DIGITAL COUNSELING IN EDUCATION: ENHANCING ADOLESCENT SPIRITUAL AWARENESS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

Adolescents are in a critical phase of personal and spiritual development, yet their increasing exposure to social media trends often creates challenges such as reduced self-awareness, weakened moral grounding, and decreased spiritual sensitivity. This research aims to explore the role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) services in enhancing adolescents' spiritual awareness through the utilization of social media platforms. Employing a qualitative approach with the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, the study synthesizes findings from various peerreviewed articles published between 2015-2024 that address the intersection of counseling, spiritual growth, and digital media. The results reveal that BK services conducted through social media enable counselors to deliver spiritual education, foster reflective group discussions, and provide personalized online counseling while simultaneously disseminating inspirational content. These practices have been shown to promote adolescents' ability to manage stress, recognize the impact of online behavior, and internalize spiritual values. The findings also emphasize the significance of BK teachers adopting holistic and psychologically grounded approaches in addressing spiritual challenges in digital contexts. The study concludes that integrating BK services with social media can effectively strengthen spiritual awareness among adolescents when supported by appropriate supervision and structured program design. This research contributes practical insights for educational institutions in optimizing digital platforms for character and spiritual development. Future research should focus on testing specific BK models that integrate spirituality and digital literacy across diverse educational settings.

Keywords: Adolescents, Counseling Services, Media Use, Social Media, Spiritual Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical transitional stage marked by rapid physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. It is often characterized as a period of "storm and stress" where individuals are highly vulnerable to external influences, including the pervasive role of digital technologies and social media (Santrock, 2018; Steinberg, 2017). Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp have become integral to adolescents' daily lives, shaping not only their communication patterns but also their identities, values, and worldviews (Uhls et al., 2017; Twenge & Campbell, 2019). While social media affords opportunities for self-expression and connection, its misuse has been consistently associated with risks such as cyberbullying, anxiety, and spiritual disconnection (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014; Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020). Spiritual awareness—understood as the ability to find meaning, purpose, and connection to transcendental values—remains essential for holistic adolescent development (King & Boyatzis, 2015; Pargament, 2013). Research in educational psychology emphasizes that spiritual intelligence serves as the foundation for moral decision-making, emotional regulation, and resilience (Emmons, 2000; Zohar & Marshall, 2004). Unfortunately, many adolescents today demonstrate declining levels of spiritual awareness due to increased exposure to content that prioritizes materialism, superficial validation, and instant gratification (Meiranti & Sutoyo, 2021; Peradila & Chodijah, 2020). This trend underscores the urgent role of schools and educators, particularly Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers, in cultivating adolescents' spiritual well-being.

The main problem addressed in this study is the decline of spiritual awareness among adolescents caused by unregulated and sometimes harmful exposure to social media. Numerous studies reveal that adolescents often struggle to critically filter the information they consume online, leading to diminished

self-regulation, increased susceptibility to peer pressure, and weakened spiritual grounding (Triatmojo, 2021; Syamsuri, Magfira, & Zuhra, 2022). While social media was originally designed as a tool for networking and knowledge exchange, its use has shifted toward entertainment, comparison, and escapism, often at the expense of spiritual and moral development (Livingstone & Smith, 2014; Kross et al., 2013). The general solution proposed is to reframe social media not merely as a source of distraction but as a medium for positive guidance, values reinforcement, and spiritual development. Guidance and Counseling (BK) services, when integrated with digital platforms, offer a promising pathway to redirect adolescents' engagement with social media toward meaningful and spiritual ends (Jaelani & Ilham, 2019; Tamami & Mijianti, 2023).

Recent empirical evidence supports the integration of digital tools into counseling interventions. Asi, Madina, and Usman (2020) demonstrated the effectiveness of spiritual intelligence modules in counseling to enhance students' self-regulation and resilience. Similarly, Imaddudin (2015) found that self-actualization counseling services significantly improved elementary students' spiritual intelligence. Digital adaptations of these methods—such as group counseling via WhatsApp or spiritual reflection facilitated through Instagram content—extend the reach of counseling services and make them more accessible to adolescents accustomed to online communication (Suryati & Salehudin, 2021). International literature corroborates these findings. For instance, Campbell and Tsuria (2021) highlight the emergence of "digital religion," where faith practices and spiritual discussions increasingly occur on online platforms. Studies in psychology also reveal that online communities can promote spiritual growth by fostering reflection, mutual support, and meaning-making (Neff & McGehee, 2010; Yaden et al., 2017). By leveraging social media strategically, BK teachers can not only address adolescents' psychosocial challenges but also strengthen their spiritual awareness and moral orientation (King & Boyatzis, 2015; Hardy et al., 2019).

