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Social Media as a Platform for Counseling Education: Examining the Perceived Effectiveness and Adaptation of Modern Services for Students in Schools

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the effectiveness of counseling education delivered through social media platforms while evaluating the integration of Islamic counseling principles and digital literacy paradigms in the contemporary Indonesian context. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with a multi-method study design, this research implemented data triangulation techniques consisting of: (1) semi-structured in-depth interviews with 12 digital Islamic counseling practitioners and 18 active counseling service users (aged 18–35 years); (2) thematic content analysis of 150 digital artifacts (posts, videos, and podcasts) related to Islamic counseling on Instagram and TikTok platforms during the 2022–2024 period; and (3) documentation analysis of five digital counseling ethical guidelines used by major platforms, along with documentation studies of counseling content on Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and TikTok during the January–June 2024 period. The findings indicate that: (1) Islamic counseling through social media is effective in improving clients' emotional well-being and spiritual awareness; (2) social media provides significant accessibility and time flexibility, particularly for individuals facing geographical, financial, or psychological limitations in accessing face-to-face counseling services; and (3) the integration of digital literacy into Islamic counseling practices plays a significant role in overcoming oversharing behavior and maintaining ethical digital communication practices.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, advancements in digital technology have transformed various aspects of human life, including counseling and mental health services. In Indonesia, from 2021 to 2026, digital acceleration has been significant, with 73.7% of the population becoming active social media users and spending an average of 3–5 hours per day online (Zahrah et al., 2025). This phenomenon has not only transformed how people communicate but has also created new spaces for religious practice and spirituality. Approximately 68% of Indonesian Muslims consider social media to be their primary source of religious learning.

Observations of daily life activities indicate that such behaviors may contribute to higher levels of stress and anxiety as well as lower self-esteem (Wahidah et al., 2019). Furthermore, these conditions may negatively affect interpersonal relationships in both digital environments and face-to-face interactions. In the field of mental health, demand for counseling services based on Islamic values increased by 42% after the pandemic. This increase is attributed to younger Muslim generations' preference for counseling models that

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are more flexible, easily accessible, and relevant to the digital environment. However, a significant gap remains between these needs and the availability of Islamic counseling services that can integrate technological advancements. Only 28% of formal counseling institutions have incorporated digital platforms into their services.

Advancements in modern mass media and the shift toward digital technologies and social media have become essential parts of modern life worldwide. Social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Telegram are no longer merely communication and entertainment tools; they have also become new spaces for learning, social interaction, and addressing psychological and spiritual issues (I. D. P. Sari et al., 2018). These changing patterns have significantly affected mental health service needs, as digital strategies are increasingly being used alongside traditional counseling methods to reach broader communities. Concerns about these developments have intensified because advancements in data-collection technologies and social media algorithms use personal information for targeted advertising and content delivery. Consequently, excessive information sharing affects individuals and contributes to broader challenges related to data security and privacy.

However, significant gaps remain in this context. Some Muslims often perceive conventional counseling services offered in clinics, schools, or universities as "secular" and inconsistent with their religious principles. Concerns remain that counselors may not fully understand clients' theological perspectives or may interpret their social and behavioral conditions solely through psychoeducational approaches. On the other hand, religious figures or ustadz who often become sources of personal consultation may not always possess the professional counseling skills required to address complex psychological issues.

In Islam, preserving personal dignity and privacy represents a fundamental value that every individual is encouraged to uphold (I. D. P. Sari et al., 2018). Islamic teachings emphasize safeguarding personal matters and avoiding unnecessary disclosure of private information. These principles apply not only to physical interactions but also to behavior within digital spaces. The Qur'an highlights the importance of privacy and respect for others in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:12), where Allah states: "*O you who have believed, avoid much negative assumption. Indeed, some assumptions are sinful. And do not spy or backbite one another*." (Al-Qur'an 49:12). Islamic counseling based on digital literacy is an integrated approach that combines Islamic counseling principles with the skills required to navigate and address challenges within the digital landscape.

