DIGITAL ISLAMIC COUNSELING IN THE DIGITAL MEDIA AGE: A CRITICAL REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR FAMILY RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING

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Abstract: Digital Islamic counseling is emerging as a key response to how social media and digital religion reshape family life in Muslim societies. This article develops a conceptual model of Digital Islamic Counseling for Family Resilience and Sustainable Well Being. A critical literature review synthesises sixty six peer reviewed studies from 2019 to 2024 on digital religion, Islamic counseling, family resilience, and sustainable well being. The analysis applies systematic search, screening, and thematic synthesis and organises the evidence into three main components. Results show that Muslim families inhabit dense digital faith and media ecosystems where online preachers, influencer da'wa, and algorithmic curation expand access to Islamic learning while also intensifying commodification, polarisation, and misinformation. Islamic counseling grounded in Qur'anic principles, moral character, consultation, and spiritual coping can turn these environments into opportunities for shared meaning making, stronger parent child communication, and adaptive parenting when delivered through online counseling. The conceptual model links digital faith practices, counseling processes, and outcomes in family resilience and sustainable well being, and offers pathways for intervention. The study concludes that Digital Islamic Counseling provides a promising, faith informed framework for strengthening Muslim family resilience and sustainable well being and sets an agenda for future research and training.

Keywords: *Digital Islamic Counseling; Family Resilience; Sustainable Well-Being; Muslim Families.*

INTRODUCTION

Family life and religious practice are undergoing profound transformations in the digital age. Rapid diffusion of networked technologies has reshaped how family members communicate, negotiate everyday decisions, and access religious authority, often intensifying generational gaps in technology use and digital competences (Sangarathas, 2025; Xie et al., 2022). For many Muslim families, digital platforms now mediate the circulation of religious knowledge, from Qur'anic lessons and online sermons to crowdfunding for zakat and charity, thereby expanding opportunities for participation in religious life while simultaneously destabilising established patterns of authority and interpersonal communication (Aziz, 2024; Kasri & Sosianti, 2023). These shifts can enrich domestic religious experience, but they may also generate new

forms of conflict when parents and children differ in their levels of digital literacy, media preferences, or interpretations of religious messages, with consequences for family cohesion and spiritual well-being (Sangarathas, 2025; Xie et al., 2022).

Alongside digitalisation, global scholarship has given growing attention to family resilience and sustainable well-being as key lenses for understanding how families withstand and adapt to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and long-term socio-economic uncertainty (Perry et al., 2023; Rich et al., 2022). Research in psychology and family studies highlights that families with strong relational bonds, flexible role negotiation, and effective communication are more capable of mobilising resources, sustaining mental health, and re-organising everyday life under pressure (Odintsova et al., 2022; Crespo & Relvas, 2024). From a communication perspective, patterns of parent–child interaction, including the ways families integrate digital media into their routines, are central to resilience; open dialogue and shared meaning-making during crises predict more positive adjustment trajectories over time (Allen et al., 2024; Everri et al., 2022). At the same time, questions of sustainable well-being extend beyond short-term coping to encompass the capacity of families to cultivate enduring spiritual, emotional, and social resources that support flourishing across generations (Crespo & Relvas, 2024; Rich et al., 2022).

Despite this emerging consensus on the importance of resilience and sustainable well-being, Muslim families face a specific constellation of challenges at the intersection of digital media, religion, and mental health. Studies of digital religion show that social media and other online platforms have become pivotal arenas where young Muslims learn, contest, and perform their religious identities, often in ways that are only partially visible to parents and local religious institutions (Aziz, 2024; Swarna et al., 2024). While such participation can strengthen religious commitment and provide new forms of belonging, it can also expose adolescents to misinterpretations of Islamic teachings, polarising discourse, and harmful behavioural norms when critical digital and religious literacies are weak (Dewita et al., 2022; Jima'ain, 2023). The resulting tensions in which parents struggle to monitor online exposure while young people seek autonomy may erode everyday communication, diminish trust, and compromise the role of religion as a shared source of meaning within the family (Sangarathas, 2025; Swarna et al., 2024).

These dynamics intersect with broader concerns about mental health in Muslim societies and the adequacy of existing support systems. A growing body of work documents the potential of Islamic counseling to address psychological distress, promote spiritual growth, and strengthen family relationships by grounding interventions in Qur'anic principles, prophetic traditions, and local cultural wisdom (Sulaiman, 2020; Saputro et al., 2021). Yet many Islamic counseling practices remain organised around face-to-face sessions, institutional settings, and problem categories that predate the current digital environment (Sutoyo et al., 2023; Saragih & Siregar, 2023). Scholars note that these models rarely engage systematically with online risks, the reconfiguration of authority through digital platforms, or the new forms of relational strain emerging from always-connected lifestyles (Darmawani et al., 2021; Indri et al., 2021). Consequently, there is a risk of a widening gap between the lived realities of Muslim families navigating digital media and the frameworks offered by Islamic counseling and guidance services.

