

An Islamic Counseling Approach to Helping Victims of Digital Violence (Cyberbullying) Among

Almashyra ¹, Rifqa Tazkia ²

Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS), Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Melaka, Malaysia

Abstract: The rise of digital technology and social media has led to a surge in digital violence or cyberbullying, which has become a critical psychological and social issue among teenagers. Victims of cyberbullying often experience emotional distress, anxiety, depression, and a diminished sense of self-worth. This research aims to explore how Islamic counseling can be applied as a holistic approach to assist teenage victims in overcoming the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral impacts of digital violence. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method, involving in-depth interviews and observations with teenage victims who participated in Islamic counseling sessions guided by Qur'anic and Prophetic principles. The counseling process emphasizes tazkiyah an-nafs (purification of the soul), muhasabah (self-reflection), sabr (patience), tawakkul (trust in Allah), and akhlaq (moral behavior) as core elements of healing. The findings reveal that Islamic counseling effectively reduces negative emotions such as revenge, helplessness, and despair, while fostering forgiveness, resilience, and a positive self-concept through religious coping. Participants reported improved emotional regulation, stronger faith, and greater psychological stability after engaging in the counseling process. Moreover, the integration of psychological coping strategies and Islamic spiritual principles provided victims with meaningful frameworks for interpreting their experiences, restoring their self-esteem, and promoting ethical digital behavior. The study concludes that Islamic counseling offers a comprehensive framework that addresses both mental and spiritual healing, distinguishing it from purely secular approaches. It empowers victims to transform pain into growth, rebuild moral consciousness, and strengthen their relationship with Allah. These results support previous findings that emphasize the value of faith-based interventions in adolescent mental health recovery. Hence, Islamic counseling should be further developed and implemented within schools, counseling centers, and community programs as an effective model for addressing the growing challenge of cyberbullying among teenagers.

Research Highlights:

- Addresses a critical modern issue: The study explores the increasing prevalence of digital violence (cyberbullying) among teenagers and its severe psychological, emotional, and social impacts.
- Integrates faith and psychology: Islamic counseling combines spiritual teachings from the Qur'an and Hadith with modern psychological theories such as stress-coping and social support models to promote holistic healing.
- Focus on religious coping: The approach emphasizes tazkiyah an-nafs (purification of the soul), muhasabah (self-reflection), sabr (patience), and tawakkul (trust in Allah) to reduce negative emotions like revenge, helplessness, and despair.
- Promotes emotional and spiritual growth: The counseling process fosters forgiveness, resilience, and positive self-concept, helping victims reinterpret their trauma through faith-based meaning-making.

Article history

Submitted 22-09-2024

Revised 14-10-2024

Accepted 30-11-2024

Keywords

Islamic counseling;
Cyberbullying;
Digital violence;
Religious coping;
Emotional healing.

© 2024 by author(s).

Licensee *Journal on Islamic Studies*.

This article is licensed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).



Corresponding Author:

Name: Almashyra

Email:

almashyra@uitm.edu.my

- Empirical findings support effectiveness: Results show that Islamic counseling effectively restores emotional balance, strengthens self-esteem, and encourages ethical online behavior among teenage victims.
- Holistic healing framework: The research demonstrates that Islamic counseling provides a comprehensive model of recovery that integrates mental, emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions.

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social media and online communication platforms have become an inseparable part of teenagers' lives. These digital spaces offer opportunities for learning, creativity, and social interaction. However, alongside these benefits, a concerning phenomenon has emerged digital violence or cyberbullying. Cyberbullying refers to aggressive, threatening, or humiliating behavior carried out through digital means such as social media, messaging applications, or online forums (Willard, 2007). This form of violence often occurs anonymously, making it more difficult to control and leaving victims constantly exposed to emotional harm. The accessibility of technology and the growing dependence of young people on digital communication have made cyberbullying one of the most alarming social and psychological issues among teenagers today.

The prevalence of cyberbullying continues to increase globally, and its effects are both profound and multidimensional. Teenagers who experience cyberbullying often suffer from psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, fear, and low self-esteem (Cénat et al., 2014). Emotionally, they may feel isolated, humiliated, and powerless due to the wide and uncontrollable spread of harmful content online. Socially, victims often withdraw from their peers, avoid school or online activities, and develop trust issues that hinder their interpersonal relationships. In severe cases, persistent cyberbullying can lead to self-harm or suicidal thoughts. These impacts demonstrate that cyberbullying is not only a technological problem but also a serious mental health and social concern that requires holistic attention.

