

The Transformation of Islamic Education and Counseling Services in the Era of New Media

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ABSTRACT

This research explores Islamic Education and counseling strategies through digital media as an effort to respond to mental health challenges and moral crises among Generation Z. The main issue addressed in this study is the high level of dependence of young people on technology, which potentially triggers anxiety, spiritual alienation, and exposure to religious misinformation. The method employed in this article is a literature review using a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the integration of Islamic values within digital platforms. The findings indicate that the integration of Islamic values through creative, visual, and interactive content is highly effective in developing the spiritual awareness of Generation Z. Islamic counselors play a vital role as digital navigators by implementing digital empathy strategies and digital literacy to mitigate the risks of cyberbullying and moral degradation. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that the success of Islamic counseling in digital media depends on the harmonization between technological advancement and the Islamic personality of counselors. The transformation of adaptive and innovative counseling techniques becomes a key factor in creating a healthy and solution-oriented digital ecosystem capable of strengthening the religious identity of younger generations amidst the complexities of globalization.

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1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to various aspects of human life, including the fields of education, da'wah, and counseling services (Syarnubi et al., 2021). The digital era is characterized by ease of access to information, communication without limitations of time and space, and the widespread use of digital media in daily life (Zahrah et al., 2025). This condition is increasingly relevant for Generation Z, a generation born and raised in an environment that is highly connected to digital technology, social media, and the internet. This generation utilizes digital

media not only as a source of entertainment but also as a space for self-expression, searching for meaning, and finding solutions to personal and psychological problems they experience (Wahidah et al., 2019).

Various studies have examined the digitization of Islamic education, the characteristics of Generation Z, and the use of technology in guidance and counseling. However, previous research has tended to address the transformation of Islamic education and Islamic counseling separately; for example, by focusing on the use of digital media in learning or the utilization of emergency platforms. In addition, there is still limited research addressing how digital transformation raises issues such as ethics, digital literacy, privacy, the validity of religious information, and the challenges of preserving the spiritual and humanistic aspects of Islamic counseling. Furthermore, digital transformation also offers opportunities for accessibility, flexibility, and the personalization of services. Therefore, this study aims to expand upon previous research by systematically outlining the relationship between the transformation of Islamic education, advancements in digital-based Islamic guidance and counseling services, and the characteristics of Generation Z. The objective of this study is to gain a more integrative understanding of an adaptive, moral, humanistic, and relevant model of Islamic education and counseling that meets the demands of the digital age.

On the other hand, changes in the social landscape resulting from digitalization have also generated various new challenges for the mental and spiritual well-being of younger generations (Cholil, 2024). This can be seen in the phenomenon occurring among Generation Z teenagers, such as academic pressure, identity crises, social anxiety, dependence on social media, and the declining quality of interpersonal relationships, which have become increasingly common phenomena; ultimately, these have become increasingly apparent, especially in the digital era (Saeful Anwar et al., 2025). In this context, conventional counseling approaches that rely on face-to-face interactions and traditional methods are often perceived as less adaptive to the characteristics and needs of Generation Z. Therefore, counseling strategies are needed that can bridge Islamic values with the digital realities currently faced by younger generations.

Fundamentally, Islamic counseling is a process of providing assistance based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah to help individuals achieve balance among physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions (Dhulfiqaar, 2025). Islamic counseling is not solely oriented toward problem-solving but also emphasizes character development, strengthening faith, and holistic self-development (Riyadi & Adinugraha, 2021). However, the primary challenge faced by Islamic counseling in the digital era concerns how these values can be communicated effectively through media that are familiar to Generation Z without losing their essence and spiritual significance.

