Thematic Quranic Interpretation and Islamic Educational Psychology in Explaining Digital anxiety: An Integrative Review

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Abstract: *This study bridges a gap in the integration of Islamic exegesis and contemporary psychological frameworks regarding digital age anxieties feelings of anxiety over potentially missing information, trends, or experiences that others are having. This study employs qualitative techniques, incorporating a literature review that investigates both classical and modern commentaries along with literature on Islamic psychology. The findings suggest that these passages embody spiritual principles that may alleviate Fear of Missing Out, including recognition of the world's impermanence, the significance of self-acceptance, and confidence in and contentment with God's provisions. The main cause of syndrome is an irrational fear (intense anxiety) regarding the information acquired, frequently resulting in feelings of discontent and diminished self-worth.*

Keywords: *digital anxiety, thematic analysis, psychology of Islamic Education.*

Abstrak: *Artikel ini menghubungkan kekurangan dalam penggabungan interpretasi Islam dengan paradigma psikologi modern tentang kecemasan di zaman digital akan tertinggal informasi, tren, atau pengalaman yang dirasakan orang lain. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan studi pustaka, menelaah kitab-kitab tafsir klasik dan kontemporer serta literatur psikologi Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ayat-ayat tersebut mengandung nilai-nilai spiritual yang mampu meredam gejala kecemasan, seperti kesadaran akan kefanaan dunia, pentingnya penerimaan diri, serta tawakal dan ridha terhadap ketentuan Allah. Sumber utama dari syndrome adalah rasa takut yang tidak realistis (cemas berlebih) terhadap suatu informasi yang diperolehnya, seringkali membuatnya merasa kurang bahagia dan minder.*

Kata Kunci: *Kecemasan digital, tafsir tematik, psikologi pendidikan Islam.*

Introduction

Social media addiction is a significant global problem, with an estimated 210 million people worldwide suffering from social media and internet addiction (Ali Al-Abyadh, 2025). Despite 5.22 billion social media users, representing 63.8% of the

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world's population, many spend excessive time on these platforms (Piko et al., 2025). On average, social media users spend 2 hours and 19 minutes each day scrolling, interacting, and consuming content (Feng et al., 2025).

Based on the results of a survey conducted by the Alvara Research Center in March 2023 regarding the duration of internet use between generations in Indonesia, it was found that Generation Z has an addiction to using gadgets (addicted users) with internet access of more than seven hours a day (Sekar Arum & Amira Zahrani, 2024). Generation Z is all individuals born after 1995, namely the generation born from 1996 to 2012. Strengthened by the results of the Statista Research Department survey (share of Instagram by age Indonesia, 2024) on November 17, 2024, showed that TikTok and Instagram users in Indonesia, as of August 2024, were 38.8% with an age range of 18-24 years (Alva & Rita, 2024). There are around 103.95 million TikTok and Instagram users, of which 51.7 percent are women and 48.3 percent are men (Fadillah & Adianto, 2024).

Previous research on the Fear of Missing Out phenomenon, conducted by (Elhai et al., 2025), found that millennials experiencing Digital anxiety tend to spend more time on their smartphones, causing them to lose emotional connections with their friends. Similar research by (Servidio et al., 2024) found that the psychological impact of Digital anxiety influences information-seeking behavior, with those experiencing it constantly seeking updates to satisfy their psychological needs. This is supported by the results of (Davis et al., 2023) research, which showed that early adolescents experience a fear of missing out because their psychological needs for connection and self-understanding are unmet. Adolescents feel less connected to others and are uncomfortable or unable to fulfill their desires (Sende et al., 2025).

However, there are also accompanying negative impacts behind the various conveniences and positive impacts offered by social media (Ertiö et al., 2024). One of the negative impacts of Instagram use is psychological stress, resulting in both physical and mental health problems, one of which is Fear of Missing Out (Gede Semarajana, 2024). Fear of Missing Out (Digital anxiety) is the fear of feeling "left behind" due to not participating in certain social activities (Lianawati et al., 2023). A simple example of someone's behavior indicating Digital anxiety is frequently checking chats, phone calls, or notifications on social media, continuously and repeatedly, regardless of whether the incoming information is important (Maysitoh et al., 2020).