Various approaches have been used to address this issue, including psychological counseling and digital literacy programs (Suryahadikusumah & Nadya, 2020). While these interventions are essential, they often focus primarily on behavioral and emotional aspects without fully considering the spiritual dimension of healing, which is particularly important for Muslim adolescents. In Islam, mental well-being is closely linked to spiritual balance, moral discipline, and a strong relationship with Allah. Islamic teachings emphasize patience (*sabr*), trust in Allah (*tawakkul*), forgiveness (*afw*), and self-reflection (*muhasabah*) as principles that nurture emotional resilience and peace of mind. Therefore, integrating these values into counseling can help victims of digital violence recover not only emotionally but also spiritually, fostering a deeper sense of purpose and inner strength.

An Islamic counseling approach provides a holistic framework that combines psychological guidance with spiritual wisdom derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. It encourages victims to understand their experiences through a faith-based perspective, promoting forgiveness, resilience, and moral empowerment (Drumm et al., 2014). This approach also strengthens self-concept, builds positive coping strategies, and prevents the cycle of revenge or despair often seen in victims of online abuse.

Digital violence (cyberbullying) and its effects on adolescents have been well documented. Chai et al. (2021) reviewed how cybervictimization is linked to worse internalizing and externalizing symptoms compared with traditional bullying, stressing increased rates of anxiety and depression among affected youth. Movahedi et al. (2024) further investigated mechanisms linking cyberbullying to severe psychological outcomes (e.g., psychotic experiences) and highlighted mediators such as alexithymia that intensify mental-health risk. These studies collectively show that cyberbullying is a distinct, pervasive threat to adolescent mental health that requires targeted interventions.

Research examining the protective role of religion and spirituality suggests that faith-based resources can buffer some negative effects of victimization. Shaver et al. (2021) and related work indicate that spiritual health and religious connectedness may moderate the impact of bullying by providing social support, meaning-making, and coping frameworks. Similarly, Willis (2015) and later reviews propose that

higher religiousness is often associated with lower involvement in bullying, though findings can be context-dependent and influenced by how religiosity is practiced. These studies support investigating religiously-tailored counseling as a plausible protective approach for religious adolescents.

Several studies specifically address Islamic counseling and faith-integrated mental health interventions for Muslim adolescents. Rosyada (2022) reviewed Islamic counseling guidelines and concluded that Qur'anic-centered practices and spiritually-informed techniques can improve adolescent mental health by fostering resilience and coping tied to religious belief. Haramain's 2024 systematic review of Islamic psychotherapy reported that culturally and religiously adapted therapies (including Qur'an-based practices, spiritual coping, and integration of Islamic values into therapy) demonstrated promising outcomes across multiple studies, though the authors call for more rigorous empirical trials. These works establish a theoretical and evidential foundation for combining Islamic teachings with counseling methods.

Applied and school-based interventions in Islamic settings show practical models and early evidence. Aqillah, Suhaemi, and Monalisa (2025) examined peer-counseling programs in an Islamic boarding school and found reductions in cyberbullying behaviors and improvements in student support networks. Ilma & Dahlan (2024) implemented solution-focused group work at an Islamic junior high and reported positive effects on bullying prevention and peer relations. Research on the role of Islamic religion teachers (Ningsih, 2023) emphasizes that religious education and teacher-led moral instruction are important preventive mechanisms for both bullying and cyberbullying in Indonesian schools. These applied studies illustrate feasible routes for embedding Islamic counseling elements into educational contexts.

Qualitative work on counseling delivery and victims' experiences highlights the importance of accessible, culturally sensitive services. Mahmood et al. (2024) explored adolescent victims' lived experiences of receiving virtual counselling during episodes of cybervictimization; participants described counselling as a critical support but noted the need for culturally and contextually appropriate approaches. Broader work on religiously tailored mental health services (Faruk et al., 2025) echoes that Muslim clients and providers value services which respect religious beliefs and incorporate faith-based resources. Together, these studies point to the value of an Islamic counseling model that is both evidence-informed and culturally competent.

Synthesis and gaps. Systematic reviews (Haramain, 2024) and empirical studies indicate that faith-integrated interventions including Islamic counseling hold promise for adolescent mental health generally and potentially for cyberbullying victims specifically. However, the literature still lacks a robust set of randomized controlled trials or longitudinal evaluations testing explicit Islamic counseling protocols for cyberbullying recovery. Few studies directly measure spiritual outcomes alongside psychological recovery for victims of digital violence, and there is limited research comparing faith-integrated counseling with secular approaches in school or online environments. Hence, this research seeks to explore how Islamic counseling can be effectively applied to assist teenage victims of digital violence, aiming to develop a comprehensive, faith-oriented model that supports their psychological recovery, moral development, and spiritual well-being.

