polarization. The standard solution proposed by mainstream secular models—often packaged as "digital etiquette" or skills-based netiquette—is rooted in the assumption that teaching students to independently verify facts or politely self-regulate is sufficient to mitigate online conflict. However, recent empirical studies demonstrate the severe limitations of this secular, technocratic approach. Observational data indicate that structural design tweaks and generic netiquette campaigns consistently fail to reduce deep-seated affective polarization; in fact, when unmoored from shared communal values, such skills-based interventions can backfire, increasing ideological entrenchment among strongly identified partisans (Guess et al., 2020; Nyhan et al., 2023; Van Der Meer & Hameleers, 2021). This highlights a significant risk: a secular autonomy model that relies solely on isolated, hyper-individualistic self-regulation alienates the digital subject from the communal and spiritual fabric necessary to withstand identity threats (Diepeveen & Pinet, 2022).





In stark contrast, Iqbal's philosophical ideal of the *Insan-i-Kamil* (the Perfect Man) offers a robust pedagogical alternative. By actualizing the power of *Khudi* through dynamic engagement with a transcendent metaphysical ground, Iqbal demonstrates that ethical resilience cannot be forged in existential solitude. Instead, the cyber public sphere requires digital subjects whose capacity for critical thinking and tolerance is deeply anchored in a theistic, communal framework, thereby providing the ontological security that secular digital literacy critically lacks (Khan & Munawwar, 2024; Shakeel, 2024).

This pedagogical synthesis fundamentally redefines the operational role of "local wisdom" within digital spaces. A common pitfall in both civic education and early digital literacy efforts has been the tendency to frame local traditions as static historical artifacts, resulting in a form of "passive nostalgia" that fails to engage the modern students or withstand algorithmic pressures. However, drawing from Iqbal's reconstructive method—in which he transformed the passive Indo-Persian Sufi ideal of self-effacement (*fana*) into the active, world-affirming philosophy of *Khudi*—contemporary pedagogy demonstrates the urgent need to weaponize tradition. Recent empirical studies confirm that when local wisdom and indigenous religious narratives are dynamically revitalized, they function not as museum pieces, but as highly effective digital counter-narratives against algorithmic extremism. Research shows that integrating localized cultural values and classical textual heritage into digital formats creates embedded, authentic authorities that successfully challenge absolutist narratives and identity politics online (Ali et al., 2023; Muqtada, 2022; Setia & Haq, 2023). Consequently, the paradigm must shift: local wisdom must be repositioned from a backward-looking artifact into a forward-looking, digitally mediated ethical program. By reinterpreting indigenous knowledge through the active lens of *Khudi*, communities are empowered to transform their traditions from passive burdens into active tools for character resilience, inoculating students against the divisive pull of online polarization (M. Amin & Ritonga, 2024; Anam, 2024).

In the domain of digital interreligious dialogue, this framework offers a crucial pedagogical corrective to the polarizing dynamics of the cyber public sphere. Observational studies of platforms such as YouTube reveal that contemporary online debates frequently devolve into intense topic-sentiment polarization, where insecure religious identities are weaponized primarily to delegitimize out-groups in a toxic battle for moral authority (Grigoropoulou, 2020). Conversely, algorithmic attempts to mitigate this hostility often rely on a search for superficial commonalities, inadvertently weakening distinct identities in the name of a fragile "passive harmony." An approach grounded in the cultivation of *Khudi* actively dismantles this dichotomy by shifting the focus toward fostering deep pedagogical competencies—such as emotional regulation, moral integrity, and perseverance—independent of algorithmic pressures (R. Amin et al., 2022; Masluhah





et al., 2021). Pedagogically, this paradigm asserts that true digital tolerance emerges from internal ontological strength (*Aqidah*), not from the weakness of conflict evasion. When students first fortify their own spiritual and intellectual foundations, they develop the security necessary to navigate moral complexity without the paralyzing fear of *cancel culture* (Ahmad et al., 2023). Consequently, online dialogue proceeds not from a position of defensive insecurity or a desire for assimilation, but from profound self-confidence, transforming digital comment ecosystems into spaces for robust, honest, and productive engagement with difference (Nuril Hidayati et al., 2023).

This reconstructive framework establishes a concrete pedagogical foundation for ethical digital stewardship within the cyber public sphere. A resilient digital subject, operating from a strengthened *Khudi*, intimately understands their ontological interconnectedness within a dynamic and shared online ecosystem. Consequently, they cannot view the internet merely as a utilitarian resource to be exploited for algorithmic engagement or as a dumping ground for toxic polarization. Instead, the digital world is recognized as a shared communicative ecology requiring mutual care and ethical preservation (Cover, 2024; Sihombing, 2025). Empirical research confirms that when students internalize this level of spiritual responsibility by acting as proactive digital stewards or *khalifah*, there is a measurable reduction in various forms of digital pollution, including online harassment, cybercrime, and the dissemination of misinformation (Althibyani & Al-Zahrani, 2023; Ameer & Hukamdad, 2025). By grounding online practices in a profound respect for the integrity of the cyber ecosystem, the educational philosophy of Iqbal effectively translates the environmental stewardship principles of Green Islam into the core of digital self-development. This provides a vital mechanism for sustaining healthy and non-toxic online communities (Stahl, 2024; Trier et al., 2023).

This Iqbalian pedagogical model provides a transformative theoretical contribution to global digital ethics that progresses significantly beyond secular digital literacy. Specifically, this framework advances existing theories of character education by prioritizing internal ontological security and resilience over superficial behavioral compliance. Furthermore, it enriches the global discourse on interfaith education by demonstrating that authentic digital tolerance strictly demands a spiritually aware subject. By elevating students to the role of proactive ethical stewards, the model also systematically expands the concept of digital citizenship. Ultimately, this reconstructive paradigm proves that the cultivation of *Khudi* operates not merely as a local concept but as a robust advancement in Islamic educational philosophy that offers a highly structural and globally transferable vision for sustaining an authentically harmonious cyber public sphere.

Conclusion





This study explicitly develops a philosophical model of the Resilient Digital Subject rooted in the ontology of Khudi by Muhammad Iqbal to resolve the crisis of algorithmic safetyism within the cyber public sphere. This reconstructive intervention systematically rejects the passive conflict evasion inherent in secular digital literacy by re-anchoring authentic digital tolerance in internal spiritual strength and pedagogical security. Cultivating this internal ontological architecture empowers students to confront ideological polarization productively as proactive digital stewards or khalifah tasked with mitigating digital pollution. This paradigm shift necessitates a strategic reorientation among digital stakeholders and educators to transition existing religious moderation policies toward an active curriculum of character resilience. Future research must directly pursue the empirical validation of this conceptual framework within Islamic schools, universities, or digital citizenship programs to conclusively demonstrate its educational applicability beyond philosophical discourse.

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Credit Author Statement

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AI Usage Declaration

The authors declare no used AI Tools





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