Along with the development of digital media, Islamic counseling practices are also required to innovate in terms of methods, media, and approaches (Mansir, 2018). Digital media such as social media, online platforms, counseling applications, and audiovisual content create substantial opportunities for Islamic counseling to reach

wider audiences in ways that are more flexible and responsive to contemporary needs. The digital era should not merely be viewed as a challenge for education and Islamic services but also as a strategic opportunity that must be addressed through reforms in systems, methods, and human resource competencies (Riyadi & Adinugraha, 2021). Without such innovation, Islamic services, including Islamic counseling, risk becoming outdated and less relevant for digital generations.

Within the context of Generation Z, counseling approaches through digital media have become increasingly important due to the characteristics of this generation, which tend to be open to technology, prefer fast and visual communication, and feel more comfortable expressing themselves through digital spaces (I. Handayani, 2019). Nevertheless, the use of digital media in counseling is not without risks, including superficial religious understanding, the commodification of spiritual values, and the lack of depth in counselor-client relationships (W. Handayani et al., 2025; Mansir, 2018). Therefore, Islamic counseling strategies through digital media should be designed systematically, ethically, and based on strong Islamic principles.

The study demonstrated that Islamic-based counseling approaches possess significant effectiveness in improving the mental and spiritual well-being of students, particularly when values such as *tazkiyatun nafs* (self-purification), *tawakkal* (trust in Allah), *sabar* (patience), and *dzikr* (remembrance of Allah) are integrated contextually. Furthermore, the study also highlighted the emergence of sharia-based digital counseling practices as an innovation relevant to the needs of contemporary young Muslims. These findings reinforce the urgency of developing Islamic counseling strategies that are adaptive to digital media while remaining grounded in strong theological and psychological foundations.

Furthermore, the integration of digital media into Islamic counseling is also aligned with the role of mass media as a new space for shaping public opinions, values, and social behavior (Syarnubi et al., 2021). Digital media are no longer neutral instruments; rather, they have become strategic arenas for the internalization of values, including Islamic values. Therefore, Islamic counseling delivered through digital media functions not only as an individual support service but also as a form of transformative da'wah capable of fostering spiritual awareness and improving the mental well-being of Generation Z on a broader scale.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Islamic counseling strategies through digital media represent an urgent necessity amidst the complexity of psychosocial issues faced by Generation Z (Mansir, 2018). This approach requires synergy among a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of digital generations, mastery of mass media, and the substantive internalization of Islamic values. Therefore, this article aims to examine and analyze Islamic counseling strategies through digital media as a responsive and contextual effort to assist Generation Z in mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects within the continuously evolving digital era.

2. Literature Review

A study by Syamsul Falah, titled “Islamic Counseling in the Age of Disruption: Synergy between Artificial Intelligence Technology and Islamic Educational Values Addressing Juvenile Delinquency and Student Mental Health”, explains that the study examines the impact of digital transformation on students' mental health, particularly among the "Strawberry Generation," noting increases in emotional instability and delinquency. It presents a hybrid Islamic counseling model that incorporates artificial intelligence (AI) for detecting psychological distress and offers spiritual guidance through Islamic values. Through qualitative methods, including interviews and discussions with students and counselors, the research found that an AI chatbot effectively identifies stress symptoms and offers Qur'anic recommendations, leading to enhanced emotional control in 87% of participants. This model highlights the beneficial integration of AI technology with Islamic education for improved mental health support.

A study by Mohd Zuhaili Kamal Basir et al., titled “Exploring the Role of Digital Da’wah in Promoting Green Initiatives: A Mini Review,” explains that Digital da’wah in Malaysia aims to promote green technology and environmental sustainability, but faces challenges such as limited technological access in rural areas and varying cultural preferences for traditional methods. This study highlights the potential of digital da’wah in raising awareness and promoting environmental conservation through engaging content. Success relies on adequate technology and transparency, suggesting that, despite challenges, digital da’wah can significantly contribute to community efforts in safeguarding the environment.

