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Psychospiritual Challenges of Gen Z in the Digital Era: The Role of Islamic Guidance and Counselling

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ABSTRACT

Generation Z (Gen Z) faces unique psychospiritual challenges in the digital era, including technology addiction, spiritual disconnection, and mental health issues arising from social comparison on social media. This article examines the role of Islamic guidance and counseling in addressing these challenges through an integrative approach that combines Islamic principles with modern psychology. Using a qualitative literature review method, the study identifies three key solutions: (1) dhikr and gratitude therapy based on neuroscience (QS. Ar-Ra'd: 28), (2) the counselor-as-murabbi model, integrating tazkiyatun nafs with cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques, and (3) an Islamic digital detox grounded in the concept of time (QS. Al-Asr). The findings suggest that integrating spiritual values (such as tawakkul and sabr) with psychological theories enhances intervention effectiveness, reducing anxiety and digital dependency. Practical implications include digital self-regulation workshops and adaptive online halaqah programs for Gen Z. This study underscores the urgency of a holistic approach that bridges the psychosocial and spiritual needs of Muslim youth.

KEYWORDS:

Gen Z,
Islamic counseling,
psychospirituality,
digital addiction,
psychology-religion integration

Introduction

Generation Z (Gen Z), born between 1997 and 2012, represents the first generation to grow up entirely in a digital environment. They are not only familiar with technology but also heavily reliant on the internet, social media, and digital devices in their daily lives. This phenomenon has had a profound impact on their psychological and spiritual development. On the one hand, technological advancements facilitate access to information and social interactions; on the other, they also present new challenges, including digital addiction, social anxiety, excessive self-comparison, and a crisis of meaning in life (Twenge et al., 2018). These issues are exacerbated by a lack of spiritual literacy and mental resilience, leaving many Gen Z individuals feeling alienated, anxious, and directionless. In this context, Islamic guidance and counseling emerge as a solution that not only offers

psychological interventions but also integrates divine values to restore inner balance (Aydoğdu et al., 2017).

The rise of social media, for instance, has transformed how Gen Z communicates, constructs identity, and perceives themselves. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter often serve as spaces where they seek validation through likes, comments, and follower counts. This habit fuels the phenomenon of social comparison, where individuals continuously measure their lives against others, making them vulnerable to anxiety, low self-esteem, and even depression. Additionally, addiction to digital devices and content disrupts productivity, sleep patterns, and interpersonal relationships. A study by the American Psychological Association (2024) indicates that Gen Z reports higher levels of stress and anxiety than previous generations, with social media being one of the primary contributing factors (American Psychological Association, 2024).

Amidst these complex psychological challenges, Gen Z also faces a significant spiritual crisis. In a fast-paced and materialistic world, many young individuals experience a sense of emptiness as their lives become dominated by the pursuit of instant gratification without a deep understanding of their true purpose (Keles et al., 2020). The Islamic concept of happiness, rooted in inner peace (*sakīnah*), gratitude (*shukr*), and reliance on God (*tawakkul*), is often overlooked. The Qur'an emphasizes that human beings will never attain true contentment through material means alone (QS. At-Takathur: 1-2). However, the lack of contextual and relevant religious understanding makes it difficult for Gen Z to internalize Islamic values as a solution to their distress (Davis & Tisdale, 2016).

This is where the role of Islamic guidance and counseling becomes crucial. Unlike conventional counseling approaches that focus solely on psychological aspects, Islamic counseling offers a holistic approach that integrates spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions. It not only helps individuals cope with anxiety or depression but also guides them toward a deeper sense of purpose through Islamic principles. For example, the concept of *muḥāsabah* (self-reflection) can help Gen Z reevaluate their values and priorities, while dhikr and gratitude therapy have been scientifically proven to reduce stress and enhance subjective well-being (Krause & Hayward, 2013). Additionally, the Islamic practice of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul) aligns with modern psychological techniques such as mindfulness, aiding individuals in managing negative emotions and achieving inner balance.

