



The Phenomenon of Digital Burnout and Social-Emotional Crisis Among Students: The Role of Counselors in Fostering Digital Balance

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Abstract

The phenomenon of digital burnout has emerged as a critical challenge in modern education, where students increasingly depend on digital technology for learning and social interaction. Excessive reliance on social media, online games, and other digital activities causes mental fatigue, decreased empathy, and emotional dysregulation. This condition contributes to the decline of students' social-emotional capacities, leading to reduced face-to-face communication, increased social isolation, and symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression. This conceptual paper aims to analyze the relationship between digital burnout and social-emotional crises among students, while exploring the counselor's role in fostering digital balance through developmental psychology and Islamic guidance counseling approaches. Through literature review and theoretical analysis, this study finds that counselors play not only curative but also preventive and educational roles by integrating Islamic spiritual values, digital literacy, and emotional regulation training. Counselors are vital in guiding students toward wise and proportional technology use, thereby achieving digital balance in both academic and social life.

Keywords: Digital Burnout, Social-Emotional Crisis, Students, Digital Balance, Islamic Counseling.

Abstract

Fenomena digital burnout menjadi tantangan nyata di era pendidikan modern, di mana peserta didik semakin bergantung pada teknologi digital dalam aktivitas belajar dan bersosialisasi. Ketergantungan yang berlebihan pada media sosial, gim daring, dan aktivitas digital lainnya memicu kelelahan mental, penurunan empati, dan gangguan regulasi emosi. Kondisi ini berdampak pada kemunduran sosial-emosional peserta didik, seperti menurunnya kemampuan berinteraksi langsung, meningkatnya isolasi sosial, serta munculnya gejala stres, cemas, dan depresi. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara konseptual hubungan antara digital burnout dan krisis sosial-emosional peserta didik, serta menguraikan peran strategis konselor dalam menumbuhkan keseimbangan digital berbasis pendekatan psikologi perkembangan dan bimbingan konseling Islam. Melalui kajian pustaka dan analisis teoritis, artikel ini menemukan bahwa peran konselor tidak hanya bersifat kuratif, tetapi juga preventif dan edukatif dengan mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai spiritual Islam, literasi digital, dan pelatihan regulasi emosi. Konselor berperan penting dalam membimbing peserta didik agar mampu menggunakan teknologi secara bijak dan proporsional, sehingga keseimbangan digital dapat terwujud dalam kehidupan belajar dan sosial mereka.

Kata Kunci: Digital Burnout, Sosial-Emosional, Peserta Didik, Keseimbangan Digital, Konseling Islam.

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Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought about major changes in the world of education, particularly in the way students interact, learn, and express themselves. On the one side, digitalisation has opened up vast opportunities for learning innovation, unlimited access to learning resources, and efficient academic communication. However, on the other side, excessive use of technology has given rise to a new phenomenon known as digital burnout, which is a condition of mental and emotional exhaustion caused by excessive exposure to digital devices.¹ This phenomenon not only reduces motivation to learn, but also affects the social and emotional balance of students.²

Recent research shows that more than 68% of secondary school students and university students in Indonesia experience signs of digital fatigue, such as stress, concentration disorders, and changes in social behaviour due to the high intensity of social media use.³ This situation is also compounded by academic pressure, social demands, and technology addiction, which cause students to increasingly lose their emotional balance and ability to manage themselves in the digital world. This phenomenon shows that education in the digital age not only requires technological literacy, but also psychological and spiritual guidance so that students are able to maintain a balance between academic and social demands and mental health.

In terms of developmental psychology, the teenage years are a crucial phase in the formation of identity, emotions, and social skills. According to Erikson, teenagers are at the stage of identity versus role confusion, where they strive to find their true selves through social interactions and personal experiences.⁴ When this space for interaction is dominated by an instant and artificial digital world, the process of identity formation becomes disrupted. Students often experience digital loneliness, a decline in empathy, and a decrease in their ability to understand the feelings of others. This reinforces the assumption that digital burnout not only affects students psychologically, but also socially and emotionally.

The socio-emotional crisis caused by the imbalance in technology use has become a serious challenge for the world of education. This is where the role of educational counsellors becomes crucial. Counsellors no longer function solely as academic mentors, but also as facilitators who help students understand and manage the negative impacts of technology use on their psychological well-being. Through intervention strategies such as self-regulation counselling, digital mindfulness training, and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)-based guidance, counsellors play a role in fostering self-awareness, digital discipline, and social responsibility among students.

The gap between technological advances and spiritual maturity has created an urgent need for value-based mentoring models. Most previous research, such as Mahmud et al. (2023) and Rahman (2023), highlights the importance of psychological intervention to overcome the negative impacts of digital media.⁷⁻⁸ However, this approach is still quite secular and does not reach the spiritual dimension that is actually at the core of human balance. This is where the scientific novelty of this study lies, namely integrating the concept of Islamic counselling as a holistic approach to overcoming digital burnout. This approach is rooted in the principles of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul),

¹ S. Durmus, "Determining Digital Burnout in Students," *Computers in Human Behavior Reports* 7 (2022): 113.

