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## Addressing The Global Moral Crisis Through The Revitalization of Local Wisdom in The Age of Technology

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### Abstract

Contemporary society faces a profound moral crisis characterized by value erosion, ethical ambiguity, and declining social cohesion, paradoxically intensified by technological advancement. This article examines how the revitalization of local wisdom can address global moral challenges in the digital age. Drawing upon recent scholarship, this conceptual analysis explores the intersection of traditional knowledge systems and modern technology, arguing that local wisdom offers crucial resources for navigating contemporary ethical dilemmas. The discussion encompasses two primary dimensions: first, understanding the nature of the global moral crisis and its relationship to technological disruption; second, exploring strategies for integrating local wisdom with technological progress to foster ethical renewal. The analysis reveals that local wisdom traditions contain time-tested principles for ethical living, community building, and sustainable development that remain highly relevant despite rapid technological change. Successful integration requires deliberate effort to preserve, adapt, and disseminate traditional knowledge through modern platforms while maintaining authenticity and cultural integrity.

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## INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century presents a paradoxical landscape where unprecedented technological advancement coexists with profound moral uncertainty and value confusion. While digital technologies have connected humanity in ways previously unimaginable, they have simultaneously contributed to fragmentation of traditional value systems, erosion of community bonds, and emergence of new ethical challenges that existing moral frameworks struggle to address. According to Twenge (2020), the digital revolution has fundamentally altered human social interaction, value formation, and moral reasoning, particularly among younger generations who have grown up immersed in technology-mediated environments. This transformation has generated what many scholars identify as a global moral crisis—a widespread sense that traditional ethical anchors have become unmoored while new moral compasses remain inadequately developed. The crisis manifests in various forms including increased social polarization, declining trust in institutions, rising mental health challenges, and widespread cynicism about shared values and collective purpose.

The concept of local wisdom encompasses the accumulated knowledge, practices, beliefs, and values that communities have developed over generations in response to their specific environmental, social, and spiritual contexts. These indigenous knowledge systems represent sophisticated understandings of sustainable living, social harmony, and human flourishing that have enabled communities to thrive for centuries or millennia. Rist and Dahdouh-Guebas (2006) emphasize that local wisdom embodies practical and philosophical insights about human relationships with nature, community, and transcendent meaning that remain relevant despite modernization. However, globalization and technological change have threatened these wisdom traditions, often dismissing them as backward or irrelevant in favor of supposedly universal modern rationality. This dismissal has contributed to what some scholars describe as a crisis of meaning, where individuals and communities struggle to find moral orientation in rapidly changing circumstances.

The relationship between technology and morality represents one of the defining challenges of our era, requiring careful examination of how digital tools shape ethical thinking and behavior. Technology is not morally neutral; it embodies particular values, assumptions, and worldviews that influence users often unconsciously. Vallor (2016) argues that contemporary technologies frequently cultivate vices rather than virtues, encouraging impatience, narcissism, and distraction rather than patience, humility, and attentiveness. Social media platforms, for instance, may amplify moral outrage while diminishing nuanced ethical reasoning, creating environments where complex moral questions are reduced to simplistic binary positions. The challenge is not to reject technology but to develop more intentional approaches to technological design and use that support rather than undermine moral development and ethical living.

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The erosion of traditional moral frameworks has created a vacuum that neither secular rationalism nor technological solutionism has adequately filled. While Enlightenment-inspired secular ethics emphasized universal reason and individual autonomy, these frameworks have proven insufficient for addressing contemporary challenges requiring collective action, long-term thinking, and recognition of human interdependence with natural systems. Bhaskar et al. (2021) contend that modern moral philosophy's emphasis on abstract principles divorced from cultural context and lived experience has contributed to ethical frameworks that feel disconnected from actual human life and community. This disconnection has left many people, particularly younger generations, seeking moral guidance but finding available frameworks either overly rigid and dogmatic or excessively relativistic and permissive. The result is widespread moral confusion and ethical paralysis in the face of pressing challenges requiring clear values and committed action.