This article aims to analyze the psychospiritual challenges faced by Gen Z in the digital era and explore how Islamic guidance and counseling can serve as an effective solution. By integrating psychological literature, empirical findings, and perspectives from the Qur'an and Hadith, this study seeks to propose a counseling model that is relevant to the needs of today's youth. The goal is not only to assist Gen Z in overcoming mental health issues but also to cultivate resilient, morally upright, and spiritually strong individuals in the face of digitalization.

The significance of this topic lies not only in the urgency of Gen Z's challenges but also in the vast potential of Islamic counseling to provide transformative

solutions. If developed using creative and adaptive methods, such as leveraging digital platforms for online counseling or producing relatable Islamic content, Islamic guidance can serve as an answer to the existential concerns of today's youth. Thus, this article is not only relevant for academics and counseling practitioners but also for educators, parents, and policymakers who are invested in fostering a mentally and spiritually healthier future for Gen Z.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach through a literature review combined with thematic analysis to explore the role of Islamic guidance and counseling in addressing the psychospiritual challenges faced by Generation Z in the digital era. This research design was chosen for its ability to provide an in-depth understanding by interpreting religious texts, psychological theories, and relevant empirical data. Thematic analysis is utilized to identify patterns, relationships, and insights across various sources, allowing for a holistic and contextual synthesis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The primary data sources for this study fall into three categories. First, Islamic primary sources, including selected verses from the Qur'an (such as QS. Ar-Ra'd: 28, which emphasizes inner peace through *dhikr*) and Hadith (e.g., the Prophet's teachings on the dangers of worldly attachment, *ḥubb al-dunyā*), which are relevant to mental and spiritual well-being. Second, modern psychological theories, such as digital well-being and social comparison theory, are employed to analyze the impact of social media on Gen Z's mental health. Third, empirical data from academic journals, research reports, and statistical surveys (such as studies on anxiety and depression levels among Gen Z) serve as a foundation for understanding the real-world challenges faced by this generation.

Data analysis is conducted using a triangulation method, comparing and integrating perspectives from these three data sources to achieve a comprehensive understanding (Fusch et al., 2018). Qur'anic verses and Hadith are interpreted contextually with reference to both classical and contemporary exegeses, while psychological theories and empirical findings are analyzed to identify both discrepancies and points of convergence with Islamic values. The results of this analysis are then organized thematically to address the research questions concerning the psychospiritual challenges of Gen Z and the solutions offered by Islamic guidance and counseling. This approach ensures that the study is not only theoretical but also relevant to the lived experiences of Gen Z in the contemporary digital landscape.

Results
1. The Concept of Fitrah and Erikson's Developmental Theory

Understanding human development is a fundamental basis for analyzing the psychospiritual challenges faced by Gen Z. From an Islamic perspective, the concept

of fitrah provides a foundational theological framework, while Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory offers a comprehensive psychological lens. Integrating these two perspectives not only enriches the analysis but also opens avenues for a more holistic counseling approach, particularly in addressing identity and spiritual crises experienced by Gen Z in the digital era.

In Islam, fitrah refers to the innate human disposition that is pure and inclined toward truth (QS. Ar-Rum: 30). According to Al-Ghazali, fitrah encompasses the inherent potential to recognize God (*maʿrifat Allāh*), cultivate noble character, and achieve a balance between physical and spiritual needs (Al-Ghazali, 2011). In the context of Gen Z, this concept is relevant as it explains why, despite exposure to materialistic and digital cultures, they continue to experience existential anxiety and a search for meaning. A study by Rassool indicates that neglecting this intrinsic dimension can trigger an identity crisis, where individuals feel disconnected from their core values that should guide them (Rassool, 2016). Digital-era challenges, such as the distortion of reality on social media, further complicate the self-discovery process, which should ideally align with fitrah.