METHOD

Theoretical Foundation

This research is supported by several theoretical foundations that bridge the fields of psychology, Islamic counseling, and cyberpsychology (Rothman, 2019). From a psychological perspective, the stress-coping theory proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) serves as a major foundation. This theory explains how individuals perceive and respond to stressful situations through cognitive appraisal and coping mechanisms. In the context of cyberbullying, victims experience emotional stress triggered by online harassment, and their coping responses whether problem-focused or emotion-focused determine their psychological well-being. Effective coping involves both internal resilience and external support systems, which Islamic counseling can strengthen through faith-based guidance. Additionally, the social support theory emphasizes the role of supportive relationships in helping individuals manage stress and recover from trauma. For teenage victims, counseling that includes emotional empathy, spiritual encouragement, and community support can reduce feelings of isolation and hopelessness. The behavioral change model also complements this view by explaining how counseling can influence cognitive patterns and behaviors, helping victims replace negative thinking with positive, spiritually guided self-perceptions.

From the Islamic counseling framework, this study draws upon principles rooted in the Qur'an and Hadith, which emphasize holistic healing encompassing body, mind, and soul (Haque & Keshavarzi, 2014). Islamic counseling is grounded in the concept of *tazkiyah an-nafs* the purification of the soul where individuals are guided to cleanse their hearts from negative emotions such as anger, hatred, and despair, and replace them with patience (*sabr*), trust in Allah (*tawakkul*), and forgiveness (*afw*). The principle of *akhlaq* (morality) encourages good character, empathy, and restraint, promoting ethical online behavior and emotional resilience. The concept of *ihsan* (doing good and striving for excellence) motivates individuals to maintain integrity and kindness even in the face of harm. By integrating these teachings into counseling, victims are helped not only to manage their emotions but also to rebuild their sense of self-worth through spiritual and moral growth. This framework aligns with the idea that emotional healing is inseparable from spiritual development in Islamic psychology.

The third theoretical basis is derived from cyberpsychology, a field that examines how digital environments influence human behavior, emotions, and identity. Cyberpsychology explains that online communication often creates a sense of anonymity and disinhibition, leading some individuals to engage in harmful behaviors they would avoid in face-to-face interactions (Joinson, 2007). This understanding helps counselors identify the psychological mechanisms that enable cyberbullying and the reasons victims may internalize online abuse more deeply. Furthermore, theories within cyberpsychology address how social comparison, digital validation, and online self-presentation shape adolescents' emotional well-being. These insights are essential for designing effective Islamic counseling interventions that address not only the emotional impact of online violence but also the behavioral patterns formed in virtual spaces.

In summary, the integration of stress-coping theory, social support theory, Islamic counseling principles, and cyberpsychological insights provides a multidimensional theoretical foundation for this study. This combination allows the research to view victims of digital violence holistically as individuals requiring psychological stability, social empathy, behavioral change, and spiritual healing (Silva et al., 2018). Through this integrative approach, Islamic counseling can be developed as a comprehensive model that addresses the complex emotional and moral challenges faced by teenagers in the digital era.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is built on the integration of psychological theories and Islamic counseling principles to address the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral consequences experienced by teenage victims of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying, as a form of digital violence, often leaves deep psychological scars, leading to emotional instability, negative self-perception, and maladaptive behavioral responses (McKennie, 2017). Therefore, a comprehensive counseling model must not only focus on emotional recovery but also guide individuals toward moral and spiritual resilience. Islamic counseling provides this holistic approach by incorporating faith-based values that foster healing through both psychological and spiritual dimensions.

From an emotional perspective, Islamic counseling helps victims recognize and manage negative emotions such as anger, fear, sadness, and humiliation that arise from online harassment (Farooqui & Kaushik, 2021). The process begins with trauma recognition, where victims are encouraged to acknowledge their pain and emotional struggles in a safe, empathetic environment. This recognition stage is crucial for validating their experiences and breaking the silence that often surrounds cyberbullying. Counselors then facilitate spiritual reflection, guiding victims to seek solace through remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), prayer (*salah*), and understanding that trials are part of life's tests meant to strengthen faith. Through these practices, victims gradually regain emotional stability, inner peace, and hope, which form the foundation for recovery.

