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FORMATION OF MORAL HYGIENE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CONDITIONS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES: A SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT
This article presents a socio-philosophical analysis of the formation of moral hygiene among young people in the context of artificial intelligence and digital technologies. The rapid expansion of the digital information environment and the widespread use of AI systems significantly influence young people’s worldview, value orientations, and moral behavior. In this context, the concept of moral hygiene is substantiated as a socio-philosophical category aimed at ensuring the moral and spiritual well-being of individuals, promoting critical thinking, improving media and information literacy, and developing moral immunity against manipulative information and destructive ideas. The research employs historical-logical, comparative, systemic, and socio-philosophical methods. The ethical ideas of Eastern and Western thinkers concerning moral purification, self-control, and personal development are analyzed in relation to the challenges of the digital age. As a result, a theoretical model for the formation of moral hygiene among young people in the digital society is proposed.

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Keywords: *artificial intelligence, digital technologies, digital society, moral hygiene, moral immunity, spiritual security, media and information literacy, critical thinking, youth, socio-philosophical analysis.*

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INTRODUCTION

The preservation of moral well-being is as important as the protection of physical health. Classical virtue ethics treats moral character as something cultivated through repeated judgment and habituation, while deontological ethics emphasizes inward responsibility and self-governance (Aristotle, 1999; Kant, 1998). Within Islamic ethical thought, moral purification and disciplined self-examination similarly function as preventive practices rather than responses applied only after misconduct has occurred (Al-Ghazali, 1995).

In a society increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence and digital technologies, young people encounter not only psychological and social pressures but also moral risks. Algorithmically selected information, disinformation, cyberbullying, anonymous communication, deepfakes, and automated persuasion can affect value formation and moral decision-making. Contemporary AI-ethics scholarship therefore emphasizes transparency, responsibility, non-maleficence, fairness, privacy, and human oversight (Floridi et al., 2018; Jobin et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2021a).

In this study, moral hygiene is defined as a preventive and reflective system through which individuals examine their actions, decisions, values, and motives, identify early risks of deviation from ethical norms, and apply self-corrective practices. This interpretation combines the philosophical traditions of care of the self, character formation, and moral self-discipline (Al-Ghazali, 1995; Aristotle, 1999; Foucault, 1986). It is intended as an analytical concept, not as a medical diagnosis.

Reflection is a central practical mechanism of moral hygiene. Reviewing one's digital behaviour, information-sharing habits, communication style, and decision-making can strengthen responsibility and self-regulation. Equally important is the capacity to verify AI-generated information, compare sources, recognize manipulation, and evaluate the possible consequences of sharing content. These abilities are central to media and information literacy and responsible digital citizenship (Choi, 2016; Richardson & Milovidov, 2019; UNESCO, 2021b). Thus, moral hygiene combines internal ethical self-regulation with critical participation in the digital environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The theoretical foundations of moral hygiene can be traced to Eastern and Western traditions of ethical self-cultivation. Al-Farabi links human happiness to knowledge, virtue, and the moral organization of society (Al-Farabi, 2001). Avicenna emphasizes rational inquiry and disciplined knowledge as means of resisting error (Avicenna, 2005). The ethical and didactic traditions represented by Yusuf Khass Hajib and Alisher Navoiy connect justice, knowledge, honesty, restraint, and social responsibility with the formation of the mature person (Dankoff, 1983; Navoiy, 1983). Al-Ghazali's account of disciplining the soul and the Naqshbandi tradition's emphasis on remembrance, vigilance, and self-control further illuminate practices of moral self-examination (Al-Ghazali, 1995; Weismann, 2007).

Western philosophy likewise gives sustained attention to moral responsibility and self-governance. Kant associates moral action with rational duty and autonomy (Kant, 1998), whereas Aristotle understands virtue as a stable disposition developed through practice (Aristotle, 1999). Foucault's account of care of the self highlights continuing ethical work upon the person (Foucault, 1986). Habermas places responsible, non-coercive communication at the centre of social legitimacy (Habermas, 1984), and Dewey treats moral education as an experiential and democratic process (Dewey, 1916). Bauman's analysis of liquid modernity is relevant to the instability and uncertainty that accompany contemporary moral choice (Bauman, 2000).