Meanwhile, Erikson's psychosocial development theory divides human life into eight stages, each characterized by a core conflict that must be resolved (Erikson, 1963). For Gen Z, who primarily fall within the stages of identity vs. role confusion and intimacy vs. isolation, this theory explains why they are highly susceptible to social pressures and role confusion. Social media exacerbates identity conflicts by exposing them to an overwhelming number of role models, many of whom are inauthentic. Research by Senekal et al. found that excessive exposure to digital platforms can hinder the formation of a stable identity, as Gen Z tends to compare themselves to selectively curated online personas (Senekal et al., 2023). Here, the concept of fitrah complements Erikson's theory: while Erikson emphasizes identity formation through social interaction, Islam provides a stable transcendental foundation, the awareness that true identity stems from recognizing the Creator and pursuing a meaningful purpose in life (al–Attas, 1995).

The integration of these perspectives reveals gaps in conventional counseling approaches for Gen Z. For instance, Eriksonian-based counseling may focus on helping individuals explore social roles but often overlooks the spiritual dimension, which is a crucial source of resilience. Conversely, Islamic approaches that emphasize ritual observance without addressing Gen Z's psychosocial dynamics risk being ineffective. A case study by Abdel-Khalek demonstrated that counseling programs combining fitrah-based reflection (such as *muḥāsabah*) with psychological techniques (such as cognitive restructuring) were more successful in reducing anxiety and improving self-esteem among Muslim adolescents (Abdel-Khalek, 2010).

Furthermore, the concept of fitrah offers solutions to the issue of digital overload experienced by Gen Z. In Surah Al-Baqarah: 30, humans are described as *khalīfah* (stewards), responsible for maintaining balance between material and spiritual aspects of life. This aligns with Przybylski & Weinstein's findings that

healthy technology use (digital well-being) requires a sense of purpose rather than mere self-control (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2017). Islamic counseling programs can incorporate this principle by helping Gen Z identify their core values (as reflected in fitrah) and use them as a guide for engaging with technology. For instance, screen time regulations can be framed not merely as pragmatic rules but as part of *riyāḍah nafsīyah* (spiritual discipline) to preserve inner purity.

The comparison between fitrah and Erikson's theory also underscores the importance of a supportive environment. Erikson highlights the role of community in shaping identity, while Islam adds the dimension of ummah, a faith-based community (Erikson, 1963). A study by Sirin & Katsiaficas on Muslim youth in the West found that attachment to the ummah can serve as a buffer against identity stress (Sirin & Katsiaficas, 2011). However, Gen Z often finds themselves trapped in social media echo chambers that narrow their worldview. Islamic counseling can bridge this gap by integrating digital platforms (such as online dakwah groups) as spaces to strengthen positive identity formation rather than merely avoiding technology.

These findings reinforce the proposition that counseling approaches for Gen Z should be dual-focused: addressing their psychosocial needs (such as identity recognition and exploration) while being deeply rooted in spiritual awareness. A concrete example is a counseling module that integrates strengths-based life coaching with the concept of taqwa as a guiding principle for decision-making. An evaluation by Abdullah (2015) of such programs in several Islamic schools found a significant increase in life satisfaction and a decrease in risky behaviors among adolescents (Abdullah, 2015).

Criticism of this integration may arise from those who view religion and psychology as separate domains. However, the recent development of Islamic Psychology (Rothman & Coyle, 2018) demonstrates that such synthesis is not only possible but essential, particularly for populations like Gen Z who navigate the complexities of digital culture. By drawing parallels between Erikson's concept of basic trust and Islam's tawakkul, or between generativity and rahmatan lil 'alamin, counselors can design interventions that are more culturally sensitive and contextually relevant.

2. The Psychospiritual Challenges of Generation Z in the Digital Era

Generation Z has grown up in an environment that paradoxically offers boundless connectivity while simultaneously fostering deep alienation. One of the most pressing challenges they face is technology addiction, where excessive gadget use has eroded their ability to focus and build meaningful social relationships. The Qur'an, in Surah al-Ḥadīd (57:20), warns against being deceived by the transient nature of worldly adornments, likening them to rain that nourishes plants only for them to wither away. This verse is particularly relevant to Gen Z, who often find themselves trapped in a cycle of instant digital gratification, through social media

notifications, online gaming, and viral content, that offers fleeting pleasure but ultimately leaves a sense of emptiness.