In response, several strands of literature propose partial solutions. One line of research emphasises the integration of digital literacy and religious education within the family to help children and adolescents manage technology in ways that remain anchored in Islamic values (Aziz, 2024; Dewita et al., 2022). This work suggests that when parents involve children in shared

decision-making about technology use and openly discuss the ethical dimensions of online behaviour, families can turn digital environments into arenas for learning, reflection, and collective problem-solving rather than sources of conflict (Sangarathas, 2025; Jima'ain, 2023). Another line of scholarship identifies spiritual resources—such as prayer, family religious rituals, and narratives of divine support—as protective factors that enhance coping and meaning-making in times of crisis, thereby contributing to family resilience and psychological well-being (Perry et al., 2023; Diego-Cordero et al., 2022; Hasanah et al., 2021).

A second cluster of studies focuses on the expansion of counseling and mental-health services into digital formats. The rapid adoption of online and mobile counseling platforms during the pandemic demonstrated that virtual modalities can increase access to psychological support, reduce stigma, and enable continuity of care despite physical restrictions (Manurung et al., 2024; Akgül & Ergin, 2022). Within Muslim contexts, scholars argue for the development of Islamic counseling services that harness digital tools to provide confidential, culturally sensitive guidance to individuals and families who might otherwise be reluctant or unable to seek help (Manurung et al., 2024; Sulaiman, 2020). Related initiatives in the Islamic economy—such as digital zakat campaigns and online religious education—show how digital media can be mobilised to reinforce social solidarity and ethical responsibility when accompanied by appropriate literacy and accountability frameworks (Hudaefi & Beik, 2021; Aziz, 2024). At the same time, research on Islamic entrepreneurship indicates that when young people internalise Islamic ethical principles, they are more likely to pursue forms of economic activity that contribute to sustainable well-being for themselves and their communities (Mayvita & Rifani, 2024).

Taken together, these bodies of work reveal substantial but fragmented knowledge on three interrelated domains: (1) faith and media, including digital religion and mediatization of Islamic practices; (2) Islamic counseling, with its theological foundations and emerging digital adaptations; and (3) family resilience and sustainable well-being, with particular attention to the role of spirituality and communication. Studies in each domain provide valuable insights such as how digital platforms reshape religious authority (Swarna et al., 2024; Jima'ain, 2023), how Islamic counseling can strengthen individual coping and family support (Saputro et al., 2021; Sulaiman, 2020), and how spiritual practices bolster resilience during crises (Diego-Cordero et al., 2022; Fitriana & Ahmad, 2022). However, the literature rarely integrates these strands into a single analytical framework that explains how digital Islamic counseling might systematically enhance family resilience and sustainable well-being in Muslim contexts, especially in the Global South. Existing reviews tend either to map digital religion phenomena, to examine Islamic counseling practices in isolation from media dynamics, or to conceptualise family resilience without sustained engagement with Islamic theological perspectives and digital infrastructures (Darmawani et al., 2021; Everri et al., 2022; Odintsova et al., 2022).

This article addresses that gap by proposing an integrated conceptual model of Digital Islamic Counseling for Family Resilience and Sustainable Well-Being. Drawing on a critical literature review of peer-reviewed publications on digital religion, Islamic counseling, family resilience, and sustainable well-being, the study synthesises 66 articles published between 2019 and 2024 to construct a cross-disciplinary framework that links faith, media practices, and counseling processes in Muslim families. Building on prior calls to update Islamic counseling approaches in response to contemporary challenges (Sutoyo et al., 2023; Saragih & Siregar, 2023), the article rethinks how core Islamic principles—such as tawhid, akhlaq, and shura—can be

operationalised through digital counseling modalities to support adaptive coping, relational cohesion, and ethically grounded life projects. The novelty of the study lies in its systematic integration of digital media studies, Islamic counseling theory, and family resilience scholarship into a model that is attentive to both the risks and opportunities of digitalisation for Muslim families. Conceptually, the article seeks to (1) clarify how digital media reshape religious communication and authority within families; (2) articulate the distinctive contributions of Islamic counseling when reconfigured for digital environments; and (3) theorise pathways through which Digital Islamic Counseling can foster family resilience and sustainable well-being. The scope of the study is global but anchored in experiences and scholarship from Muslim-majority contexts, with the aim of offering a flexible framework that can inform future empirical research, professional practice, and policy development in the field of Islamic counseling in the digital age.

METHOD
Research design

This study employed a critical literature review design to develop an integrated conceptual model of Digital Islamic Counseling for family resilience and sustainable well-being. Critical literature reviews not only synthesise existing evidence but also interrogate underlying assumptions and conceptual gaps, making them suitable for rapidly evolving fields such as digital religion and online counseling (Snyder, 2019; Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). The review therefore combined a systematic procedure for identifying and selecting relevant publications with an interpretive synthesis that foregrounds how faith, media, and counseling intersect in Muslim family life. The protocol followed recommendations for rigorous narrative reviews, organised into three stages systematic search and screening, extraction of study characteristics, and qualitative synthesis and was informed by PRISMA 2020 guidelines on transparent reporting of search strategies, eligibility criteria, and study-selection flows (Page et al., 2021; Paré & Kitsiou, 2017).