The study uses a dialectical approach, systemic analysis, historical-logical analysis, comparative interpretation, and socio-philosophical synthesis. The historical-logical method was applied to trace ideas of virtue, self-control, and moral purification; the comparative method was used to connect these traditions with contemporary theories of digital citizenship, media literacy, and AI ethics. Systemic analysis was then used to identify five interdependent components of moral hygiene: spiritual values, critical thinking, media and information culture, AI ethics, and moral self-control. Chart 1 summarizes the composition of the 33 verified sources used in the revised manuscript; it is a bibliographic description rather than an empirical result.

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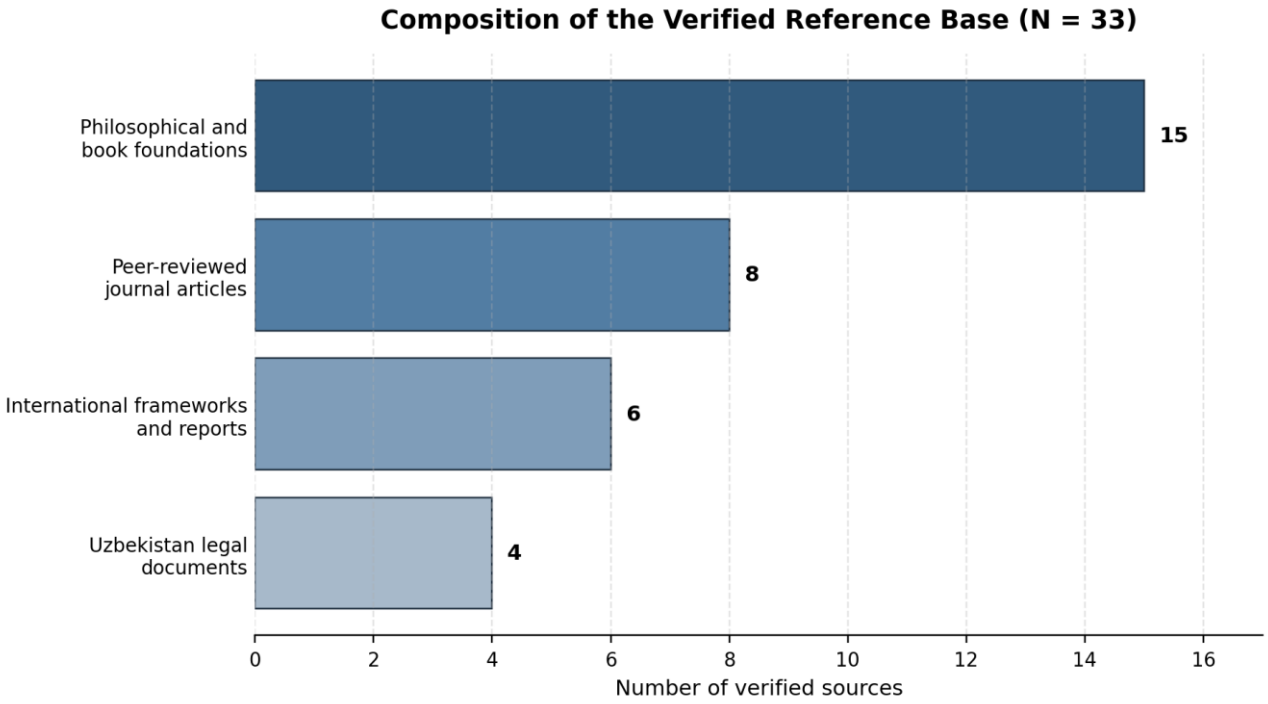


Chart 1. Composition of the verified reference base used in the manuscript.

Note. Categories were assigned by the author for descriptive purposes; the chart does not represent empirical findings about young people.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis supports the interpretation of moral hygiene as an integrative socio-philosophical category for maintaining spiritual and moral stability in digital society. Its structure includes ethical values, critical evaluation of information, self-control, responsibility, and observance of norms in digital communication. This interpretation is consistent with multidimensional accounts of digital citizenship, which combine ethics, media and information literacy, participation, and critical awareness (Choi, 2016; Richardson & Milovidov, 2019).

Eastern concepts of self-discipline and moral cultivation and Western theories of virtue, autonomy, self-care, and communicative responsibility are not identical; however, they converge around the need for reflective agency. On this basis, moral hygiene can perform four related functions: prevention of harmful influence, education of stable virtues, regulation of communication, and adaptation to technological change. These functions also correspond with international approaches that connect digital participation to rights, well-being, responsibility, and critical literacy (Richardson & Milovidov, 2019; UNESCO, 2021b).

