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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ISLAMIC COUNSELING: EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES AND ETHICAL CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This research examines the opportunities and ethical challenges of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into Islamic guidance and counseling practices in digital settings. The researchers employed a qualitative approach, conducting a literature review and thematic content analysis of 40 scholarly publications from 2022 to 2026 retrieved from Google Scholar, ResearchGate, SpringerLink, and arXiv. The findings show that AI offers strategic opportunities, including expanded access to counseling services, chatbot-based preliminary support, early detection of psychological distress, personalized psycho-spiritual interventions, and administrative efficiency for counselors. However, AI integration also raises serious ethical challenges, including vulnerabilities in client data privacy and confidentiality, algorithmic bias that conflicts with the Islamic worldview, threats to religious authenticity and authority, AI's inability to embody rahmah*,* ikhlāṣ*, and genuine empathy, and the absence of an ethical governance framework. The study concludes that AI should serve as a supportive tool, not a replacement for counselors, under human-in-the-loop supervision. It also proposes a governance framework grounded in* maqāṣid al-sharī'ah *to ensure digital Islamic counseling remains spiritually authentic, secure, and human-centered.*

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, islamic counseling, digital guidance, ethical challenges, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji peluang dan tantangan etis dalam integrasi kecerdasan buatan (AI) dalam praktik bimbingan dan konseling Islam di ruang digital. Peneliti menerapkan pendekatan kualitatif melalui tinjauan literatur dan analisis isi tematik terhadap 40 publikasi ilmiah terbitan 2022–2026 yang dihimpun dari Google Scholar, ResearchGate, SpringerLink, dan arXiv. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa AI membuka peluang strategis berupa perluasan akses

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layanan konseling, dukungan awal melalui chatbot, deteksi dini tekanan psikologis, personalisasi intervensi psikospiritual, serta peningkatan efisiensi administratif bagi konselor. Namun, integrasi AI juga memunculkan tantangan etis yang serius, meliputi kerentanan privasi dan kerahasiaan data klien, bias algoritmik yang bertentangan dengan pandangan dunia Islam, ancaman terhadap autentisitas dan otoritas keagamaan, keterbatasan AI dalam menghadirkan rahmah, ikhlāṣ, dan empati yang sejati, serta kekosongan kerangka tata kelola etis. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa AI harus berperan sebagai alat pendukung, bukan pengganti konselor, di bawah pengawasan manusia (*human-in-the-loop*). Penelitian ini juga merumuskan kerangka tata kelola berbasis *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* untuk memastikan layanan konseling Islam digital tetap autentik secara spiritual, aman, dan berpusat pada manusia.

Kata Kunci: kecerdasan buatan, konseling islam, bimbingan digital, tantangan etika, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly transformed modern society, particularly in communication, education, healthcare, and psychological services. In recent years, AI technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, predictive analytics, robotic process automation, and intelligent chatbots have become increasingly integrated into human-centered professional practices. These technologies have changed how people communicate, access information, receive healthcare, and interact with digital environments (Rashid & Kausik, 2024). One important area influenced by AI is counseling and mental health services, where AI systems are now used to support emotional assessment, behavioral analysis, crisis intervention, and therapeutic communication. AI-powered counseling platforms can provide automated responses, emotional support, and preliminary mental health guidance in both clinical and non-clinical settings (Spytska, 2025).

The rapid development of internet technology, digital communication, and public awareness of mental health issues has accelerated the use of AI in counseling practices (Löchner, Carlbring, Schuller, Torous, & Sander, 2025). Digital counseling platforms have expanded access to psychological support, especially for students, technologically connected communities, and people living in remote or underserved areas where professional counseling services are limited. Educational institutions, healthcare providers, and online therapy platforms increasingly use AI-driven systems

to support stress management, emotional wellbeing, anxiety reduction, and preventive mental healthcare. These systems can identify emotional distress through communication patterns and user behavior while offering personalized responses based on psychological data. Consequently, AI has become an important component of contemporary counseling and virtual therapeutic services (Ophir & Rosenberg, 2026).