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This fear refers to the feeling or perception that others have a better life. Digital anxiety is an internal struggle that occurs within a person. Digital anxiety arises as a side effect of modern life, facilitated by technology (Aurira et al., 2023). Long before the development of social media, Digital anxiety was present in people's daily lives; in any situation, a person can experience feelings of anxiety. This phenomenon is closely related to the massive use of social media and its impact on mental health (Irena Syva Salbilah Ulfa & Ika Andrini Farida, 2023).

In an Islamic context, conditions such as Digital anxiety can be seen as a form of spiritual imbalance. The Quran, as a guide for Muslims, provides various guidance for facing life's challenges, including psychological symptoms like Digital anxiety . Someone who feels anxious or worried about being unable to keep up with what others are doing is experiencing an imbalance between their focus on this world and the afterlife (Faiz Habibah et al., 2024). This verse reminds us that everything worldly is temporary, and nothing can bring true happiness except prioritizing worship acts and a life Allah has blessed.

Based on the problem description and several previous studies, this study offers novelty and gaps in the analysis of thematic interpretation studies. It compares it with Pierre Levy's (Zhang et al., 2023) New Media theory, which discusses the development of mass media technology. It is divided into two perspectives: the social interaction perspective and the social integration perspective. Therefore, this article can provide theoretical and practical contributions to developing interdisciplinary studies between Qur'anic interpretation and contemporary psychology.

Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research, which collects data and information from various library materials, such as books, journals, and reports (Clarke, 2025). Primary data comes from the Quran, particularly Surah Al-Hadid verses 20–23, and is interpreted through a thematic (maudhu'i) tafsir approach. Secondary data includes tafsir books (such as Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Al-Misbah, and Al-Maraghi), Islamic psychology literature (such as the works of Malik Badri and Al-Ghazali), and scientific journals related to Digital anxiety .

Document collection using a thematic approach involves interpreting the Quran by selecting a specific theme. Then, verses related to that theme are collected,

explaining each semantically and interpretively, and connecting them to form a complete and comprehensive understanding of the Quran's perspective on the topic under study (Caniago, 2021).

Next, the obtained data is collected and processed through the editing stage, which involves re-examining the data, particularly for completeness, clarity of meaning, and harmony between the data. This is followed by the organizing stage, which involves organizing the obtained data within the required framework. The final stage is finding the research findings, which involves further analyzing the organized data using predetermined rules, theories, and methods to arrive at specific conclusions that address the research objectives (Chu, 2023).

The steps in data analysis include: 1) data reduction is the process of selecting, simplifying, focusing, abstracting and changing raw data into research notes, 2) data presentation, is done in the form of a brief description or chart to make it easier to conclude, 3) researchers conclude a continuation of the presentation and results of data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

Result and Discussion

Classification of digital anxiety verses

The Quran contains numerous verses that discuss feelings of fear, anxiety, or worry, indicators of Digital anxiety , broken down into four terms: the word "khouf" and its derivatives, mentioned 122 times; "*huzn*" and its derivatives, mentioned 42 times; "dhoyiq" (drowsy), 12 times; and "*halu'a*" (fear) in Surah Al-Ma'arij, verse 19 (Fauziah et al., 2023).

These verses are: 1. The word "*khouf*" and its derivatives. In the book "Mu'jam Al-Mufahros," the word "*khouf*," meaning fear, is mentioned 122 times. One such word is in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 155.

$$\text{وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوْعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرٰتِّ وَبَشِّرِ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ}$$

Meaning: We will test you with fear and hunger, and a loss of wealth, lives, and fruits. Convey (O Prophet Muhammad) good news to the patient people. (Kementrian_Agama, 2019)

The derivations or pronouns can be found in the following verses: Qs. Al-Baqoroh: 182, 229, 239, 38, 62, 112, 229, 262, 274, 277 114. Qs. Ali Imran: 175 mentioned

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3 times, and verse 170. Qs. An-Nisa: 128, 9, 3, 35, 101, 34, 83. Qs. Al-Maidah: 28, 94, 108, 23, 54, 69. Qs. Al-An'am: 15, 48, 80, 81 are mentioned twice, 51. Qs. Al-'Araf : 59, 35, 49, 56, 205. Qs. Al-Anfal: 48, 58, 26 (Zulfikar & Iskandar, 2023).