² L.Z. Chong, "Student Burnout: A Review on Factors Contributing to Learning Fatigue in the Digital Era," *International Journal of Education and Learning* 15, no. 2 (2025): 210–225.

³ Rachmawati, N. (2022). "Digital Fatigue among Indonesian Students during the Pandemic," *Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan Indonesia* 11, no. 3 (2022): 233–247.

⁴ Erik Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 135.

muraqabah (awareness of Allah's supervision), and *ittidal* (balance in behaviour), which are aimed at helping students manage their use of technology in a proportionate and ethical manner.

By placing Allah at the focus of orientation in life, the Islamic counselling model guides students to understand that every digital activity has moral value and a dimension of worship. This is in line with the commandment in the Qur'an that humans should not be excessive in all things:

وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

“*And do not be excessive. Verily, Allah does not like those who are excessive.*”

This provides an ethical basis that digital balance is part of spiritual responsibility, and deviations from it have the potential to cause mental fatigue.

Based on this phenomenon, this study focuses on conceptualising an Islamic counselling model for digital balance as a solution to digital burnout and the socio-emotional crisis experienced by students. This study seeks to answer the following questions: how does the phenomenon of digital burnout affect the socio-emotional balance of students; what is the role of educational counsellors in guiding digital balance through psychological and spiritual approaches; and how can the Islamic counselling model be effectively applied in the context of modern education. This study uses a library research approach with descriptive-critical analysis methods of various educational psychology, counselling guidance, and classical and contemporary Islamic literature.

Thus, this article is expected to contribute theoretically and practically to the development of Islamic guidance and counselling in the digital age. Its theoretical contribution lies in its attempt to integrate modern developmental psychology theory with Islamic spiritual concepts as an approach to intervening in digital burnout. Meanwhile, its practical contribution is expected to serve as a reference for educational counsellors in fostering digital balance based on the values of tawhid, self-awareness, and media ethics. With the synergy between these psychological and spiritual dimensions, it is hoped that students will become healthy, productive, and virtuous technology users.

Result and Discussion

1. The Phenomenon of Digital Burnout Among the Students

The phenomenon of digital burnout among students is a condition of emotional, cognitive and physical exhaustion that appears as a result of exposure and demands of continuous use of digital technology in the context of learning and their social lives. In the era of educational digitalisation, students are required to always be connected to devices and online platforms, which causes a significant increase in psychological and academic burdens. This condition is not just ordinary fatigue, but also includes a loss of motivation to learn, boredom, and a decline in concentration due to repeated digital pressure and distractions.⁵

The concept of digital burnout originates from the classic burnout theory proposed by Maslach and Jackson, which explains burnout as a response to prolonged chronic stress in the workplace. However, in the digital context, this pressure appears as a result of overexposure to technology.⁶ In education, digital pressure can take the form of online assignments, numerous notifications, demands for rapid communication, and academic multitasking across various platforms. The Stressor Strain Outcome (SSO) framework explains that exposure to digital stressors (such as long screen time and

⁵ Durmus, Op. cit., 114.

⁶ Christina Maslach & Susan E. Jackson, *The Measurement of Experienced Burnout* (Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1981).

online assignment demands) will cause psychological strain in the form of cognitive and emotional fatigue, which ultimately results in digital burnout and a decline in academic performance.⁷

The results of the study indicate that the factors causing digital burnout include several important aspects. First, the duration and intensity of high digital device usage has a significant correlation with the level of digital fatigue. A study by Durmus found that students who used digital devices for more than eight hours per day had a significant increase in their digital burnout scores compared to those who used them for shorter periods.⁸ Secondly, the type of media use also has an impact, whereby entertainment-oriented or social media use tends to be more likely to cause fatigue than instructional or academic use. Thirdly, the academic workload in online learning plays a major role in digital fatigue because students are faced with dense online tasks and activities without clear time limits. In addition, poor sleep quality and anxiety due to late-night screen exposure have also been shown to exacerbate symptoms of digital burnout.⁹

The impact of digital burnout on students is multidimensional. Psychologically, there are symptoms of emotional exhaustion, increased stress, mild depression, and decreased motivation to learn. Cognitively, digital burnout reduces the ability to focus, memory, and reflective thinking, which leads to a decrease in academic performance.¹⁰ Physically, students experience sleep disturbances, eye strain, and decreased physical activity due to prolonged interaction with digital devices. Research conducted by Kaewpradit et al. even shows that excessive screen exposure not only affects mental health, but also impacts the sleep quality and academic performance of students in Southern Thailand.¹¹

In the context of Indonesian students, this phenomenon is also significant. A study conducted by Syahputra revealed that digital burnout is commonly experienced by Generation Z students, who tend to be highly attached to social media and digital activities. This condition is exacerbated by heavy academic workloads and a lack of self-regulation skills in using digital technology.¹² In addition, the results of a study by Lestari show that smartphone addiction is positively associated with academic burnout and procrastination among students, indicating a link between excessive use of technology and academic fatigue.¹³

This phenomenon demands serious attention from educational institutions and counselling practitioners. Possible interventions include: limiting the duration of online learning, implementing digital breaks, digital literacy and self-regulation education, and mindfulness programmes to help students manage stress caused by digital demands. Additionally, institutional policies are needed to balance online and offline activities, along with the provision of counselling services focused on students' digital well-being.