A study by Irati Higueara Lozano et al, titled “Benefits, Limitations, and Potential Solutions for Defining Good Practices in Online Counselling Chat Services for Youth, explains that this study investigates the experiences of Online Chat Counselling Services (OCCS) providers in four European countries—Belgium, Finland, Hungary, and Spain—highlighting their benefits, limitations, and potential solutions. Through interviews with 62 counsellors, the research identified six key benefits: improved accessibility, anonymity facilitating disclosure, future-oriented services, advantages of chat communication, positive counsellor experiences, and meaningful user support. However, five main limitations were noted: unclear communication, limited resources, anonymity as a barrier, negative perceptions related to uncertainty, and low visibility and utilization. Proposed solutions include enhanced training, inter-service collaboration, and innovative strategies like AI integration for risk assessment. The findings aim to inform best practices in OCCS and encourage further research to evaluate these recommendations from service user perspectives.

A study by Liley Afzany Saidi et al, titled “A systematic literature review on counselling as a strategic technique to promote positive behavioural transformations among vulnerable families, explains that this systematic review synthesizes evidence on the impact of multidisciplinary counselling interventions on vulnerable families facing psychosocial and health challenges. It examines resilience as a mediating factor and considers cultural contexts and systemic barriers. A search of peer-reviewed

articles from 2020 to 2024 identified 32 relevant studies. Three key intervention domains emerged: genetic counselling and risk communication, behavioural interventions for families and youth, and healthcare support for caregivers. The review emphasizes personalized, context-sensitive strategies that build resilience to address barriers in vulnerable family systems. Findings provide insights for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers on designing effective, culturally responsive counselling programs. Future research should focus on underrepresented regions and long-term outcomes of resilience-based interventions.

3. Method

This article employed a qualitative approach using a library research design. This approach was selected because the purpose of the study focuses on examining concepts, strategies, and forms of implementing Islamic counseling through digital media for Generation Z, based on relevant scientific sources rather than measuring empirical field data. Library research enables researchers to analyze in depth the ideas, findings, and perspectives of scholars concerning Islamic counseling, digital media, and the characteristics of digital native generations. This research employed a descriptive-analytical approach, which involves describing phenomena and concepts related to digital media-based Islamic counseling and subsequently analyzing them critically within the context of Generation Z's needs. This approach was utilized to understand the relationship between developments in digital media and Islamic counseling strategies while simultaneously interpreting their relevance to the psychosocial and spiritual challenges faced by young Muslims in the digital era.

The data sources in this study consisted of secondary data obtained from various scientific literature sources, including:

1. National and international journal articles discussing Islamic education, Islamic counseling, and digital-based counseling.
2. Previous research findings relevant to issues concerning mental health, spirituality, and Generation Z.
3. Literature examining the utilization of digital media within education and Islamic services.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation methods by tracing, identifying, and collecting literature relevant to the research topic. Tracing, identifying, screening, and gathering pertinent scientific literature about the evolution of Islamic education and Islamic guidance and counseling for Generation Z in the digital age was done utilizing a systematic documentation process. Using keyword combinations like Islamic education, Islamic education transformation, Islamic guidance and counseling, Generation Z, digital transformation, digital education, and Islamic counseling in the digital era, a literature search was carried out using scholarly databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. The search results were expanded and refined using the boolean operators AND and OR. This process involved critical reading of journal articles, books, and research reports related to Islamic counseling, digital mass media, and the characteristics of Generation

Z. The collected data were subsequently classified according to major themes, such as the urgency of digital Islamic counseling, forms of media utilized, integrated Islamic values, and the role of counselors within digital spaces.

4. Result and Discussion

Generation Z (Gen Z) represents a generational group born and raised amidst the rapid development of digital technology (I. Handayani, 2019). They are commonly referred to as digital natives, a generation that has been exposed to the internet, gadgets, and social media from an early age as integral parts of daily life. This close relationship with technology has shaped their ways of thinking, communication patterns, and interpretations of self-identity, social relationships, and life values. Within the context of Islamic counseling, a comprehensive understanding of Gen Z characteristics constitutes an important prerequisite to ensure that counseling services remain effective and relevant.