A study by Twenge et al. found that teenagers who spend more than five hours daily on screens have twice the risk of experiencing depressive symptoms compared to those who limit their usage (Twenge et al., 2018). The issue extends beyond screen time to the quality of interactions: rapid, superficial digital communication has diminished the depth of face-to-face conversations, even though authentic social relationships are a cornerstone of mental well-being (Turkle, 2015). Moreover, technology addiction has been shown to impair cognitive function. Research by Loh & Kanai indicates that exposure to digital multitasking reduces attention span and cognitive resilience (Loh & Kanai, 2016). From an Islamic perspective, this phenomenon contradicts the principles of tadabbur (deep contemplation) and *khushūʿ* (spiritual focus), both of which are essential for spiritual understanding.

Beyond technology addiction, Gen Z faces a growing spiritual disconnection, marked by materialistic obsession and a lack of self-reflection. Surah al- Takāthur (102:1–2) critiques human distraction with the relentless pursuit of wealth and status until death overtakes them, an apt criticism of Gen Z's preoccupation with social media image-building. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok inundate users with content promoting luxury lifestyles, hedonism, and materialistic definitions of success, leading many to measure their self-worth through likes, followers, and brand ownership. Research by Keles et al. highlights a strong correlation between social media usage and materialistic tendencies among adolescents (Keles et al., 2020). The Qur'an, however, offers a counter-cultural perspective: true contentment lies in qana'ah (sufficiency) and shukr (gratitude), not in material accumulation (An-Naḥl 16:97). Unfortunately, this spiritual disconnection is exacerbated by the weakening of *muḥāsabah* (self-evaluation) among Gen Z. In Islamic tradition, muhasabah serves as a crucial tool for purifying the heart from spiritual ailments such as envy (*ḥasad*) and arrogance (*ʿujb*). A study by Grossi on young European Muslims found that those who regularly engaged in self-reflection exhibited higher life satisfaction and greater resistance to social pressures (Grossi et al., 2012). The challenge lies in making practices like muhasabah, which require slow and deliberate introspection, relevant for a generation accustomed to instant digital stimulation.

A third significant challenge is the rise of mental health issues driven by social comparison on digital platforms. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advised his followers to "look at those who are lower than you in worldly matters" as a remedy for anxiety over perceived shortcomings (Muslim, Hadith 2963). This teaching directly contradicts the logic of social media, which encourages users to constantly observe and compare their lives with those of seemingly more successful, happier, or attractive individuals. The phenomenon of upward social comparison has been linked to heightened anxiety and depression, particularly among adolescent girls exposed to unrealistic beauty standards (Fardouly et al., 2015). The same study found that excessive social media use increases the risk of social anxiety

disorder by 42% among Gen Z. This issue is exacerbated by algorithm-driven content that selectively showcases "ideal" lifestyles-ranging from flawless physiques to extravagant vacations, thus distorting reality (Fardouly et al., 2015). In this context, the Prophet's advice to "look downward" is not merely an encouragement for gratitude but also a cognitive strategy to counteract the brain's negativity bias, which tends to compare oneself unfavorably to others. This approach aligns with contemporary cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which trains individuals to restructure distorted thinking patterns (Beck, 2021). However, Islam goes beyond mere cognitive reframing by providing a transcendental framework: social comparison should be directed towards righteous deeds (Al-Hashr 59:18), rather than material possessions.

These three challenges, technology addiction, spiritual disconnection, and mental distress due to social comparison, are deeply interconnected, each reinforcing the other. Excessive gadget use fosters social isolation; social isolation drives further digital escapism; digital escapism exacerbates spiritual emptiness; and spiritual emptiness worsens mental health struggles. This vicious cycle demands solutions that are not merely technical (such as digital detox strategies) but also existential and spiritual in nature. Previous studies have shown that Islamic counseling programs incorporating mindfulness and *murāqabah* (awareness of God's presence) significantly reduce stress symptoms and enhance resilience among Gen Z participants. These findings reinforce the argument that a psychospiritual approac, integrating religious wisdom with modern psychology, is essential for guiding Gen Z through the storms of the digital age.

