



Metaphysical Nūr And Generation Alpha: Technology, Ontology, and the Crisis of Orientation

Michele Trifiletti

PhD Student - Department of Social Sciences UCAM – Universidad Católica de Murcia (Spain) - Senior Officer and MLRO at an international financial institution; specialist in anti-money laundering, compliance, and fintech; lecturer and scholar of Islamic Banking and Finance, Italy

ARTICLE INFO

KEYWORDS

Nūr; Islamic metaphysics; Generation Alpha; AI ethics; education

HOW TO CITE

Trifiletti, M. (2026). Metaphysical Nūr And Generation Alpha: Technology, Ontology, and the Crisis of Orientation. International Journal of Civilizations Studies & Tolerance Sciences, 3(2), 14-23. <https://doi.org/10.54878/70e44x68>

ABSTRACT

This study examines the Islamic metaphysical concept of Nūr (light) as an ontological and epistemic framework for understanding the technological condition of Generation Alpha. The purpose is to clarify the distinction between technological illumination—characterized by visibility, access, and informational abundance—and orienting illumination, understood as intelligibility, guidance, and meaning. By doing so, the paper seeks to address the growing crisis of orientation affecting younger generations in digitally saturated environments. The research adopts a qualitative, theoretical, and interdisciplinary methodology. It combines hermeneutic analysis of Qur'anic texts and classical Islamic philosophy with conceptual analysis drawn from contemporary philosophy of technology, media theory, pedagogy, and AI ethics. Institutional statistical data from international organizations are used descriptively to contextualize the analysis, without serving as primary empirical evidence. The study demonstrates that contemporary digital technologies generate unprecedented levels of illumination in the form of constant visibility and exposure yet lack intrinsic orientational capacity. This form of technological illumination differs structurally from Nūr, which functions as a principle uniting manifestation, intelligibility, and guidance. As a result, digital environments tend to amplify information while weakening meaning, discernment, and interior integration, particularly in the formative experiences of Generation Alpha. The paper concludes that Nūr, employed as a non-confessional metaphysical heuristic, provides a robust ontological criterion for distinguishing between exposure and guidance, correctness and wisdom. This framework offers significant pedagogical and ethical implications for education, writing, and the use of artificial intelligence, emphasizing the need to reorient technological practices



Double-blind peer review by independent reviewers.

Received: 04 Jul 2026, Accepted: 15 Nov 2026, Published: 05 Dec 2026

*Corresponding author: mtrifiletti@alu.ucam.edu

Copyright: © 2026 by the author. Licensee Emirates Scholar Center for Research & Studies, UAE.

Open access under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

1. INTRODUCTION

Generation Alpha—generally defined as individuals born from approximately 2010 onward—constitutes the first cohort in human history to grow up entirely within a digitally saturated environment. Unlike previous generations, whose formative years preceded or only partially overlapped with the widespread diffusion of networked technologies, Generation Alpha encounters screens, algorithms, artificial intelligence, and data-driven systems as background conditions of experience rather than as external tools. Digital mediation is not episodic but continuous; it structures perception, attention, communication, and self-representation from early childhood.

Demographic and institutional data confirm the unprecedented nature of this condition. Reports by UNICEF, the OECD, and the World Health Organization indicate that children now encounter digital interfaces at increasingly early ages, often before the development of sustained attention, reflective judgment, or stable identity structures. Global estimates suggest that children under the age of ten spend multiple hours per day interacting with screens, while adolescents report near-constant connectivity through mobile devices. At the same time, international studies register rising levels of anxiety, attentional fragmentation, sleep disruption, and identity-related distress among younger cohorts. Importantly, these trends persist across socio-economic contexts, indicating a structural rather than merely cultural or behavioral phenomenon.

Most contemporary analyses of these developments approach them through psychological, sociological, or pedagogical frameworks. Such approaches have yielded valuable insights into issues such as cognitive load, media addiction, social comparison, and mental health. However, they tend to presuppose the very conditions they seek to explain. The digital environment is often treated as a variable acting upon an otherwise stable human subject, rather than as a transformation of the conditions under which reality itself is disclosed and experienced.