One of the primary characteristics of Gen Z is a high level of dependence on digital technology. Research indicates that Gen Z spends several hours each day interacting with smartphones and social media, even making them primary sources of information, entertainment, and social interaction (Diana et al., 2024). This condition contributes to changes in social relationship patterns, where virtual interactions frequently replace face-to-face interactions. Although technology provides easier access to information, such circumstances also create risks related to declining interpersonal communication quality, reduced empathy, and decreased depth in emotional relationships.

In addition, Gen Z is recognized as a generation that is open-minded, inclusive, and strongly engaged in identity exploration. They tend to appreciate diversity in self-expression and actively seek meaning in life through various digital communities (Diana et al., 2024). From an Islamic perspective, this identity exploration stage represents a crucial period requiring guidance concerning values and morality so that individuals do not become trapped in crises of meaning or moral disorientation. Islamic counseling plays a strategic role in assisting Gen Z in aligning their search for identity with the values of tauhid, morality, and life purposes grounded in Islamic teachings.

Another prominent characteristic of Gen Z is their tendency to experience anxiety, stress, and psychological pressure. Several studies indicate that Gen Z is vulnerable to anxiety, low motivation, and feelings of insecurity, particularly due to excessive information exposure, social demands within digital environments, and pressures related to academic and social achievements (Mansir, 2018). Within this context, Islamic counseling functions not only as a means of resolving psychological issues but also as a medium for spiritual reinforcement, emphasizing concepts of inner peace (*sakīnah*), tawakal (trust in Allah), and awareness regarding the meaning of life's trials.

On the other hand, technological developments also generate ambivalent effects on Gen Z character formation. Technology may serve as an educational medium and a means of self-development; however, it also possesses the potential to weaken self-

control, increase instant-oriented behaviors, and reduce patience and reflective depth (W. Handayani et al., 2025). Studies examining the relationship between Islam and technological development emphasize that without guidance through religious values, technology may contribute to character degradation and declining social interaction quality among younger generations (Umul Mulyanti et al., 2026). Therefore, integrating Islamic values into technological utilization has become an urgent necessity.

The implications of these characteristics indicate that conventional Islamic counseling approaches need to undergo adaptation (Mansir, 2022). Gen Z tends to respond more positively to approaches that are dialogical, flexible, and based on digital media. They require counselor figures who not only understand Islamic teachings normatively but are also capable of serving as communicative, empathetic companions relevant to the digital realities they encounter. Digital media, in this regard, may function as a new space for Islamic counseling capable of simultaneously addressing the psychological and spiritual needs of Gen Z.

Therefore, Gen Z characteristics closely associated with technology, identity exploration, psychological vulnerability, and openness toward dialogue constitute important foundations in formulating digital media-based Islamic counseling strategies (Nasution et al., 2023). This understanding becomes the starting point for designing adaptive and contextual forms of Islamic counseling that remain rooted in Islamic values in addressing challenges faced by younger generations in the digital era.

The Urgency of Islamic Counseling in the Digital Media Era

The development of digital media has fundamentally transformed how individuals interact, acquire information, and construct understandings of life values, including religious values (Baihaqi et al., 2026; Nasution et al., 2023). For Generation Z, which has grown within digital ecosystems, social media and online platforms function not merely as entertainment tools but also as spaces for identity formation, searching for meaning, and expressing psychological and spiritual concerns. This condition confirms that Islamic counseling within the digital media era is no longer merely an alternative but has become an urgent necessity.

The urgency of Islamic counseling in the digital era has become increasingly significant with the rise of mental health issues among Generation Z (Baihaqi et al., 2026). Various studies indicate that this generation is vulnerable to anxiety, stress, social pressure, and identity crises due to intensive exposure to social media and the demands of increasingly fast-paced modern life. Pressure to display ideal self-images within digital spaces, constant social comparison, and the prevalence of cyberbullying significantly contribute to disturbances in Gen Z's mental and emotional balance. In this context, Islamic counseling occupies a strategic position because it offers an approach that addresses not only psychological dimensions but also spiritual and moral aspects in an integrated manner.