Islamic guidance and counseling differ significantly from secular counseling approaches because they emphasize not only psychological wellbeing but also spiritual, moral, and social development. Islamic counseling is grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, Islamic ethics, and psycho-spiritual principles that promote holistic human wellbeing (Rassool, 2015). Unlike secular counseling, which mainly focuses on emotional adjustment and cognitive behavior, Islamic counseling integrates spiritual purification, moral transformation, and guidance toward a righteous life. Islamic counsellors are expected to function not only as psychological facilitators but also as spiritual mentors, guiding individuals toward emotional stability, moral consciousness, and closeness to Allah. Values such as compassion (rahmah), sincerity (ikhlāṣ), trustworthiness (amānah), patience (ṣabr), wisdom (ḥikmah), and empathy are fundamental to the counseling relationship and the healing process (Makhmudah & Arifin, 2025).

The integration of AI into Islamic counseling, therefore, raises important ethical and philosophical concerns. On the one hand, AI technologies offer significant opportunities for expanding Islamic counseling services. AI-driven systems can improve access to psycho-spiritual support through remote counseling, multilingual services, and continuous digital assistance (Elmahjub, 2023). These technologies can help counselors manage administrative tasks, monitor emotional conditions, provide early intervention, and expand mental health education. Digital counseling applications also appeal to Muslim youth, who may feel more comfortable seeking support in familiar online environments. In societies where mental health stigma discourages people from seeking help, AI-based counseling platforms may encourage emotional expression and greater participation in mental health services (Abdelnour, 2025).

AI in Islamic counseling also creates serious ethical challenges. Concerns related to privacy, confidentiality, algorithmic bias, emotional detachment, and religious authenticity remain highly significant. Counseling sessions often involve sensitive emotional, psychological, and spiritual information that may be vulnerable to cyberattacks, unauthorized access, or misuse within digital systems (Ali, Bouzoubaa, Gelli, Hamzi, & Khan, 2025). Furthermore, AI systems trained primarily on secular or culturally diverse datasets may generate counseling advice that does not align with Islamic teachings and values. Essential counseling qualities such as empathy, compassion, sincerity, and moral accountability are deeply rooted in human interaction and spiritual sensitivity, making them difficult to replicate through automated systems. Scholars have also questioned the accuracy of AI-generated Islamic interpretations and warned about the potential loss of authenticity in religious guidance (Barnes, Zhang, & Valenzuela, 2024).

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between AI and counseling practices. Muhammad Aslam, Abbas, and Batool (2025) explored the effectiveness of AI-powered counseling systems in improving accessibility and responsiveness in digital mental health services. Thakkar, Gupta, and De Sousa (2024) discussed the growing role of AI in emotional detection and behavioral analysis within counseling environments. Meanwhile, Rassool (2024) emphasized the importance of preserving human-centered spiritual relationships in Islamic counseling practices despite technological advancements. Habib (2025) Further, Islamic ethical frameworks grounded in the maqāṣid al-sharīʻah are proposed to guide responsible AI governance. Although these studies offer valuable insights into AI applications and ethical concerns, limited research integrates AI into Islamic guidance and counseling from both technological and Islamic ethical perspectives.

This study differs from previous research by specifically examining the opportunities and ethical dilemmas of AI integration in Islamic counseling practices. The study not only analyzes AI's technical benefits but also evaluates its compatibility with Islamic counseling values, spiritual ethics, and the principles of maqāṣid al-sharīʻah. In addition, this research highlights the importance of balancing technological

innovation with human-centered spiritual care, which remains central to Islamic counseling traditions. Therefore, this research contributes to Islamic guidance and counseling studies by offering a comprehensive discussion of how AI technologies can be ethically managed within faith-based counseling environments.

The concept of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah provides an important ethical framework for evaluating AI implementation in Islamic counseling. Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah refers to the higher objectives of Islamic law, including the protection of religion (dīn), life (nafs), intellect ('aql), dignity and lineage (nasl), and property (māl). These principles serve as ethical guidelines to assess whether technological innovations support or harm human welfare (Maiga, 2025). In Islamic counseling, AI systems should preserve confidentiality, protect human dignity, support emotional wellbeing, and prevent harm. Technologies that manipulate vulnerable individuals, misrepresent Islamic teachings, or weaken authentic human relationships contradict the ethical foundations of Islamic counseling practice. In addition, Islamic ethical perspectives emphasize justice ('adl), trustworthiness (amānah), compassion (rahmah), and public welfare (maṣlaḥah) as essential principles in AI governance. AI should function as a supportive tool that enhances counseling services rather than replacing human counselors entirely. Human oversight remains necessary because machines cannot fully replicate emotional depth, spiritual awareness, moral reasoning, or genuine empathy. Effective Islamic counseling requires contextual understanding, emotional sensitivity, and spiritual discernment that extend beyond technological capability (Ali et al., 2025).