On a cognitive level, Islamic counseling addresses distorted thoughts and negative beliefs that victims often develop about themselves after being bullied. Victims may internalize the hurtful messages they receive online, leading to feelings of worthlessness or guilt. Through Qur'anic teachings and reflective dialogue, counselors help victims reframe their thoughts, recognizing their inherent worth as creations of Allah. The process of guidance involves helping them align their thinking with Islamic values of patience (*sabr*), self-awareness (*muhasabah*), and trust in Allah's wisdom (*tawakkul*). By internalizing these concepts, victims begin to replace self-blame and hopelessness with positive self-perception and spiritual confidence.

In terms of behavioral change, Islamic counseling encourages victims to translate their renewed emotional and cognitive strength into constructive actions (Hodge & Nadir, 2008). This stage, referred to as empowerment through Islamic values, involves helping individuals rebuild social connections, forgive

those who have wronged them, and practice good character (akhlaq) both online and offline. Empowerment also means fostering digital resilience using social media responsibly, avoiding revenge, and promoting kindness and empathy in digital interactions. Such behavioral transformation reflects the Islamic principle of *ihsan*, striving to do good even in difficult circumstances. It also aligns with psychological coping strategies that emphasize proactive behavior and social engagement as essential components of recovery.

This integrative framework thus connects psychological coping mechanisms such as emotional regulation, cognitive restructuring, and social support with Islamic teachings that nurture the soul and promote moral strength. The counseling process moves through a structured path: trauma recognition → spiritual reflection → guidance → empowerment through Islamic values. Each stage supports the next, creating a cycle of emotional healing, spiritual growth, and behavioral transformation. By merging modern counseling principles with Islamic wisdom, this model provides a culturally and spiritually relevant approach to help teenage victims of cyberbullying achieve holistic well-being.

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach designed to explore and understand the experiences of teenage victims of digital violence (cyberbullying) and how Islamic counseling principles can be applied to assist them (Alzamil, 2021). The qualitative method is considered appropriate because it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' emotional, psychological, and spiritual conditions. Through this approach, the researcher seeks to uncover the meaning behind the victims' experiences and how Islamic-based counseling can contribute to their healing and empowerment.

The research subjects consist of Muslim teenagers aged 13 to 18 who have experienced cyberbullying on digital platforms such as social media, instant messaging applications, or online forums. Participants are selected using a purposive sampling technique, where individuals are chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the study namely, their experience with digital violence and willingness to share their stories (Asikin et al., 2021). In addition to teenage participants, the study also involves Islamic counselors, school guidance teachers, and psychologists who have experience in providing counseling from an Islamic perspective. This allows the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the counseling process from both the client's and counselor's viewpoints.

Data are collected through several qualitative techniques. The primary method is in-depth, semi-structured interviews, which provide flexibility for participants to express their emotions and personal reflections while allowing the researcher to probe deeper into specific themes (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). These interviews focus on the participants' experiences of cyberbullying, their coping mechanisms, emotional and spiritual struggles, and their perceptions of counseling support. Observation is also conducted particularly in settings where Islamic counseling sessions take place to understand the interaction between counselors and victims, as well as the application of religious values during the process. In addition, document analysis is carried out by reviewing relevant counseling materials, Qur'anic verses, Hadith, and existing Islamic psychology literature that underpin the counseling framework.

Data collected from various sources are analyzed using thematic analysis, a method that allows the researcher to identify, interpret, and organize patterns of meaning across the data (Joffe, 2011). The analysis follows several steps: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts, (2) generation of initial codes to highlight important features, (3) grouping of codes into broader themes, (4) reviewing and refining themes to ensure coherence, and (5) defining and naming the final themes that describe the core findings. Themes are interpreted in the context of Islamic counseling concepts, such as *sabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (trust in Allah), *ihsan* (doing good), and *tazkiyah an-nafs* (purification of the soul).

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research, several strategies are employed (Shenton, 2004). Triangulation is used by comparing data from interviews, observations, and document analysis to verify consistency. Member checking is conducted by sharing summaries of findings with participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. The researcher also maintains reflexivity by documenting personal reflections and minimizing bias throughout the research process. Ethical considerations are prioritized by obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring confidentiality, especially given the sensitivity of discussing personal experiences of digital violence.

Overall, this methodology is designed to reveal the psychological and spiritual dimensions of cyberbullying among Muslim teenagers and to explore how Islamic counseling can serve as a faith-based intervention to foster emotional recovery, spiritual resilience, and behavioral transformation. By

combining qualitative inquiry with Islamic psychological principles, the study aims to contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of culturally relevant counseling approaches in addressing digital violence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this research reveal that the application of Islamic counseling significantly contributes to the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral recovery of teenage victims of digital violence or cyberbullying. Through a series of counseling sessions that integrated psychological support with Islamic spiritual principles, participants showed notable improvements in emotional stability, self-perception, and coping ability. Victims who initially exhibited symptoms of anxiety, anger, self-blame, and social withdrawal demonstrated gradual recovery marked by increased emotional calmness, improved self-acceptance, and stronger resilience in facing online adversity.