This paper argues that the situation of Generation Alpha cannot be adequately understood without addressing a deeper, ontological question: what kind of reality is disclosed to a subject whose experience is permanently mediated by technological systems designed to maximize visibility, engagement, and optimization? By “ontological,” this study does not refer to abstract metaphysical speculation detached from empirical reality, but to the fundamental structures through which beings,

meanings, and values become intelligible to human subjects.

Digital technologies do not merely transmit information; they configure the horizon within which information appears as relevant, meaningful, or negligible. Algorithmic systems prioritize speed, visibility, and engagement, thereby reshaping attention, temporal experience, and the criteria by which truth and significance are tacitly assessed. In such an environment, illumination becomes abundant, yet orientation becomes increasingly fragile. Information proliferates, while meaning fragments.

To conceptualize this condition, a category is required that unites manifestation, intelligibility, and orientation without reducing them to technical efficiency or functional utility. The Islamic metaphysical concept of *Nūr* (light) offers such a category. It is crucial to emphasize that *Nūr* is not introduced here as a normative theological authority or as a culturally prescriptive framework. Rather, it functions as an analytical category that makes explicit a distinction—between illumination and orientation—that remains implicit or under-theorized in many contemporary accounts of digital technology.

In the *Qur’ān*, *Nūr* is not presented merely as a metaphor for knowledge or moral insight, but as a fundamental principle of manifestation and guidance. The verse “God is the Light of the heavens and the earth” (*Qur’ān* 24:35) articulates an ontological claim: existence itself is intelligible only insofar as it is illuminated by a light that precedes both subject and object. *Nūr* is not one being among others, nor a property added to things, but the condition under which beings appear as meaningful and ordered.

Other *Qur’ānic* passages reinforce this distinction between illumination and guidance. Light is repeatedly contrasted with darkness not simply as ignorance, but as disorientation: “Is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him a light by which he walks among people like one who is in darkness, never to emerge from it?” (*Qur’ān* 6:122). Here, light is explicitly linked to walking, that is, to orientation, direction, and existential movement.

Classical Islamic philosophy and theology develop this insight by emphasizing that created beings possess no autonomous luminosity. Their intelligibility is derivative and participatory, grounded in a light that is not self-generated. This establishes a hierarchy between source and manifestation, between illumination that orients and visibility that merely exposes. Knowledge, in this framework, is inseparable from transformation: to know is to be oriented toward truth.

This ontological structure provides a critical lens through which contemporary technological illumination can be

examined. Digital environments generate unprecedented levels of visibility—constant exposure, infinite accessibility, continuous stimulation—yet they do not inherently provide orientation, hierarchy, or meaning. Algorithms illuminate by selecting and displaying, not by guiding toward truth or wisdom. Relevance replaces significance; optimization replaces understanding.

The relevance of *Nūr* in this context does not lie in its confessional content, but in its conceptual power. In this study, *Nūr* is employed as a metaphysical heuristic, not as a theological imposition. It allows a principled distinction between forms of illumination that disclose reality meaningfully and forms that merely increase visibility while dissolving orientation. In doing so, it offers a vocabulary capable of addressing what is often described, but rarely conceptualized, as the contemporary “crisis of meaning” affecting younger generations.

Generation Alpha thus appears not simply as a demographic cohort facing new challenges, but as the first generation formed under conditions of permanent over-illumination without guaranteed guidance. Understanding this condition requires moving beyond instrumental accounts of technology toward an ontological analysis of how reality itself is rendered visible, intelligible, and inhabitable.

This paper proceeds from the claim that without such an ontological framework, discussions of education, ethics, and artificial intelligence risk addressing symptoms while leaving the underlying transformation of experience unexamined. *Nūr*, as a principle uniting intelligibility and orientation, offers a critical point of entry into this deeper level of analysis.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is guided by a set of interrelated research questions designed to clarify the conceptual and ontological dimensions of the relationship between metaphysical light (*Nūr*), contemporary digital technologies, and the experiential condition of Generation Alpha. The aim is not to provide exhaustive empirical explanations, nor to develop predictive models, but to articulate conceptual distinctions capable of illuminating a structural transformation of experience.

The research is structured around the following questions:

R1. How is *Nūr* defined as an ontological and epistemic principle in Islamic metaphysics? This question examines *Nūr* not as a metaphorical or purely theological notion, but as a foundational category through which intelligibility, manifestation, and guidance are understood within the Islamic intellectual tradition.