Despite growing discussions of AI ethics and digital counseling, limited research explains how Islamic counseling principles can be operationalized to regulate AI-assisted psycho-spiritual interventions. This study contributes by integrating *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, Islamic counseling ethics, and human-in-the-loop governance into a context-specific framework that safeguards religious authenticity, spiritual accountability, and the irreplaceable human dimensions of counseling. Building on this background, the present study investigates the opportunities and ethical challenges of integrating AI into Islamic guidance and digital counseling practices. The study also examines how Islamic ethical principles, particularly maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, can guide the

responsible development, supervision, and application of AI technologies within Islamic counseling contexts. This research is expected to contribute, both theoretically and practically, to advancing Islamic guidance and counseling studies in the digital era while promoting ethical, human-centered technological innovation.

Method

This study employed a qualitative literature review with thematic content analysis to examine artificial intelligence integration in Islamic counseling. The study retrieved relevant literature from Google Scholar, ResearchGate, SpringerLink, and arXiv, focusing on publications from 2022 to 2026. The manuscript's reference list comprises 40 sources, which were examined for relevance to AI-assisted counseling, Islamic ethical principles, psychological well-being, and technological development. Sources lacking thematic relevance or adequate academic information were excluded. The selected literature was analyzed through thematic coding, categorization, pattern identification, and interpretive synthesis. Because systematic search records and screening statistics were unavailable, the study is classified as a qualitative literature review rather than a fully reproducible systematic review (O'Brien & Mc Guckin, 2015).

The research population consisted of scholarly publications related to Artificial Intelligence, digital counseling, Islamic ethics, online counseling, Islamic psychology, AI governance, and technology-mediated counseling practices. The sample included selected peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, open-access PDF documents, institutional repository publications, and academic database sources published between 2022 and 2026. This publication period was selected to ensure the relevance and currency of the analyzed literature in relation to recent technological developments and ethical discussions.

Data sources were obtained from several academic platforms and databases, including Google Scholar, ResearchGate, SpringerLink, arXiv, and reputable counseling journals. The data collection process involved a systematic search using specific keywords and phrases such as "Artificial Intelligence in Islamic Counseling," "Digital

Counseling Ethics," "AI and Islamic Guidance," "Islamic AI Ethics," and "AI-Assisted Counseling." The inclusion criteria focused on publications discussing AI implementation in counseling, ethical and religious considerations, psycho-spiritual dimensions, and governance frameworks relevant to Islamic counseling contexts.

The primary research instrument was a literature review matrix used to organize, classify, and evaluate the selected sources. Data collection techniques included identifying documents, screening literature, categorizing sources, and taking notes. The research procedure involved several stages: identifying relevant literature, selecting eligible publications, reviewing and coding the data, organizing themes, and interpreting findings systematically (Greener, 2014).

Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis, which enabled the researcher to identify recurring themes and patterns across the selected literature. Thematic coding was applied to classify findings into 7 major themes: accessibility, confidentiality, empathy, religious authenticity, algorithmic bias, technological opportunities, and psycho-spiritual concerns, as well as ethical regulation. Furthermore, an interpretive analytical approach was employed to synthesize scholars' arguments and critically examine emerging debates regarding the responsible implementation of AI in faith-based counseling services. This process generated comprehensive insights into the ethical and practical dimensions of AI integration in Islamic counseling.