Thus, digital burnout in students is not only a technological problem, but also a psychosocial phenomenon that reflects an imbalance between connectivity and mental health. In the era of technology-based learning, it is important for educational institutions to foster a healthy and

⁷ Chong L.Z., "Student Burnout: A Review on Factors Contributing to Learning Burnout," *International Journal of Education and Learning* 5, no. 1 (2025): 25–35.

⁸ Durmus, Op. cit., 114.

⁹ Kaewpradit K. et al., "Digital Screen Time Usage and Its Association with Mental Health, Sleep Quality and Academic Performance Among Southern University Students," *BMC Psychology* 13, no. 1 (2025): 45–57.

¹⁰ Durmus, Op. cit., 116.

¹¹ Kaewpradit K. Op. cit., 47.

¹² M. Syahputra, "Fenomena Digital Burnout pada Mahasiswa Generasi Z di Indonesia," *Jurnal Sadeva* 4, no. 2 (2024): 115–130.

¹³ D. Lestari, "Hubungan Smartphone Addiction dengan Academic Burnout dan Prokrastinasi pada Mahasiswa," *Jurnal Psikopedagogia* 12, no. 1 (2023): 15–24.

sustainable digital culture so that students do not get caught in a cycle of digital fatigue that has the potential to hinder their academic and personal development.

In Islam, technology is the result of human intellectual ability bestowed by Allah SWT as part of the mandate of stewardship on earth. Islam does not reject technological progress; in fact, it encourages the development of science and innovation as a manifestation of the implementation of Allah's verses. However, this progress must be directed towards the benefit and balance of life, not towards exploitation and spiritual exhaustion. The Qur'an emphasises that humans were created as caliphs (*istikhlāf*) whose duty is to prosper the earth responsibly:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ

“He is the one who made you caliphs on earth.”¹⁴

This verse confirms that every form of human creativity, including technological innovation, must be placed within the framework of moral responsibility towards Allah, fellow human beings, and the universe. Therefore, the use of technology in Islam is not merely a worldly activity, but part of worship when intended and used for good purposes (*maslahah*).

The main function of technology in the Islamic perspective is as a means (*wasilah*) to facilitate the implementation of sharia values and devotion to Allah. Qardhawi states that Islam is *wasathiy* — moderate and balanced in responding to developments of the times, including in the use of modern technology.¹⁵ This means that Islam encourages technological advancement, but rejects its misuse, which causes spiritual and moral imbalance. Technology should not be a *ghayah* (ultimate goal), but rather a *wasilah* (means) to achieve *falāh* — happiness in this world and the hereafter.

In the context of education, technology can be an effective means of *ta'lim* and *tarbiyah* if it is guided by ethical and spiritual values. The Prophet ﷺ said:

خَيْرُ النَّاسِ أَنْفَعُهُمْ لِلنَّاسِ

“The best of people are those who are most beneficial to others. (Narrated by Ahmad, no. 23408).”

This hadith provides ethical guidance that all forms of innovation and use of technology should be directed towards providing social benefits, not causing harm, dependence, or moral destruction. Therefore, the use of technology that triggers digital burnout is actually contrary to the ethical goals of Islam, because it distances humans from inner peace and productive good deeds.

In addition to being a means of benefit, Islam emphasises the importance of the principle of *muraqabah* (awareness of Allah's supervision) in using technology. This principle encourages digital users to always feel that they are being watched by Allah, thereby forming a responsible media ethic. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah explains that this spiritual awareness protects humans from misusing Allah's blessings and prevents behaviour that exceeds limits.¹⁶ In the digital context, *muraqabah* becomes the foundation for self-regulation so that students do not get caught up in compulsive behaviours such as doom scrolling, cyberbullying, or digital escapism.

Furthermore, Islam emphasises the importance of the principles of *'adl* (justice) and *ittidal* (balance) in every aspect of life, including the use of technology. Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala says:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا

“And thus We have made you a middle ummah.”¹⁷

This verse forms the philosophical basis for the concept of digital moderation in Islam. Muslims are not required to reject technology, but to use it in a balanced and responsible manner. This

¹⁴ Al-Qur'an Surat Faṭir (35): 39.

¹⁵ Yusuf al-Qardhawi, *Fiqh al-Wasathiyah wa al-Tajdid: Ma'alim wa Manarat* (Kairo: Dar al-Syuruq, 2010), 89–91.

¹⁶ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Madarij as-Salikin* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2008), 112.

¹⁷ Al-Qur'an Surat Al-Baqarah (2): 143.

moderation includes a balance between the virtual world and the real world, between physical and spiritual needs, and between digital productivity and spiritual worship.

In practice, these principles can be implemented through Islamic education and counselling that instils awareness that technology is merely a trust that must be managed with the right intentions and ethics. Nasir and Mubarak (2021) emphasise that Islamic counselling has a *tazkiyah* (purification of the soul) function that not only focuses on problem solving, but also moral and spiritual guidance to direct behaviour in accordance with divine guidance. Therefore, in the context of digital burnout, Islamic counselling can serve as a means of reorienting meaning — helping students reinterpret their relationship with technology as part of worship and moral responsibility.