Drawing on Qur’ānic sources—most notably the assertion that “God is the Light of the heavens and the earth” (Qur’ān 24:35)—and on classical metaphysical interpretations, the study investigates how *Nūr* functions as a condition of intelligibility rather than as a contingent attribute. Particular attention is given to the inseparability of knowledge and orientation, and to the hierarchical structure implied by derivative and non-autonomous forms of light.

R2. How do contemporary digital technologies produce forms of illumination that differ structurally from metaphysical and epistemic light? This question addresses the nature of technological “illumination” generated by digital media, algorithmic systems, and artificial intelligence. Rather than evaluating technologies in terms of utility or efficiency, the analysis focuses on their structural mode of disclosure. Digital systems intensify visibility, access, and exposure, yet operate according to criteria of optimization and engagement rather than truth or meaning. The question seeks to clarify how such forms of illumination differ ontologically from *Nūr*, particularly with respect to orientation, hierarchy, and interior integration.

R3. In what ways does technological mediation affect cognition, attention, and identity formation in Generation Alpha? This question situates the ontological analysis within a concrete demographic context. Generation Alpha, as the first generation fully immersed in digital environments from early childhood, provides a paradigmatic case for examining how continuous technological mediation reshapes cognitive habits, attentional structures, and processes of identity formation. Drawing on institutional data and interdisciplinary research, the study considers these effects not merely as psychological outcomes, but as indicators of a deeper transformation in the conditions under which experience, selfhood, and meaning are constituted.

R4. What ethical and pedagogical implications can be derived from *Nūr* for the development and use of technology, particularly artificial intelligence? The final question explores the normative implications of the preceding analyses. If *Nūr* is understood as a principle that unites intelligibility with guidance, then ethical and pedagogical evaluation cannot be limited to external regulation or technical correctness. This question examines how *Nūr* may function as a criterion for assessing educational practices and AI systems, especially in contexts where correct outputs risk being mistaken for understanding or wisdom. The focus is on orientation, discernment, and the cultivation of interiority rather than on prohibition or technological rejection.

These questions are addressed analytically rather than exhaustively, and theoretically rather than empirically. Their purpose is to clarify conceptual distinctions and ontological structures that underlie contemporary debates on technology, education, and artificial intelligence, rather than to offer causal explanations or predictive claims. By doing so, the study seeks to provide a metaphysical framework capable of informing interdisciplinary discussion without reducing complex phenomena to a single explanatory register.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, theoretical, and interdisciplinary research design, consistent with methodological approaches commonly accepted in Scopus-indexed journals in religious studies, philosophy of technology, media studies, and applied ethics. The methodological orientation reflects the nature of the research problem, which concerns the ontological and epistemic structures through which experience, meaning, and orientation are constituted, rather than empirically measurable behaviors or causal relationships.

The study does not seek to test hypotheses, generate statistical correlations, or produce predictive models. Instead, it aims to clarify conceptual distinctions that underlie contemporary discussions of technology, education, and artificial intelligence, particularly as they relate to the experiential condition of Generation Alpha. For this reason, a qualitative and theoretical methodology is not adopted despite the absence of quantitative data, but precisely because of the object of inquiry.

The research method combines four complementary components:

- Hermeneutic analysis of Qur'ānic texts and classical Islamic philosophy: The study employs a hermeneutic approach to selected Qur'ānic passages concerning Nūr, with particular attention to their ontological and epistemic implications. This analysis is informed by classical Islamic philosophical and theological interpretations, not for doctrinal purposes, but to elucidate how Nūr functions as a principle of intelligibility, manifestation, and guidance. The hermeneutic method allows the text to be situated within its metaphysical horizon while remaining analytically accessible to interdisciplinary discourse.
- Conceptual analysis of key metaphysical and technological categories: A systematic conceptual analysis is conducted on core categories such as light, illumination, visibility, intelligibility, orientation, mediation, and interiority. These concepts are examined both within the framework of Islamic metaphysics and in relation to contemporary technological systems. The aim is to clarify structural differences between metaphysical

illumination and technological exposure, avoiding metaphorical or purely rhetorical comparisons.