Furthermore, digital literacy in Islamic counseling functions as both a protective and a strategic instrument (Riyadi & Adinugraha, 2021). From a protective perspective, digital literacy helps counselors and clients understand the ethical risks inherent in digital interactions, such as misuse of personal data, dissemination of invalid religious information, and oversharing behaviors that may worsen an individual's psychological condition. This finding aligns with research showing that low digital literacy can trigger unwise behavior on social media, requiring counseling approaches that not only advise but also provide digital education.

From a strategic perspective, integrating digital literacy enables Islamic counseling to become more adaptive and relevant to the needs of modern generations. Counselors with digital competencies can use social media for therapeutic *da'wah*, provide responsive

guidance, and build professional counseling relationships even when the counseling process occurs online. In this context, Islamic principles such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), responsibility, and maintaining personal dignity (*hifz al-'ird*) can be internalized through ethical digital literacy practices. Another perspective (Syarnubi et al., 2021), notes that digital technology has transformed counseling practices, including counseling based on religious values. Social media offers accessibility, anonymity, and broad reach, making it a potentially effective alternative for modern counseling services, particularly within Muslim communities.

Therefore, the Islamic counseling approach based on digital literacy proposed by (Elfattah, 2025) is not only theoretically relevant but also contextually appropriate for addressing the challenges of modern counseling services. This approach emphasizes that the effectiveness of Islamic counseling in the digital era is largely determined by counselors' abilities to integrate Islamic spiritual values with responsible digital competencies (Elfattah, 2025). Islamic counseling, which is founded upon Islamic spiritual values such as faith (*iman*), remembrance of Allah (*dzikir*), patience (*sabar*), gratitude (*syukur*), and reliance upon God (*tawakal*), faces significant challenges and opportunities in today's technological era. Social media enables individuals to reach a broader audience than ever before. However, concerns also exist regarding violations of Islamic counseling ethics, particularly concerning professionalism, confidentiality (*sirriyah*), and the validity of religious content delivered through digital platforms. Consequently, alternative modern counseling services require not only technical expertise but also an understanding of the moral responsibilities associated with digital interactions, along with the ability to access, analyze, and utilize digital information wisely and ethically.

This study's research approach was designed to address the primary question of the effectiveness of Islamic counseling through social media as an alternative modern counseling service. Because this study focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of the processes, experiences, and meanings constructed by counselors and clients in digital contexts, a descriptive qualitative approach was selected as the methodological foundation. This approach was considered most appropriate for comprehensively and contextually describing social phenomena, particularly Islamic counseling practices in digital environments. It enables researchers to study social realities holistically by emphasizing the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of research subjects rather than merely measuring numerical data. Social media-based Islamic counseling is valuable because service effectiveness is measured through interactions, ethical values, internalization of Islamic teachings, and outcomes (Weyant, 2022).

Furthermore, this study aims to provide a systematic and factual description of Islamic counseling practices through social media (W. Handayani et al., 2025). The descriptive method was employed to reveal how Islamic counseling is implemented in digital environments, how counselors' digital literacy roles are manifested, and how clients respond to these services as alternatives to conventional face-to-face counseling. In addition, the study is exploratory because social media-based Islamic counseling continues to evolve alongside changes in how people communicate online. Therefore, this study does not test specific hypotheses but instead aims to develop a deeper conceptual understanding of the effectiveness of Islamic counseling services in the modern era. This study draws on key

literature on Islamic counseling (Zahrah et al., 2025), oversharing behavior, and digital literacy theory (Wahidah et al., 2019) to establish a strong theoretical foundation.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach. The primary data collection techniques were in-depth interviews and document analysis. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format to provide researchers with a question guide while maintaining flexibility to explore broader information based on participants' responses. The interview questions focused on counselors' experiences in providing Islamic counseling services through social media, their understanding of digital literacy, the implementation of Islamic counseling ethics, and clients' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of these services. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using general question guidelines prepared in advance, while still allowing researchers flexibility to develop additional questions based on informants' responses. This approach was considered relevant because Islamic counseling practices on social media are dynamic and contextual, requiring in-depth exploration that is not rigidly restricted by predetermined closed questions. The primary focus of the interviews was directed toward several key aspects.