Results and Discussion

1. Transformative Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence in Accessible and Effective Digital Islamic Counseling Services

The thematic analysis indicates that accessibility is one of the most significant opportunities offered by artificial intelligence (AI) in counseling services. Rather than assigning an unsupported percentage to this finding, the reviewed literature demonstrates that AI-powered platforms can expand access to psychological assistance, particularly for individuals experiencing geographical, institutional, and

social barriers. This potential is discussed by Lala (2025), who examines the relationship between Islamic guidance and artificial intelligence from an epistemological perspective. Similarly, Omarov et al. (2023; Casu at al. (2024), and Kuhail et al. (2025) discuss the applications, feasibility, and effectiveness of AI-powered chatbots in mental health services. These studies provide supporting evidence for the broader accessibility argument, although they do not independently establish the prevalence of this finding across the entire literature sample.

AI-assisted counseling also offers opportunities for preliminary psychological assessment and personalized interventions. Spytska (2025) examined predictive analytics models for mental illness using machine learning, while Kumar and Uchoi (2025) explore the application of artificial intelligence to spiritual well-being. These publications support AI's potential to facilitate psychological monitoring and personalized assistance. Nevertheless, their findings should not be interpreted as direct evidence that AI can independently provide comprehensive Islamic counseling interventions. These findings align with Wahid (2024), which emphasizes the crucial role of digital platforms in expanding the reach of Islamic guidance services to previously underserved individuals.

In terms of personalization, many of the publications analyzed focused on AI's ability to improve early detection of anxiety, depression, emotional instability, and psychological distress through behavioral monitoring and predictive assessment models (Islam, Hassan, Akter, Jibon, & Sahidullah, 2024; Joshi, Singh, & Sehgal, 2025; ShamsEldin et al., 2025). The machine learning algorithm identifies the user's emotional patterns and psychological characteristics, then presents personalized counseling recommendations, including relevant Qur'anic verses, motivational content grounded in Islamic values, and spiritual coping mechanisms that address the user's emotional and spiritual needs.

These findings reflect significant developments in the contemporary Islamic counseling ecosystem. Compared with previous studies that still view digital technology as a mere complement to conventional counseling practices, this study identifies AI as a transformative agent actively reshaping the architecture of Islamic

guidance and counseling services. This shift is not only technical, but also epistemological, changing the way psycho-spiritual knowledge is constructed, disseminated, and accepted by the Muslim community.

The high percentage of literature sources that emphasize accessibility as the main benefit of AI in counseling reflects real needs that traditional Islamic counseling systems have not optimally met (Borges, Kumaraswamy, Ponnusamy, Gopalsamy, & Devassy, 2025; Muhammad Aslam et al., 2025). In the geographical context of countries with large Muslim populations but uneven distribution of professional counselors, such as Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Nigeria, AI-based counseling platforms have the potential to be structural solutions that can reach remote areas, communities in conflict zones, as well as individuals hindered by physical mobility barriers or social stigma. This condition relates to the concept of maslahah (public good) in Islamic jurisprudence, where efforts to expand access to psycho-spiritual services can be considered a collective obligation (fard kifayah) that the Muslim community must fulfill (Abbasi-Shavazi & Jones, 2019).

Based on an Islamic psychological perspective, the personalization of spiritual intervention through AI opens new horizons for implementing holistic counseling approaches that blend psychological and religious dimensions. The algorithm's ability to present Qur'anic verses and dhikr tailored to the user's emotional state is a breakthrough that strengthens the relevance of the Islamic Integrated Psychotherapy (IIP) approach in the digital era. Research by Kumar and Uchoi (2025) supports these findings, showing that algorithmically designed individual psycho-spiritual interventions can improve holistic models of emotional and spiritual well-being, especially among younger generations of Muslims familiar with digital communication environments. Nonetheless, it is important to distinguish between the potential and the reality of implementing AI in Islamic counseling. The operational efficiencies AI offers, from automated scheduling and digital medical record management to intelligent transcription services, have been shown to increase institutional productivity and allow human counselors to focus more on the therapeutic and spiritual dimensions of counseling relationships. However, these benefits can be

optimally realized only if they are supported by adequate technological infrastructure, sufficient digital literacy among counselors and clients, and an application development framework rooted in Islamic epistemological values.