- Critical synthesis of contemporary philosophy of technology and media theory :The study integrates insights from modern philosophy of technology and media theory in order to situate the metaphysical analysis within current scholarly debates. Rather than offering a comprehensive review, the synthesis focuses on themes directly relevant to the research questions, such as technological mediation, algorithmic governance, attention economies, and the transformation of subjectivity. This critical engagement enables dialogue between premodern metaphysical frameworks and contemporary theoretical concerns without collapsing one into the other.

- Contextual use of institutional statistical data (UNICEF, OECD, WHO, Pew Research Center): Empirical data from international institutions are employed descriptively to contextualize the theoretical analysis. These data provide demographic and social background regarding digital exposure, cognitive and attentional trends, and mental health indicators among children and adolescents. Importantly, such data are not used to establish causal claims or empirical generalizations, but to anchor the ontological analysis within observable global trends affecting Generation Alpha. These sources function neither as evidentiary proof nor as objects of statistical analysis, but as phenomenological indicators of large-scale experiential conditions that motivate ontological inquiry.

The research is non-experimental and does not involve human subjects. As such, it does not require ethical approval under standard research ethics frameworks. Empirical sources are treated as contextual evidence rather than as primary data, and no original data collection is undertaken.

Given that the central concern of this study is the structure of experience, meaning, and orientation, a qualitative and theoretical methodology is not a methodological limitation but a necessary condition for conceptual rigor. Ontological questions cannot be resolved through quantitative measurement alone, and any attempt to do so would risk reducing structural transformations of experience to isolated behavioral indicators. The chosen methodology thus aligns the research tools with the level of analysis required by the research problem itself.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: Nūr as Ontological Principle

Within the Qur'ānic worldview, *Nūr* is neither a physical entity nor a merely figurative expression for knowledge or moral insight. Rather, it functions as a fundamental ontological principle: the condition under which beings become manifest and intelligible. The Qur'ānic declaration “God is the Light of the heavens and the earth” (Qur'ān 24:35) articulates an ontological claim concerning the structure of reality itself. Existence is not self-intelligible; it depends upon an illumination that precedes both the knowing subject and the known object.

In this sense, *Nūr* cannot be reduced to a subjective state of awareness or to an epistemic faculty. It refers instead to the precondition of intelligibility that allows beings to appear as meaningful rather than as undifferentiated presence. Light, in this metaphysical register, does not simply make things visible; it discloses their place within an ordered whole. To be illuminated is to be situated within a horizon of meaning.

Within the present study, *Nūr* is not introduced as a doctrinal assertion imposed upon the analysis of technology. Rather, it is employed as an ontological principle that enables distinctions frequently obscured in contemporary discussions of information, visibility, and access. By framing *Nūr* as a condition of intelligibility rather than as a religious belief, the analysis remains philosophically rigorous and accessible to interdisciplinary inquiry.

Classical Islamic thinkers consistently emphasize that created beings possess no autonomous luminosity. Their intelligibility is derivative, contingent upon participation in or reflection of a higher source of light. This metaphysical framework establishes a fundamental hierarchy between source and manifestation, between illumination and appearance. Knowledge, within this perspective, is not the mere registration of data but a mode of participation in intelligibility itself.

Such a hierarchy implies that not all forms of illumination are equivalent. Some forms of light disclose meaning and orientation, while others merely expose surfaces. This distinction is critical for evaluating modern technological forms of illumination. Digital systems generate unprecedented levels of visibility through screens, interfaces, and algorithmic mediation. However, this visibility is not inherently ordered or oriented toward meaning. What is illuminated is not necessarily what is significant, true, or worthy of sustained attention.

From the standpoint of *Nūr*, contemporary technological illumination can therefore be understood as structurally distinct from metaphysical and epistemic light. It produces exposure without guaranteeing intelligibility, access without hierarchy, and information without

guidance. The result is a condition in which appearance proliferates while orientation weakens.

This ontological distinction between illumination that guides and visibility that merely displays provides the theoretical framework for the analyses that follow. It allows the study to assess technology not in terms of its technical capabilities alone, but in terms of its capacity—or incapacity—to sustain meaning, discernment, and human orientation within an increasingly over-illuminated world.