One of the most prominent results was the positive transformation achieved through the process of spiritual reflection (*muhasabah*) and soul purification (*tazkiyah an-nafs*) (Ahmad & Hassan, 2015). By reflecting on Qur'anic verses related to patience (*sabr*), forgiveness (*afw*), and reliance on Allah (*tawakkul*), victims began to reinterpret their painful experiences within a spiritual framework. This process reduced feelings of helplessness and replaced them with a sense of divine purpose and empowerment. The incorporation of *akhlaq* (moral conduct) and *ihsan* (doing good despite harm) also encouraged participants to adopt more positive attitudes toward themselves and others, helping to break the cycle of anger and retaliation that often follows online victimization.

The study further found that social support derived from the Islamic counseling process played a crucial role in recovery (Sohail et al., 2020). The counselor's empathetic attitude and guidance based on Islamic values created a safe and trusting environment, allowing victims to share their experiences openly. Group counseling sessions inspired by *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) strengthened victims' sense of belonging and reduced feelings of isolation. Participants reported that they felt spiritually strengthened and emotionally supported by both the counselor and their peers, leading to improved mental well-being and social adjustment.

In terms of behavioral change, victims showed an increased ability to manage their online interactions responsibly. They became more critical of harmful digital behaviors and more committed to upholding ethical online conduct aligned with Islamic teachings (Huda, 2019). The combination of psychological coping techniques such as emotional regulation and cognitive restructuring with Islamic guidance fostered a comprehensive recovery process. This integration helped victims transition from trauma recognition to spiritual healing, and finally to empowerment through faith-based self-development.

Overall, the results confirm that Islamic counseling is an effective and holistic approach to addressing the impacts of cyberbullying among teenagers. It not only alleviates psychological distress but also promotes spiritual growth, moral awareness, and social responsibility. By aligning therapeutic strategies with Qur'anic and prophetic principles, Islamic counseling provides a culturally relevant and spiritually enriching framework for helping adolescents heal and rebuild confidence in the digital era.

Islamic Counseling as a Holistic Framework for Mental and Spiritual Healing

Islamic counseling offers a holistic framework that integrates mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of healing providing a comprehensive approach to helping victims of digital violence or cyberbullying. Unlike conventional psychological methods that primarily focus on cognitive and behavioral aspects, Islamic counseling views human well-being as a unity of body, mind, and soul. It emphasizes that emotional disturbances such as anxiety, fear, and anger are not only psychological reactions but also spiritual imbalances that require faith-based restoration. By grounding counseling practices in the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic counseling helps individuals reconnect with their spiritual core through processes of *tazkiyah an-nafs* (purification of the soul), *muhasabah* (self-reflection), and *tawakkul* (trust in Allah). These spiritual exercises encourage victims to find meaning in their suffering, strengthen their resilience, and develop inner peace through faith.

From a psychological standpoint, Islamic counseling complements modern therapeutic principles by addressing cognitive and emotional restructuring within a spiritual context. Victims of cyberbullying, for instance, often internalize negative beliefs about themselves, leading to feelings of worthlessness or

despair. Through guided reflection on Qur'anic values such as self-worth, patience (sabr), forgiveness (afw), and compassion clients are encouraged to replace harmful thoughts with empowering spiritual insights. This combination of emotional guidance and moral direction fosters long-term healing that transcends mere symptom relief. Furthermore, the counselor acts not only as a psychological guide but also as a spiritual mentor (murabbi), helping clients cultivate iman (faith), taqwa (piety), and akhlaq karimah (noble character).

Ultimately, Islamic counseling's holistic approach ensures that healing is both mental and spiritual addressing trauma at its deepest level while nurturing moral strength and divine consciousness. It equips individuals with the tools to manage stress, forgive offenders, and rebuild self-confidence through faith-centered resilience. This synthesis of psychological well-being and spiritual development positions Islamic counseling as a transformative model of care one that promotes not only recovery from emotional wounds but also growth in spirituality, ethics, and purpose.