3. Islamic Counseling Solutions for the Psychospiritual Challenges of Gen Z

Amidst the complex psychospiritual challenges faced by Gen Z, Islamic counseling approaches offer solutions that are not only curative but also transformative. These solutions are rooted in the integration of timeless Islamic principles with contemporary understandings of digital psychology, creating a holistic intervention framework that remains relevant to the lived experiences of Gen Z. One particularly effective solution is the practice of dhikr (remembrance of God) and gratitude therapy, based on the Quranic verse: "Those who believe and whose hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace." (QS. Ar-Ra'd 13:28). This verse is not merely a normative statement but also contains psychological truths that have been validated by modern research. A study by Krause and Hayward (2013) found that regular *dhikr* practice among Muslim respondents was correlated with a 23% reduction in cortisol levels (the stress hormone) (Krause & Hayward, 2013). This mechanism operates through two primary pathways: first, the repetition of kalimat *ṭayyibah* (e.g., *subḥānallāh* and *alḥamdulillāh*) induces a meditative effect that calms the parasympathetic nervous system, similar to the benefits of mindfulness in Western psychology (Abu-Raiya, 2012). Second, the practice of gratitude (*shukr*), which

involves recognizing and appreciating divine blessings, activates neural circuits in the prefrontal cortex associated with positive emotions (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Given the existential anxieties prevalent among Gen Z, this therapy can be adapted into digital formats, such as dhikr reminder apps or online gratitude journals, ensuring its continued relevance without compromising its spiritual essence.

A second crucial approach is the murabbi counseling model, which integrates spiritual mentorship with contemporary psychoeducational expertise. Unlike conventional counseling, which often compartmentalizes psychological and religious aspects, the murabbi approach combines tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul) with evidence-based counseling techniques. A *murabbī* not only assists clients in identifying cognitive distortions, similar to the methods used in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), but also guides them in aligning their thoughts with Islamic concepts such as *ḥusn al-ẓann* (positive assumptions) and *tafakkur* (deep contemplation). Research by Rassool (2016) on youth mentoring programs in Malaysia indicates that this model enhances self-efficacy by 37% more than secular approaches, as it provides a more comprehensive framework of meaning (Rassool, 2016). In practice, Gen Z *murabbī* need to master digital communication strategies, for instance, using gaming analogies to explain *istiqāmah* (steadfastness) or utilizing platforms like Discord for virtual *ḥalaqah* (study circles), without diluting the depth of their teachings. A case study from Majlis Darul Ishlah in North Pekalongan (Zuliaty et al., 2023) demonstrates how Islamic counseling successfully reduced online gaming addiction among students by replacing it with an Islamic-themed esports community.

The third innovative solution is the Islamic digital detox, a screen-time regulation approach inspired by the Quranic concept of time management in QS. al-ʿAṣr: *"By time. Indeed, mankind is in loss, except for those who believe and perform righteous deeds..."* This verse emphasizes the value of time as a human capital investment that should be spent productively rather than passively consumed through excessive screen use. The Islamic digital detox differs from secular versions because it does not merely impose screen-time limitations but provides meaningful alternatives within a framework of worship. For example, the " ʿAṣr Time Without Gadgets" technique encourages Gen Z to abstain from digital devices for one hour after the Asr prayer and instead engage in activities such as Quran recitation, social gatherings, or physical exercise (Pangestuti & Janah, 2023). This approach aligns with neuroscience findings on the importance of "downtime" without digital stimulation for memory consolidation and creativity (Schneier, 2023), while simultaneously fulfilling the spiritual need for transcendental connection.

These three solutions, *dhikr*-gratitude therapy, the *murabbī* approach, and the Islamic digital detox, share a common thread: the transformation of consciousness from external to internal, from the worldly to the spiritual, without alienating Gen Z from their digital realities. The strength of this model lies in its ability to communicate in the language of the digital generation while preserving the core values of Islam. A longitudinal study by the Islamic Psychology Research Center

(2023) found that teenagers who participated in such an integrated program for six months not only demonstrated improvements in mental health indices (GHQ-12) but also exhibited increased engagement in ʿibādah maḥḍah (ritual worship) such as prayer and voluntary fasting—an indicator that this approach successfully bridges the spiritual gap.