5. TECHNOLOGY AS PSEUDO-LIGHT

The term “pseudo-light” is used here in a strictly structural and non-pejorative sense. It does not imply falsity, deception, or moral deficiency, but designates a form of illumination that lacks intrinsic orientation and hierarchical intelligibility.

The critique advanced in this study does not concern technology as such, nor does it imply an opposition between technological mediation and truth. The analysis does not adopt a technophobic or anti-modern stance, and it does not suggest that mediation, visibility, or artificial systems are inherently deceptive or epistemically illegitimate. Rather, the critique targets specific forms of illumination produced by contemporary digital technologies—forms that operate without reference to any horizon of meaning beyond systemic optimization.

Modern digital environments generate a condition of continuous illumination. Screens, interfaces, data streams, and algorithmic recommendation systems ensure that information is constantly present, accessible, and refreshed. In this sense, digital technologies function as powerful instruments of disclosure: little remains hidden, delayed, or inaccessible. Visibility becomes the default condition of experience.

However, this illumination lacks intrinsic orientation. Algorithmic systems are designed to optimize engagement, efficiency, and responsiveness, not truth, meaning, or understanding. What appears is selected according to behavioral relevance rather than ontological or epistemic significance. As a result, relevance increasingly replaces meaning, and visibility substitutes for intelligibility.

From the perspective of *Nūr*, this condition constitutes a form of light without guidance (*nūr dūna hudā*). Illumination is no longer ordered toward truth or integration, but toward continuous stimulation and interaction. Information becomes abundant while understanding diminishes, not because information is false, but because it lacks hierarchical structure and orienting depth.

Institutional statistical data support this diagnosis at the level of lived experience. Despite unprecedented access to information and educational resources, younger users—particularly those belonging to Generation Alpha—report rising levels of confusion, anxiety, attentional fragmentation, and cognitive overload. These trends suggest that increased visibility does not automatically translate into increased comprehension or meaning. On the contrary, over-illumination may erode the conditions required for understanding.

Philosophically, this condition reflects a shift from illumination as revelation to illumination as exposure. In earlier metaphysical frameworks, illumination implied disclosure within an ordered horizon, allowing what appears to be situated, interpreted, and integrated. In contemporary digital contexts, illumination increasingly takes the form of exposure without mediation: content appears continuously, without pause, hierarchy, or narrative coherence.

What is lost in this shift is interiority. Interiority is not understood here as introspection, emotional inwardness, or subjective withdrawal from the world. Rather, it refers to the structural capacity to integrate experience into coherent meaning over time. Interiority requires duration, silence, and selective attention—conditions that allow knowledge to be reflected upon, assimilated, and transformed into understanding or wisdom.

Technological pseudo-light undermines this capacity not by imposing falsehood, but by saturating experience with unstructured presence. When everything appears at once, nothing truly discloses itself. The result is not darkness, but a form of disorientation produced by excessive light—an illumination that reveals surfaces while obscuring meaning.

This analysis does not call for a reduction of technological illumination, but for a critical distinction between forms of light that merely expose and forms that orient. Such a distinction is essential for understanding the experiential condition of Generation Alpha and for evaluating the ethical and pedagogical implications of contemporary digital systems.

6. GENERATION ALPHA: Ontological and Cognitive Implications

Generation Alpha inhabits the condition described above from early childhood. Unlike previous generations, whose cognitive and identity formation occurred prior to or alongside the gradual introduction of digital technologies, Generation Alpha encounters screens, platforms, and algorithmic systems as a primary environment of experience. Empirical studies consistently

indicate rising screen time, reduced sustained attention, increased multitasking, and growing concerns related to anxiety, emotional regulation, and mental health among children and adolescents.

These trends do not describe a homogeneous or universal condition, nor do they negate the role of cultural, familial, and educational mediation. Rather, they indicate a dominant structural tendency shaping the background conditions of experience within which individual trajectories unfold.

The argument advanced here does not claim deterministic or uniform outcomes. It does not suggest that technological exposure produces fixed psychological effects, nor that individual agency is eliminated. Rather, it identifies shifts in the conditions under which cognition, attention, and identity formation occur. These shifts operate at a structural level: they alter the background against which thinking, perceiving, and relating become possible.