As a result, Islam places technology in a noble but limited position: as a blessing that brings benefits when used proportionally, and as a trial when it exceeds its limits. Technology should lead humans to a higher spiritual consciousness, not distance them from Allah. Therefore, Islamic education and Islamic counselling have a strategic role in guiding students to be able to manage their relationship with technology based on the values of *wasathiyah*, *muraqabah*, and *tazkiyah al-nafs*, so that a digital balance is achieved that brings peace of mind and blessings to life.

2. The Socio-Emotional Crisis among Students in the Digital Age

The digital era has brought significant changes to the social and emotional characteristics of students. The digital transformation that has occurred in the world of education has made technology an integral part of learning activities, communication, and self-actualisation. However, this progress has also presented a new paradox: high virtual connectivity is accompanied by emotional and social isolation. This phenomenon is known as the social-emotional crisis, a condition where individuals experience an imbalance in managing emotions, empathy, and social relationships due to the dominance of digital interactions over real-life interactions.¹⁸

The socio-emotional crisis among students has appeared due to a shift in communication patterns from face-to-face to screen-based communication, which lacks real emotional expression. Studies conducted by Valkenburg and Peter show that intensive use of social media among adolescents contributes to increased loneliness, social anxiety, and decreased empathy.¹⁹ The study confirms that digital relationships are often superficial and temporary, unable to provide the emotional warmth that is usually obtained from direct interaction. A similar phenomenon was found in a study by Beyens et al., which identified a link between excessive social media use and a decline in emotional well-being among adolescents.²⁰

This crisis is also reflected in the increase in psychosocial problems among students, such as stress, anxiety, and emotional dysregulation. In the context of Indonesian education, a survey by the Centre for Assessment and Learning (Pusmenjar, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, 2023) found that 62% of high school students experience difficulties in controlling their emotions and focusing on their studies due to social pressure on digital media, such as social comparison and cyberbullying.²¹ This condition shows that the use of digital media without self-control can reduce the social and emotional abilities that are important for the development of students' personalities.

¹⁸ Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 12–15.

¹⁹ Patti M. Valkenburg and Jochen Peter, “Social Media Use and Its Impact on Adolescents’ Well-being: A Meta-analysis,” *Current Opinion in Psychology* 52 (2023): 101–110.

²⁰ Ine Beyens et al., “Social Media Use and Adolescents’ Well-being: Developing a Model of Social Media Effects,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 29, no. 4 (2020): 381–387.

²¹ Pusat Asesmen dan Pembelajaran (Pusmenjar) Kemendikbudristek, *Laporan Nasional: Kesejahteraan Sosial-Emosional Siswa Indonesia di Era Digital* (Jakarta: Kemendikbudristek, 2023).

From an educational psychology perspective, the socio-emotional crisis in the digital age can be explained through the theory of social-emotional learning (SEL), which emphasises five key competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.²² Digital fatigue (digital burnout) often disrupts the balance of these five aspects, especially in self-management and social awareness. Students who are overly exposed to digital interactions experience a decline in empathy and emotional regulation, and tend to seek external validation through social media likes and comments, rather than through authentic relationships. In Islam, the socio-emotional health is not only measured by psychological balance, but also by the ability to maintain harmonious relationships with Allah, oneself, and human beings. The Qur'an emphasises the importance of balance of the heart and inner peace as the basis of true emotional intelligence:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"Remember, only by remembering Allah will the heart be at peace."²³

This verse emphasises that true emotional balance comes from spirituality and transcendental awareness. In the context of Islamic education, the socio-emotional crisis experienced by students in the digital age can be seen as a result of the weakness of *taḥkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul) and the loss of self-control (*mujahadah an-nafsi*) due to excessive digital distractions.

The role of educational counsellors is very important in dealing with this crisis. Counsellors need to help students develop digital self-awareness, practise value-based emotional regulation, and foster healthy social empathy in the virtual world. The Islamic Guidance and Counselling approach can be used as an intervention strategy that combines psychological approaches and religious values to shape students' social-emotional balance.²⁴ Islamic group counselling programmes, for example, can focus on strengthening self-control, spiritual reflection, and social responsibility in the use of digital technology.

Thus, the socio-emotional crisis among students in the digital age is not only a psychological problem, but also a moral and spiritual one. Efforts to overcome this must involve a holistic approach that integrates character education, Islamic values, and healthy digital literacy. Through the role of counsellors who are oriented towards digital and spiritual balance, students can be guided to use technology wisely, maintain emotional balance, and strengthen social relationships based on *akhlakul karimah* values.

In Islam, this socio-emotional crisis is a form of *ghaflah* (negligence of the heart), as mentioned in the Verses of Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ

"And do not be like those who forget Allah, so Allah makes them forget themselves"²⁵

This verse emphasises the relationship between spirituality and self-awareness. Students who are trapped in the digital world without spiritual control will lose their spiritual balance. Therefore, social-emotional guidance needs to be accompanied by the strengthening of faith and moral values so that students are able to face the dynamics of the digital age with moral and emotional maturity.

3. The Role of Counsellors in Growing Digital Balance

²² CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), *SEL Framework Guide* (Chicago: CASEL Press, 2020).