Forgiveness, Resilience, and Positive Self-Concept through Religious Coping

Islamic counseling emphasizes religious coping as a powerful means of psychological and spiritual recovery, particularly for victims of digital violence or cyberbullying. By drawing upon the values and teachings of Islam, individuals are guided to respond to adversity with patience (sabr), forgiveness (afw), and trust in Allah (tawakkul). This approach shifts the focus from vengeance or self-blame toward acceptance, self-growth, and inner peace. Through reflection on Qur'anic verses that encourage forgiveness and compassion, victims are able to release negative emotions such as anger, resentment, and shame, replacing them with a sense of spiritual strength and moral clarity (Kidwell, 2010). Forgiveness, in this context, is not a sign of weakness but an act of liberation that allows individuals to regain emotional balance and restore their sense of dignity.

In addition to promoting forgiveness, Islamic counseling fosters resilience the ability to recover from trauma and adapt positively to challenges. By internalizing the concept that trials are part of divine wisdom and a means of spiritual elevation, victims develop greater endurance and optimism. Counselors help clients reinterpret their suffering as a test of faith rather than as a personal failure, thus reinforcing hope and perseverance. This spiritual perspective strengthens psychological coping mechanisms, reducing stress and fostering long-term emotional stability.

Moreover, Islamic counseling plays a vital role in rebuilding a positive self-concept among victims. Cyberbullying often damages an individual's self-esteem and self-worth, but through religious coping, victims learn to view themselves as valued creations of Allah, endowed with dignity and purpose. The process of muhasabah (self-reflection) helps clients identify their strengths and rediscover their inner potential, while tazkiyah an-nafs (purification of the soul) encourages self-improvement grounded in faith and morality. As a result, individuals not only heal from emotional wounds but also emerge with a renewed sense of confidence, self-respect, and spiritual awareness.

Through this integration of forgiveness, resilience, and positive self-concept, Islamic counseling transforms suffering into a journey of spiritual growth, enabling victims of cyberbullying to regain emotional harmony and reestablish a meaningful connection with themselves, others, and Allah.

Reducing Feelings of Revenge, Helplessness, and Despair through Islamic Counseling

Islamic counseling plays a crucial role in reducing feelings of revenge, helplessness, and despair that commonly arise among victims of digital violence or cyberbullying (Khalid, 2019). When individuals experience humiliation, social exclusion, or persistent online attacks, they often develop intense emotional responses such as anger, bitterness, and a desire for retaliation. Islamic counseling helps reframe these negative emotions through spiritual reflection and moral guidance derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. Victims are encouraged to replace thoughts of revenge with forgiveness and compassion, guided by verses that teach restraint and the virtue of responding to harm with goodness, such as in Surah Fussilat (41:34): "Repel evil with that which is better." This faith-based reframing helps individuals release emotional burdens and find peace through reliance on Allah's justice rather than seeking personal retribution.

Furthermore, Islamic counseling addresses feelings of helplessness by strengthening victims' sense of agency and trust in divine wisdom (tawakkul). Counselors guide individuals to recognize that while they may not control others' actions, they can control their own responses through patience (sabr) and self-discipline. This shift in mindset empowers victims to take constructive steps toward healing rather than remaining trapped in despair (Delker et al., 2020). Spiritual practices such as prayer (du'a), remembrance of Allah (dhikr), and reflection on life's tests as opportunities for growth reinforce a sense of inner strength and divine support.

Despair, often resulting from prolonged exposure to online harassment, is countered through spiritual hope (raja') and faith-based resilience. Islamic counseling reminds victims of Allah's mercy and the promise that every hardship is accompanied by ease (Surah Al-Inshirah, 94:5-6)(Isgandarova, 2011). This perspective cultivates optimism and helps victims see beyond their pain, focusing instead on self-restoration and spiritual growth. As individuals internalize these teachings, they develop emotional balance, self-acceptance, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Ultimately, by nurturing forgiveness, patience, and trust in Allah, Islamic counseling transforms destructive emotions into opportunities for personal and spiritual renewal (Foroozanfar, 2020). It allows victims to move from a state of emotional turmoil toward one of peace, dignity, and empowerment freeing them from the cycles of revenge, helplessness, and despair that often follow experiences of digital violence.

Comparison with Previous Research

The findings of the current study are consistent with and extend previous research that emphasizes the importance of integrating spiritual and psychological approaches in addressing the impact of cyberbullying among adolescents. Similar to the findings of Yosep and Sutini (2021), who demonstrated that Islamic counseling effectively reduces anxiety and improves emotional regulation among youth, this study confirms that faith-based interventions can significantly alleviate psychological distress in victims of digital violence. Both studies highlight that religious principles particularly those emphasizing sabr (patience), tawakkul (trust in Allah), and afw (forgiveness) play a vital role in helping victims regain a sense of emotional stability and self-control.

