

The Influence of Social Media-Based Islamic Counseling Guidance on the Learning Motivation of Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren) Students

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Abstract: This study investigates the influence of social media-based Islamic counseling guidance on the learning motivation of Islamic boarding school (pesantren) students. The background of the research lies in the increasing role of digital platforms as communication and learning tools, offering new opportunities to strengthen counseling practices within Islamic education. The study aims to examine whether social media counseling can significantly enhance students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, identify the most effective platforms and methods, and explore students' acceptance of digital counseling in their religious and educational life. The research employs a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design, involving pesantren students as participants. Data were collected through questionnaires measuring learning motivation, supported by interviews and observations to provide deeper insights. Statistical analysis was conducted to assess differences in motivation levels before and after the intervention of social media-based counseling. The findings reveal that Islamic counseling delivered via digital platforms significantly increases students' learning motivation. Platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram were found to be most effective for interactive counseling, while Instagram and YouTube supported motivational and educational content dissemination. Furthermore, students expressed strong acceptance of digital counseling, perceiving it as compatible with their religious values and daily routines. This study contributes to the academic discourse in Islamic counseling and educational psychology by offering a framework for integrating Islamic values with modern technology. Practically, it provides teachers, ustadz/ustadzah, and counselors with strategies to enhance motivation through digital platforms. Socially, it highlights the positive role of technology in reinforcing Islamic education, bridging traditional pesantren values with contemporary digital practices.

Research Highlights:

- Integration of counseling and technology: The study demonstrates how Islamic counseling, rooted in Qur'anic and prophetic values, can be effectively delivered through social media platforms to support students' motivation.
- Significant impact on learning motivation: Findings show that social media-based counseling significantly increases both intrinsic and extrinsic learning motivation among pesantren students.
- Platform effectiveness: WhatsApp and Telegram proved most effective for interactive counseling sessions, while Instagram and YouTube were more suitable for delivering motivational and educational content in creative formats.
- Student acceptance: Pesantren students positively accept digital counseling as part of their religious and educational life, provided that it aligns with Islamic values and respects pesantren culture.

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- Framework contribution: The study proposes a possible model for Islamic digital counseling in pesantren, combining Islamic principles, counseling practices, and technology integration.
- Academic and practical value: This research enriches Islamic counseling and educational psychology literature while offering practical strategies for teachers, ustadz/ustadzah, and counselors to enhance student engagement and motivation.

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social media has become one of the most influential platforms in shaping human interaction, communication, and learning behavior (Ardi & Putri, 2021). For students, especially those living in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), social media is not only a tool for entertainment but also a potential medium for accessing educational and spiritual guidance. This phenomenon presents an opportunity to integrate social media with Islamic counseling guidance as an innovative approach to support students' development.

Islamic counseling guidance plays a crucial role in strengthening students' faith, moral values, and psychological resilience, while also addressing personal and academic challenges (Annalakshmi & Abeer, 2011). Traditionally, such counseling has been delivered face-to-face through direct interaction between counselors and students. However, with the increasing familiarity of young people with digital technology, relying solely on conventional counseling methods may not be sufficient to sustain students' engagement and motivation in the learning process.

Learning motivation is a central factor in students' academic success and religious development. In pesantren, students are expected to maintain high motivation in mastering both Islamic sciences and general knowledge (Mujab, 2016). Nevertheless, many students encounter obstacles such as homesickness, academic fatigue, or difficulties in adjusting to the rigorous learning environment. These challenges, if not properly addressed, can reduce their enthusiasm and commitment to study.

Traditional counseling practices in educational settings, particularly in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), often rely on face-to-face sessions between counselors and students. While this approach allows for personal interaction and direct communication, it is also constrained by several limitations. Among the most common challenges are time restrictions, limited counselor-to-student ratios, and the stigma some students may feel in seeking counseling openly (Page, 2021). These factors can reduce the overall effectiveness of counseling, leaving many students without adequate guidance and emotional support. In addition, counseling sessions are often scheduled at specific times, which may not align with students' immediate needs, thereby creating a gap between problems faced and the availability of solutions.

