

The phenomenom of the death of expertise: the use of social media by teenagers from the persfective of the quran surah an- nahl 43

Efa Nurazizah^{1,a}, Patria Yunita^{2,b}

^{1,2}Universitas PTIQ Jakarta, Indonesia

nurazizahefa87@gmail.com^a, patriayunita@ptiq.ac.id^b

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ABSTRACT

This studi discusses the phenomenom of the death of the expertise among teenagers by social media. Indonesia continues to experience an increase in internet usage from 62% in 2018 to 72.80% in 2024, with social media users reaching 50.2% of the total population (30% of these users are teenagers). This trend is an invaluable resource for marketers, business people, content developers, and anyone seeking to understand and harness Indonesia's digital potential. However, the ease of accessing information on social media, if not accompanied by a passion for understanding the truth, can lead to confirmation bias among teenagers. This occurs because expertise on social media is viewed skeptically and its presence is eclipsed by populism. A lack of critical thinking is one of the causes of the demise of expertise among teenagers. The flood of information on social media makes them unable to distinguish fact from fiction. The Quran, Surah An-Nahl, 16:43, teaches us the importance of a teacher/expert/specialist as a source of guidance for questions and doubts. By reasoning amidst low digital literacy, it is hoped that teenagers will be able to distinguish between fact and fiction, positive and negative

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Introduction

Social media has become an integral part of everyday life across generations and varies with the level of need of each. Based on data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), it was revealed that the number of Indonesian internet users in 2024 reached 221,563,479 people out of a total population of 278,696,200 Indonesians in 2023. (APJII *Jumlah Pengguna Internet Indonesia Tembus 221 Juta Orang*, 2024) From 2018 to 2023, internet users increased significantly from 64.8% to 78.19%, the majority of whom were Gen Z at 34.40%. (APJII *Jumlah Pengguna Internet Indonesia Tembus 221 Juta Orang*, 2024) The purpose of accessing the internet based on BPS data in 2024 included getting information/news 77.40%, receiving and sending emails 12.89% and social media 77.57% dominated by teenagers 36.46%. (Indonesia, 2025) This high level of internet usage actually shows that people have wider access to information sources and is an indicator of a country or region's readiness to face the era of digital transformation. However, if it is not balanced with critical thinking, this will actually have a negative impact.

This paper is based on the argument that the massive dissemination of information (positive and negative spread very quickly) that is not accompanied by a spirit of understanding the truth causes confirmation bias, so that people tend to accept information that supports their own views and beliefs. High access to the internet, especially social media, is inversely proportional to

the decline in digital literacy among teenagers.(Nawaf et al., 2023) At the same time, social media is filled with influencers whose voices are heard more than experts who have few followers.(Rizqullah et al., 2025) The presence of experts is met with skepticism, even because they have few followers and the expert's explanations are considered not in line with the wishes of the majority, the insults turn against the expert.(Rizqullah et al., 2025) Thus, a formula is needed to overcome this phenomenon of the death of expertise, because if not, Indonesia's demographic bonus could become a disaster in the future.

This paper is based on the argument that teenagers' use of social media without critical reasoning to confirm the truth makes them unable to filter the positive and negative aspects of every piece of information they receive. This phenomenon is called the death of expertise. The death of expertise phenomenon was first echoed by Tom Nichole, an international academic at Harvard School. Tom Nichole, in his book, *The Death of Expertise*, stated that the presence of established expertise (experts) in the digital world is starting to be replaced by expertise outside of campus.(M. Nichols, 2024) The lack of digital literacy and the flood of information on social media make it difficult for people to distinguish between fact and fiction.(Widanshah, 2020) Nichols introduces a systematic concept of how this development occurs. He describes how populism and the rejection of intellectual authority have triggered a decline in trust in experts and academic institutions.(M. Nichols, 2024) Therefore, the presence of social media should be accompanied by critical thinking patterns, especially among teenagers, to prevent the nation's young shoots from being damaged by the imbalance between technological development and its human resources.

This article specifically aims to demonstrate that the foundation of social media use among teenagers must be accompanied by a critical mindset so that these teenagers do not carelessly follow what is presented by social media. In addition to defining the phenomenon of the death of expertise, this article also shows the need to improve critical thinking patterns amidst low digital literacy for the development of human resources in facing problems in the digital era.(Hidayati et al., 2024) Critical thinking patterns are the basis for students to ward off negative information and absorb positive information that is in line with religious values.(Naufal, 2021) The Quran, Surah An-Nahl, 16: 43, which means "We did not send before you (Prophet Muhammad), except men to whom We gave revelation. So, ask those who have knowledge if you do not know." In the al-Azhar commentary it is explained that seek guidance from those who have received warnings for humans who do not know.(Viva Fadma Onilivia et al., 2025) In other words, this article presents data and facts demonstrating the need for an expert/specialist/teacher to be a source of information and guidance on unknown and questionable issues, especially in today's era of digital information overload on social media.