Data sources and search strategy

Data were drawn from multiple academic databases that index interdisciplinary work in communication, religious studies, psychology, and the social sciences. The core search was conducted in Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, complemented by targeted searches in PsycINFO, ATLA Religion, and selected national indexing services in order to capture regionally grounded scholarship on Muslim families. This combination responds to recommendations that comprehensive reviews in cross-cutting fields include both broad multidisciplinary indexes and specialised repositories (Snyder, 2019; Paré & Kitsiou, 2017). Search strings were developed iteratively from four clusters of keywords reflecting the theoretical focus of the study: digital religion and media practices, Islamic counseling and guidance, family resilience and parenting, and sustainable well-being. The refinement of search terms was informed by key publications in each cluster, including studies of digital Islamic practice (Aziz, 2024; Xie et al., 2022), work on Islamic counseling models (Sulaiman, 2020; Saputro et al., 2021; Sutoyo et al., 2023), and research on family resilience and spiritual coping (Perry et al., 2023; Diego-Cordero et al., 2022; Odintsova et al., 2022). Searches were limited to works published between 2019 and 2024, while earlier seminal studies were added purposively when repeatedly cited in the retrieved articles.

Study selection and PRISMA flow

Eligibility criteria were defined a priori to ensure that the included studies were relevant to the review questions and methodologically defensible. Articles were considered eligible when they were published in peer-reviewed outlets, written in English or Indonesian with an extended English abstract, addressed at least one of the four focal domains—digital religion and media, Islamic counseling, family resilience, or sustainable well-being—within Muslim contexts, and contained sufficient conceptual or empirical detail to inform the model. Exclusion criteria comprised publications that were primarily devotional or journalistic, duplicated reports of the same study, or works whose primary focus lay outside religious, counseling, or family processes. The process of identification, screening, and inclusion followed the logic of the PRISMA 2020 framework and is summarised in Figure 1. The initial searches yielded 320 records; after removal of duplicates, 180 unique records remained and were screened on titles and abstracts. Ninety-five articles were selected for full-text assessment, after which 66 articles were retained for in-depth analysis. Reasons for exclusion at the full-text stage included lack of focus on Muslim populations, absence of explicit engagement with counseling or family processes, and insufficient methodological detail. The PRISMA-style documentation enhances transparency and aligns the study with best practices in reporting literature reviews (Page et al., 2021).

Summary of included studies

To provide an overview of the evidence base, the main characteristics of the 66 included studies were extracted into a structured matrix covering publication year, country or region, disciplinary field, methodological approach, type of data, unit of analysis, and focal themes. This mapping step is consistent with recommendations to chart the epistemic landscape of complex fields before undertaking deeper interpretive synthesis (Paré & Kitsiou, 2017; Snyder, 2019). As summarised in Table 1, the corpus spans research conducted in Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and North America, with a notable concentration of empirical work in Indonesia and Malaysia that reflects both the size of their Muslim populations and the rapid expansion of digital Islamic practices in these settings (Aziz, 2024; Hudaefi & Beik, 2021). The studies employ diverse methodologies, including qualitative interviews and ethnographies of online religious communities, quantitative surveys of family resilience and religiosity, mixed-method designs examining digital counseling interventions, and conceptual or theological analyses of Islamic well-being.

Table 1.
Summary of the literature-review protocol and key characteristics of
the included studies.

Aspect	Disciption
Type of Review	Critical Literature Review
Data Sources	Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, Google Scholar
Publication Period	2019 – 2024
Inclution Criteria	Peer-reviewed articles relevant to digital religion, Islamic counseling, family resilience, and sustainable well-being
Exclusion Criteria	Non-academic articles, duplicates, irrelevant studies, non–peer-reviewed publications
Final Number of Articles	66 articles

Data analysis and synthesis

Data analysis proceeded in two interconnected stages: thematic synthesis and critical integration. Thematic synthesis was used to identify, compare, and refine patterns in how the included studies conceptualised and empirically described relationships between digital media, Islamic counseling, family resilience, and sustainable well-being. This approach adapts procedures commonly used in qualitative evidence synthesis, in which findings are coded line by line, grouped into descriptive themes, and then developed into higher-order analytical themes that interpret and extend the primary studies (Thomas & Harden, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2019). In the present review, textual segments containing key claims, conceptual definitions, and empirical insights were coded in an iterative manner, using both inductive codes that emerged from the data and deductive codes derived from sensitising concepts such as digital religious authority, parent–child negotiation of media use, spiritual coping, Islamic therapeutic alliance, and family well-being trajectories (Sulaiman, 2020; Perry et al., 2023; Swarna et al., 2024). Constant comparison across studies helped ensure that themes captured both recurrent patterns and contextual specificities across different Muslim settings.