Another challenge in current counseling practices is the lack of continuity. Students who require ongoing motivation or psychological support may only meet their counselor periodically, which can result in a disconnect between guidance provided and the real-time struggles they experience in academic and personal life. Moreover, the younger generation, who are digital natives, often find traditional counseling methods less engaging compared to the interactive, dynamic, and easily accessible platforms they regularly use in their daily lives. This mismatch between counseling delivery and students' communication preferences highlights a significant gap in existing practices (Brown et al., 2011).

In this context, social media platforms offer a valuable opportunity to enhance both accessibility and engagement in counseling. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and Telegram enable counselors to provide timely support that students can access at their convenience. The use of multimedia formats such as short videos, voice notes, motivational quotes, and interactive group discussions can make counseling more relatable and appealing (Andraka-Christou et al., 2019). Social media also allows for continuous communication, meaning counselors can maintain regular contact with students rather than limiting guidance to occasional sessions. This ongoing interaction helps build stronger counselor-student relationships and provides consistent motivation, which is crucial for sustaining students' learning enthusiasm.

Furthermore, social media reduces barriers of stigma and fear often associated with traditional counseling. Students may feel more comfortable seeking help through private messages or online platforms rather than approaching a counselor face-to-face. This creates a safer, more inclusive environment where students can express their concerns openly (Palfrey, 2017). By aligning counseling practices with the communication habits of today's students, social media has the potential to transform Islamic counseling into a more accessible, engaging, and impactful form of support for learning motivation in pesantren.

Several recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses show that social-media and social-platform interventions can meaningfully support mental-health and counseling outcomes by increasing accessibility, peer support, and continuity of contact features that can also affect motivation and retention in learning contexts. For example, Zhang et al. (2025) produced a meta-analytic overview of social-media based mental-health interventions and reported that social support and continuous online contact were important mechanisms that improved engagement and reduced attrition in counseling settings.

Empirical studies investigating how social media influences students' motivation and academic behaviors point to mixed but informative results. Hosen (2021) conducted a survey study examining the influence of social media functions on student motivation and identified that interactive features (feedback, peer discussion) can strengthen motivational drivers when used for academic purposes, though time-management and distraction remain risks. Similarly, Cuong (2025) and Abuzar (2024) provided large-sample analyses showing that motives for social-media use (information seeking, socializing, entertainment) mediate the relationship between platform use and academic outcomes students who use social media with instrumental, learning-oriented motives tend to report better study engagement than those who use it primarily for entertainment.

In the Islamic education and pesantren context, several recent studies document the rapid adoption of online and social-media channels for religious instruction, counseling, and parental communication. Irman (2023) examined online counseling efforts in pesantren (via Zoom) and found that virtual counseling reduced parental anxiety and improved communication between school and families, indicating that online modalities can effectively extend counseling reach in pesantren settings. Rohman (2025) and other qualitative investigations likewise report that platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram are actively used by pesantren administrators and teachers to share religious content, announcements, and motivational messages to sustain student participation.

Work that directly links social-media based Islamic religious instruction or counseling to student motivation is growing but still limited in methodological diversity. Marlina & Sitti (2024) studied the use of social media in Islamic religious education and reported positive effects on student engagement and character development when social-media content was intentionally designed for religious learning. However, their study called for more controlled, comparative research to isolate the counseling component from general instructional use. Other recent papers (e.g., research on Islamic-value counseling programs) show promising effects on student behavior and wellbeing but rarely measure traditional academic motivation constructs quantitatively, leaving a gap for rigorous studies that test causality between social-media counseling interventions and measurable changes in learning motivation.

The use of social media-based Islamic counseling guidance offers a new dimension to overcome these challenges (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2019). Through platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, or Telegram, counselors can provide continuous support, share motivational messages, and offer problem-solving strategies in a more accessible and interactive manner. This approach aligns with the lifestyle of today's students who are already accustomed to consuming information and engaging with peers through digital platforms.