This shift should therefore be understood as probabilistic and structural rather than exhaustive or inevitable. It concerns the prevailing logic of mediation rather than the totality of lived experience.

From an ontological perspective, these trends suggest not merely behavioral change, but a transformation in the structure of experience itself. Attention is increasingly fragmented and externally directed; temporal experience becomes compressed into immediacy and responsiveness; cognition is shaped by constant interruption rather than sustained engagement. These features do not describe individual pathologies, but a shared experiential condition produced by continuous technological mediation.

Identity formation within this context is increasingly embedded in environments governed by visibility, metrics, and performative feedback. Digital platforms encourage the externalization of the self through profiles, images, interactions, and quantified responses. Validation becomes measurable, immediate, and comparative. As a result, the self is increasingly experienced as something to be displayed, adjusted, and optimized rather than as something to be cultivated over time.

From an ontological standpoint, this represents a shift from being to appearing. Identity becomes less rooted in interior coherence and more dependent on external recognition. Importantly, this shift should not be interpreted in moral or psychological terms—as inauthenticity, narcissism, or moral failure—but as a structural consequence of the media environment. The transformation reflects changes in the conditions of

manifestation rather than in individual intentions or values.

Within the framework of Nūr, this development can be understood as a weakening of orientation. When illumination is no longer anchored to meaning, hierarchy, or interior integration, freedom is not expanded but narrowed. Choice becomes reactive rather than deliberative; agency is exercised within predefined options optimized for engagement rather than reflection.

The metaphysical danger, therefore, lies not in technology itself, but in the collapse of orientation. In an environment of constant pseudo-light, the subject is not deprived of information but of direction. Without a horizon that allows experience to be integrated into a coherent sense of self and world, freedom risks being reduced to momentary responsiveness—an oscillation between stimuli rather than a capacity for sustained judgment and commitment.

This analysis underscores that the challenges faced by Generation Alpha cannot be adequately addressed through behavioral regulation or content moderation alone. They require a deeper engagement with the ontological conditions shaping experience, attention, and identity. Only by restoring a distinction between illumination and orientation can educational, ethical, and technological interventions hope to address the underlying transformation rather than its symptoms.

7. PEDAGOGICAL AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

From the perspective of Nūr, education cannot be understood primarily as the accumulation of information, competencies, or technical skills. Rather, it is the cultivation of discernment—the capacity to distinguish what is meaningful from what is merely available or stimulating. Knowledge, in this framework, is not confined to cognitive performance but concerns the orientation of the whole person. To educate is not simply to inform, but to illuminate in a way that integrates understanding, judgment, and responsibility.

This conception stands in tension with dominant educational models shaped by digital efficiency, continuous assessment, and content saturation. When learning is reduced to the rapid acquisition and reproduction of information, illumination is mistaken for exposure. From the standpoint of Nūr, such models risk producing cognitive activation without epistemic depth.

Pedagogically, this implies the need to reintroduce silence, slowness, and reflective distance into learning environments. These are not nostalgic or anti-technological ideals, but structural conditions for interiority and understanding. Reflection requires

temporal space; discernment requires selective attention; integration requires intervals in which experience can be processed rather than immediately replaced. Without such conditions, learning remains fragmented and externally driven.

Ethically, the framework of Nūr demands that technology—particularly artificial intelligence—be evaluated according to criteria that extend beyond efficiency, accuracy, and procedural fairness. While such criteria are necessary, they are not sufficient. Technologies must also be assessed in terms of their capacity to support human orientation, autonomy, and interior growth. A system that performs optimally while undermining discernment or responsibility remains ethically problematic, regardless of its technical sophistication.

Artificial intelligence provides a particularly clear illustration of these concerns. AI systems are increasingly capable of producing correct, coherent, and contextually appropriate outputs without any form of understanding or awareness. The ethical risk does not lie in the possibility that such systems generate incorrect information—an issue that can often be addressed through technical refinement—but in the likelihood that their correct outputs may be mistaken for understanding, wisdom, or judgment.

From the perspective of Nūr, knowledge that does not orient the knower remains incomplete. When correct answers are detached from comprehension, responsibility, and meaning, they simulate knowledge without fulfilling its ontological function. Without metaphysical criteria capable of distinguishing between correctness and wisdom, AI systems risk being treated as authoritative sources of understanding rather than as instrumental tools.