First, counselors' experiences providing Islamic counseling services through social media, including reasons for selecting digital platforms, communication strategies used, and challenges encountered during online counseling. Second, counselors' and clients' understanding of digital literacy, particularly regarding media ethics, data security, and the validity of Islamic information being conveyed. Third, the implementation of Islamic counseling ethics within digital spaces, including maintaining client confidentiality (*amanah*), professional boundaries, and communication etiquette. Fourth, clients' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Islamic counseling services delivered through social media as an alternative to face-to-face counseling. Through these in-depth interviews, researchers obtained not only descriptive data but also reflective data showing how direct participants practice, interpret, and perceive Islamic counseling in terms of effectiveness. Therefore, in-depth interviews became the primary instrument for understanding the psychological, spiritual, and digital dimensions of modern Islamic counseling services.

Documentation studies were employed to complement interview data through analyses of counseling content, educational posts related to Islamic counseling themes, and ethical guidelines used in online counseling practices. This technique aimed to strengthen data validity and provide a more comprehensive overview of Islamic counseling practices within digital environments (Sugiyono, 2023). The simultaneous use of in-depth interviews and documentation studies enabled methodological triangulation, making the collected data more credible and comprehensive. Interviews provided subjective perspectives and direct experiences from participants, while documentation presented recorded evidence of practices occurring in digital activities. Integrating these two techniques strengthened the researchers' analysis of the extent to which Islamic counseling through social media is implemented effectively, ethically, and in accordance with digital literacy principles. Thus, the data collection techniques employed in this study served not only as technical

procedures but also as methodological strategies for gaining an in-depth understanding of how Islamic counseling services are transforming in the digital era.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that social media has the potential to serve as a platform to support guidance and counseling services in schools, particularly in expanding communication channels between guidance counselors and students, facilitating the dissemination of educational information, and creating a more flexible space for interaction tailored to students' characteristics in the digital age. Social media is perceived as supporting counseling services that are more adaptive, communicative, and accessible, particularly in conveying information about personal development, social issues, psychosocial health, and problem-solving strategies for students. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these services depends on guidance counselors' ability to select appropriate platforms, communicate professionally, maintain the confidentiality of personal information, and set ethical boundaries in digital interactions. These findings emphasize that integrating social media into guidance and counseling services must be planned, centered on students' needs, and grounded in professionalism, digital safety, and responsible counseling relationships.

Developments in information and communication technology have influenced various dimensions of human life, including mental health services and counseling practices (I. Handayani, 2019). In the digital era, online counseling has emerged as an alternative service that provides psychological assistance flexibly, without being constrained by distance or time. This service has become increasingly relevant because modern life creates a growing need for psychological support, including academic pressure, family issues, and other social problems. Numerous studies indicate that online counseling can provide effective psychological support through various approaches using digital communication media such as text messaging, voice calls, and video conferencing services, while also offering advantages in terms of accessibility and service flexibility (Yusril Yasin, 2024).

However, in Muslim communities, there is a specific need to integrate Islamic principles into the counseling process (Riyadi & Adinugraha, 2021). Islamic counseling aims not only to resolve individuals' psychological issues but also to internalize spiritual values derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, thereby offering a holistic, integrative approach that encompasses psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. This concept is particularly important in online services, as many clients require guidance aligned with their beliefs and religious values. Research on Islamic counseling has largely focused on integrating religious values into conventional counseling practices; however, studies examining online Islamic counseling models remain relatively limited and require a deeper understanding (Cholil, 2024; Mansir, 2022)

Implementing online Islamic counseling requires counselors to possess professional competencies that encompass not only psychological approaches but also adequate Islamic knowledge and understanding (Dhulfiqaar, 2025). Ethical considerations, confidentiality, and the quality of therapeutic relationships are essential factors in ensuring the effectiveness of digital-based counseling services (Mansir, 2018b). Beyond competencies and ethics, the success of online Islamic counseling is also influenced by the ability to adapt counseling methods to the characteristics of digital media. Counselors should adjust media platforms,

communication patterns, and strategies for delivering Islamic messages to clients' psychological conditions to keep the counseling process effective, personalized, and educationally valuable (Mansir, 2018).