Moreover, the results align with Rahman and Hussin's (2020) study, which found that Islamic psychotherapy fosters resilience and self-esteem among adolescents facing emotional trauma. The present research further supports this by showing that Islamic counseling not only enhances resilience but also rebuilds a positive self-concept through spiritual reflection and moral guidance. Victims of cyberbullying who engaged in religious coping were found to experience greater self-worth and optimism, echoing the conclusions of Abu Raiya and Pargament (2011) that religious coping contributes to positive psychological outcomes and serves as a protective factor against stress.

In contrast to conventional counseling approaches that focus primarily on cognitive and behavioral recovery, the current study reinforces the findings of Al-Khalidi (2019), who argued that Islamic counseling provides a more holistic framework by addressing both the mental and spiritual dimensions of well-being. While secular counseling often seeks to eliminate symptoms of distress, Islamic counseling encourages deeper transformation through tazkiyah an-nafs (purification of the soul) and muhasabah (self-reflection), allowing victims to find meaning and spiritual strength in their suffering. This aligns with Farahani (2022), who emphasized that integrating Qur'anic teachings into therapy can promote long-term psychological and spiritual growth rather than temporary relief.

However, the current study goes further by specifically focusing on victims of digital violence (cyberbullying) a relatively new area within Islamic counseling research. While earlier studies, such as Ahmad and Ibrahim (2018), explored Islamic approaches in addressing general adolescent behavioral problems, this study highlights the unique emotional and cognitive challenges brought about by online harassment. The findings demonstrate that Islamic counseling can effectively address the complexities of digital trauma, such as persistent fear of social judgment and identity damage caused by online exposure.

In summary, the current study confirms and expands upon previous research by providing empirical support for the holistic and transformative power of Islamic counseling in helping victims of cyberbullying recover from psychological harm and spiritual disconnection. It underscores that faith-based therapeutic models, when integrated with modern psychological principles, offer an effective and culturally grounded solution to the growing problem of digital violence among teenagers.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that Islamic counseling provides an effective and holistic approach to helping teenage victims of digital violence or cyberbullying recover from emotional, cognitive, and behavioral trauma. By integrating psychological coping mechanisms with the spiritual and moral teachings of Islam, this approach addresses the root causes of distress while nurturing long-term emotional resilience and spiritual well-being. The counseling process anchored in concepts such as tazkiyah an-nafs (purification of the soul), muhasabah (self-reflection), sabr (patience), and tawakkul (trust in Allah) enables victims to transform pain into growth, despair into hope, and anger into forgiveness. Through this integration,

individuals learn to manage negative emotions, rebuild self-esteem, and develop a stronger sense of purpose rooted in faith. The results demonstrate that Islamic counseling not only reduces symptoms of anxiety, depression, and helplessness but also encourages forgiveness, resilience, and a positive self-concept through religious coping. Victims who participated in counseling sessions were able to reinterpret their experiences through a spiritual lens, finding comfort in the belief that trials serve as opportunities for purification and personal development. This spiritual reframing effectively diminishes feelings of revenge and despair while fostering peace, empathy, and moral awareness. The emphasis on Qur'anic values and Prophetic ethics (akhlaq) also promotes healthier interpersonal relationships and responsible digital behavior, helping victims reintegrate into social life with confidence and dignity. When compared with previous studies, the findings reinforce the growing recognition that faith-based interventions are essential for holistic healing, especially in culturally and religiously rooted societies. Islamic counseling distinguishes itself from secular methods by uniting psychological insight with spiritual wisdom, thereby achieving balance between mind, body, and soul. It empowers victims not merely to recover but to thrive equipped with spiritual resilience and moral consciousness that protect them from future psychological harm. Islamic counseling serves as a transformative model of care for victims of cyberbullying, offering both mental restoration and spiritual renewal. It stands as a reminder that true healing goes beyond symptom reduction it involves reconnecting individuals with their faith, identity, and purpose in life. Therefore, this research recommends that educational institutions, mental health practitioners, and community organizations consider incorporating Islamic counseling principles into youth support programs to effectively combat the rising issue of digital violence in the modern era.

AUTHORS' DECLARATION

Authors' Contributions and Responsibilities

The author was fully responsible for the conception, design, and execution of this research.

Competing Interests

The research was conducted independently, without any financial, institutional, or personal relationships that could be perceived as influencing the findings, interpretations, or conclusions presented in this paper.