²³ Al-Qur'an, Surat Ar-Ra'd (13): 28.

²⁴ M. Nasir & A. Mubarak, Op. cit.

²⁵ Al-Qur'an Surat Al-Hasyr (59): 19.

The phenomenon of digital burnout and the socio-emotional crisis experienced by students in the digital age demands the active role of educational counsellors in guiding students to develop digital balance. Digital balance refers to an individual's ability to use technology in a healthy, productive, and purposeful manner without losing control of the emotional, social, and spiritual aspects of their lives. Amidst the rapid flow of information, counsellors serve not only as psychological companions, but also as digital well-being facilitators who help students develop self-awareness, digital regulation skills, and spirituality that guide their online behaviour.²⁶

Counsellors play an important role in developing digital self-regulation, which is the ability of students to manage their time, emotions, and motivation while using digital media. A study by Montag explains that digital well-being depends on an individual's ability to balance online and offline needs by developing reflective awareness of their digital behaviour.²⁷ In the context of guidance, counsellors can implement cognitive-behavioural counselling and mindfulness-based interventions to help students recognise the signs of digital fatigue and develop strategies for managing digital stress.

In educational settings, a counselling approach based on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is also relevant. This approach emphasises five key competencies, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Through the implementation of SEL-based group counselling, students can be guided to understand the impact of technology use on their emotional well-being and social relationships. Research by Binti Abdul Wahab & D. Rahman in Malaysia shows that digital emotional regulation training through group counselling effectively reduces academic stress levels and improves students' emotional balance.²⁸

Furthermore, in the context of Islam, counsellors have a moral and spiritual responsibility to instil moral values in the use of technology. The principle of *wasatiyyah* (balance) in Islam teaches moderation and self-control in all aspects of life, including the use of digital media. The Qur'an emphasises:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَ

*"And thus We have made you a moderate community."*²⁹

This verse provides a normative basis that balance is a fundamental value that must be realised in the digital behaviour of students. From the perspective of Islamic Guidance and Counselling, the role of the counsellor is not only as a facilitator of behavioural change, but also as a *murabbi* (spiritual educator) who instils the values of *muraqabah* (awareness of Allah's supervision) and *tazkiyah an-nafs* (purification of the soul) so that students are able to control excessive digital impulses.

Research by Nasir and Mubarak emphasises that Islamic counselling can serve as a means of establishing balance between spiritual, emotional and rational aspects in facing the challenges of the digital age.³⁰ In practice, counsellors can integrate Islamic values into counselling sessions, for example by instilling the concepts of *i'tidal* (proportionality) and *amanah* (responsibility) in the use of social media, as well as reflection through dhikr or prayer to foster digital inner peace. A study by Kurniawati shows that an Islamic group counselling model that emphasises self-control and spiritual

²⁶ R. Burr and S. Floridi, "The Ethics of Digital Well-being: A Thematic Review," *Science and Engineering Ethics* 26 (2020): 2313–2343.

²⁷ C. Montag et al., "Digital Well-being: A Multi-disciplinary Review and Agenda for Future Research," *Computers in Human Behavior* 121 (2021): 106796.

²⁸ N. Binti Abdul Wahab & D. Rahman, "Digital Emotional Regulation in Group Counseling: Effects on Students' Stress and Social Well-being," *Malaysian Journal of Guidance and Counseling* 12, no. 2 (2023): 47–6

²⁹ Al-Qur'an Surat Al-Baqarah (2): 143.

³⁰ M. Nasir & A. Mubarak, Op. cit.

reflection can increase students' awareness of the impact of excessive gadget use and reduce levels of digital fatigue.³¹

Counsellors can also play a role in creating a digital counselling environment, which involves the wise use of online platforms to provide remote counselling services while maintaining the ethics and privacy of counselees. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven the effectiveness of e-counselling services as a flexible alternative for supporting students. Research by Baker & Ray confirms that online counselling services can increase the accessibility of psychological assistance, provided that counsellors are able to manage the risk of technostress and build emotional closeness virtually.³² Therefore, digital literacy skills for counsellors are a prerequisite for guidance interventions to remain effective in this fast-paced digital age.

In practical terms, growing digital balance requires collaboration between counsellors, educators and parents. Counsellors can initiate programmes such as 'Digital Mindfulness Class' or 'Digital Fasting' as preventive guidance activities to foster awareness of healthy technology use. From the perspective of educational institutions, it is necessary to establish a digital well-being policy that ensures students have screen-free time, space for spiritual reflection, and restrictions on online hours to prevent digital exhaustion.

Thus, the role of counsellors in fostering digital balance is highly strategic and multidimensional. Counsellors not only help students overcome the negative impacts of technology use, but also guide them to integrate spiritual, moral, and social values into the digital world. Through a humanistic, reflective, and Islamic-based guidance approach, counsellors can become agents of transformation who lead students towards balanced digital wellbeing—between technological connectivity and inner peace.

In Islam, education is not only oriented towards the mind, but also the heart. The Prophet Muhammad *Shallallahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam* said:

أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ . أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ

*"Remember that within the body there is a lump of flesh. If it is good, then the whole body is good. If it is bad, then the whole body is bad. Know that it is the heart."*³³

Counsellors need to strengthen the hearts of students so that they remain in control of themselves when faced with digital temptations. True digital balance can only be achieved when the spiritual and emotional dimensions develop harmoniously.