The word huzn and its derivation Lafadz, or the word huzn, which means sadness, is mentioned 42 times, one of which is Qs. Al-Baqoroh verse 38:

$$ قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوْا مِنْهَا جَمِيْعًا ۚ فَاِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِّنِّيْ هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ $$

Meaning: We said, "Come down all of you from heaven! Then, if My guidance truly comes to you, whoever follows My guidance will have no fear befall them nor will they grieve. "(Kementrian_Agama, 2019)

The word huzn also has many derivations or pronouns mentioned in the following verses: Qs. Al-Baqoroh: 62, 112, 262, 274, 277. Qs. Ali Imran: 139, 153, 170, 176. Qs. Al-Maidah: 41, 69. Qs. Al-An'am: 33, 48. Qs. Al-'Araf: 35, 49. Qs. At-Taubah: 40, 92. Qs. Yunus: 62, 65. Qs. Yusuf: 13, 84, 86. Qs. Al-Hijr: 88 (Husain, 2024).

The word *dhoyiq* and its derivatives, Lafadz or the word *dhayiq*, which means narrowness of the soul, are mentioned 12 times, one of which is in Qs. At-Taubah verse 118:

$$ وَّعَلَى الثَّلٰثَةِ الَّذِيْنَ خُلِّفُوْا ۗ حَتّٰى اِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْاَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ اَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوْا اَنْ لَّا مَلْجَاَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِلَّآ $$

$$ اِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوْبُوْا ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ ع $$

Meaning: For three people338) who were left behind (and whose repentance was delayed) until the earth seemed cramped for them, though it was spacious, and their souls cramped for them, and they knew that there was no refuge from Allah except in Him, then (after all) Allah accepted their repentance so that they would remain in their repentance. Indeed, Allah is the Acceptor of Repentance, the Most Merciful. (Kementrian_Agama, 2019)

Then the derivation of the word dhayiq is also mentioned in the following verses: Qs. Al-An'am: 125. Qs. At-Taubah: 25 and verse 118 are mentioned twice. Qs. Hud: 12, 77. Qs. Al-Hijr: 97. Qs. An-Nahl: 127. Qs. Al-Furqan: 13. Qs. Shu'ara: 13. Qs. An-Naml: 70, Qs. Al-Ankabut: 33, and Qs. At-Talaq: 6 (Fauziah et al., 2023).

Interpretation of the Verses on digital anxiety

After searching for verses and classifying them according to interpretations that fit the context of Fear of Missing Out, the author found two verses in different surahs. These verses are: Qs. Al-Baqarah, verse 155, and Qs. An-Nisa, verse 83.

In his commentary on Al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab states that in this verse, Allah intends to convey that the sign of life in this world is the presence of various trials, including a slight fear of everything. The form of trial exemplified in this verse is a slight fear of hunger, a lack of wealth, lives, and fruits (Hidayanti & Hidayatullah, 2023). In the interpretation of Al-Misbah, it also explains the meaning of the word "little" in this verse, which shows that when compared to human potential in facing trials, then the trials can be said to be only a little because in reality Allah has bestowed the ability to face trials for every human being and Allah only gives trials according to the abilities of His servants, so whatever trials humans will face will always be within the radar of human capabilities.

In closing, Allah says, "Give glad tidings to the patient." This means that Allah will always be with His servants who are patient in facing trials and will give them good news. Abu Yahya bin Musa, in his commentary on Hidayatul Insan, explains that in this verse, Allah states that He will certainly test each of His servants to see who is honest and who is lying, who is patient and who is complaining (Zakin & Saerozi, 2025).

Those who complain will suffer losses in the form of weakened faith, loss of patience, contentment, and gratitude, and even calamities they face will feel even more difficult. Meanwhile, calamities will feel lighter for those who are patient, and their blessings will increase.