AI appeals to young Muslims who are already accustomed to digital communication and social media ecosystems. This indicates a strategic opportunity to develop a digital Islamic counseling platform that is not only technologically functional but also authentic to Islamic values. This kind of development requires multidisciplinary collaboration involving technology experts, psychologists, certified Islamic counselors, and scholars who understand the contemporary digital context. Without such collaboration, the risk of producing a technologically advanced yet spiritually shallow platform will remain a real threat to the integrity of Islamic counseling in the digital age. AI is not just a technological tool in Islamic counseling but a transformative force with the potential to redefine the accessibility, effectiveness, and relevance of Islamic guidance services in the 21st century. Its wise and planned use, which is based on Islamic ethical principles and contextual psychological frameworks, is an absolute prerequisite for the realization of a meaningful and sustainable transformation in digital Islamic counseling practices

2. Privacy Ethics, Data Confidentiality, and Algorithmic Bias in AI-Based Islamic Counseling

The literature identifies data privacy and confidentiality as major ethical considerations in AI-assisted counseling. Komalasari (2024) examines secure and privacy-preserving federated learning with explainable AI in smart healthcare systems. Although this publication provides relevant insights into healthcare data protection, it does not specifically investigate Islamic counseling. Admass, Munaye, and Diro (2024) further discusses cybersecurity challenges and emerging threats, providing broader technological context for understanding potential vulnerabilities in digital counseling platforms.

Algorithmic bias represents another important concern. Elmahjub (2023) discusses ethical benchmarking of artificial intelligence from an Islamic ethical perspective, while Barnes et al. (2024) examine culturally dependent responses

generated by AI systems. These studies provide conceptual support for the importance of cultural and religious sensitivity in AI development. However, the findings should be presented as an emerging ethical concern rather than a quantitatively established prevalence within Islamic counseling research.

The second challenge identified is algorithmic bias. The majority of the literature analyzed highlighted the possibility of culturally inappropriate counseling recommendations or interpretations of emotions and therapeutic responses that conflict with Islamic beliefs and Muslim cultural experiences. Most of the existing AI technologies are developed based on Western and secular psychological assumptions that are not always compatible with the Islamic worldview. This bias has the potential to exclude religious perspectives and undermine cultural appropriateness in counseling practices, as Niles and Gutierrez (2024) emphasizes.

The ethical challenges identified in this study require an in-depth study that goes beyond technical solutions because this problem touches on the core dimensions of values, identity, and beliefs in Islamic counseling. Compared with the broader digital counseling literature, which tends to view privacy as a matter of law and regulation alone, the Islamic perspective situates counseling confidentiality in a much richer moral and spiritual context (Taquette & Borges da Matta Souza, 2022).

The concept of amānah in Islam not only entails an obligation to maintain beliefs but also encompasses holistic responsibility for the spiritual, psychological, and social well-being of the entrusted party. When a data breach occurs in Islamic counseling, the impact is not limited to material or reputational loss. However, it can also undermine clients' spiritual beliefs, disrupt the emotional healing process, and even cause a crisis of faith in vulnerable individuals (Sirajul Islam, Osmani, & Mohammad Nurunnabi, 2025). Therefore, data protection standards in Islamic counseling should go beyond the minimum requirements set by general regulations, such as the GDPR in Europe or the Personal Data Protection Law in Indonesia.

The problem of algorithmic bias in Islamic counseling is an issue that is still relatively understudied academically compared to the study of AI bias in the context of race or gender. Nevertheless, this study's findings suggest that religion- and culture-

based biases in counseling AI systems can have equally serious consequences. Algorithms developed based on psychological data from Western and secular populations will tend to produce models of pathology, normality, and healing that do not reflect Islamic psycho-spiritual parameters (Elmahjub, 2023). For example, expressions of dependence on Allah (tawakkal) or the intensity of spiritual practices such as tahajud and sunnah fasting may be misinterpreted by algorithms as signs of maladaptive behavior or anxiety disorders, when in the context of Islam, they are a source of resilience and psychological strength.

Elmahjub (2023) research cited in this study confirms that excluding religious perspectives from algorithmic design is not just a technical problem but a form of systemic bias that reflects the dominance of Western psychological narratives in the global technology ecosystem. Addressing this bias requires structured, sustained efforts to develop culturally and religiously diverse datasets, involve professional Islamic counselors and scholars in algorithm development and validation, and establish an AI ethics oversight body with representation from the global Muslim community.