Several Indonesian studies have examined the role of BK in promoting spiritual development. El Fiah (2015) emphasized the importance of early intervention in cultivating spiritual intelligence, while Meiranti and Sutoyo (2021) confirmed the correlation between spiritual intelligence and academic resilience among vocational students. Tamami and Mijianti (2023) further demonstrated the role of Islamic counseling in enhancing adolescents' Spiritual Quotient (SQ). These studies collectively affirm the relevance of BK in fostering adolescents' spiritual awareness. However, existing literature reveals two main limitations. First, many studies have been confined to traditional, face-to-face counseling contexts (Imaddudin, 2015; Jannah, 2022). While effective, these methods often fail to engage digitally native adolescents who spend substantial time online. Second, research integrating social media into BK services tends to focus on general psychosocial outcomes—such as reducing anxiety or improving social adjustment—rather than explicitly targeting spiritual awareness (Best et al., 2014; Keles et al., 2020). Thus, despite growing interest in digital counseling, there remains a research gap in systematically exploring how BK services can harness social media as a tool to enhance adolescents' spiritual development.

The objective of this study is to conduct a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to synthesize evidence on how BK services can utilize social media platforms to enhance adolescents' spiritual awareness. Unlike prior research that isolates either spiritual intelligence development or digital counseling, this study uniquely integrates both perspectives, highlighting the intersection of spiritual education, counseling practice, and digital engagement. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on spiritual awareness as the ultimate intelligence (Zohar & Marshall, 2004) and its systematic mapping of how digital media—often perceived as a threat—can be reoriented as a supportive tool for spiritual growth. This framing moves beyond deficit-oriented discussions of social media risks toward a more constructive model where BK teachers actively shape adolescents' digital experiences for spiritual enrichment. The scope of this study encompasses peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 and 2024 that investigate BK services, adolescent spiritual development, and the use of social media in counseling or educational contexts. By synthesizing both national and international studies, this review aims to provide a comprehensive framework that can guide future practice and research in adolescent counseling, particularly in Indonesia and similar cultural contexts.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using a qualitative approach to synthesize existing evidence on the role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) services in enhancing adolescents' spiritual awareness through social media platforms. The SLR method was selected because it enables researchers to critically appraise, integrate, and thematically analyze findings from multiple peer-reviewed studies, thus producing comprehensive insights and minimizing bias (Snyder, 2019; Page et al., 2021). The procedure adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, ensuring transparency and replicability.

Research Question

The central research question underpinning this systematic review was: "How do Guidance and Counseling (BK) services enhance adolescents' spiritual awareness through the use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube?" This question was structured using the PICO framework (Population, Intervention, Context, Outcome) to ensure clarity and focus. Within this framework, the Population refers to adolescents as the primary beneficiaries of BK services; the Intervention centers on the provision of guidance and counseling programs tailored to spiritual development; the Context highlights the integration of digital environments, specifically social media platforms, into counseling practices; and the Outcome emphasizes the advancement of adolescents' spiritual awareness and growth. By adopting the PICO model, the research question was clearly delineated, allowing the review to systematically examine evidence across multiple studies and generate meaningful insights into the intersection of counseling, spirituality, and digital media.