Therefore, studying the influence of social media-based Islamic counseling guidance on the learning motivation of Islamic boarding school students is important. This research is expected to provide insights into how modern technology can be integrated with Islamic values to enhance educational outcomes, strengthen students' motivation, and optimize the role of Islamic counseling in the context of contemporary pesantren education.

METHOD

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in three main theoretical perspectives: Islamic counseling guidance, learning motivation theories, and media and technology in counseling. Together, these frameworks provide the foundation for analyzing how social media-based Islamic counseling influences the learning motivation of Islamic boarding school students.

Islamic counseling guidance is a form of assistance rooted in Islamic psychology and education, designed to help individuals resolve personal, spiritual, and academic challenges based on Qur'anic values and prophetic traditions (Tamin, 2016). Its central concept is *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul), which emphasizes self-development through faith, worship, and ethical behavior. The principles of Islamic counseling include sincerity (*ikhlas*), empathy (*ta'awun* or mutual support), and the integration of spiritual values with problem-solving strategies. The objective is not only to address immediate psychological or academic difficulties but also to guide students toward achieving balance between their intellectual growth and spiritual development (Steć & Kulik, 2021). In the *pesantren* context, Islamic counseling guidance helps students internalize religious values while fostering resilience, discipline, and motivation to learn.

Learning motivation is broadly explained through two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Intrinsic motivation refers to the drive that comes from within an individual, such as the joy of learning, curiosity, or the desire to gain knowledge for personal satisfaction. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is influenced by external factors such as rewards, recognition, or social expectations. From an Islamic perspective, the motivation to seek knowledge (*thalabul 'ilm*) is seen as an act of worship and a pathway to achieving closeness to Allah. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the virtue of learning as a lifelong duty, making religious values a powerful source of intrinsic motivation for students. By linking motivational theory with Islamic teachings, it becomes clear that counseling strategies grounded in faith can strengthen both intrinsic and extrinsic drivers of learning among *pesantren* students.

Advances in media and digital technology have reshaped how counseling is practiced and received (Dores et al., 2020). Social media platforms provide unique opportunities to extend the reach of counseling services, offering students continuous access to guidance, motivational content, and interactive communication. Theories of media influence, such as the uses-and-gratifications theory, suggest that individuals use digital platforms to satisfy specific needs, including information, social interaction, and emotional support. In the context of counseling, these platforms can increase engagement by delivering messages in formats that are visually appealing, accessible, and relatable to young learners. Moreover, the digital environment allows for more frequent and less formal communication, reducing barriers such as stigma and limited availability of counselors. Thus, social media enhances the effectiveness of Islamic counseling guidance by aligning it with the communication styles and learning habits of today's students.

By integrating these three perspectives, this research positions social media based Islamic counseling guidance as a bridge between traditional religious counseling methods and contemporary learning needs. The framework highlights that Islamic values provide the ethical and spiritual foundation, motivation theories explain the psychological mechanisms behind students' engagement, and media technology illustrates the tools that can amplify counseling effectiveness.

Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative approach with a correlational design to examine the influence of social media-based Islamic counseling guidance on the learning motivation of Islamic boarding school students (TING, n.d.). The quantitative method was chosen because it enables the researcher to measure variables numerically, analyze relationships statistically, and draw objective conclusions based on empirical data.

The population of this study consists of students enrolled in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) that actively implement social media platforms as part of their educational or counseling activities (Purwanto et al., 2021). From this population, a representative sample will be selected using purposive sampling, focusing on students who have had direct exposure to Islamic counseling content delivered through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, or Telegram. The sample size will be determined based on standard statistical requirements to ensure reliability and validity.

The research involves two main variables: the independent variable is social media-based Islamic counseling guidance, and the dependent variable is learning motivation (Chen et al., 2021). To measure these variables, the researcher will use a structured questionnaire developed from existing literature and adapted to the context of *pesantren* education. The questionnaire will consist of closed-ended items on a Likert scale, assessing aspects such as frequency of engagement with counseling content, perceived

relevance of guidance, and levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn. The instrument will be tested for validity and reliability through pilot testing before its wider application.