The second stage, critical integration, sought to move beyond thematic description toward the construction of an integrated conceptual model. Critical integration resembles critical interpretive synthesis, through which reviewers interrogate the assumptions and implications of existing studies in order to generate new theoretical constructs and lines of inquiry (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). In this review, the process involved juxtaposing themes across the four focal domains and examining their convergences and tensions, for instance by contrasting how digital religion studies conceptualise youth agency with how counseling literature frames vulnerability and support, or by exploring how family-resilience research theorises coping in relation to Islamic notions of *tawakkul* and *sabr* (Diego-Cordero et al., 2022; Hasanah et al., 2021; Saputro et al., 2021). Through successive rounds of memo-writing and conceptual mapping, themes were organised into the three core components of the proposed model—faith and media practices, digital Islamic counseling processes, and outcomes in family resilience and sustainable well-being—while checking interpretations against the original studies to preserve the integrity of primary findings. Throughout the review, reflexive consideration was given to the limitations imposed by the existing evidence base and the rapid evolution of digital technologies, so that the resulting model is offered as a robust yet provisional framework to guide future empirical research on Digital Islamic Counseling in Muslim family life (Snyder, 2019; Page et al., 2021; Paré & Kitsiou, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
RESULT
Faith and Media in the Digital Age

The review first mapped how recent scholarship describes the changing relationships between faith and media in Muslim contexts. Studies of "digital religion" and the mediatization of Islam argue that digital platforms now function not only as channels for transmitting religious messages but also as environments that shape what counts as legitimate religious knowledge and authority (Alex & Paul, 2022; Evolvi, 2021). Within a broader media-ecology perspective, authors highlight how ubiquitous connectivity, algorithmic curation, and the convergence of interpersonal, mass, and social media produce hybrid spaces in which religious symbols circulate alongside commercial and entertainment content (Wei, 2024; Vela, 2023). In Southeast Asia, where Islam is

demographically and culturally dominant, these processes have facilitated the emergence of new preacher–influencer figures, online *majelis taklim*, and transnational devotional publics that rework local traditions while remaining deeply embedded in national and community identities (Aziz, 2024; Swarna et al., 2024).

At the same time, the literature documents significant ambivalences and tensions in these developments. Several authors warn that the logics of platform capitalism—particularly metrics of visibility, virality, and monetisation—tend to reward polarising or simplified religious messages and to blur the line between spiritual guidance and commercial branding (Masinde et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2021). Martino (2020) shows how online debates around doctrinal issues often privilege antagonistic styles of argument, in which winning a controversy takes precedence over mutual understanding, while Peterson (2020) notes that algorithmic filtering can reinforce ideological enclaves and sectarianism. Studies from Indonesia and other Muslim-majority societies describe how these dynamics intersect with existing social inequalities, leading to unequal capacities to access reliable religious information and to critically evaluate digital content (Kasri & Sosianti, 2023; Wilopo et al., 2023). Overall, the first analytic strand of the review confirms that the digital age has expanded opportunities for Islamic learning, participation, and da'wa, but has simultaneously intensified risks of commodification, fragmentation, and misinformation.

Rethinking Islamic Counseling in the Digital Context

A second cluster of findings concerns the current state of Islamic counseling and its adaptation to digital environments. Foundational works describe Islamic counseling as grounded in core theological and ethical principles—*tawhid* (the oneness of God), *akhlaq* (moral character), *syura* (consultation), and balance between spiritual and worldly responsibilities—that orient both counselor and client toward holistic well-being (Sulaiman, 2020; Saputro et al., 2021). These principles position counseling as a process of guiding individuals and families to rediscover their relationship with Allah, cultivate virtuous conduct, and align daily decisions with Islamic teachings. Empirical studies show that when such principles are translated into practice, Islamic counseling can strengthen coping with stress, enhance marital and family harmony, and support recovery from psychological distress (Abdi et al., 2020; Chairani et al., 2023).

However, the review also reveals considerable gaps between these ideals and their implementation in digitally saturated societies. Many counseling programmes in schools, universities, and community settings remain oriented toward face-to-face sessions and rely on curricula that pay limited attention to digital media, online risks, or the spiritual-psychological challenges associated with pervasive connectivity (Darmawani et al., 2021; Indri et al., 2021). Sutoyo et al. (2023) and Saragih and Siregar (2023) emphasise that training for Islamic counselors often underplays digital competences, resulting in practitioners who are confident in Qur'anic and *hadith*–based guidance but hesitant to engage with clients' online experiences. Studies conducted during and after the COVID-19 pandemic show that while some counselors successfully migrated services to video-conferencing and messaging applications, this shift was largely reactive and lacked coherent models for safeguarding confidentiality, building therapeutic alliance, and integrating religious resources in virtual settings (Manurung et al., 2024; Akgül & Ergin, 2022). These findings underscore the need to rethink Islamic counseling in ways that systematically address digital realities rather than treating them as peripheral or temporary phenomena.

Family Resilience and Sustainable Well-Being

The third strand of the review focuses on how faith, counseling, and digital media intersect in research on family resilience and sustainable well-being. Multiple studies conceptualise family

resilience as a dynamic process through which families mobilise relational, spiritual, and material resources to withstand and grow from adversity (Perry et al., 2023; Crespo & Relvas, 2024). Within Muslim contexts, empirical work consistently identifies religious faith, shared rituals, and a sense of divine support as central protective factors that foster hope, patience, and mutual care during crises (Hasanah et al., 2021; Diego-Cordero et al., 2022). Chairani et al. (2023) demonstrate that families who actively integrate Qur'anic recitation, collective prayer, and religious storytelling into their coping strategies report higher levels of cohesion and perceived meaning, while Fitriana and Ahmad (2022) find that spiritual practices can buffer the psychological impact of socio-economic stress.