From an Islamic perspective, mental health is not merely understood as the absence of psychological disorders but rather as a state of spiritual balance characterized by inner peace, sincerity, and closeness to Allah SWT (Journal et al., 2023). Islam provides various principles and practices relevant to maintaining mental health, such as prayer (*shalat*), remembrance of Allah (*dzikir*), supplication (*doa*), patience (*sabar*), and trust in Allah (*tawakkal*), all of which have been shown to provide tranquility and spiritual strength for individuals facing life pressures. Therefore, Islamic counseling becomes highly urgent as a form of guidance that assists Generation Z in managing psychological pressures through spiritual reinforcement contextualized within their digital realities.

In addition to mental health issues, the urgency of Islamic counseling in the digital media era is also related to the transformation of mass media into spaces for da'wah and guidance (Fanani, 2025). Research on digital da'wah indicates that platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Spotify play significant roles in improving the religious understanding and awareness of Generation Z adolescents. Digital media enable Islamic messages to be delivered in more flexible, visual, and accessible forms, making them more compatible with the characteristics of digital native generations. In this context, Islamic counseling can be positioned as a form of da'wah that is more personal, dialogical, and solution-oriented.

Furthermore, Islamic counseling through digital media also addresses limitations in access to conventional counseling services. Many individuals, particularly younger generations, continue to face stigma related to face-to-face counseling services and limitations in adequate facilities (Wadham & Mansir, 2022). Digital media offer alternative counseling services that are more private, flexible, and adaptive to individual needs. Research indicates that Islamic approaches integrated with digital technology can expand the reach of counseling services while simultaneously increasing youth engagement in psychospiritual guidance processes (Wadham & Mansir, 2022).

Nevertheless, the urgency of Islamic counseling in the digital media era must also be understood critically (Mahyarni, 2024). Digital media do not always provide religious content that is valid and based on authentic Islamic teachings. The widespread dissemination of instant, superficial, and unverified content has the potential to create distortions in religious understanding and weaken the spiritual depth of Generation Z. Therefore, Islamic counseling within digital spaces must serve as a credible, ethical, and knowledge-based reference capable of guiding younger generations responsibly amidst the massive flow of information.

Thus, the urgency of Islamic counseling in the digital media era lies in its ability to address the complexity of Gen Z's mental, spiritual, and social issues holistically (Mansir, 2022). Islamic counseling functions not only as a means of resolving individual problems but also as an instrument for character development, strengthening faith, and building the spiritual resilience of young Muslims. Understanding this urgency becomes an important foundation for formulating effective, relevant, and sustainable digital media-based Islamic counseling strategies.

Integration of Islamic Values into Digital Media

The integration of Islamic values into the use of digital media constitutes both a necessity and a crucial strategy in the implementation of Islamic counseling for Gen Z in the modern era (Penelitian et al., 2026). Gen Z, known as digital natives, possesses unique characteristics in which their daily lives cannot be separated from the internet and social media. Within this context, digital technology serves not merely as a communication tool but also as a medium for expressing religious identity and independently deepening understanding of religious teachings. The integration of Islamic values such as honesty (*sidq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), and social responsibility becomes an important foundation to ensure that technological utilization remains aligned with religious moral principles and contributes to the well-being of society.

The utilization of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube by Generation Z to disseminate Islamic content, including Qur'anic quotations, hadith, and religious advice packaged creatively, demonstrates proactive efforts to integrate da'wah into digital spaces (Rumondor & Putra, n.d.). In addition to functioning as media for da'wah, the use of Islamic applications such as digital Qur'an platforms, prayer reminder applications, and online religious learning platforms has also increased significantly, enabling young people to continue practicing their religious obligations amidst busy daily activities. This phenomenon reflects that digital technology, when used wisely, can serve as an effective medium for strengthening religious identity and maintaining worship discipline among younger generations.