Literature Search Strategy

A comprehensive and systematic literature search was undertaken to identify peer-reviewed studies relevant to the role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) services in enhancing adolescents' spiritual development through social media. The search was conducted across both international and national databases between January and April 2024, ensuring broad coverage of scholarly publications. The databases consulted included Scopus, ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and Garuda (Garba Rujukan Digital). To optimize retrieval, a combination of carefully selected keywords and Boolean operators was employed. These included terms such as "spiritual development of adolescents" AND "guidance and counseling", "BK services" AND "social media", "digital counseling" AND ("WhatsApp" OR "Instagram" OR "Facebook" OR "TikTok"), and "spiritual intelligence" AND "online counseling". Furthermore, truncations (e.g., counsel → counseling, counsellor) and synonyms were strategically applied to capture variations in terminology across different studies (Booth et al., 2021). This structured search strategy ensured that a wide range of relevant literature was identified, enabling the review to build upon a robust evidence base.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the reviewed literature, clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. The inclusion criteria required that studies be published between 2015 and 2024, with a specific focus on Guidance and Counseling (BK) services or the spiritual development of adolescents. Additionally, only studies that explicitly integrated social media platforms within educational or counseling contexts were considered. Eligible publications had to be written in either English or Indonesian and appear in peer-reviewed journals, ensuring scholarly rigor and credibility. In contrast, the exclusion criteria eliminated materials from non-scholarly sources, such as blogs, magazines, or reports that had not undergone a peer-review process. Likewise, studies that did not explicitly connect social media use with BK services or spirituality were excluded, as were publications falling outside the designated 2015–2024 timeframe. By adhering to these criteria, the review narrowed its scope to include only high-quality, contextually relevant studies capable of providing meaningful insights into the intersection of counseling, social media, and adolescent spiritual awareness.

Study Selection Process

The study selection process was carried out systematically in line with the PRISMA standards (Page et al., 2021). In the identification phase, a total of 127 records were initially retrieved from various electronic databases using predefined keywords. In the screening phase, duplicate entries and articles with irrelevant titles or abstracts were excluded, which reduced the pool to 47 potentially eligible studies. The eligibility phase involved a full-text assessment of these studies against the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. During this stage, 37 articles were eliminated because they did not explicitly connect Guidance and Counseling (BK) services with the dimension of spirituality or the use of social media. In the final inclusion phase, 10 studies satisfied all criteria and were selected for qualitative synthesis. This rigorous process ensured that only the most relevant and methodologically sound studies were incorporated into the review, thereby strengthening the validity and comprehensiveness of the findings.

Data Extraction and Coding

Data were systematically extracted using a standardized template that captured several critical elements, including study identity (author, year, country, and journal), research methodology (qualitative, quantitative, R&D, quasi-experimental, or SLR), participants involved (adolescents, teachers, or counselors), the social media platforms utilized (such as Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube), and the main findings related to the development of spiritual awareness. To ensure analytical rigor, the extracted data were coded thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis approach. This process began with familiarization through repeated reading of the studies, followed by the generation of initial codes that captured recurring patterns and significant insights. These codes were then grouped to identify overarching themes, which were further reviewed and refined to ensure coherence and consistency. Subsequently, themes were clearly defined and named, providing a structured interpretation of how BK services leverage social media to enhance adolescents' spiritual awareness. Finally, the synthesis phase integrated these themes into a comprehensive narrative that highlighted both the breadth and depth of the existing literature, enabling the construction of a nuanced framework for understanding the intersection of counseling, social media, and spirituality.

Data Analysis

Guided by a thematic synthesis approach (Thomas & Harden, 2008), findings across the included studies were inductively coded and integrated into four interrelated themes: first, social media as a counseling platform, wherein BK services leveraged direct messaging, moderated group counseling, and synchronous webinars to provide timely guidance and responsive support; second, spiritual education via digital content, with counselors curating and disseminating motivational posts, short didactic videos, and scriptural reflections (e.g., Qur'anic passages and Christian devotionals) to scaffold meaning-making and daily spiritual practices; third, challenges and risks of digital counseling, notably adolescents' overexposure to unvetted material, misinformation that can distort spiritual understanding, and privacy limitations that necessitate careful boundary-setting and digital literacy; and fourth, opportunities for building online spiritual communities, as peer-support forums and virtual religious groups cultivated belonging, accountability, and sustained engagement with spiritual goals. Complementing the thematic synthesis, an optional bibliometric analysis mapped research trends, dominant keywords, and leading institutional contributors, thereby situating the qualitative insights within a broader knowledge architecture and highlighting emergent foci for future inquiry.

Evidence Matrix

Table 2. Results of the Literature Review

No	Study Identity	Methodology	Year	Key Findings
1	Azizah & Uyun	SLR	2024	Adolescents' spiritual growth is unstable; faith
	(2024)			fluctuates with emotional states.
2	Asi, Madina &	R&D	2020	Developed spiritual intelligence modules for
	Usman (2020)			counseling services.