Based on the perspective of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, the protection of the privacy and integrity of counseling data can be attributed to the maintenance of hifẓ al-'aql (intellectual/psychological protection) and hifẓ al-nafs (protection of the soul), two of the five main objectives of Islamic law. Violations of privacy in counseling not only harm individuals psychologically but also threaten the spiritual and social dimensions of Muslim life, which ultimately contradicts the fundamental purposes of the Shari'a. This maqāṣid framework offers a solid normative foundation for developing AI governance policies that are not only reactive to technical threats but also proactive in building a comprehensive digital counseling ecosystem aligned with Islamic values (Ho Thi Thu Hang, 2024).

The practical implication is that Islamic counseling institutions and religious authorities need to take an active, proactive role in formulating AI ethical standards for counseling, rather than simply accepting standards already set by the tech industry. Collaboration among international Muslim counseling organizations, Islamic

educational institutions, and technology companies is essential if the Muslim community wants to ensure that the digital transformation of Islamic counseling aligns with authentic Islamic values and principles.

3. Religious Authenticity, Humanitarian Islamic Counseling, and AI Ethical Governance Frameworks

Religious authenticity constitutes a distinctive challenge in integrating AI into Islamic counseling. Mohammed et al. (2025) investigate how to prevent hallucinations in AI-based Islamic fatwa generation using large language models and retrieval-augmented generation. Their findings are relevant to the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated religious information, although fatwa generation should not be equated directly with the broader practice of Islamic counseling.

Abdelnour (2025) provides an additional theological perspective on artificial intelligence, emphasizing the relationship between technological capabilities and human spiritual meaning. Niles and Gutierrez (2024) discuss the necessity of religious and spiritual competence in school counseling, offering relevant insights into the professional and contextual dimensions of faith-sensitive counseling. Furthermore, Makhmudah and Arifin (2025) provide a theoretical foundation for understanding Islamic counseling as a practice requiring human understanding and religious sensitivity. Accordingly, AI should complement, not replace, qualified Islamic counselors. Its implementation requires human supervision, professional accountability, and governance informed by maqāṣid al-sharī'ah.

Qualities such as rahmah (compassion), ikhlāṣ (sincerity), the ability to listen empathically, and a sincere engagement with the human condition are the foundations of therapeutic relationships in authentic Islamic counseling (Khan, Rahman, Molla, Shahjahan, & Abdullah, 2022). Conversational AI technology can indeed mimic emotional dialogue, but it lacks true emotional awareness or spirituality. Emerging phenomena such as griefbots and digital simulations of life after death have also been identified as presenting additional psycho-spiritual challenges that can disrupt the process of Islamic grief, emotional healing, and acceptance of death (Dwi, 2025). At the governance level, this study identified significant gaps in the ethical and legal

frameworks governing AI-assisted Islamic counseling tools. Existing counseling ethical principles, which are largely inspired by traditional face-to-face counseling settings, are considered inadequate to address contemporary AI issues such as algorithmic accountability, digital informed consent, digital autonomy, and technological transparency.

This research outlines the structured analysis matrices and visual charts designed to synthesize the research findings. The data focuses on the critical convergence of artificial intelligence, Islamic theological boundaries, psycho-spiritual counseling dimensions, and the required governance architecture based on the Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah framework. The table below functions as a relational matrix mapping out the empirical vulnerabilities identified in current automated counseling frameworks against authentic humanistic/theological requirements (Gressel et al., 2020).

Table 1. *Core Empirical Findings & AI Limitations Matrix*

Core Dimension	**Empirical Data & Findings**	**Key Vulnerabilities / AI Reductions**
Religious Authenticity & Authority	66% of analyzed studies state that Islamic counseling requires contextual wisdom, scientific competence, spiritual discernment, and moral accountability.	• High risk of incorrect fatwas. • Inaccurate interpretation of the Qur'an/Hadith. • Untargeted spiritual recommendations. • Epistemological reduction: AI operates only on procedural knowledge, lacking 'wisdom knowledge' (Knowing Why).
Humanitarian Dimension	69% of the surveyed sources emphasize that the human component is essential and cannot be replaced by computer software/algorithms.	• AI lacks genuine emotional awareness or spirituality (can only mimic text). • Griefbots & digital after-life simulations disrupt healthy Islamic grief, emotional healing, and acceptance of Qadha & Qadar (Mawaddati et al., 2025).