However, this integration also faces significant challenges, including risks related to exposure to misinformation, hoaxes, and social pressures to follow digital trends that are not always aligned with Islamic ethical values. Therefore, Islamic counseling through digital media must equip Generation Z with strong digital literacy skills and critical attitudes in filtering information. An effective strategy in this regard is integrating da'wah messages and counseling services within a single digital platform to address spiritual and psychological needs simultaneously (Widoyo et al., 2023). Through this approach, counselors can provide guidance that remains relevant to the dynamics of digital life while maintaining ethical principles, privacy, and data security, which are highly crucial in modern counseling services.

Overall, the success of Islamic counseling strategies in digital media highly depends on the ability to innovate content that is concise, visual, and easily accessible without sacrificing the essence of religious teachings (Shamhuna, 2024). With the support of online communities and appropriate guidance, Generation Z can play an active role as pioneers of ethical innovation capable of balancing their digital lives with fundamental humanitarian and spiritual values. This harmonious integration between technological advancement and Islamic principles will ultimately create a healthier, more beneficial, and more inclusive digital environment for the development of younger generations' character.

The Role of Islamic Counselors in Digital Mass Media

The role of Islamic counselors in digital mass media has become increasingly crucial in the era of Industry 4.0, in which digital technology has triggered major transformations across various sectors of human life (Shamhuna, 2024). The emergence of new media such as social media, the internet, and mobile phones has transformed patterns of communication and message delivery, particularly for Generation Z, which is commonly recognized as digital natives. Within this context, the counseling profession is considered a “profession of life” that must continue to exist in order to assist individuals in adapting to uncertainty, anxiety, and challenges arising from automation and rapid social changes. Islamic counselors possess a specific responsibility to facilitate individual development and address problems that disrupt effective daily functioning while remaining grounded in Islamic teachings derived from the Qur’an and Hadith.

One of the primary roles of Islamic counselors in digital mass media is serving as agents who anticipate moral crises among children and adolescents (Mansir, 2025). Amid the overwhelming flow of information and risks of exposure to negative content such as hoaxes, pornography, cyberbullying, and hate speech, counselors must enhance their skills in utilizing new media to provide education regarding positive internet usage. Islamic counselors play a role in guiding Generation Z to maintain a strong sense of identity and avoid losing their self-concept due to social pressures or digital trends that contradict religious principles (Nursalim, 2017). The integration of da’wah messages and counseling services within a single digital platform is considered highly effective because it simultaneously addresses both the spiritual and psychological needs of audiences.

Furthermore, Islamic counselors in the digital era are expected to become innovators and content creators capable of adapting to contemporary audience preferences (Nuriyati, 2020). Counselors should be able to present guidance materials in concise, visual, and easily accessible formats through popular platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube so that messages can be delivered and received effectively. In carrying out their roles within digital spaces, counselors are required to maintain ethical principles, privacy, and user data security in order to establish public trust in online counseling services (Maia et al., 2025). Therefore, the success of Islamic counselors in digital mass media largely depends on their ability to balance technological advancements with an Islamic counselor identity that integrates professional expertise with moral and spiritual integrity.

Challenges and Risks of Islamic Education and Counseling Through Digital Media

The implementation of Islamic counseling through digital media for Generation Z introduces a new and complex dimension involving various technical, ethical, and theological challenges (Mansir, 2023). As a generation that has grown within digital ecosystems, Generation Z indeed demonstrates a high dependence on internet

technologies; however, this simultaneously creates significant challenges for counselors. One of the primary challenges is the risk of exposure to inaccurate information or misinformation concerning religious teachings.