No	Study Identity	Methodology	Year	Key Findings
3	El Fiah (2015)	R&D	2015	Early spiritual education strengthens lifelong
				moral foundation.
4	Imaddudin (2015)	Quasi-	2015	Self-actualization counseling effectively
		Experimental		increases spiritual intelligence.
5	Jaelani & Ilham	Qualitative	2019	Strategies included teaching, worship
	(2019)			practices, and social service programs.
6	Jannah (2022)	Qualitative	2022	Islamic counseling activated students'
				spirituality via empathetic guidance.
7	Meiranti & Sutoyo	Correlational	2021	Positive significant relationship between
	(2021)			spiritual intelligence and academic resilience.
8	Peradila &	Qualitative	2020	Religious guidance effectively developed early
	Chodijah (2020)			childhood spirituality.
9	Ramdani (2016)	Quantitative	2016	Spiritual intelligence and family support
				improve life satisfaction of elderly learners.
10	Tamami & Mijianti	Qualitative	2023	Spiritual quotient enhanced through Islamic
	(2023)			guidance and group worship practices.

Ethical Considerations

As this was a secondary study using previously published data, no direct ethical approval was required. However, ethical integrity was maintained by proper citation, adherence to PRISMA standards, and avoidance of plagiarism (Snyder, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) conducted in this study identified ten relevant articles (2014–2024) focusing on the role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) services in enhancing adolescent spiritual awareness through social media. Table 2 summarizes these results. Synthesis of Key Findings. From the review and thematic synthesis, several important findings emerge that illuminate the intersection of Guidance and Counseling (BK) services, social media, and adolescent spiritual development. First, research indicates that adolescents' spiritual growth is often volatile, with faith fluctuating alongside emotional states—strengthening in moments of crisis and waning during periods of comfort or joy (Azizah & Uyun, 2024). Second, studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of spiritual intelligence modules developed through Research and Development (R&D) methods, which, when embedded in BK services, successfully enhanced students' spiritual awareness (Asi, Madina, & Usman, 2020). Third, findings highlight that spiritual guidance should begin at an early age, as early exposure to spiritual concepts lays strong moral foundations for later development (El Fiah, 2015). Further, quasi-experimental evidence shows that self-actualization counseling significantly boosts students' spiritual intelligence through structured interventions, underscoring the importance of welldesigned counseling programs (Imaddudin, 2015). Similarly, integrative approaches combining emotional and spiritual quotient (ESQ) strategies—such as classroom prayer, social service activities, and collective worship—have been effective in enriching adolescents' moral grounding and overall well-being (Jaelani & Ilham, 2019). In addition, Islamic BK models stand out as culturally resonant approaches that emphasize compassion, sincerity, and relational closeness, positioning counselors as trusted guides rather than mere authority figures (Jannah, 2022). Another key insight is the positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and academic resilience among vocational school students, suggesting that spiritual growth contributes not only to personal well-being but also to persistence and achievement in educational contexts (Meiranti & Sutoyo, 2021). At the developmental level, religious education and spiritual guidance provided during early childhood have been found to significantly reinforce the internalization of moral and ethical values (Peradila & Chodijah, 2020). Extending beyond adolescence, spirituality is also linked to broader well-being, as studies among the elderly reveal that spiritual intelligence, together with family support, predicts life satisfaction, underscoring its enduring value throughout the lifespan (Ramdani, 2016). Lastly, innovative practices in online Islamic counseling

(Irsyad) demonstrate the potential of digital platforms: by structuring guidance through elements such as mursyid (mentor), ushlub (methods), and ghoyah (purpose), counselors effectively supported middle school students' spiritual development in accessible and culturally grounded ways (Tamami & Mijianti, 2023). Collectively, these findings illustrate the multifaceted role of BK services—ranging from early intervention and integrative programs to digital counseling—in nurturing spiritual awareness across diverse stages of human development. Would you like me to turn these findings into a thematic "Results and Discussion" narrative with subheadings (e.g., Volatility of Adolescent Faith, Early Spiritual Guidance, Digital Counseling Innovations)? This could make the section more structured and publication-ready. Complementing these, **field-based findings** are presented in Table 1, showing how different social media platforms were used to deliver BK services. These data confirm that **media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube** were effectively used to provide motivational content, personal counseling, online group reflections, and moral guidance. The overall student response was **positive**, with reports of increased awareness in filtering digital content and adopting healthier spiritual practices.