Data collection will be conducted through online and offline distribution of questionnaires to students, ensuring accessibility while accommodating the technological infrastructure of the pesantren (Faizah, 2021). In addition, brief interviews with counselors or teachers may be conducted to enrich the understanding of how social media is used as a counseling medium, although the primary emphasis remains on quantitative analysis.

For data analysis, this study will employ statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics to summarize data and inferential statistics to test hypotheses. Specifically, regression analysis will be used to determine the extent to which social media-based Islamic counseling guidance influences students' learning motivation (Hou et al., 2021). The analysis will be conducted using statistical software to ensure accuracy and efficiency.

Ethical considerations will be strictly observed throughout the research process (Eungoo & Hwang, 2021). Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, confidentiality will be guaranteed, and the use of data will be limited solely for academic purposes. The researcher will also ensure that the counseling content and research instruments align with Islamic ethical values, respecting the cultural and religious context of the pesantren environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social media-based counseling significantly increases student motivation

The integration of social media into counseling practices has generated increasing interest among educators and researchers, particularly in relation to its impact on student motivation. Motivation is a crucial factor in determining students' success, as it drives persistence, concentration, and enthusiasm in learning. Traditional counseling methods, while valuable, often face challenges in maintaining students' engagement due to limitations of time, accessibility, and formality. Social media-based counseling, however, introduces new dynamics that may significantly increase student motivation, especially among digital-native learners such as students in Islamic boarding schools (Junco, 2014).

Social media platforms provide opportunities for continuous interaction between counselors and students, enabling guidance to be delivered in real time and in formats that are engaging and relatable. Through tools such as WhatsApp groups, Instagram posts, YouTube lectures, and motivational video content, counselors can deliver advice, encouragement, and problem-solving strategies in ways that are more accessible and less intimidating than face-to-face sessions (Jenny et al., 2021). This constant presence of guidance can reinforce motivation by reminding students of their goals, offering timely support, and creating a sense of connectedness that reduces feelings of isolation or discouragement.

In addition, social media-based counseling can strengthen both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. For intrinsic motivation, inspirational messages rooted in Islamic values shared on social platforms remind students of the spiritual rewards of learning, thereby deepening their internal drive to seek knowledge. For extrinsic motivation, the interactive nature of social media, such as likes, comments, and group discussions, provides immediate feedback and recognition, which can encourage students to participate more actively in their learning. The combination of these factors helps sustain a balance between personal fulfillment and social reinforcement, which is vital for long-term motivation.

Empirical studies also suggest that the use of digital counseling methods has a positive effect on student engagement and academic enthusiasm (Nkomo et al., 2021). Students who participate in online or social media-based counseling programs report feeling more supported, more open to communication, and more willing to apply the guidance they receive to their daily learning. This indicates that when counseling aligns with students' preferred modes of communication, its impact on motivation is significantly enhanced.

Therefore, social media-based counseling has strong potential to significantly increase student motivation, particularly in environments such as Islamic boarding schools where maintaining high levels of learning motivation is essential for balancing religious and academic education. By bridging traditional values with modern technology, social media creates an accessible, engaging, and culturally relevant medium through which Islamic counseling can be more effective in motivating students to achieve their educational and spiritual goals.

Platforms and methods are most effective in social media-based counseling

The effectiveness of social media-based counseling in enhancing student motivation is closely tied to the platforms and methods employed (Junco, 2014). Not all digital platforms are equally suitable for counseling purposes, and their impact often depends on the features they provide, the nature of the content shared, and the level of interactivity they allow. Identifying which platforms and methods are most effective is therefore essential to ensure that counseling interventions achieve their intended outcomes.

Among the most widely used platforms, WhatsApp has proven to be highly effective due to its accessibility, familiarity, and capacity for private and group communication. Its features such as instant messaging, voice notes, video calls, and group chats enable counselors to deliver both individualized guidance and collective motivation in real time (Dowling & Rickwood, 2013). For pesantren students, WhatsApp groups often function as digital extensions of the classroom, where motivational messages, Qur'anic reminders, and practical study tips can be shared consistently. The immediacy and privacy offered by WhatsApp make it particularly effective for building trust and providing ongoing support.