The Phenomenom of The Death Of Expertise

The death of expertise first echoed by Tom Nicholes, an international academic at Harvard School. This phenomenon discusses how the position of an expert on campus is shifted by an expert from outside the campus.(M. Nichols, 2024) The presence of the internet and social media makes people become know-it-all's just by watching a video clip or reading a few paragraphs of news, making them the most expert of the experts themselves.(Team, 2025) The phenomenon of the demise of expertise impacts the challenges of digital-era preaching(Ridwanulloh, 2023), influencing public decisions and policies, (M. Nichols, 2024) and public sentiment toward the government.(Rizqullah et al., 2025) This is caused by the massive influx of information, both positive and negative, leading to confirmation bias between fact and fiction.(M. Nichols, 2024) Furthermore, with the FYP pattern on social media, the algorithms can vary depending on what they like or are interested in, even if this is wrong in the eyes of experts.(Melita R>U & Misnawati, 2025) The explanation above shows that weak critical thinking amidst the flood of information is one of the factors causing confirmation bias, which leads to the death of expertise in the digital world.

This phenomenon of the demise of expertise is not only occurring in Indonesia but also in other countries, such as America. People tend to trust economic influencers more than established

economists. In fact, 50% of Americans access the internet for health tips rather than going directly to a health professional. Recent data shows that 20% of Americans ask Google about their illness before seeing a doctor. (Parikesit, 2024) Even mature adults still prefer the opinions of influencers. Of course, the negative impact is greater for teenagers whose mindsets are immature and tend to be fanatical followers of certain influencers. (M. Ali Zuhri, 2018) The rigid delivery style of experts is also considered one of the reasons experts are abandoned because it is irrelevant to the communication styles of today's generation. (Rabbani, 2021) As a result, debates in the digital world are filled with insults and insults instead of academic debate and communication.

Method

The methodology used is library research. Mustika Zed, Library Research Methods (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2008). This research uses data collection from various sources. The literature used is not limited to books. The emphasis of this literature research is to discover various theories, laws, propositions, principles, opinions, ideas, and other sources that can be used to analyze and solve the problem being studied. Furthermore, the author uses the tafsir (interpretation) and maudhu'i (interpretation) methods for interpretation. **Anandita Yahya, Kadar M Yusuf, and Alwizar Alwizar, 'Tafsir Methods (Al-Tafsir Al-Tahlili, Al-Ijmali, Al-Muqaran Dan Al-Mawdu'i)', PALAPA, 10 (2022), 1–13 <<https://doi.org/10.36088/palapa.v10i1.1629>>.** This approach is carried out by studying the science of hadith interpretation related to management theory, collecting library data such as books, articles in journals and then analyzing them.

Result

Social media has become an inseparable part of the digital society. The emergence of social media is a result of the dynamic development of information and communication technology. This technology connects people in various parts of the world, now distance is no longer a problem due to technological developments. (Agyztia Premana et al., 2020) The concept of social media proposed by B.K. Lewis initially wanted to create a trend of bayu-style interactions. (Lewis, 2009) This development led to the birth of the first social media network, namely Six Degrees in 1997. Six Degrees allows its users to connect with real-world contacts, for example, creating profiles in the database. (Dhingra & Mudgal, 2019) The emergence of Frenstre in 2001 was the beginning of the popularity of social media, followed by Facebook and Instagram in 2003 and 2005, then TikTok in 2017. (Gani, 2015) Internet usage in Indonesia continues to increase from 2018 to 2024, with all 62% to 72%, with 50.2% of them accessing social media, 32% of which is accessed by teenagers. (Indonesia, 2025) The increase in internet usage is actually a breath of fresh air, indicating that our society is beginning to develop. But is our society ready for this development? This is where experts, the government, educational institutions, and every element of society come into play.

Adolescence is a transitional period, leaving childhood behind but not yet entering adulthood. Social media has become addictive among teenagers, and its trends have become part of their lifestyle. Teenagers access social media not only as a place to communicate but also as a learning and entertainment medium. Unfortunately, despite the many positive benefits of social media, it also has numerous negative impacts. The influence of social media on teenagers can lead to various personality disorders (narcissistic (Engkus et al., 2017), mental health, and mental disorders), cyberbullying, (fazry & Apsari, 2021) exposure to immoral behavior, (Doni, 2025) and increased aggression that can lead to criminal acts. (Fairuzzen et al., 2024) These negative impacts occur due to a lack of critical thinking among teenagers. They tend to swallow every piece of information without hesitation, even without understanding the rightness or wrongness of what they are doing.