At the same time, the reviewed literature points to complex effects of digital media on family resilience. On one hand, digital platforms enable families to maintain connections with diasporic relatives, access health and religious information, and participate in online support groups, thereby expanding their networks of solidarity and knowledge (Darmawan et al., 2021; Barton et al., 2020). On the other hand, authors describe how excessive or unsupervised screen time, exposure to harmful content, and conflicting norms around technology use can generate intergenerational tensions, disrupt communication, and erode shared routines that are vital for resilience (Jones et al., 2020; Wijaya et al., 2023). A theoretical review by Wecker et al. (2024) shows that digital devices often become both resources and stressors in family life, with outcomes depending on how families negotiate boundaries, responsibilities, and values. These findings suggest that sustainable well-being in Muslim families requires not only economic and psychological support but also deliberate integration of faith-based resources and digital literacy within everyday interactions.

Towards a Conceptual Model of Digital Islamic Counseling

Synthesising the three strands of evidence, the review generated a conceptual model that theorises Digital Islamic Counseling as a mediating process between faith–media practices and family resilience outcomes. The model is presented in Figure 2 and summarised in Table 2. It identifies three interrelated components: the ecosystem of digital faith and media within which families and counselors operate; the specific processes of Digital Islamic Counseling that mobilise theological, relational, and technological resources; and the resultant patterns of family resilience and sustainable well-being. Each component is grounded in recurrent themes across the 66 reviewed studies while also responding to conceptual gaps identified in the existing literature.

Within the first component, the model emphasises how digital religious environments shape the issues that families bring to counseling and the resources available to address them. Studies of online Islamic learning and influencer *da'wa* show that adolescents often encounter divergent interpretations of Islam, negotiate multiple authorities, and experience both empowerment and confusion in digital spaces (Aziz, 2024; Swarna et al., 2024; Xie et al., 2022). Research on media education and digital literacy highlights that the ability to interpret algorithms, verify information, and critically engage with online religious content remains uneven across socio-economic groups (Serik et al., 2023; Mozgovoy, 2022). The model therefore treats digital faith–media practices not as a neutral backdrop but as a dynamic field that generates both vulnerabilities—such as exposure to extremist narratives or consumerist spirituality—and opportunities for collective reflection and learning (Masinde et al., 2023; Wilopo et al., 2023).

The second component delineates the core processes of Digital Islamic Counseling. Drawing on empirical evaluations of Islamic counseling interventions and online psychological

services, the model posits that effective digital counseling requires the integration of three types of resources: spiritual–theological guidance, counseling micro-skills, and digital-platform affordances (Abdi et al., 2020; Manurung et al., 2024; Sulaiman, 2020). Spiritual–theological guidance involves helping families reinterpret their challenges in the light of Qur'anic narratives, prophetic exemplars, and Islamic concepts of *sabr, tawakkul,* and gratitude (Saputro et al., 2021; Diego-Cordero et al., 2022). Counseling micro-skills include empathic listening, collaborative problem-solving, and culturally attuned psychoeducation, which previous research identifies as crucial for building trust and facilitating change in Muslim clients (Chairani et al., 2023; Saragih & Siregar, 2023). Digital-platform affordances encompass the secure use of messaging apps, video calls, and online groups to deliver counseling, maintain continuity of care, and involve multiple family members when appropriate (Akgül & Ergin, 2022; Darmawani et al., 2021). The model highlights how these resources intersect in specific practices such as online family consultations, digital homework tasks, and faith-based reflection exercises that are adapted to clients' technological realities.

The third component links these processes to outcomes in family resilience and sustainable well-being. Building on family-resilience theory and empirical studies conducted during large-scale crises, the model proposes that Digital Islamic Counseling can strengthen three clusters of outcomes: spiritual–meaning-making capacities, relational patterns, and pragmatic coping strategies (Perry et al., 2023; Crespo & Relvas, 2024; Barton et al., 2020). Spiritual–meaning-making capacities refer to families' ability to frame adversity within Islamic narratives of trial and mercy, thereby sustaining hope and collective purpose (Hasanah et al., 2021; Diego-Cordero et al., 2022). Relational patterns include increased communication openness, mutual support, and shared rituals, which have been shown to buffer stress and facilitate post-crisis growth (Jones et al., 2020; Wijaya et al., 2023). Pragmatic coping strategies involve concrete changes in routines, technology use, and resource management that are guided by Islamic ethical commitments and informed by accurate digital information (Wecker et al., 2024; Hudaefi & Beik, 2021). The model thus conceptualises Digital Islamic Counseling as a bridge linking faith-informed interpretation with practical adaptation in the digital age.
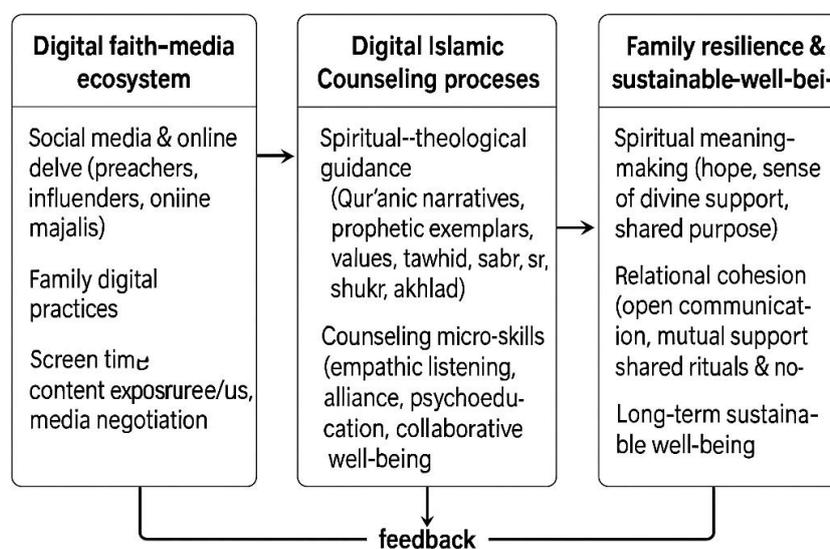