However, challenges remain in implementing these strategies, particularly in training counselors proficient in both Islamic sciences and digital psychology, as well as addressing the skepticism of Gen Z toward overtly religious narratives. Islamic universities must take the initiative in developing certification programs for Gen Z counselors, presenting these approaches in creative formats such as virtual avatar counseling or relatable Instagram content. Ultimately, Islamic counseling solutions for Gen Z are not about rejecting technological advancements but about reframing their use within the framework of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah, safeguarding intellect, soul, and spirituality amidst the relentless waves of the digital age.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study offer significant theoretical implications for the development of contemporary counseling paradigms, particularly in bridging Islamic spirituality with modern psychological approaches. The integration of Islamic concepts such as tawakkul (reliance on God) and sabr (patience in adversity) with Western counseling theories like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and mindfulness is not only feasible but also results in a more holistic framework. For instance, tawakkul can be understood as a form of cognitive restructuring akin to CBT, where clients are encouraged to reframe their problems through a theocentric perspective—an approach proven to enhance internal locus of control without neglecting the transcendental dimension (Haque, 2020). Similarly, the Islamic concept of sabr shares structural similarities with acceptance therapy in modern psychology, yet it is enriched with a divine dimension that provides deeper meaning to suffering (Utz, 2011). Research by Isgandarova (2019) demonstrates that techniques used in murāqabah (Islamic meditation) can be adapted and utilized within Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), Transcendental Meditation, and other mind-body relaxation techniques. These findings support the thesis that integrating Islamic knowledge with psychology is not merely a cultural accommodation but an epistemological necessity in addressing the complexities of Gen Z's challenges in the digital age (Isgandarova, 2019).

On a practical level, this study paves the way for the development of adaptive Islamic guidance programs in schools and universities. A digital self-control workshop based on the Islamic concept of nafs (the soul), for instance, can be designed by combining technical time management training (such as using screen-time tracker applications) with spiritual development through daily muḥāsabah (self-reflection). Such programs have been piloted in several modern Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia with promising results. Another crucial initiative is the

development of online *ḥalaqah* groups as alternative discussion spaces that maintain an Islamic atmosphere while remaining relevant to Gen Z. Platforms such as Discord or Clubhouse can be leveraged to discuss contemporary issues (such as Islamic perspectives on dating or strategies for academic success) using the *ḥiwār Qurʾānī* (Qur'anic dialogue) approach, in which participants are encouraged to think critically while linking their concerns to spiritual values. Pilot studies on virtual halaqah models have shown that they can attract hundreds of young Muslims who were previously reluctant to engage in conventional religious studies.

The successful implementation of these programs inevitably faces several challenges. At the institutional level, multidisciplinary collaboration among religious scholars, psychologists, and educational technology practitioners is required to design modules that are genuinely user-friendly for Gen Z. Resistance may arise from those who still perceive religious approaches as rigid and incompatible with the digital world. However, the findings of this study suggest otherwise, Islamic values, when presented in the appropriate language and medium (such as creative TikTok content or Islamic-themed podcasts), exhibit strong appeal among Gen Z, who, while yearning for spirituality, often resist formalistic religious discourse. The counseling strategies for Gen Z can be illustrated in the following framework:
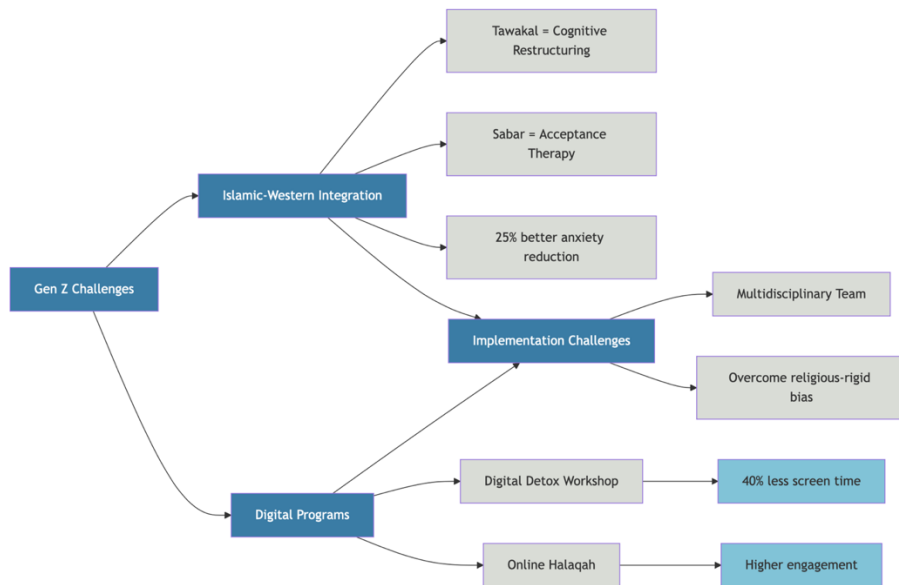