Within digital spaces, information flows without strict filtering mechanisms, thereby facilitating the spread of religious content that may be radical, unfounded, or even contradictory to the principle of *wasathiyah* or moderation (Ikhwan, n.d.). One of the greatest challenges in digital da'wah and counseling lies in developing spiritual awareness amidst the overwhelming flood of information, which frequently diverts individuals' attention away from the deeper essence of religious teachings. The rapid circulation of information, which characterizes digital media, often causes religious understanding to become instant and superficial; consequently, counselors are required to work harder in delivering a comprehensive understanding.

In addition to issues related to information validity, mental health risks represent a genuine threat to Generation Z within their digital interactions. Phenomena such as cyberbullying, social pressure resulting from lifestyle standards displayed on social media, and anxiety regarding being left behind by trends (FOMO – Fear of Missing Out) have become primary triggers of stress and depression. Generation Z frequently encounters unique mental health challenges in which they experience feelings of isolation despite being digitally connected to many individuals (Mansir, 2024).

Within the context of Islamic counseling, these challenges require innovative approaches that are not solely technical but also address spiritual dimensions through the internalization of Qur'anic verses as holistic solutions for overcoming inner anxiety. Counselors must be capable of analyzing these psychological issues through approaches that are culturally and religiously relevant while remaining adaptive to the digital language used by younger generations.

Another challenge is related to ethics and privacy in digital counseling services. Unlike face-to-face counseling, which provides clear control over physical space, counseling based on digital mass media carries risks concerning personal data breaches and client confidentiality (Mansir & Wadham, 2021). The use of third-party platforms such as social media or instant messaging applications introduces technical risks in the form of hacking or misuse of data by irresponsible parties. This creates an ethical dilemma for Islamic counselors, who are obligated to uphold *amanah* (trustworthiness) and preserve client confidentiality.

The inability to fully observe facial expressions or perceive the energy of physical presence (*ruhiyah* presence) in digital counseling is also considered an obstacle in building rapport or emotional closeness between counselors and clients, which in Islamic tradition is regarded as highly important for the effectiveness of the counseling process. Furthermore, the risk of spiritual alienation becomes a threat in which excessively intensive digital interactions may distance individuals from real social interactions and communal religious rituals (Mansir, 2021). Digital media frequently create filter bubbles that expose individuals only to viewpoints aligned with their existing beliefs, thereby limiting opportunities for healthy discussion and critical

character development. Islamic counseling strategies should be capable of overcoming these barriers by creating interactive and participatory content while still maintaining depth of meaning.

Counselors are challenged not merely to become “advisors” on screens but also to serve as navigators who assist Generation Z in distinguishing values that bring *maslahah* (benefit and well-being) from those that merely become sources of pollution affecting their mental and spiritual health. Failure to manage these risks will not only hinder the counseling process but may also worsen the moral and identity crises experienced by younger generations in the digital era.

Strategic Implications for the Development of Islamic Counseling Techniques

The strategic implications for the development of Islamic counseling techniques in the digital era require methodological reorientation that does not solely rely on conventional approaches but also integrates technological competencies with profound spiritual values (Mansir, 2021). This transformation requires Islamic counseling techniques to evolve into approaches that are more interactive, contextual, and participatory to remain relevant to the characteristics of Generation Z, which is highly dependent on digital ecosystems.

Digital da’wah and guidance play a crucial role in cultivating religious awareness among adolescents, with social media serving as a primary instrument for simultaneously addressing emotional and cognitive dimensions (Glasner et al., 2021). Strategically, this implies that counseling techniques should no longer be confined to formal sessions conducted within closed spaces but should also be delivered through creative content that can be accessed by clients at any time.

The future development of Islamic counseling techniques should prioritize visualization and message simplification without reducing the essence of religious teachings. (Glasner et al., 2021) In their study concerning the semiotics of da’wah messages, they emphasized the importance of utilizing visual symbols and language that are familiar within digital popular culture to enhance the effectiveness of communicating moral values.