Figure 1.
Conceptual model of Digital Islamic Counseling for family resilience and sustainable well-being.

Table 2.
Core components of the Digital Islamic Counseling model.

Component	Key elements	Illustrative mechanisms in the literature
Digital faith–media ecosystem	Online *da'wa* and religious influencers; algorithmic curation; converging media platforms	Youth learning Islam through social media; exposure to commodified spirituality; negotiation of multiple authorities (Aziz, 2024; Swarna et al., 2024; Masinde et al., 2023; Wilopo et al., 2023)
Digital Islamic Counseling processes	Integration of spiritual–theological guidance, counseling micro-skills, and digital affordances	Online family counseling sessions; faith-based psychoeducation; secure use of messaging apps and video calls for follow-up (Sulaiman, 2020; Abdi et al., 2020; Manurung et al., 2024; Akgül & Ergin, 2022)
Family resilience and sustainable well-being outcomes	Spiritual meaning-making; relational cohesion; adaptive coping in technology-rich environments	Enhanced sense of divine support, improved parent–child communication, and ethically grounded adjustments to digital routines (Hasanah et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2023; Crespo & Relvas, 2024; Wijaya et al., 2023)

Contributions of the Digital Islamic Counseling Model

Finally, the synthesis clarifies the specific contributions that the proposed model of Digital Islamic Counseling makes to existing scholarship and practice. Conceptually, the model brings into a single analytic frame three literatures that have largely developed in parallel: studies of digital religion and the mediatization of Islam, research on Islamic counseling and psychotherapy, and work on family resilience and sustainable well-being. By specifying how digital religious environments shape counseling needs and resources, and how digitally mediated counseling can in turn influence resilience trajectories, the model responds to calls for more integrative approaches to religion, media, and mental health in Muslim societies (Darmawani et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2023; Sutoyo et al., 2023).

Practically, the model provides a structured vocabulary that counselors, educators, and policy-makers can use to design and evaluate interventions. It highlights the importance of training Islamic counselors not only in classical religious sciences and counseling techniques but also in digital literacy, ethical guidelines for online practice, and collaborative work with families around media use (Saragih & Siregar, 2023; Manurung et al., 2024). The model also suggests indicators for assessing outcomes of Digital Islamic Counseling, including changes in families' spiritual narratives, communication patterns, and everyday management of digital technologies (Hasanah et al., 2021; Wijaya et al., 2023; Wecker et al., 2024). Taken together, these results demonstrate that Digital Islamic Counseling is best understood not as a technical add-on to existing practices, but as a

comprehensive, faith-informed response to the intertwined transformations of religion, media, and family life in the contemporary Muslim world.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this critical literature review highlight how deeply intertwined digital media, religious authority, and family life have become in contemporary Muslim societies. As summarised in Figure 2 and Table 2, the proposed model of Digital Islamic Counseling positions families within a broader digital faith–media ecosystem that both enables and constrains their efforts to pursue resilience and sustainable well-being. The discussion in this section elaborates the theoretical and practical implications of this model, engages with existing scholarship on digital religion, Islamic counseling, and family resilience, and identifies key directions for further empirical investigation.

Digital faith–media ecosystems and shifting religious authority

The first set of results underscores that digital platforms are no longer peripheral tools for disseminating Islamic messages but constitute dense environments in which norms, authorities, and identities are negotiated. This finding resonates with media-ecology approaches to religion that conceptualise platforms as socio-technical infrastructures that co-produce religious experience, rather than simply transmit pre-existing doctrine (Alex & Paul, 2022; Evolvi, 2021). The review confirms that in many Muslim-majority contexts, social media have amplified the visibility of preacher–influencer figures and enabled participatory forms of *da'wa*, thereby widening access to religious learning and creating new channels for youth engagement (Aziz, 2024; Swarna et al., 2024). Yet it also reveals how platform logics of virality and monetisation encourage certain forms of religious expression over others, privileging affectively charged, polarising, or commodified content at the expense of slow, dialogical, and contextually grounded interpretation (Masinde et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2021; Martino, 2020).