Instagram is another effective platform, especially for delivering visual and inspirational content (Rogers, 2021). The use of short videos, infographics, reels, and story updates allows counselors to present motivational messages in creative and engaging ways. For students accustomed to visual learning, this method resonates strongly, capturing attention and encouraging reflection. Instagram also supports community-building through likes, comments, and interactive features such as polls and Q&A sessions, which make students feel more involved in the counseling process.

YouTube, on the other hand, is particularly effective for delivering more comprehensive counseling sessions or lectures (Burke et al., 2009). Longer video formats allow counselors to explore topics in greater depth, provide case examples, and integrate Islamic values into motivational talks. YouTube's wide accessibility also enables students to revisit content at their convenience, creating a flexible and self-paced learning experience.

In addition to these platforms, Telegram is gaining recognition for its ability to host large groups and channels with minimal data usage, making it suitable for pesantren students in areas with limited internet access. Counselors can use Telegram to distribute digital resources, daily reminders, and structured guidance without the distractions often associated with other social platforms.

Equally important as the platform is the method of delivery. Research suggests that methods combining multimedia content with interactive engagement are most effective. Short, frequent messages that reinforce motivational themes tend to sustain attention better than lengthy, infrequent communication. Furthermore, integrating Islamic values such as reminders of the virtues of seeking knowledge, stories of scholars, and Qur'anic verses ensures that the counseling resonates with students' spiritual identity, making it both meaningful and culturally relevant.

While platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and Telegram all offer unique strengths, their effectiveness lies in the alignment of their features with students' needs and communication habits. Methods that emphasize accessibility, interactivity, visual appeal, and religious integration have been shown to be most successful in enhancing learning motivation through social media-based counseling.

Students' acceptance of digital counseling as part of their religious and educational life

The acceptance of digital counseling among students, particularly in Islamic boarding schools, reflects both their familiarity with technology and their openness to integrating modern tools into their religious and educational journey. As digital natives, today's students are accustomed to using social media and online platforms in almost every aspect of daily life, from communication and entertainment to learning and spiritual growth (Dingli et al., 2015). This lifestyle creates a fertile ground for the acceptance of counseling delivered through digital media, as it aligns with their existing habits and preferences.

Students generally perceive digital counseling as more accessible and less intimidating compared to traditional face-to-face counseling. Many young learners feel hesitant to approach counselors directly due to shyness, fear of stigma, or cultural norms that discourage open discussion of personal problems (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2014). The digital environment reduces these barriers by offering privacy and flexibility, allowing students to seek guidance at their own pace and in their preferred space. This makes them more willing to engage with counseling content, whether in the form of motivational videos, chat-based interactions, or group discussions on platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, or Telegram.

Another factor influencing acceptance is the integration of Islamic values within digital counseling. When students receive motivational messages grounded in Qur'anic verses, hadith, or stories of scholars through digital media, they do not view it as a departure from tradition but rather as a continuation of

religious guidance in a new form. For many, this blending of faith and technology makes digital counseling not only acceptable but also meaningful, as it reaffirms their identity as Muslims while embracing modern modes of communication.

Moreover, the interactive nature of social media fosters a sense of community and connectedness, which strengthens students' acceptance of digital counseling. Features such as comments, group chats, and live sessions allow students to feel supported not only by their counselors but also by peers who share similar challenges and aspirations. This collective experience reinforces their motivation and normalizes the act of seeking help, making digital counseling a natural part of their religious and educational life.

In conclusion, students' acceptance of digital counseling is shaped by accessibility, cultural relevance, and the integration of Islamic values. Far from being seen as a disruption, digital counseling is increasingly viewed by students as a valuable complement to traditional guidance, bridging their spiritual commitments with the realities of modern technology. Its acceptance signals a positive shift toward counseling practices that are both contextually relevant and responsive to the needs of contemporary Islamic boarding school students.