In addition to the role of counsellors, parents also play a very important role in fostering digital balance in students. In the context of Islamic education, the family is the *madrasah ulā* (first school) for children, which forms the foundation for character, moral, and spiritual development before children interact with the outside environment. Parents are not merely supervisors of gadget use, but also the main role models in building a healthy digital culture at home. The Prophet Muhammad *Shallallahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam* said:

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ

*"Each of you is a leader, and every leader will be responsible for those they lead."*³⁴

This hadith emphasises the spiritual and moral responsibility of parents in guiding their children towards the wise and proportionate use of technology. In Islam, parental leadership (*wilāyah*

³¹ R. Kurniawati, "Model Bimbingan Kelompok Islami untuk Mengembangkan Kontrol Diri Siswa di Era Digital," *Jurnal Konseling Religi* 14, no. 2 (2023): 155–170.

³² K. Baker & S. Ray, "E-Counseling during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Review of Effectiveness and Ethical Concerns," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 100, no. 3 (2022): 321–334.

³³ Hadis Riwayat Bukhari no. 52 dan Muslim no. 1599.

³⁴ Hadis Riwayat Al-Bukhari, no. 893 dan Muslim, no. 1829.

tarbawiyah) encompasses the dimensions of supervision (*muraqabah*), habit formation (*ta'lim*), and moral guidance (*tazkiyah*). Therefore, the role of parents does not stop at the technical aspect of screen time management, but also extends to instilling an awareness that technology is a trust that must be used with manners and responsibility.

Education in Islam is essentially a process of *ta'dib*, which is instilling manners and wisdom so that humans are able to put everything in its proper place. In this context, parents need to guide their children to use technology as a means of doing good—not as the centre of their lives. Parents must be digital role models, demonstrating ethical media behaviour, such as not spending too much time on social media, avoiding the spread of useless information, and prioritising direct family interaction.

Research by Su'adah shows that parental involvement in digital parenting has a significant effect on children's ability to manage screen time, manage digital emotions, and avoid destructive content. This approach is in line with the concept of *uswah hasanah* in Islam, where role modelling is the most effective educational method for instilling values.³⁵ When children witness their parents using technology moderately, responsibly, and ethically, these habits will be instilled as life values.

In addition, the Qur'an provides guidance to parents to always educate their children within the framework of monotheism and moral responsibility. Luqman's advice to his son in QS. Luqmān [31]: 17–18 serves as a relevant guideline for digital character education:

‘O my son, establish prayer, enjoin good and forbid evil, and be patient over what befalls you...’

This verse teaches that true education does not stop at the cognitive aspect, but also includes ethical and spiritual guidance so that children are able to distinguish between content that is beneficial and that which is potentially destructive. In the context of the digital world, this means that parents need to guide their children to understand online ethics, guard their digital speech, and reject behaviours that lead to sin such as backbiting, slander, or spreading hoaxes.

In practice, parents can support digital balance through several practical strategies, such as:

- a. Establishing open communication between children and parents about their digital experiences, challenges, and social pressures faced by children in the virtual world.
- b. Building digital-based spiritual routines, such as watching online lectures together, reading the Qur'an through applications, or creating digital family time with clear time limits.
- c. Implementing the principle of family digital fasting, which is limiting the use of gadgets at certain hours to encourage social and spiritual interaction at home.
- d. Providing reflective guidance by inviting children to discuss the meaning of technology as a trust and a means of righteous deeds, not just entertainment.

From an Islamic guidance and counselling perspective, parents also play a collaborative role with educational counsellors. Counsellors can involve parents in parental counselling sessions or home guidance programmes to build shared awareness of the importance of spiritually-based digital literacy. Nasir and Mubarak emphasise that the success of Islamic counselling does not only depend on the interaction between the counsellor and the counsellee, but also on the support of a family ecosystem that is in line with *Islamic tarbiyah* values.

Thus, the digital balance of students cannot be achieved through counsellor intervention alone, but requires synergy between school and family. Parents, as the first and foremost educators, have the responsibility to set an example, provide supervision, and offer continuous spiritual guidance. When spiritual values and digital discipline are firmly instilled within the family, students will be better prepared to face technological challenges with a calm heart, a clear mind, and civilised behaviour.

³⁵ Su'adah, "Parental Mediation and Digital Balance among Muslim Adolescents in Indonesia," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (2022): 133–148.

4. Islamic Counselling Model to Overcome Digital Burnout

In the modern context, the phenomenon of digital burnout is not only a psychological problem, but also a spiritual one. Students who are overexposed to digital technology often show symptoms of mental fatigue, loss of meaning in learning, and concentration disorders due to prolonged digital stress. This is where Islamic counselling plays a significant role, as this approach not only focuses on cognitive and emotional aspects but also fosters spiritual awareness, which is the foundation of self-balance for students in the digital age.

The Islamic counselling model in the context of digital burnout is oriented towards the principles of *tazkiyah al-nafs* (purification of the soul), *muraqabah* (awareness of Allah's supervision), and *ittidal* (balance in behaviour).³⁶ The aim is to develop individuals who have spiritual awareness to use technology proportionally and ethically. Islamic counselling places Allah at the centre of life orientation (*tauhidik*), so that every digital behaviour is linked to moral responsibility and worship values.