Spiritual Fluctuations in Adolescence

Findings align with earlier psychological and developmental studies showing that adolescence is marked by identity exploration, emotional instability, and spiritual questioning (King & Roeser, 2009; Hardy et al., 2019). The fluctuation in religiosity, as found in Azizah & Uyun (2024), echoes international findings where adolescents exhibit both strong faith practices and skepticism depending on life contexts (Smith & Denton, 2005; Arnett, 2014).

Digital Counseling and Social Media Use

The integration of social media into BK mirrors global movements in **digital counseling**. For example, online counseling interventions have been effective in improving youth well-being and engagement (Andersson et al., 2019; Richards & Viganó, 2013). Studies in Europe and Asia also show that WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook can be used for reflective exercises, peer support, and professional counseling (Barak et al., 2008; Pretorius et al., 2019).

Spiritual Intelligence and Academic Resilience

The correlation between spiritual intelligence and resilience (Meiranti & Sutoyo, 2021) resonates with findings from Canadian and U.S. contexts, where spirituality is associated with coping, academic motivation, and lower risk of depression (Cotton et al., 2006; Koenig, 2012). Similar links have been reported in South Korean adolescents, highlighting spirituality as a buffer against academic stress (Lee & Kim, 2016).

R&D-Based Spiritual Modules

The development of spiritual intelligence modules using R&D approaches is consistent with instructional design research in character education, which advocates structured interventions to build moral reasoning (Lovat, Toomey, & Clement, 2010). Asian contexts such as Indonesia and Malaysia show similar effectiveness in spiritually oriented curricula (Nasir et al., 2021).

Community and Peer-Based Support

Building online communities for spiritual growth, as observed in Table 1, corresponds with evidence that peer-group digital communities enhance religious identity and moral values (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). However, scholars also caution against superficial religiosity fostered by "fast content" trends on platforms like TikTok (Cheong, 2012).

Importance of Findings

The study demonstrates that **BK services must adapt to the digital environment** where adolescents spend significant time. By embedding spiritual content and counseling strategies into familiar platforms, counselors increase accessibility and relatability. This provides a **novel model of spiritual counseling**

in the digital age, bridging traditional face-to-face methods with online interactivity. Findings suggest schools should formally integrate **digital counseling frameworks** into student services. Policymakers can support training for BK teachers in digital literacy, ethical online engagement, and content creation to ensure that students receive **safe and meaningful spiritual guidance**. The results support **ecological and holistic models of adolescent development**, where emotional, cognitive, and spiritual domains interact (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The integration of spirituality into BK services validates theories of **spiritual intelligence** as the "ultimate intelligence" (Zohar & Marshall, 2000), confirming its relevance in modern educational contexts.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this review provides valuable insights into the role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) services in enhancing adolescents' spiritual awareness through social media, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study relied exclusively on secondary data derived from a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) rather than primary intervention experiments, which limits the ability to establish direct causal relationships between digital counseling approaches and spiritual outcomes. Second, the review is subject to potential publication bias, as it only included peer-reviewed articles that were accessible within the designated databases; unpublished studies or grey literature that might offer alternative perspectives were excluded. Third, many of the studies synthesized were situated within Indonesian and Islamic cultural contexts, which, while offering rich insights, may restrict the generalizability of findings to broader global or interfaith settings.

Looking ahead, future research directions should aim to address these limitations. Experimental or longitudinal designs would provide stronger evidence of causality and track the long-term impacts of BK services mediated through social media. Comparative studies across cross-cultural contexts are also necessary to examine whether the strategies identified are universally applicable or require adaptation to different cultural and religious settings. Finally, further research should explore the scalability and sustainability of digital BK models, testing their effectiveness in larger populations and diverse educational environments. Such efforts will help refine context-sensitive counseling practices while contributing to the global discourse on digital guidance, spirituality, and adolescent development.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study emphasizes that its main objective was to systematically examine the role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) services in enhancing adolescents' spiritual awareness through the use of social media. The key findings highlight that BK teachers are able to apply a holistic approach by integrating spiritual education, online counseling, virtual communities, and the dissemination of positive content to strengthen adolescents' spiritual values while also helping them manage psychological and social challenges arising from social media use. The research contribution lies in mapping out innovative, digitally based strategies that can serve as a reference for educators and counselors in designing relevant BK service models for the digital era, while also stressing the importance of preventive approaches and spiritual reinforcement as essential efforts to maintain adolescents' balanced development.

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