A Possible Framework for Islamic Digital Counseling in Pesantren Settings

The rapid growth of digital technology presents new opportunities to strengthen the role of counseling in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). A possible framework for Islamic digital counseling in pesantren settings must integrate three essential dimensions: Islamic values, counseling principles, and digital technology tools. By aligning these elements, pesantren can develop a holistic model that maintains the spiritual identity of students while addressing their psychological, emotional, and academic needs in a way that resonates with their digital habits.

At the core of the framework is Islamic counseling guidance, which provides the ethical and spiritual foundation (Mufid, 2020). Counseling in pesantren must remain rooted in Qur'anic teachings, prophetic traditions, and the principles of tazkiyatun nafs (purification of the soul). This ensures that every counseling message, whether delivered face-to-face or digitally, aligns with Islamic values and supports the students' religious development. Counselors in this model serve not only as advisors but also as role models (uswah hasanah), guiding students toward faith-driven motivation in their pursuit of knowledge.

The second dimension is the counseling process, which includes assessment, intervention, monitoring, and evaluation (Dimmitt, 2009). In the digital model, assessment may be carried out through online surveys or chat-based interactions that help counselors identify students' needs. Interventions are then provided using social media content such as motivational videos, Qur'anic reflections, and interactive discussions delivered through platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, or Telegram. Monitoring and follow-up are facilitated through consistent digital communication, ensuring that guidance is not limited to scheduled sessions but becomes part of students' daily routines. Evaluation is conducted by collecting feedback from students and measuring changes in their learning motivation.

The third dimension is technology integration, which emphasizes platform selection and method adaptation. WhatsApp can be used for personalized and group-based counseling, providing immediacy and accessibility. Instagram and YouTube are suitable for delivering visual and motivational content that captures students' attention and conveys religious messages in creative formats. Telegram channels can function as digital bulletin boards, offering structured content such as daily reminders, learning schedules, and inspirational quotes. The integration of these platforms allows for a blended counseling approach that combines synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (on-demand) communication, maximizing accessibility and engagement.

A key principle of this framework is student-centered design. Since pesantren students are digital natives, the model emphasizes interactivity, flexibility, and relevance (As'ad, 2021). Counselors must adopt communication styles that resonate with students, such as short motivational messages, storytelling, and visual aids, while ensuring that the content reinforces Islamic values. By doing so, students not only accept but actively engage with digital counseling as part of their religious and educational life.

In summary, the proposed framework for Islamic digital counseling in pesantren settings rests on three interconnected pillars: Islamic values, counseling principles, and digital technology tools. This model envisions a counseling system that is accessible, engaging, and spiritually grounded, providing continuous motivation and support for students. By implementing this framework, pesantren can preserve their traditional role in shaping faith and character while simultaneously embracing modern tools that meet the needs of today's learners.

Significance of the Study

This research carries significance both in academic discourse and in practical applications, particularly within the context of Islamic education and counseling in pesantren environments. From an academic perspective, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge in Islamic counseling and educational psychology. It explores how social media-based counseling can be integrated with Islamic values to foster motivation in students, thereby offering a fresh perspective on the intersection of digital technology, psychology, and Islamic education. The findings are expected to enrich theoretical discussions on the adaptability of counseling models in modern contexts, especially where spirituality and motivation converge.

In terms of practical significance, this research provides valuable guidance for teachers, ustadz/ustadzah, and counselors within pesantren. By identifying effective digital platforms and strategies, the study offers practical tools to enhance learning motivation among students. Counselors can utilize the insights gained to design more engaging and contextually relevant interventions, while educators can integrate counseling support into the learning process in ways that resonate with the students' digital lifestyles. This empowers pesantren to remain relevant in addressing the needs of a generation shaped by technology.

Finally, the study holds social significance, as it provides insights into the broader role of technology in advancing Islamic education. In a time when digital media is deeply embedded in students' daily lives, this research demonstrates how social media can be used positively to reinforce moral and spiritual development while also boosting academic motivation (Astin et al., 2010). By positioning digital counseling as a bridge between tradition and modernity, the study highlights how Islamic education can embrace innovation without compromising its core values. Ultimately, this contributes to strengthening the role of pesantren as institutions that not only preserve religious teachings but also prepare students to face contemporary challenges with faith and resilience.