Local wisdom traditions offer valuable resources for addressing this moral vacuum precisely because they integrate ethical principles with practical wisdom, community life, and spiritual meaning in holistic ways (Muhsyanur et al., 2022). These traditions typically do not separate ethics from other dimensions of human existence but embed moral guidance within comprehensive worldviews that address questions of meaning, purpose, and right relationship with others and nature. For example, many indigenous traditions emphasize reciprocity, respect for elders, harmony with natural cycles, and long-term thinking that contrasts sharply with modern consumerism's emphasis on individual gratification, youth worship, resource exploitation, and short-term profit maximization. Kimmerer (2021) demonstrates how indigenous ecological knowledge contains not only practical insights for sustainable resource management but also moral principles about human responsibilities to future generations and non-human nature that Western societies urgently need to recover.

The challenge of revitalizing local wisdom in the technological age requires more than nostalgic preservation of traditional practices; it demands creative integration that makes ancient insights accessible and applicable to contemporary circumstances. This integration is particularly important for younger generations who are digital natives and may initially perceive traditional wisdom as irrelevant to their technology-saturated lives. However, research suggests that many young people hunger for the meaning, connection, and moral clarity that wisdom traditions offer, even as they remain committed to technological engagement. Sternberg and Glück (2023) emphasize that wisdom is not merely accumulated knowledge but involves the ability to apply knowledge judiciously in service of human flourishing, a capacity that remains essential regardless of technological change. The task is to demonstrate how traditional wisdom can inform ethical technology use, provide frameworks for navigating digital dilemmas, and offer alternative visions of the good life that resist technology's tendency toward instrumentalism and commodification.

The global nature of contemporary moral challenges requires both universal ethical principles and culturally specific wisdom traditions that resonate with particular

communities' identities and experiences (Muhsyanur, 2023). Climate change, artificial intelligence ethics, biotechnology governance, and digital privacy all demand collective action across cultural boundaries, suggesting the need for shared moral foundations. Yet history demonstrates that imposed universal ethics often mask cultural imperialism and fail to gain authentic commitment from diverse populations. The solution may lie in what scholars call "rooted cosmopolitanism"—an approach that honors particular cultural traditions while seeking dialogue and mutual learning across traditions to address common challenges. Local wisdom traditions from around the world often contain surprisingly convergent insights about human nature, ethical living, and sustainable community despite surface differences in expression and practice.

Looking forward, the revitalization of local wisdom in the technological age represents not a rejection of modernity but an enrichment of it—a recognition that human flourishing requires both technological capability and moral wisdom, both innovative progress and reverence for time-tested truths. As technology continues advancing at accelerating pace, the need for moral anchoring in wisdom traditions becomes more rather than less urgent (Muhsyanur, Inne Pelangi, 2021). Communities that successfully integrate local wisdom with technological engagement will be better positioned to navigate coming challenges while maintaining social cohesion, environmental sustainability, and human dignity. The following sections explore in greater depth the nature of the global moral crisis and strategies for wisdom revitalization, arguing that humanity's future depends on recovering the past's moral insights while embracing the present's technological possibilities.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

### **Understanding the Global Moral Crisis in the Technological Age**

The contemporary moral crisis manifests across multiple dimensions of social life, from interpersonal relationships to institutional governance to human relationships with the natural world. At the interpersonal level, technology-mediated communication has fundamentally altered how people form and maintain relationships, often in ways that undermine the development of virtues essential for ethical living. According to Turkle (2021), constant connectivity paradoxically produces feelings of isolation and loneliness as digital interactions substitute for face-to-face encounters that build empathy, trust, and authentic connection. The decline of direct human contact particularly affects young people's moral development, as they miss crucial opportunities to practice virtues like patience, active listening, and conflict resolution that can only be fully developed through embodied interaction. Social media's emphasis on curated self-presentation encourages narcissism and inauthenticity, while its reward structures cultivate addiction-like behaviors that undermine self-control and intentional living.