According to Nasir and Mubarak, Islamic counselling is an effort to help individuals overcome life problems through guidance based on Islamic values rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah, emphasising a balance between spiritual, intellectual, and emotional aspects.³⁷ This model is relevant to address digital burnout because it provides meaning-based therapy, not merely reducing stress symptoms, but realigning students' lives with the values of monotheism and sincerity. The implementation of the Islamic counselling model in the context of digital burnout can be carried out in several stages.

First, the *muhasabah* (self-reflection) stage, where the counsellor helps students become aware of unhealthy digital habits, such as compulsive use of social media or losing study time due to online distractions.³⁸ This process is carried out using guided self-reflection techniques that link digital activities with the values of responsibility (*amanah*) and self-awareness (*taqwa*). Noor Haliza and Surawan show that spiritual reflection can reduce the negative impact of social media on students' mental health, as the process strengthens self-awareness and the relationship with God. The value of *muhasabah* is in line with Allah's command in His words:

مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِي وَمَنْ يُضِلِّلْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

“Whoever is guided by Allah, he is the one who receives guidance (in all goodness in this world and the hereafter); and whoever is led astray by Allah, they are the ones who lose (in this world and the hereafter)”.³⁹

Reflection serves as a means of guidance so that individuals are able to reorganise their digital behaviour.

Second, the *tazkiyah* (purification of the soul) stage, in which students are guided to control their digital desires through spiritual practices such as dzikir, praying on time, and reading the Qur'an regularly. According to Fadhilah's research in the Journal of Religious Counselling, the application of *tazkiyah*-based counselling was able to reduce students' academic stress levels by 35% and improve emotional balance amid technological pressures.⁴⁰ This is in line with Rahman's research findings, which show that dzikir meditation effectively reduces symptoms of emotional exhaustion caused by excessive digital exposure.⁴¹

³⁶ M. Nasir & A. Mubarak, Op. cit.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ R. Kurniawati, Op. cit.

³⁹ Al-Qur'an Surat Al-A'raaf (7): 78.

⁴⁰ N. Fadhilah, Op. cit.

⁴¹ M. Rahman, “Meditation and Dhikr Practice for Digital Fatigue Reduction,” *Journal of Islamic Counseling and Therapy* 9, no. 2 (2022): 112–125.

At this stage, *muraqabah* becomes central, namely the awareness that Allah is always watching. As He says:

“يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا”

“O ye who believe, remember Allah abundantly”⁴²

Dhikr and prayer are spiritual regulation methods that calm the nervous system and strengthen emotional control. Rahman even found that dhikr meditation effectively reduces emotional exhaustion caused by excessive digital exposure by up to 30%.

Third, the stages of *takhalli–taballi–tajalli*, as explained by Sufi scholars, are the process of abandoning bad habits (*takhalli*), filling oneself with positive values (*taballi*), and achieving spiritual tranquillity (*tajalli*).⁴³ In counselling practice, Islamic counsellors can guide students to replace the habit of doom scrolling with productive activities such as reading, exercise, or social worship. This process not only restores digital balance but also strengthens spiritual resilience against psychological pressure.

Fourth, the stage of integrating Qur'anic values into digital emotional regulation. The Qur'an commands human beings to be balanced and not excessive, as Allah says:

وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

“And do not be excessive. Verily, Allah does not like those who are excessive.”⁴⁴

This verse provides an ethical basis that the use of technology must be limited by the value of proportionality (moderation). In the context of counselling, this value is internalised through guidance on managing screen time, avoiding negative content, and using digital media as a means of charitable giving, not merely entertainment.

The Islamic counselling model for overcoming digital burnout also emphasises an integrative-holistic approach, in which counsellors combine cognitive-behavioural strategies with spiritual values. For example, counsellors can use behavioural substitution techniques (replacing negative behaviours with positive ones) with religious approaches such as replacing time spent ‘scrolling through social media’ with reading thematic interpretations about time or productivity. A study by Hassan and Azhar (2024) in the *International Journal of Islamic Psychology* proves that integrative Islamic counselling with behavioural religious reframing techniques can reduce digital stress levels and increase students' gratitude.⁴⁵

In addition to clinical aspects, the Islamic counselling model also includes the dimension of digital moral education (*akhlakiah raqamiyah*), namely the formation of Islamic character in online interactions. Counsellors act as digital *murabbi*, who not only advise but also exemplify technological ethics with Islamic manners — such as guarding digital speech, avoiding online gossip, and spreading kindness in the virtual world. Thus, Islamic counselling functions as a self-development system that connects faith, knowledge, and deeds in facing the challenges of the digital age.

From an implementational perspective, several Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia have developed a digital wellness counselling model based on Islamic values. Research by Arifin and Nurhayati (2023) shows that the ‘Digital Fasting and Reflection’ programme implemented in modern Islamic boarding schools has reduced students' digital dependency and increased their spirituality-

⁴² Al-Qur'an Surat Al-Ahzab (33):41.