Methods of Implementing Islamic Counseling Through Digital Literacy

Digital literacy-based Islamic counseling on social media does not rely on one-way communication; instead, it uses various forms of online interaction, such as private messages (direct messaging), group discussions, and educational content in text, audio, and video related to spiritual guidance and counseling. Social media can serve as both a communication and therapeutic tool in contemporary counseling because it enables counselors to address clients' needs individually and flexibly. The educational and interactive aspects of content shared by counselors show that social media can serve as a medium for continuous, contextual guidance aligned with current digital communication features.

This argument is reinforced by findings showing that integrating digital literacy into Islamic counseling helps address oversharing behaviors and increases clients' awareness of digital ethics on social media, making digital counseling services more meaningful and relevant in modern life (Diana et al., 2024). In addition, studies on the use of digital media in guidance and counseling services indicate that online media provide flexibility in time and location, enabling clients to receive psychological and emotional support regardless of where they are situated. These findings align with research by Latiffatunnisa (2025), which showed that digital counseling media effectively provide emotional and psychological support in situations requiring online services, such as during pandemics. This effectiveness is attributed to the fact that such services are delivered in real time and can be adapted to specific counseling circumstances (Umul Muliyanti et al., 2026).

From another perspective, the literature indicates that counseling through social media requires adaptation to the digital characteristics of contemporary generations. This method requires counselors to understand not only the basic features of digital platforms but also the social and psychological dynamics within digital interactions, including issues related to digital identity and their impact on clients' mental health. For example, (W. Handayani et al., 2025) discussed how counselors should address social media-related issues affecting students' identities and psychological well-being. They argued that counseling approaches tailored to the digital context of Generation Z and other social media-oriented generations are necessary.

Furthermore, studies on alternative modern counseling services indicate that online counseling, or e-counseling, can serve as an effective alternative to conventional psychological support and support the use of social media as a counseling platform. Yasin and Sa'adah (2024) stated that online counseling through social media and digital communication applications has been shown to provide significant psychological support because it is easily accessible and can reach individuals who may face barriers to obtaining face-to-face services (Mansir, 2018).

Therefore, it can be concluded that social media as a digital literacy-based Islamic counseling platform is not only relevant to contemporary communication needs but is also useful in expanding service accessibility, encouraging reflective interactions between counselors and clients, and strengthening the internalization of ethical and religious digital

values through well-designed educational content (Mansir, 2023). This approach shows that Islamic counseling on social media can become a transformative practice in digital spaces, provided counselors have strong digital competencies and a comprehensive understanding of how communication functions on the internet (Shamhuna, 2024).

Transforming Islamic spiritual messages into digital formats is a complex hermeneutic process involving three critical stages: deconstructing traditional meanings, contextual adaptation, and formative reconstruction (Rumondor & Putra, n.d.). This study found that successful Islamic counselors on social media do not merely translate texts; instead, they engage in "digital ijtihad," a creative reasoning effort to present spiritual essence through comprehensive digital expressions for contemporary generations (Widoyo et al., 2023). Modern Islamic counseling shapes particular ways of thinking, and spirituality within digital media requires new formulations (Shamhuna, 2024). The transformation of digital spirituality requires approaches that consider not only message accuracy but also the psychology of digital audiences, whose cognitive and emotional characteristics differ from those of previous generations.

Digital Epistemological Issues in Digital Transformation

In their phenomenological study concerning Islamic psychospiritual support on social media, they identified three primary dilemmas:

a. The Dilemma of Religious Authority versus Digital Freedom:

One of the primary emphases within these fatwas is maintaining Islamic ethics during online interactions. Values such as humility, honesty, and moderation should guide digital communication, just as they govern face-to-face interactions (Mansir, 2022). Evidence obtained from user interviews indicates that awareness of Islamic ethics can prevent negative behaviors such as arrogance and excessive self-promotion in online environments. These findings reflect classical teachings of scholars such as Imam Al-Ghazali, who emphasized the importance of inner intention (*niyyah*) in all actions.