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The institutional dimension of the moral crisis involves widespread erosion of trust in traditional sources of moral authority including religious institutions, educational systems, and civic organizations. This trust deficit partly reflects legitimate concerns about institutional failures and hypocrisies, but it also leaves people without reliable guides for moral formation and ethical decision-making. Carreira da Silva and Vieira (2021) document how declining institutional trust correlates with increasing moral relativism, where individuals lack confidence in any shared ethical standards beyond subjective preference. This relativism creates particular challenges for addressing collective problems requiring coordinated action based on shared values. Without trusted institutions to facilitate moral discourse and forge ethical consensus, societies fragment into competing value systems that increasingly view each other with suspicion or hostility. The result is moral tribalism where ethical judgments depend primarily on group loyalty rather than reasoned deliberation about universal principles or common good.

Environmental degradation represents another crucial dimension of the moral crisis, reflecting humanity's failure to live according to principles of sustainability, intergenerational responsibility, and respect for non-human nature. The climate crisis and biodiversity collapse demonstrate the catastrophic consequences of economic systems and consumption patterns that treat nature as mere resource for exploitation rather than sacred trust to be stewarded for future generations. Whyte (2020) argues that indigenous communities have long warned about the unsustainability of dominant development models, but their wisdom has been systematically dismissed by those who prioritize short-term economic growth over long-term ecological health. Technology has enabled unprecedented resource extraction and environmental destruction while simultaneously creating psychological distance from nature that undermines moral concern for ecological degradation. People increasingly experience the natural world primarily through screens rather than direct sensory engagement, weakening emotional connections that could motivate environmental stewardship.

The moral challenges posed by emerging technologies themselves constitute another critical dimension of the contemporary crisis. Artificial intelligence, biotechnology, neurotechnology, and other advancing fields raise profound ethical questions about human nature, dignity, and flourishing for which existing moral frameworks provide inadequate guidance. For instance, the development of increasingly sophisticated AI systems raises questions about consciousness, moral status, and the appropriate boundaries of human technological manipulation of intelligence and perhaps eventually sentience. Coeckelbergh (2020) emphasizes that these technologies challenge fundamental assumptions about human uniqueness and exceptionalism while creating possibilities for either human enhancement or dehumanization depending on how they are developed and deployed. The rapid pace of technological change outstrips society's capacity for moral deliberation, creating situations where technologies are widely adopted before their ethical implications

are adequately considered. This pattern reflects and reinforces a broader cultural tendency toward technological determinism—the assumption that technological development is inevitable and irreversible rather than subject to moral evaluation and democratic governance.

### **Integration of Local Wisdom with Technological Progress for Ethical Renewal**

Revitalizing local wisdom in the technological age requires first recognizing that wisdom traditions contain sophisticated understandings of human nature (Muhsyanur, 2020) muhsyanur types, virtue development, and ethical living that remain profoundly relevant despite surface differences from modern contexts. These traditions typically emphasize virtues such as humility, gratitude, patience, compassion, and reverence that directly counter the vices technology often cultivates. For example, contemplative practices found in many wisdom traditions train attention and mindfulness in ways that resist technology's fragmentation of consciousness and cultivation of distraction. Sonam et al. (2020) demonstrate that mindfulness meditation, a practice with ancient roots in Buddhist and Hindu traditions, effectively counters negative psychological effects of excessive technology use including anxiety, depression, and attention deficits. The key is adapting traditional practices to contemporary circumstances—such as using meditation apps or online communities—while preserving their essential character and purpose. This requires discernment about which aspects of traditions are culturally specific and which contain universal insights applicable across contexts.