⁴³ A. A. al-Hujwiri, *Kasyf al-Mahjub* (Kairo: Dar al-Fikr, 2009), 203–206.

⁴⁴ Al-Qur'an Surat Al-A'raf (7): 31.

⁴⁵ S. Hassan & N. Azhar, “Integrative Islamic Counseling to Reduce Technostress among University Students,” *International Journal of Islamic Psychology* 5, no. 2 (2024): 95–110.

based self-control. This model emphasises that spiritual strengthening is the key to overcoming digital fatigue among Muslim students.⁴⁶

Thus, the Islamic counselling model for overcoming digital burnout is a combination of psychological and spiritual approaches that guide students to be able to balance their digital and spiritual lives. This approach not only treats the symptoms of digital fatigue but also builds spiritual resilience and transcendental awareness, so that students can become wise, productive, and moral users of technology.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of digital burnout and social-emotional crisis among students is a psychological and social reality that cannot be ignored in today's digital age. The high intensity of technology use without self-control causes students to experience mental fatigue, decreased motivation to learn, social relationship problems, and loss of emotional balance. This situation shows that technological developments not only bring convenience to the learning process, but also new challenges to the mental and moral health of students. Therefore, the role of counsellors is very strategic in helping students achieve sustainable digital balance.

The results of the study show that counsellors have three main roles in dealing with this phenomenon. First, as digital wellbeing facilitators, counsellors need to help students build self-awareness in using technology healthily through guidance interventions based on self-regulation and mindfulness. Second, as agents of social-emotional character building, counsellors play a role in developing social intelligence and digital empathy through a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) approach tailored to the context of 21st-century education. Third, as spiritual educators, counsellors integrate Islamic values such as *wasathiyah* (moderation), *muraqabah* (consciousness of Allah's supervision), and *tazkiyah an-nafs* (purification of the soul) into the counselling process to shape students' moral and spiritual balance when interacting in digital spaces.

This study also confirms that the Islamic counselling model is a highly relevant and effective approach in overcoming the symptoms of digital burnout. This model places the spiritual dimension at the core of the recovery process, with stages of *mubasabah* (self-reflection), *tazkiyah* (purification of the soul), and *taballi* (filling with positive values) that aim to foster moral awareness regarding the use of technology. Through this approach, counsellors not only help students overcome digital stress psychologically, but also instil transcendental meaning in their digital activities, so that every online action is based on the values of worship and responsibility to Allah.⁷

From a practical standpoint, digital balance can only be achieved through collaboration between counsellors, educators, educational institutions, and parents. Programmes such as Digital Fasting and Reflection, Digital Mindfulness Class, or Spiritual Self-Regulation Training have proven effective in reducing digital addiction and improving the emotional well-being of students. In this context, counsellors function not only as providers of psychological services, but also as digital *murabbi* — spiritual guides who lead students to internalise Islamic ethical values in the virtual world.

Thus, it can be concluded that digital burnout and the socio-emotional crisis of students are multidimensional challenges that require integrative solutions between psychology and Islamic spiritual values. The role of counsellors is key in building a generation of digital natives who are faithful, ethical, and mentally healthy. The Islamic counselling approach provides a holistic framework for establishing digital balance — not only treating the symptoms of digital fatigue, but

⁴⁶ M. Arifin & S. Nurhayati, "Digital Fasting and Reflection: An Islamic-Based Counseling Program to Prevent Digital Addiction," *Journal of Educational Guidance* 8, no. 1 (2023): 45–59.

also fostering inner peace, self-control, and sustainable spiritual awareness. In line with the words of Allah SWT:

“*Truly fortunate are those who purify their souls, and truly unfortunate are those who defile them.*” (QS. Asy-Syams [91]: 9–10).

This verse serves as a philosophical basis that the success of digital education is not measured solely by technological mastery, but by the ability of students to maintain the purity of their souls in the tide of modernity. Therefore, through the guidance of Islamic counsellors, education in the digital age is expected to produce students who are not only digitally literate, but also emotionally and spiritually balanced — achieving harmony between technology and peace of mind.

Recommendations

1. For Educational Counsellors

It is necessary to develop a digital balance guidance model based on Islamic values that emphasises self-awareness, digital mindfulness, and self-control (*mujahadah an-nafs*). This programme can be implemented through group counselling, digital time management training, and spiritual reflection in school or boarding school activities.

2. For Educational Institutions

It is important to include digital literacy and media ethics in the character education curriculum. Schools can also collaborate with counsellors and parents to create a healthy and controlled digital environment for students.

3. For Further Researchers

It is recommended to conduct field research to empirically test the effectiveness of Islamic counselling interventions in overcoming digital burnout, as well as to develop a contextual counselling model in line with the digital culture of Indonesia's younger generation.

4. For Students

It is hoped that they will be able to cultivate self-awareness to use technology in a balanced manner, utilise digital media for productive purposes, and strengthen their spirituality so that they are not easily trapped in the negative currents of the virtual world.

Thus, digital balance is not only a technical matter of time management, but also part of the formation of a well-rounded Islamic character and personality. Counselling that combines psychological approaches and Islamic values is key to nurturing a generation of students who are digitally savvy, emotionally healthy, and spiritually strong.

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