Consequently, these fatwas bridge traditional Islamic ethics and contemporary modes of interaction, offering moral coherence in the digital era (Penelitian et al., 2026). In conclusion, the fatwas of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia / MUI) represent an important effort to align contemporary digital behavior with Islamic ethical principles. These fatwas address both the benefits and moral risks associated with social media while offering a framework grounded in theology and social responsibility. These fatwas align with broader ethical theories and complement global discussions on digital literacy and ethics. By guiding content sharing, time management, and mutual respect, these religious fatwas play a crucial role in shaping morally conscious Muslim digital communities. Their relevance continues to increase as online engagement becomes increasingly integrated into everyday life.

b. The Dilemma between Psychospiritual Benefits and the Risks of Symbolic Violence and Hoaxes

Numerous studies indicate that gradual changes are more readily accepted than drastic changes in the development of digital religious services and modules. This finding aligns

with (Mansir, 2022), which found that evolutionary methods are more effective than revolutionary methods in Islamic-oriented digital contexts (Nasution et al., 2023). Compared to drastic and sudden changes, evolutionary approaches in digital Islamic counseling are more compatible with patterns of socio-religious transformation in the digital era, which are characterized by strategies, negotiations, and multilayered processes (Mahyarni, 2024). Such approaches are more acceptable, safer in terms of values, and better suited to the diversity of user communities.

c. The Dilemma between Personalization and Universality

Although the shift toward digital counseling offers easier access, it also increases the risk that users may be exposed only to perspectives that reinforce their pre-existing beliefs (echo chambers). This phenomenon affects an individual's level of spiritual development and the depth of counseling processes within the context of Islamic psychospiritual services (Baihaqi et al., 2026). Because most users interact only with counselors or content aligned with their schools of thought, religious preaching styles (*dakwah*), or religious ideologies, spiritual echo chambers rarely provide balanced perspectives (Fanani, 2025). Studies regarding online consultation emphasize that similar user values and preferences within specific networks are shaped by particular media and platforms such as WhatsApp, social media, and specialized applications. The findings indicate that the majority of users become trapped within spiritual echo chambers, suggesting that digital Islamic counseling is not socially and technologically neutral. Therefore, the development of modules and platforms must be carefully planned to counterbalance algorithmic logic, broaden perspectives, and preserve authentic Islamic values (Wadham & Mansir, 2022).

Online Islamic Counseling as a Digital Psycho-Da'wah Model

Online Islamic counseling is a psychospiritual guidance service that uses digital technology as a medium for interaction between counselors and clients. Unlike conventional online counseling, online Islamic counseling does not focus solely on resolving psychological issues but is also directed toward spiritual development and strengthening Islamic values within clients. (N. P. Sari et al., 2024) emphasized that online Islamic counseling should be understood as an integration of psychological intervention and personal *da'wah* conducted through continuous and dialogical processes. In this context, digital media do not merely function as technical tools but rather serve as new spaces for *da'wah* that facilitate individualized approaches based on clients' psychological needs. This shows that online Islamic counseling functions as a *da'wah* service model grounded in applied psychology (Wadham & Mansir, 2022). From a psychological perspective, online Islamic counseling is rooted in humanistic counseling principles emphasizing empathy, unconditional acceptance, and therapeutic relationships (therapeutic alliance). Studies on online counseling indicate that the effectiveness of online services largely depends on counselors' ability to establish feelings of security and trust, despite the absence of physical interaction (Online Counseling as a Solution During the COVID-19 Pandemic) (Nurintan Muliani Harahap, 2021).

Other studies have shown that psychological intervention techniques such as self-management and cognitive reflection remain effective in digital counseling services, provided counselors can adapt their methods to the characteristics of online media (The

Effectiveness of Behavioral Counseling Services Using Self-Management Techniques) (Sholikha et al., 2025). This psychological foundation is important to ensure that online Islamic counseling does not shift into merely providing religious advice but continues functioning as a professional mental health service.

From a *da'wah* perspective, online Islamic counseling represents a form of *dakwah irsyad*, which emphasizes individualized guidance and personality development. *Da'wah* is not conducted through one-way lectures but through empathetic dialogue that adapts Islamic messages to clients' psychological conditions. The concept of *dakwah irsyad* positions counselors as spiritual companions who help clients find solutions and meaning in life based on Islamic teachings (Dakwah Irsyad: The Paradigm of Islamic Counseling Guidance) (Ramadhani & Halwati, 2024). This approach aligns with the concept of *dakwah bil hikmah* because Islamic values are conveyed contextually and without judgment. Therefore, online Islamic counseling functions as a humanistic and transformative *da'wah* medium within digital spaces.