Educational systems represent crucial venues for wisdom revitalization (Muhsyanur and Mustapha, 2023), requiring curricula that integrate traditional knowledge with modern subjects rather than treating them as opposed or irrelevant to each other. Indigenous education initiatives worldwide demonstrate how traditional ecological knowledge can enrich scientific understanding while grounding it in ethical frameworks that emphasize sustainability and reciprocity. For instance, teaching mathematics through traditional beadwork patterns or architecture through indigenous building techniques shows how wisdom traditions contain sophisticated knowledge expressed through different idioms than modern academic disciplines. Battiste (2021) advocates for decolonizing education by centering indigenous knowledge systems and pedagogies rather than merely adding them as supplements to dominant Western curricula. This approach requires profound shifts in how knowledge is understood, validated, and transmitted, recognizing that wisdom involves not just information but formation of character and capacity for sound judgment. Technology can support this educational transformation through digital archives of traditional knowledge, virtual connections with community elders, and interactive platforms for collaborative learning, provided these tools serve rather than substitute for direct mentorship relationships central to wisdom transmission.

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Intergenerational knowledge transfer represents another essential strategy for wisdom revitalization, requiring deliberate creation of opportunities for elders to share traditional knowledge with younger generations. Modern societies often segregate age groups and devalue elder wisdom, assuming that rapid change makes traditional knowledge obsolete. However, wisdom concerns not just specific information but underlying principles and ways of thinking that transcend particular circumstances. Creating structured programs that bring elders together with youth for storytelling, traditional skills learning, and moral formation helps preserve wisdom traditions while adapting them to contemporary contexts. Cajete (2020) describes indigenous education models where learning occurs through participation in community life and relationship with elders rather than classroom instruction alone. Technology can facilitate intergenerational connection through video documentation of elders' stories, online platforms for traditional language learning, and social media groups focused on cultural preservation. However, these technological supports must complement rather than replace face-to-face intergenerational relationships where wisdom is most effectively transmitted through modeling, dialogue, and shared experience.

The challenge of authenticity looms large in any effort to revitalize traditional wisdom, requiring vigilance against romanticization, appropriation, or commodification that distorts wisdom traditions while claiming to preserve them. Authentic wisdom revitalization must be led by tradition-bearers themselves and grounded in living communities (Muhsyanur, 2023) rather than imposed by external actors or marketed as lifestyle products. This requires supporting cultural sovereignty and self-determination for indigenous and traditional communities, including their rights to control how their knowledge is used and shared. Mazzocchi (2020) emphasizes that indigenous knowledge is not just information that can be extracted and applied elsewhere but is inseparable from the relationships, practices, and worldviews that give it meaning. Technological platforms for sharing traditional wisdom must respect this holistic character, providing context, acknowledging sources, and maintaining connections to living traditions rather than reducing wisdom to decontextualized nuggets of information. When done respectfully and authentically, technology can extend the reach of wisdom traditions to global audiences while strengthening their vitality in home communities through documentation, networking, and resource sharing that supports cultural continuity.

## **CONCLUSION**

The global moral crisis facing contemporary society demands responses that neither naively reject technological progress nor uncritically embrace it at the expense of timeless wisdom. Local wisdom traditions offer invaluable resources for ethical renewal precisely because they integrate moral principles with practical knowledge, community life, and spiritual meaning in ways that resist modern fragmentation and instrumentalism. Revitalizing these traditions in the technological age requires creative synthesis that makes

ancient insights accessible through modern platforms while preserving their essential character and authenticity. This integration is not a retreat from modernity but an enrichment of it—a recognition that human flourishing requires both technological capability and moral wisdom, both innovative progress and connection to time-tested truths about human nature and the good life. Success depends on educational transformation that centers wisdom alongside knowledge, intergenerational connections that honor elders as teachers, and authentic engagement with living traditions rather than romanticized nostalgia. Communities that successfully integrate local wisdom with technological engagement will be better equipped to navigate coming challenges while maintaining ethical clarity, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. The path forward requires humility to learn from the past, courage to question technological determinism, and commitment to building futures that honor both human dignity and cultural diversity.

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