The formation of moral hygiene cannot be assigned to the individual alone. Family practices, educational institutions, civil society, media organizations, and technology platforms jointly shape the informational environment in which young people make choices. Research on parental mediation shows that guidance, discussion, and age-appropriate supervision are more educationally meaningful than purely restrictive control (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). Child-centred AI governance likewise requires safety, privacy, fairness, transparency, inclusion, and preparation for technological change (UNICEF, 2025).

The digital transformation of social life has expanded the influence of machine learning, recommendation systems, generative AI, and automated decision-making. Artificial intelligence is therefore not only a technical instrument but also part of the infrastructure through which information is selected, ranked, generated, and interpreted (Russell & Norvig, 2021). The ethical challenge lies not only in formulating principles but also in translating responsibility, fairness, transparency, and human oversight into practice (Floridi et al., 2018; Jobin et al., 2019).

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Young people must consequently learn to distinguish evidence from persuasion, verify sources, recognize synthetic or manipulated content, and understand that AI-generated outputs may be inaccurate, biased, or contextually inappropriate. In education, generative AI can support explanation, feedback, and creativity, but uncritical use may weaken independent reasoning, introduce fabricated information, and undermine academic integrity (Kasneci et al., 2023; Tlili et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2023b). Ethical AI use should therefore be taught together with source evaluation, disclosure, authorship responsibility, and human verification.

The family remains a major setting for the development of moral hygiene. Within the home, children learn habits of information consumption, online etiquette, privacy protection, respect, and responsibility. Parents who discuss online experiences and model purposeful technology use can support young people more effectively than those who rely only on prohibition or surveillance (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008).

Mahalla organizations, schools, universities, youth organizations, and other civil-society institutions can reinforce moral immunity through reading programmes, media-literacy training, ethical discussion, and constructive social participation. In Uzbekistan, such initiatives should be aligned with constitutional protections and the national legal frameworks governing education, youth policy, and informatization (Republic of Uzbekistan, 2003, 2016, 2020, 2023).

International frameworks increasingly treat digital competence as a combination of technical ability, critical literacy, ethical judgment, rights awareness, and well-being. The Council of Europe's digital-citizenship framework organizes these competencies around being online, well-being online, and rights online (Richardson & Milovidov, 2019). UNESCO's media and information literacy curriculum emphasizes critical evaluation, responsible creation and sharing of information, and resilience against misinformation (UNESCO, 2021b).

Recent AI-specific guidance extends these principles by requiring human-centred governance, protection of children's rights, transparency, privacy, accountability, and age-appropriate education. UNESCO's AI ethics recommendation and guidance for generative AI in education, together with UNICEF's child-centred AI guidance, indicate that technical literacy must be integrated with ethical responsibility and institutional safeguards (UNESCO, 2021a, 2023b; UNICEF, 2025). These international frameworks support an integrated model rather than isolated lessons on online safety.

On the basis of the philosophical synthesis and contemporary digital-ethics frameworks, the author proposes a Digital Moral Hygiene Model consisting of five mutually reinforcing components (Figure 1):

- ✓ Spiritual values developing honesty, conscience, responsibility, tolerance, and humanism.
- ✓ Critical thinking, analyzing information, drawing evidence-based conclusions, and identifying manipulative influences.
- ✓ Media and information culture selecting reliable sources, disseminating information responsibly, and adhering to the ethics of digital communication.
- ✓ Artificial intelligence ethics using generative artificial intelligence tools based on the principles of academic integrity and responsibility.
- ✓ Moral self-control is the individual's evaluation of their own actions, regular self-improvement, and striving for spiritual perfection.