One primary characteristic of online Islamic counseling is its use of the Qur'an as both a value foundation and a medium for psychological reflection. Various studies concerning the integration of the Qur'an within Islamic counseling guidance demonstrate that Qur'anic verses can function as a means of strengthening motivation, regulating emotions, and providing meaning in life for clients when delivered contextually and according to individuals' psychological needs (Integration-Interconnection of Qur'an Function with Islamic Counseling Guidance) (Khofifah, 2024). Qur'anic stories in counseling have also been shown to improve psychological and spiritual resilience, particularly among adolescents, because Qur'anic narratives help clients interpret their problems as part of self-development processes (The Influence of Qur'anic Story-Based Islamic Counseling on Increasing Adolescent Resilience) (Ghaitsa et al., 2024). This strengthens the position of *da'wah* as the core element within the online Islamic counseling model rather than as a supplementary component.

Based on the synthesis of research findings, the online Islamic counseling model can be formulated into five major stages:

a. Online Psychological and Spiritual Assessment, intended to identify clients' mental conditions and religious needs (Development of Digital Platforms for Islamic Guidance and Counseling).
b. Preparation of Counseling Contracts and Islamic Digital Ethics, including confidentiality, communication etiquette, and agreements regarding service objectives, as discussed in studies concerning online counseling as a service solution during the COVID-19 pandemic.
c. Online Psychological Intervention, utilizing counseling techniques adapted to digital media characteristics (The Effectiveness of Behavioral Counseling Services Using Self-Management Techniques).
d. Internalization of Da'wah and Qur'anic Values, functioning as spiritual reinforcement and as a means of interpreting life problems (Integration-Interconnection of Qur'an Function with Islamic Counseling Guidance).

e. Online Online Evaluation and follow-up are intended to monitor clients' psychological and spiritual development continuously.

This model emphasizes that online Islamic counseling represents a comprehensive, scientific, and *da'wah*-oriented service system (Prayoga et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

Counseling Education represents a relevant and strategic service model in responding to the mental health needs of Muslim communities in the digital era because it is capable of integrating counseling psychology approaches with comprehensive Islamic da'wah values. This model is not merely a psychological intervention; it also serves as a medium for spiritual development that emphasizes forming meaning in life, inner peace, and behavioral transformation toward more positive directions. Therefore, the development of online Islamic counseling should be supported through the enhancement of counselors' competencies in both psychological and Islamic aspects, strengthening ethical standards and the security of digital services, and conducting further empirical research so that this model can be implemented more effectively, professionally, and sustainably within contemporary counseling and da'wah practices.

This research aimed to understand the effectiveness of Islamic counseling through social media as an alternative model of modern counseling services. Based on the analysis of the research data, it can be concluded that Islamic counseling implemented through social media can address counseling service needs in the digital era, particularly regarding accessibility, flexibility, and relevance to contemporary communication patterns within society. These findings indicate that the research objectives were achieved, particularly in identifying social media as a feasible and functional space for practicing Islamic counseling. The findings further emphasize that the effectiveness of Islamic counseling on social media depends not merely on using digital technology, but on integrating Islamic counseling values with counselors' digital literacy competencies. Counselors with strong digital literacy skills can conduct counseling ethically, maintain client confidentiality, and deliver Islamic values accurately and responsibly. Thus, the implicit research hypothesis stating that Islamic counseling through social media can serve as an effective alternative modern counseling service may be accepted.

Furthermore, this study found that Islamic counseling through social media increases clients' religious awareness and helps regulate their behavior in digital media environments. Clients not only find solutions to the problems they face but also engage in a learning process grounded in Islamic values and ethics that shapes their attitudes and behaviors in digital spaces. This finding shows that Islamic counseling on social media serves a dual function: a psychological-spiritual support service and a medium for digital literacy education grounded in Islamic values.

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DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

This study was approved after an explanation was provided regarding voluntary participation, confidentiality, and participant anonymity, as well as approval from the institutional ethics committee, specifically that of the researcher's university.

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