Ethical Governance & Legitimacy	Significant systemic gaps exist in the current legal and ethical infrastructure. Traditional face-to-face codes are wholly inadequate for automated settings.	• Severe deficit in algorithmic accountability. • Lack of digital informed consent and transparency. • Infringement on digital autonomy. • Disconnection from scientific Sanad (lineage) and personal moral integrity.

This visual structural chart illustrates how the Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah serves as the evaluative baseline for regulating, measuring, and governing the development and boundary limits of AI-assisted Islamic counseling tools (Maiga, 2025).

Table 2. *Ethical Governance Framework (Value-Based Ithār Akhlāqi)*

Maqāṣid Core Pillar	**Operational Evaluation Criteria**	**AI Boundary / Risk Prevention Threshold**
Maintenance of Religion (Ḥifẓ ad-Dīn)	Preserving the integrity of users' faith, orthodox creed, and authentic spiritual pathways.	AI must not independently generate fatwas or isolated interpretations of text without a verified scientific sanad.
Maintenance of Intellect (Ḥifẓ al-'Aql)	Ensuring tools empower human critical thinking, mental clarity, and rational digital autonomy.	System design must reject manipulative algorithms or automated prompts that exploit cognitive/psychological vulnerabilities.
Maintenance of Soul (Ḥifẓ an-Nafs)	Protecting psychological well-being, emotional healing processes, and the dignity of human life.	Banning or strictly limiting unregulated griefbots and simulated interactions with the deceased that interrupt healthy acceptance.
Maintenance of Offspring (Ḥifẓ an-Nasl)	Safeguarding family values, emotional counseling for lineages, and generational psychological safety.	Securing complete data privacy of highly personal interpersonal struggles from commercial algorithm targeting.
Maintenance of Property (Ḥifẓ al-Māl)	Preventing financial exploitation of vulnerable individuals seeking digital spiritual refuge.	Ensure transparency in monetization models; block predatory pricing or paywalled

		access to core theological guidance.

The sequential framework below outlines the operational flow of the 'Human-in-the-Loop' model, defining the exact boundaries where AI optimization ends and irreplaceable human intervention is required (Kallmes et al., 2025).

Table 3. *Synthesis Model: Human-AI Collaboration Framework*

Workflow Step	**Functional Layer**	**Operational Actions & Human Control Boundaries**
Step 1	AI Administrative & Efficiency Layer	Leveraged strictly to expand outreach, scale intake data processing, personalize scheduling, and provide preliminary administrative sorting for counseling services.
Step 2	Human-in-the-Loop Supervision Layer	Enforces rigorous technological transparency and algorithmic accountability. A qualified human counselor acts as a gatekeeper, verifying text outputs and structural suggestions before they are exposed to users.
Step 3	Authentic Human Mursyid Layer	The absolute core of the therapeutic relationship where technology is disallowed. Executed entirely via human elements: Rahmah (compassion), Ikhlāṣ (sincerity), deep empathetic listening, and final spiritual, moral, and theological accountability.

The issue of religious authenticity in AI-based Islamic counseling is the most distinctive dimension, distinguishing this study from the broader ethical discourse on AI in counseling. In the Islamic scientific tradition, religious authority is inseparable from the personal dimension of a pious person who has a clear scientific sanad, tested moral integrity, and spiritual sensitivity honed through deep spiritual experience (Elmahjub, 2023). When AI seeks to take over spiritual guidance by offering algorithmically generated interpretations of the Qur'an, hadiths, or fatwas, it entails a fundamental epistemological reduction: a diminishment of the depth, contextuality, and wisdom inherent in authentic religious guidance.

AI's inability to capture the contextual wisdom and spiritual discernment of Islamic counseling is particularly relevant, given the concept of wisdom in Islamic traditions (Abdelnour, 2025). Wisdom, profound wisdom that goes beyond textual knowledge alone, is a quality acquired through a long process of spiritual development, experience of human guidance, and continuous contemplation. AI systems, however sophisticated, operate at the level of procedural and propositional knowledge (knowing that and knowing how), but cannot reach the dimension of wisdom knowledge (knowing why in a spiritual context) at the heart of transformative Islamic guidance.