From the perspective of family resilience, this configuration is both promising and troubling. Adolescents may find role models and communities of practice that support their spiritual growth online, but they also confront fragmented authorities and conflicting norms that parents may feel ill-equipped to address (Xie et al., 2022; Kasri & Sosianti, 2023). The model developed in this study suggests that Digital Islamic Counseling must begin from a realistic appreciation of these environments, taking seriously the everyday media repertoires of children, parents, and counselors alike. Counselors who lack digital literacy risk either demonising online spaces or ignoring them, thereby failing to engage with the sites where religious identities are actively shaped (Serik et al., 2023; Mozgovoy, 2022). Conversely, counselors who understand how algorithms, metrics, and influencer cultures work are better placed to help families critically evaluate online religious content, recognise forms of commodified spirituality, and identify trustworthy sources of guidance (Masinde et al., 2023; Wilopo et al., 2023).

Reconfiguring Islamic counseling for digitally saturated families

The second major implication concerns the reconfiguration of Islamic counseling itself. Classical formulations emphasise holistic care that integrates spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions of well-being, grounded in principles such as *tawhid*, *akhlaq*, *sabr*, and *shura* (Sulaiman, 2020; Saputro et al., 2021). Empirical studies show that when these principles inform therapeutic practice, Muslim clients report strengthened coping, improved marital relationships, and enhanced family harmony (Abdi et al., 2020; Chairani et al., 2023). Yet the review indicates that many existing programs still treat digital media as an external risk factor to be managed, rather than as an integral dimension of clients' lived experience (Darmawani et al., 2021; Indri et al., 2021).

The conceptual model addresses this gap by specifying how spiritual–theological resources, counseling micro-skills, and digital affordances can be integrated in concrete practices of Digital Islamic Counseling. The literature on online therapy during and after the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that virtual sessions can maintain therapeutic alliance, extend access to underserved populations, and reduce stigma when attention is paid to privacy, continuity, and relational presence (Manurung et al., 2024; Akgül & Ergin, 2022). However, these studies rarely examine how explicitly Islamic forms of meaning-making and ritual can be woven into digital sessions. By focusing on practices such as guided Qur'anic reflection, digitally facilitated family rituals, and faith-based psychoeducation about media use, the model argues that digital platforms can become vehicles for enacting core Islamic counseling principles rather than mere logistical tools (Saputro et al., 2021; Diego-Cordero et al., 2022).

This reconfiguration has implications for counselor education and institutional policy. Training curricula need to cultivate not only religious scholarship and counseling skills but also competencies in digital communication, ethics of online practice, and collaborative work with families around technology (Sutoyo et al., 2023; Saragih & Siregar, 2023). Institutions must establish guidelines on secure data handling, boundaries in messaging with clients, and the use of group-based online interventions, aligning them with both national professional standards and Islamic ethical frameworks (Darmawani et al., 2021; Hudaefi & Beik, 2021). Without such structural support, individual counselors may experiment with digital tools in ad hoc ways that inadvertently reproduce inequalities of access or expose families to new vulnerabilities.

Family resilience, sustainable well-being, and digital practices

A third thread in the discussion concerns how Digital Islamic Counseling interacts with family resilience processes. Family-resilience scholarship emphasises the importance of relational patterns, shared belief systems, and organisational processes in enabling families to adapt to crises and pursue long-term flourishing (Perry et al., 2023; Crespo & Relvas, 2024). In Muslim contexts, spiritual practices such as prayer, Qur'anic recitation, and narratives of divine providence are repeatedly identified as central mechanisms through which families interpret adversity and sustain hope (Hasanah et al., 2021; Diego-Cordero et al., 2022; Fitriana & Ahmad, 2022). The present review corroborates these findings but adds a digital layer: it shows that the ways in which families use, negotiate, and reflect on digital technologies can either support or undermine these resilience-building mechanisms (Wecker et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2023).

The model therefore conceptualises Digital Islamic Counseling as a process that can reorient family digital practices toward resilience-enhancing patterns. For example, counselors may facilitate conversations in which parents and adolescents collaboratively set guidelines for social media use, framed not simply as rules but as expressions of Islamic virtues such as modesty, responsibility, and *ihsan* (Aziz, 2024; Swarna et al., 2024). They may encourage families to transform online activities into opportunities for shared religious engagement, such as watching sermons together and discussing their relevance to family challenges, or participating in digital charity initiatives that reinforce collective ethical commitments (Hudaefi & Beik, 2021; Mayvita & Rifani, 2024). At the same time, counselors can help families recognise signs that digital routines are eroding communication, disrupting sleep, or exposing members to harmful content, and support them in making gradual, values-based adjustments (Jones et al., 2020; Barton et al., 2020).

This relational emphasis challenges individualistic models of counseling that focus primarily on the client's inner states. Many of the reviewed studies on online psychological services

centre on individual users, yet family-resilience research suggests that interventions which engage multiple family members and address shared narratives are more likely to produce sustainable change (Odintsova et al., 2022; Allen et al., 2024; Everri et al., 2022). Digital Islamic Counseling can leverage the affordances of group video calls, shared digital journals, and family messaging groups to involve parents, children, and sometimes extended kin in structured conversations about faith, stress, and technology. The model thus contributes to emerging work on family-centered digital interventions by grounding them in Islamic theological anthropology, which understands human beings as relational selves embedded in networks of responsibility and care (Saputro et al., 2021; Sulaiman, 2020).