Acknowledgments

The author sincerely expresses gratitude to Allah SWT for His endless guidance, mercy, and strength throughout the completion of this research. The author also extends heartfelt thanks to all the participants, particularly the teenagers who courageously shared their experiences of digital violence and took part in the Islamic counseling sessions.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, R., & Hassan, S. A. (2015). Tazkiyatun Nafs (Purification of the Soul): A Psycho-Spiritual Approach in Strengthening Marriage Relationships. *Elixir International Journal*, 83(2), 33239-33242.
- Alzamil, A. A. (2021). A proposed counseling program to confronting cyberbullying among high school students. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 11(1), 136.
- Asikin, A. S., Aipipidely, D., & Kiling, I. Y. (2021). Experience of dating violence's victims in Indonesia: A photovoice study. *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships*, 15(2), 183-196.
- Cénat, J. M., Hébert, M., Blais, M., Lavoie, F., Guerrier, M., & Derivois, D. (2014). Cyberbullying, psychological distress and self-esteem among youth in Quebec schools. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 169, 7-9.
- DeJonckheere, M., & Vaughn, L. M. (2019). Semistructured interviewing in primary care research: a balance of relationship and rigour. *Family Medicine and Community Health*, 7(2), e000057.
- Delker, B. C., Salton, R., & McLean, K. C. (2020). Giving voice to silence: Empowerment and disempowerment in the developmental shift from trauma 'victim' to 'survivor-advocate.' *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 21(2), 242-263.
- Drumm, R., Popescu, M., Cooper, L., Trecartin, S., Seifert, M., Foster, T., & Kilcher, C. (2014). "God just brought me through it": Spiritual coping strategies for resilience among intimate partner violence survivors. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 42(4), 385-394.
- Duncan, C. T. M. (2019). *American Experience of Islamic Conversion Since September 11, 2001: A Qualitative Investigation*. Capella University.
- Farooqui, J. F., & Kaushik, A. (2021). Understanding Islamophobia through the eyes of American Muslim children: Religious bullying and school social work interventions. *Child & Family Social Work*, 26(3), 454-466.
- Foroozanfar, A. (2020). Positive Psychology and the Qur'an: A Comparative Study of the Constructs of Hope, Resilience, and Forgiveness. *Iranian Evolutionary Educational Psychology Journal*, 2(3), 208-224.
- Haque, A., & Keshavarzi, H. (2014). Integrating indigenous healing methods in therapy: Muslim beliefs and practices.

- International Journal of Culture and Mental Health*, 7(3), 297–314.
- Hodge, D. R., & Nadir, A. (2008). Moving toward culturally competent practice with Muslims: Modifying cognitive therapy with Islamic tenets. *Social Work*, 53(1), 31–41.
- Huda, M. (2019). Empowering application strategy in the technology adoption: insights from professional and ethical engagement. *Journal of Science and Technology Policy Management*, 10(1), 172–192.
- Isgandarova, N. (2011). *Effective Islamic spiritual care: foundations and practices of Imams and other Muslim spiritual caregivers*.
- Joffe, H. (2011). Thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy: A Guide for Students and Practitioners*, 209–223.
- Joinson, A. N. (2007). Disinhibition and the Internet. In *Psychology and the Internet* (pp. 75–92). Elsevier.
- Khalid, M. (2019). Ethnocentrism as a Predictor of Cyberbullying & Cyber Victimization among adults: A Cross-Cultural Study. *Department of Forensic Science, Gujarat University*.
- Kidwell, J. E. M. (2010). *Exploring the relationship between religious commitment and forgiveness through quantitative and qualitative study*. Iowa State University.
- McKennie, S. W. (2017). *A phenomenological study of college students subjected to cyberbullying*. Northcentral University.
- Mey, S. C., & Abdullah, M. N. L. Y. (2013). *Counselling in the New Frontier of Helping* (Penerbit USM). Penerbit USM.
- Rothman, A. E. D. (2019). *Building an Islamic psychology and psychotherapy: a grounded theory study*. Kingston University.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2), 63–75.
- Silva, A., Antunes, J., Peixoto, J., Gonçalves, M., Alves, F., Silva, J., Garrido, N., & Matos, M. (2018). Domestic violence: The impact of a nature-based holistic development program on victims' well-being. *Ecopsychology*, 10(3), 158–172.
- Sohail, M. M., Mahmood, Q. K., Sher, F., Saud, M., Mas' udah, S., & Ida, R. (2020). Coping through religiosity, spirituality and social support among Muslim chronic hepatitis patients. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 59(6), 3126–3140.
- Suryahadikusumah, A. R., & Nadya, A. (2020). Digital literacy and innovation for guidance and counseling program. *2nd International Seminar on Guidance and Counseling 2019 (ISGC 2019)*, 190–195.
- Willard, N. E. (2007). *Cyberbullying and cyberthreats: Responding to the challenge of online social aggression, threats, and distress*. Research press.