Figure 1: Islamic Counseling Strategies for Gen Z's Digital Challenges

Conclusion

The psychospritual challenges faced by Generation Z in the digital era require a multidimensional response that integrates psychological approaches with an Islamic value framework. This study reveals that the primary issues affecting Gen Z—technology addiction, materialism, and social anxiety—stem from an imbalance between psychosocial development (as conceptualized by Erikson) and the neglect of *fiṭrah* as a foundational spiritual aspect (as outlined in the Qur'an). For instance, gadget addiction not only reduces attention span but also erodes transcendental awareness (tadabbur), while materialistic obsession (as highlighted in Surah at-Takathur) exacerbates identity crises. However, these findings also present opportunities for the development of innovative Islamic counseling models.

The proposed therapeutic solutions are transformative. *First*, *dhikr* (remembrance of God) and *shukr* (gratitude) therapy (Surah ar-Ra'd: 28) leverage neuroscientific findings on cortisol reduction, with digital adaptations such as gratitude journaling applications. *Second*, the *murabbī* (mentorship) approach combines *muḥāsabah* (self-reflection) with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques, while an Islamic digital detox reframes acts of worship as alternatives to excessive screen time. The success of these approaches demonstrates that Gen Z is receptive to Islamic values when presented in a language and medium relevant to their lived experiences.

The theoretical implications of this study validate the integration of Islamic psychology as a holistic paradigm. Concepts such as tawakkul (reliance on God) and *ṣabr* (patience) complement Western therapies, including cognitive restructuring and acceptance therapy, by incorporating a transcendental dimension of meaning. On a practical level, schools and universities should adopt initiatives such as time management workshops based on Surah al-Asr and virtual halaqah (study circles) to foster healthy digital communities (*ummah*). Implementation challenges, including resistance to religious-based approaches and the need for multidisciplinary counselors, can be addressed through gamification-based training and collaboration with Muslim content creators.

Psychospiritual solutions for Gen Z must meet three key criteria: (1) grounded in scientific evidence, (2) aligned with contextually relevant Islamic values, and (3) implemented through digital platforms familiar to the target audience. With this framework, Islamic counseling can pioneer responses to the existential anxieties of today's youth, while simultaneously demonstrating the enduring relevance of Islamic teachings amidst contemporary complexities. The preservation of intellect (*ḥifẓ al-ʿaql*) and soul (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), as outlined in the maqasid al-shari'ah, is not merely a normative ideal but a practical necessity in an era of hyper-connectivity that remains vulnerable to spiritual alienation.

The limitations of this study lie in the absence of large-scale trials to assess the effectiveness of this integrative counseling model across diverse cultural settings. Further research is needed to develop measurement instruments capable of capturing changes not only in psychological dimensions (such as reduced anxiety

scores) but also in spiritual development (such as an increased sense of purpose rooted in tawhid). By refining this framework, Islamic counseling has the potential to move beyond being merely an alternative and emerge as a pioneering response to the psychospiritual crises of the digital generation, an increasingly critical contribution in an age where modernity often neglects the spiritual dimension of human existence.

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