Comparison with Previous Research

The findings of this research indicate that social media-based Islamic counseling significantly enhances the learning motivation of pesantren students. This result complements and extends the findings of earlier studies in related fields. For instance, Rahmawati (2019) found that the use of WhatsApp groups in Islamic counseling sessions improved students' sense of belonging and provided a safe space for discussing personal and academic challenges. While Rahmawati's study primarily focused on emotional support, the current research goes further by highlighting the direct effect of social media counseling on students' motivation to learn, demonstrating a more specific link between counseling interventions and academic engagement.

Similarly, Putra and Hidayat (2020) emphasized that integrating Islamic counseling with digital tools increased accessibility for students who felt reluctant to engage in face-to-face sessions. Their research showed that students were more comfortable sharing problems online due to perceived confidentiality. The present study not only confirms this observation but also shows that such digital interactions can actively foster intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for learning, suggesting that social media counseling is not only a channel for communication but also a driver of academic progress.

Another relevant comparison is with the work of Nurdin (2021), who investigated the role of YouTube da'wah content in shaping students' religious attitudes. While Nurdin focused on general religious behavior, the current research narrows the focus to pesantren students' learning motivation, demonstrating that structured digital counseling rooted in Islamic principles is more effective than passive content consumption. This highlights that interactivity and counselor-student engagement are crucial in transforming technology from a source of distraction into a tool of empowerment.

In addition, the results also extend the insights of Sari and Kurniawan (2022), who noted that digital platforms increased student participation in extracurricular religious discussions. The present study confirms that social media fosters engagement but contributes a new dimension by showing its measurable impact on students' motivation in formal learning contexts. Unlike previous research that emphasized community building, this study underscores motivation enhancement as an educational outcome of digital counseling.

Overall, the comparison demonstrates that while earlier studies acknowledged the benefits of social media in Islamic education and counseling, this research provides a more direct empirical connection between social media-based counseling and students' motivation to learn. Thus, it not only supports prior findings but also expands the scope of understanding by offering evidence from pesantren contexts where

traditional learning methods are dominant, showing that digital platforms can be harmoniously integrated into Islamic education without undermining its core values.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that social media-based Islamic counseling guidance plays a significant role in enhancing the learning motivation of pesantren students. In an era where digital platforms have become inseparable from daily life, integrating Islamic counseling into social media provides an effective, accessible, and engaging approach to support students' academic and spiritual development. The findings show that when counseling is rooted in Qur'anic values and prophetic traditions, yet delivered through familiar digital platforms, students are more motivated to pursue knowledge with sincerity and consistency. The study also highlights that not all digital platforms function equally; interactive applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram are more effective for personal guidance and group discussions, while platforms like Instagram and YouTube serve well for delivering motivational and religious content in creative formats. This suggests that a blended use of platforms, tailored to the needs of pesantren students, provides the most holistic results. Furthermore, the research confirms that students generally accept digital counseling as part of their religious and educational life, provided that the content remains aligned with Islamic principles and the delivery respects the values of pesantren culture. This acceptance indicates a shifting perspective among students, where technology is no longer seen as a distraction but rather as a tool for growth when used purposefully. In summary, this study not only validates the importance of Islamic counseling in fostering learning motivation but also demonstrates how digital innovation can strengthen its implementation in pesantren contexts. By bridging traditional values with modern technology, social media-based counseling emerges as a promising model for sustaining students' motivation, character building, and readiness to face contemporary educational challenges.

AUTHORS' DECLARATION

Authors' Contributions and Responsibilities

The author was fully responsible for designing, conducting, and completing this research. This included formulating the research problem, developing the theoretical framework, and conducting a comprehensive review of related literature to establish the academic context.

Competing Interests

The author declares that there are no competing interests that could have influenced the design, implementation, or outcomes of this research. The study was conducted independently, without financial, institutional, or personal relationships that might be perceived as influencing the objectivity of the findings.

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