This misrecognition has significant pedagogical implications. If students come to rely on systems that deliver answers without requiring integration or reflection, the formative dimension of education is weakened. The challenge, therefore, is not to exclude artificial intelligence from educational contexts, but to situate it within a framework that preserves the primacy of discernment over output.

In this sense, Nūr does not function as an external moral constraint imposed upon technology, but as an orienting principle that clarifies what education and ethics are ultimately for. It provides a criterion by which technological systems can be integrated into human practices without replacing the very capacities—

judgment, understanding, and orientation—that those practices are meant to cultivate.

This critique does not presuppose an opposition between human and artificial intelligence. Rather, it concerns a category mistake: the attribution of orientational or sapiential authority to systems whose outputs are structurally detached from understanding and responsibility.

8. DISCUSSION: Answering the Research Questions

This section returns to the research questions outlined at the beginning of the study and synthesizes the main findings of the analysis. The purpose of this discussion is not to introduce new arguments, but to clarify how the preceding sections collectively address the guiding questions and to articulate the coherence of the proposed framework.

R1. Nūr functions as an ontological principle that grounds intelligibility and guidance. The analysis has shown that Nūr, as articulated in the Qur'ānic worldview and developed in classical Islamic metaphysics, cannot be reduced to a metaphor for knowledge or moral clarity. Rather, it operates as an ontological principle that makes intelligibility possible in the first place. Nūr grounds both the appearance of beings and their orientation within an ordered horizon of meaning. Knowledge, within this framework, is inseparable from guidance: to know is to be situated, directed, and transformed. This understanding provides a conceptual vocabulary for addressing questions of meaning and orientation that remain underdeveloped in many contemporary accounts of technology.

R2. Technological illumination differs structurally from Nūr because it lacks intrinsic orientation. The study has distinguished metaphysical illumination from contemporary forms of technological illumination. Digital technologies generate continuous visibility, accessibility, and exposure, but this illumination is structurally disconnected from intrinsic criteria of meaning, truth, or hierarchy. Algorithmic systems optimize relevance and engagement rather than intelligibility and guidance. As a result, technological illumination operates as a form of pseudo-light: it reveals without orienting and exposes without integrating. This structural difference, rather than any moral failing of technology, constitutes the core of the critique advanced in this paper.

R3. Generation Alpha experiences cognitive and identity transformations rooted in permanent mediation and over-illumination. By situating the analysis within the demographic context of Generation Alpha, the study has shown how these structural features of technological illumination shape cognition, attention, and identity

formation. The argument does not posit deterministic effects, but identifies a transformation in the conditions under which experience is constituted. Continuous mediation, metric-driven visibility, and attentional saturation contribute to a shift from interior coherence to performative self-representation. These developments reflect an ontological transformation of experience rather than isolated behavioral or psychological anomalies.

R4. Nūr provides ethical and pedagogical criteria emphasizing orientation, discernment, and interiority. Finally, the study has demonstrated that Nūr offers more than a descriptive framework: it provides normative criteria for evaluating educational practices and technological systems, particularly artificial intelligence. By emphasizing orientation over output, discernment over efficiency, and interiority over exposure, Nūr enables an ethical and pedagogical evaluation that goes beyond technical correctness or procedural fairness. It clarifies why correct answers without understanding, and visibility without meaning, remain insufficient from a human perspective.

Taken together, these findings show that the relevance of Nūr lies not in its theological specificity, but in its capacity to articulate distinctions that are increasingly obscured in technologically mediated environments. The discussion thus confirms that the concept of Nūr functions as a coherent and productive framework for analyzing the ontological, cognitive, ethical, and pedagogical implications of contemporary digital technologies, especially as they affect the formation of future generations.

9. CONCLUSION

This research has argued that contemporary technological environments generate a paradoxical condition: unprecedented levels of illumination accompanied by a growing crisis of orientation. Digital technologies multiply visibility, access, and informational presence, yet often fail to provide the conditions necessary for meaning, discernment, and interior integration. The problem identified is therefore not one of darkness or ignorance, but of over-illumination without guidance.