Teenagers also use social media to showcase their trendy lifestyles, even though they are at odds with real life. (Gani, 2015) They often display adult-style behaviors that are inappropriate

for their age.(Fadilah et al., 2024) They vie to follow the styles, behaviors, and trends popularized by influencers, even though these behaviors align with societal and religious values and norms.(Monanda & Nurjanah, 2016) They even ignore the advice of adults and parents. Furthermore, teenagers often engage in criminal behavior and even commit crimes due to the influence of social media.(Fairuzzen et al., 2024) Experts are often viewed skeptically, and their opinions are overshadowed by popular influencers.(M. Nichols, 2024) The flood of information they receive from social media, coupled with low digital literacy, makes them unable to distinguish between right and wrong. This phenomenon is known as the death of expertise in the digital world.

Discussion

In the construction of Islamic science, where knowledge is sourced from revelation, namely the Quran, the ethical values contained in Islamic science must be within a moral and ethical framework. Islam and science are a duality. Science and moral values are two things that cannot be separated. Science is a means to understand and apply moral values, while moral values are needed to direct the goals in developing science. A Muslim should also behave as Islam teaches in terms of loving knowledge and asking experts if you do not know something or feel doubtful about something. The Quran Surah An-Nahl, 16:43 which means "And We did not send before you (Muhammad), except men to whom We gave revelation; so ask those who have knowledge if you do not know."

Ad-Dahhak said, reporting from Ibn `Abbas: "When Allah sent Muhammad as a Messenger, the Arabs, or some of them, denied him and said, 'Allah is too great to send a human being as a Messenger.' Then Allah revealed: Ad-Dahhak said, reporting from Ibn `Abbas: "When Allah sent Muhammad as a Messenger, the Arabs, or some of them, denied him and said, 'Allah is too great to send a human being as a Messenger.' Then Allah revealed: (And We sent not (as Our Messengers) before you (O Muhammad) any but men, whom We sent Revelation. So ask Ahl Adh-Dhikr, if you know not.). meaning, (ask) the people of the previous Books, were the Messengers that were sent to them humans or angels If they were angels, then you have the right to find this strange, but if they were human, then you have no grounds to deny that Muhammad ﷺ is a Messenger. Allah says: (And We sent not (as Our Messengers) before you (O Muhammad) any but men, whom We sent Revelation. So ask Ahl Adh-Dhikr, if you know not.). meaning, (ask) the people of the previous Books, were the Messengers that were sent to them humans or angels If they were angels, then you have the right to find this strange, but if they were human, then you have no grounds to deny that Muhammad ﷺ is a Messenger.(*Surah An-Nahl - 1-128 - Quran.Com*, n.d.)

Islam has established a very strong foundation and framework of critical thinking from its first revelation. The teaching of Islam has tremendously succeeded in transforming the mindset of the pagan Arabs to be more reflective, critical and civilized. It has also illustrated a general Islamic framework and worldview for the Muslim life which include necessarily critical thinking. This general framework reveals several elements of thinking which could be considered as the Islamic foundation of critical thinking. Those are foundation of the critical thinking such as Tafakkur, Al-Yaqin, Al-`Adl.(Junoh & Mohamad, 2020) Critical thinking, as adduced by al-Farabi (1906), is evident in his elaboration on the division of intellect in human theory (nazari) manusia. He divided intellect into three levels, namely material intellect (al-aql bi al-quwwah), actual intellect (al-`aql bi al-fi'l) and acquired intellect (al-`aql al-mustafad). (Junoh et al., 2021) Thus, the concept of critical thinking should be part of the curriculum of Islamic educational institutions.

There is a relevance between the concept of critical thinking in the Koran and Islamic education. That is, the purpose of Islamic education must refer to the Koran. Regarding attention to the development of intellectual qualities, the younger generation should pay attention to the Al-Quran so that they can make individuals who have concern and affection for the surrounding environment, and through the concept of critical thinking in the Al-Quran the goals and objectives of Islamic education are achieved, namely to make intelligent humans. as well as having faith and devotion to Allah SWT.(Hasan, 2020) Moreover, amidst the phenomenon of the death of expertise,

teenagers in particular have the intellectual qualities to be able to think critically in order to distinguish between fact and fiction in the onslaught of information on social media.

Conclusion

Social media is an inseparable part of today's youth. The lack of critical thinking skills, coupled with weak digital literacy, particularly among students, negatively impacts their health and personality development. Many cases of criminal and immoral behavior, as well as various personality and mental health issues, are caused by social media use without critical thinking. They tend to accept every piece of information they receive without filtering or understanding the potential impact. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions must develop curricula that foster critical thinking among adolescents. Critical thinking, as commanded by Allah in the Quran, should be an integral part of its adherents.

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