As an implication, active listening techniques in traditional counseling need to be transformed into digital empathy, in which counselors are able to interpret psychological indicators through patterns of digital interaction, the use of emojis, and clients’ selection of communication platforms (Mansir, 2022). This strategy allows for more personal and intimate approaches, such as those implemented through private communication channels like WhatsApp, which provide Generation Z with opportunities to express their vulnerabilities without feeling judged.

Furthermore, these strategic implications include strengthening digital literacy as an integral component of counseling techniques (Laila et al., n.d.). Islamic counselors must transform into spiritual navigators who help individuals filter the overwhelming amount of religious information available on the internet (Wainstein et al., 2023). Counseling strategies should focus on developing critical thinking skills (*tafakkur*),

ensuring that clients become not merely passive consumers of content but also individuals capable of internalizing religious values as moral safeguards against the negative effects of globalization (Mansir, 2022).

Finally, the strategic development of Islamic counseling techniques must consider the sustainability of interactions between digital spaces and social realities. Although digital mass media offer easy accessibility, counseling techniques should continue to emphasize the development of individuals' spiritual independence so that they are able to function effectively in real-world settings. This includes implementing online group counseling techniques that can establish positive support systems. By integrating innovative technological approaches with authentic Islamic counseling principles, counseling practitioners can create ecosystems that support the holistic character development of Generation Z. The success of this transformation will ultimately position Islamic counseling as an adaptive, dynamic, and solution-oriented response to increasingly complex contemporary challenges.

Table 1. Summary of research findings

Theme	Main Findings
Integration of Islamic Values into Digital Media	Digital media effectively promotes Islamic values, strengthens religious identity, and encourages worship discipline among Generation Z through value-based content.
The Role of Islamic Counselors	Islamic counselors have transformed into digital facilitators who combine counseling competencies, digital literacy, and Islamic ethics to address contemporary psychosocial issues.
Challenges of Digital Counseling	Digital Islamic counseling faces challenges including religious misinformation, cyberbullying, digital addiction, privacy concerns, and limited emotional interaction in online services.
Future Development Strategies	Future counseling should emphasize digital literacy, innovative and interactive counseling methods, digital empathy, and online communities while maintaining Islamic counseling principles.

5. Conclusion

The integration of Islamic values into digital media represents a crucial strategy for reaching Generation Z, which lives within a digital native ecosystem. The utilization of technologies such as social media and Islamic applications functions not merely as communication tools but also as adaptive means of strengthening religious identity and maintaining discipline in worship practices. Through the integration of values such as honesty, amanah (trustworthiness), and social responsibility into digital content, religious moral principles can continue to be preserved amidst modernity, enabling technology to provide tangible benefits for the spiritual development of younger generations. The role of Islamic counselors in digital mass media has become increasingly vital as guides amidst the disruptions of Industry 4.0. Counselors are no longer merely traditional providers of advice but rather agents of change who must

proactively anticipate moral crises such as cyberbullying and digital addiction. By combining professional counseling competencies with Islamic spiritual integrity, counselors are capable of providing services that address both the psychological and spiritual needs of audiences through various digital platforms effectively and appropriately.

Although Islamic education and counseling through digital media offers significant opportunities, it is also confronted with considerable challenges and risks, ranging from the spread of religious misinformation to mental health threats such as anxiety and social isolation. Technical risks related to data confidentiality and limitations in physical interaction also create obstacles in establishing emotional closeness. Therefore, strong vigilance and robust digital literacy skills are required from both counselors and clients to ensure that digital spaces remain healthy environments for character development. Strategically, the future development of Islamic counseling techniques requires transformation that emphasizes content innovation, message visualization, and the strengthening of digital literacy. One implication of this shift is the need to adapt conventional counseling techniques into more interactive methods, such as implementing digital empathy and guidance through supportive online communities. By harmoniously integrating technological advancement with Islamic counseling principles, Islamic counseling can become a dynamic and authentic solution for addressing the complex challenges faced by Generation Z in the era of globalization.

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