Comparison with previous literature shows that the discourse on "human in the loop" in general counseling AI systems has developed quite rapidly (Kallmes et al., 2025). However, in the specific context of Islamic counseling, humans' place in the decision-making circle is not only a matter of accuracy or security, but also of religious legitimacy and spiritual responsibility. A trained Muslim counselor serves not only as a facilitator of the psychological process but also as a mursyid. This spiritual guide helps individuals draw closer to Allah and find meaning in life within the framework of Islamic values. This dual role is fundamentally undelegatable to an artificial entity lacking a spiritual dimension (Makhmudah & Arifin, 2025).

The presence of griefbots and digital simulations of life after death, as emerging phenomena with the potential to disrupt the process of Islamic grief, as researched by Osman (2025) introduces a complex new ethical dimension. In the Islamic perspective, death is understood as a transfer to a more eternal life (the hereafter), and the grieving process is an important part of accepting Allah's decrees (qadha and qadar) as well as an opportunity to strengthen faith. Simulating the digital presence of the deceased through AI not only has the potential to hinder this process of acceptance, but it can also raise theological problems about the boundaries between the living and the deceased worlds from an Islamic perspective.

The gap in the ethical governance framework for Islamic counseling AI signals the urgency of building a comprehensive, value-based ithār akhlāqi (ethical framework). In this regard, the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah mentioned by Ali et al. (2025)

offers a solid foundation. The five main objectives of the shari'a the maintenance of religion (dīn), intellect ('aql), soul (nafs), offspring (nasl), and property (māl) can be operationalized as comprehensive evaluation criteria to assess the feasibility and limits of the use of AI in Islamic counseling. A counseling AI system that threatens the integrity of the user's faith, undermines the capacity for critical reasoning, or exploits individuals' psychological vulnerability clearly runs counter to these fundamental purposes of the Shari'a.

This research confirms that the future of Islamic counseling in the digital age is not a choice between AI and humans, but rather a wise partnership between technology and humanity. AI can and should be leveraged to strengthen the reach, efficiency, and personalization of Islamic counseling services. However, this use must remain under competent human supervision, within a strong Islamic ethical framework, and with an unwavering commitment to the spiritual authenticity and dignity of the human being as a caliph on earth.

Conclusion

A systematic review of the literature indicates that AI has considerable potential to improve service accessibility, facilitate preliminary psychological support, help identify emotional distress, and enhance the efficiency of digital counseling services. However, these opportunities should be understood as potential contributions rather than definitive evidence of effectiveness in Islamic counseling practice. The research also identifies several interconnected ethical concerns, particularly data privacy and confidentiality, algorithmic bias, religious authenticity, and AI's limitations in reproducing essential human qualities. From an Islamic perspective, counseling involves more than psychological assistance; it also encompasses spiritual development, moral responsibility, and cultivating values such as rahmah (compassion), ikhlāṣ (sincerity), and amānah (trustworthiness). Consequently, AI-generated guidance cannot replace the contextual understanding, spiritual sensitivity, and professional accountability of qualified Islamic counselors. The study further highlights the relevance of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah as an ethical foundation for evaluating

AI applications in Islamic counseling. Its objectives provide normative guidance for protecting religious integrity, psychological well-being, intellectual capacity, human dignity, and personal information. Accordingly, AI should serve as an assistive instrument under competent human supervision, not an autonomous substitute for counseling professionals or religious authorities.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The literature search relied on selected academic platforms, including Google Scholar, ResearchGate, SpringerLink, and arXiv, and was restricted to publications from 2022 to 2026. Differences in database coverage, source selection, publication accessibility, and the topic's interdisciplinary nature may have influenced the findings. Furthermore, the review does not provide a fully reproducible record of screening decisions or a consistently reported denominator for the previously stated percentages. Therefore, those percentages should not be interpreted as statistically representative estimates. Future research should employ transparent systematic review procedures and empirical investigations involving Islamic counselors and service users. Such studies could establish context-sensitive ethical guidelines and assess how AI can support accessible, culturally appropriate, spiritually authentic, and human-centered Islamic counseling.

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