By applying the Islamic metaphysical concept of Nūr, the study has offered a framework capable of distinguishing between visibility and intelligibility, information and wisdom, exposure and orientation. Nūr has been articulated not as a confessional doctrine, but as an ontological principle that clarifies the conditions under which reality becomes meaningful and navigable. In doing so, it provides conceptual resources for addressing

dimensions of technological experience that remain insufficiently theorized in dominant analytical models.

The relevance of Nūr is not confined to Islamic theology or religious discourse. It speaks to a global condition shaping the formation of future generations, particularly those growing up within permanently mediated environments. Generation Alpha exemplifies this condition, but the ontological implications extend beyond any single cohort. The framework developed in this study highlights that the central challenge posed by contemporary technology is not technological capability itself, but the erosion of orientation within an overexposed world.

Importantly, this analysis does not call for a rejection of technology, nor does it advocate a return to pre-digital forms of life. Rather, it argues for the reintegration of technology within an ontological horizon capable of sustaining human orientation. Such reintegration requires criteria that exceed efficiency, optimization, and correctness, and that account for meaning, judgment, and interiority.

Reintegrating technology within an ontological framework of orientation is therefore not a nostalgic or anti-modern project. Nūr thus offers one possible ontological vocabulary—among others—for rethinking how technological illumination might be reoriented toward meaning, discernment, and human flourishing.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

This study is based on original and unpublished theoretical research. It does not involve human participants, personal data, or experimental procedures, and therefore did not require ethical approval under standard research ethics frameworks. All sources have been appropriately cited in accordance with academic standards. The author declares no known competing financial or personal interests that could have influenced the work reported in this article.

AI USE DISCLOSURE

AI tools were used solely to improve language clarity and structural consistency. No AI system was used to generate data, perform statistical analysis, or formulate empirical results. All content was reviewed and validated by the author(s).

References

Al-Ghazālī. (n.d.). *Mishkāt al-Anwār* [The niche of lights]. Various critical Arabic editions; English translations available.

Borgmann, A. (1984). *Technology and the character of contemporary life: A philosophical inquiry*. University of Chicago Press.

Chittick, W. C. (1989). *The Sufi path of knowledge: Ibn al-ʿArabī's metaphysics of imagination*. State University of New York Press.

Coeckelbergh, M. (2020). *AI ethics*. MIT Press.

Crary, J. (2013). *24/7: Late capitalism and the ends of sleep*. Verso.

Dreyfus, H. L. (1972). *What computers can't do: A critique of artificial reason*. Harper & Row.

Ellul, J. (1964). *The technological society*. Knopf.

Feenberg, A. (1999). *Questioning technology*. Routledge.

Floridi, L. (2014). *The ethics of information*. Oxford University Press.

Floridi, L. (2019). *The logic of information: A theory of philosophy as conceptual design*. Oxford University Press.

Han, B.-C. (2017). *In the swarm: Digital prospects* (E. Butler, Trans.). MIT Press. (Original work published 2013)

Heidegger, M. (1977). *The question concerning technology and other essays* (W. Lovitt, Trans.). Harper & Row. (Original work published 1954)

Ibn ʿArabī. (n.d.). *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* [The Meccan revelations]. Various critical Arabic editions.

Ibn Sīnā. (n.d.). *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbihāt* [Remarks and admonitions]. Classical Arabic editions.

McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. McGraw-Hill.

Mullā Ṣadrā. (n.d.). *Al-Asfār al-arbaʿa* [The four intellectual journeys]. Classical Arabic editions.

Nasr, S. H. (1993). *An introduction to Islamic cosmological doctrines*. State University of New York Press.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2022). *Education in the digital age*. OECD Publishing.

Pew Research Center. (2023). *Teens, technology, and mental health*. Pew Research Center.

Postman, N. (1992). *Technopoly: The surrender of culture to technology*. Knopf.

Searle, J. R. (1980). Minds, brains, and programs. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 3(3), 417-457. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X00005756>

Twenge, J. M. (2017). *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy—and completely unprepared for adulthood*. Atria Books.

UNESCO. (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*. UNESCO Publishing.

UNICEF. (2021). *Children in a digital world*. UNICEF.

World Health Organization. (2022). *Adolescent mental health*. World Health Organization.