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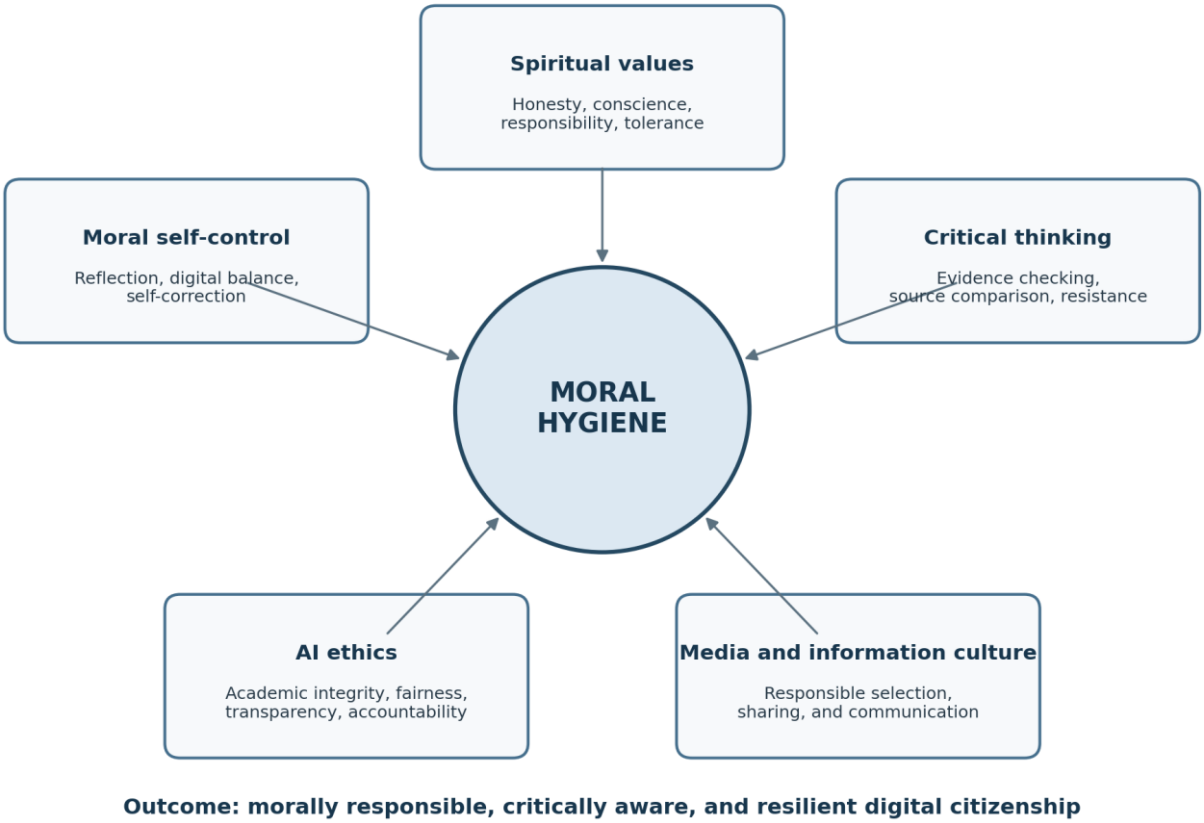


Figure 1. Digital Moral Hygiene Model for young people in an AI-mediated environment.

Note. The model is a theoretical synthesis developed in this study; arrows indicate reciprocal reinforcement rather than a fixed causal sequence.

The practical significance of the model lies in its possible application in higher education institutions, general education schools, mahalla organizations, and youth programmes. Figure 1 presents the relationship among its five components. The model can guide the development of short courses, media-literacy modules, AI-use policies, reflective activities, and spiritual-educational projects. Its effectiveness, however, should be tested in future empirical research rather than assumed from theoretical analysis alone.

CONCLUSION

This socio-philosophical analysis defines moral hygiene as a preventive and reflective system through which young people regulate their digital conduct, evaluate information critically, and align technological use with ethical values. The concept integrates traditions of virtue, moral self-discipline, autonomy, care of the self, and communicative responsibility with contemporary approaches to digital citizenship and media and information literacy (Choi, 2016; Richardson & Milovidov, 2019).

The proposed Digital Moral Hygiene Model consists of five mutually reinforcing components: spiritual values, critical thinking, media and information culture, AI ethics, and moral self-control. Its implementation requires coordinated action by families, educational institutions, mahalla organizations, civil society, media organizations, technology platforms, and public authorities. International guidance indicates that young people's engagement with AI should be supported by safety, privacy, fairness, transparency, accountability, human oversight, and age-appropriate education (UNESCO, 2021a, 2023b; UNICEF, 2025).

The model is theoretical and should not be interpreted as an empirically validated causal framework. Future studies should operationalize its components, develop reliable measurement instruments, examine young people's actual digital practices, and test educational interventions in different

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social and cultural settings. Such research would clarify whether moral-hygiene education improves source verification, responsible AI use, digital self-control, and resilience against manipulative information.

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