Theoretical contributions and research implications

The integrated model proposed here contributes to several ongoing debates in the study of religion, media, and mental health. First, it advances digital-religion scholarship by bringing family counseling and resilience theory into the conversation. Much of the existing literature maps how Muslims use social media for learning, identity performance, or activism, but pays less attention to how these practices are processed within families and therapeutic relationships (Aziz, 2024; Swarna et al., 2024; Xie et al., 2022). By centring families and counselors as mediating actors, the model shifts attention from the public sphere of online religious discourse to the intimate spaces where digital content is interpreted, contested, and integrated into everyday life.

Second, the model enriches Islamic counseling theory by systematically incorporating digital infrastructures into its conceptual core. Earlier formulations typically assume face-to-face settings and treat technology as an optional extension; consequently, they under-theorise how online environments shape clients' worldviews and relational patterns (Sulaiman, 2020; Sutoyo et al., 2023). In contrast, the present model argues that digital technologies are constitutive of contemporary subjectivities and must therefore be addressed at the level of ontology, ethics, and practice. This theoretical move aligns Islamic counseling with broader critical discussions about algorithmic culture, platform governance, and the commodification of attention, inviting Muslim scholars to articulate distinctive normative responses grounded in Qur'anic and prophetic teachings (Masinde et al., 2023; Peterson, 2020; Kasri & Sosianti, 2023).

Third, the model provides a framework for empirical research that can test and refine its propositions. The review on which it is based was necessarily constrained by the available evidence, much of which consists of small-scale case studies, cross-sectional surveys, or conceptual reflections (Snyder, 2019; Paré & Kitsiou, 2017). Future studies could operationalise the components of the model into measurable constructs—for example, scales capturing families' digital faith–media practices, indicators of digital-counseling quality, and longitudinal markers of resilience and well-being—and examine their relationships across diverse Muslim populations. Mixed-method designs would be particularly valuable, combining quantitative assessments with qualitative exploration of how families experience and make sense of Digital Islamic Counseling in specific cultural contexts (Thomas & Harden, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Methodological reflections and contextual considerations

The methodological choices made in this review also shape the discussion. The adoption of a critical literature-review design allowed for the integration of heterogeneous sources spanning communication, psychology, religious studies, and social work, following recommendations that complex social phenomena be approached through flexible yet systematic synthesis (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006; Page et al., 2021). At the same time, relying on published articles from 2019–2024 means that the model may lag behind very recent technological developments and excludes

practitioner knowledge that circulates in non-academic forms. Rapid innovations in generative artificial intelligence, immersive media, and algorithmic personalisation are likely to further transform the landscapes in which Muslim families and counselors operate, raising new ethical and spiritual questions that were only beginning to appear in the reviewed literature (Wei, 2024; Vela, 2023).

Contextual diversity is another crucial consideration. Although the corpus spans multiple regions, Indonesian and Malaysian studies are particularly prominent, reflecting both the dynamism of digital Islamic cultures in Southeast Asia and the growth of local academic publishing (Aziz, 2024; Hudaefi & Beik, 2021). While these contexts offer rich insights into how majority-Muslim societies negotiate digital transformation, their institutional arrangements, regulatory environments, and cultural histories differ from those of Muslim minorities in Western countries or conflict-affected regions. The model therefore needs to be applied with sensitivity to local conditions, including variations in internet access, legal frameworks for counseling, and prevailing theological orientations (Barton et al., 2020; Perry et al., 2023). Comparative and transnational research will be essential to explore how Digital Islamic Counseling takes shape in disparate settings and to identify both shared patterns and distinctive challenges.

CONCLUSION

This review has synthesised recent scholarship on digital religion, Islamic counseling, and family resilience to propose a conceptual model of Digital Islamic Counseling for family resilience and sustainable well-being. The analysis shows that Muslim families now inhabit dense digital faith–media ecosystems in which social media, algorithmic curation, and influencer *da'wa* profoundly shape religious learning, authority, and everyday communication. Within these environments, Islamic counseling when grounded in core theological principles and delivered through digitally competent practice emerges as a crucial mediating process that can transform digital risks and resources into opportunities for spiritual meaning-making, relational cohesion, and adaptive coping.

The model contributes to existing knowledge in three main ways. Conceptually, it integrates literatures that have largely developed in parallel, foregrounding families and counselors as key actors who interpret and reconfigure digital religious content within therapeutic and domestic settings. Practically, it offers a vocabulary and structure for designing training curricula, institutional guidelines, and program evaluations that explicitly link spiritual guidance, counseling micro-skills, and digital affordances. Methodologically, it outlines a research agenda for operationalising and empirically testing the proposed components and pathways across diverse Muslim contexts. Future studies can build on this framework through mixed-method and longitudinal designs that examine how Digital Islamic Counseling is experienced by different generations, social classes, and national communities, and how it evolves alongside rapid technological change. Together, these contributions position Digital Islamic Counseling as a promising, faith-informed response to the intertwined transformations of religion, media, and family life in the contemporary Muslim world.

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