Therefore, Allah SWT gives good news in the form of rewards, even Paradise, as a reward for those who are patient. The commentators above interpret the form of trials broadly, meaning that the trials God gives humans can be more than those mentioned in Al-Baqarah verse 155. Human trials of this unsettling fear are becoming more varied as they evolve (Afifah, 2025). This includes the modern era, where society has increasingly embraced social media as a vital tool for daily activities. This is undoubtedly also part of God's trials, as social media can more easily lead humans to

fear and anxiety. This phenomenon has recently emerged as the Fear of Missing Out syndrome.

Meanwhile, in his verse, Surah An-Nisa verse 83, Allah explains how we can confirm information whose source we do not know is valid. Therefore, the author will now explain the opinions of the commentators regarding Surah An-Nisa. An-Nisa verse 83 is as follows: The interpretation of Al-Misbah also explains that this verse is one of the main guidelines for disseminating information. When someone receives news or information, they should not immediately spread it without checking its source, because not all recipients will grasp the same message, even if the text is valid (Rohman et al., 2024).

In this case, the author concludes that the context of Surah An-Nisa verse 83 is also related to the primary source of Digital anxiety syndrome in individuals. Digital anxiety occurs when someone fails to process the information they receive because they fear being left behind. They then adopt any news on social media without confirming its authenticity, whether to re-share it or incorporate it into their lifestyle (Aini & Irfan, 2024).

People with Digital anxiety tend to stay updated with various information due to their fear of being left behind. This leads them to constantly stare at their smartphone screens to monitor the thousands of pieces of information presented on social media (Calcagni et al., 2023). Being up-to-date is not wrong, but it can be fatal if someone continually searches for unnecessary things. This worsens when someone spends time scrolling through their smartphone screen.

Analysis of Digital anxiety Behavior in Islamic Psychology

Fear is a state of anxiety, an emotional condition experienced by an individual that creates objective and subjective feelings of tension and worry. According to (Sende et al., 2025), there are two causes of fear. The first is fear caused by something with a clear origin. This feeling arises from a threat to one's safety from something dangerous, and therefore can be avoided and prevented.

(Alva & Rita, 2024) defines anxiety as a mental condition that causes fatigue due to a feeling of apprehension about a threat whose potential occurrence is uncertain. (Fiddarain et al., 2024) suggests three types of anxiety reactions: subjective reactions such as worry and hesitation, visible reactions such as trembling, and internal

physiological reactions such as increased adrenaline, characterized by increased blood pressure, heart rate, or cold sweat. Based on the opinions of psychologists mentioned above, the author concludes that the primary source of Digital anxiety syndrome is an unrealistic fear (excessive anxiety) of information received, often leading to feelings of unhappiness and inferiority.

In his book, (Elhai et al., 2025) states that Digital anxiety can arise when we spend an unreasonable amount of time and energy simply daydreaming about what we wish we had instead of being grateful for what we actually have. This can lead to envy, caused by low psychological needs being met in the real world, such as a lack of understanding, appreciation, or good relationships with others. This then causes individuals to escape from real life to the virtual world, namely, social media. This then leads to misperceptions of information received from social media, which can cause someone to desire the blessings that others are currently experiencing, anxiety when others have better experiences, and even depression due to being unable to keep up with what is currently trending (Ertiö et al., 2024).

In Islam, envy is a disease of the heart that makes someone feel uneasy, anxious, or worried in living their life because they feel they are being competed with by the happiness of others. Envy is also known as *hasad* or envy. The encyclopedia of the meanings of the Qur'an, *"Syarah Alfaazhul Qur'an,"* explains that hasad refers to someone who wishes that the blessings of others will be transferred to him. Al-Haasid refers to someone who harbors envy or jealousy (Zakin & Saerozi, 2025).

Envy is often caused by a lack of gratitude for what one already has and what God has blessed them with, leading to a constant feeling of deprivation. When a lack of gratitude envelops a person, envy of the blessings received by others arises, wishing that their blessings would disappear or perhaps be transferred to him, believing that he is truly more deserving of them than others.

(Hidayanti & Hidayatullah, 2023) also explains in his commentary that envy of the blessings God bestows upon others is forbidden because it prevents one from accepting the destiny God has ordained for them and leads the envious person to daydream without being accompanied by effort and prayer . A person who balances effort and prayer is better than one who merely daydreams. As a psychological way to address Digital anxiety , the author will present a simple solution: implementing tips

that can be done independently by a Digital anxiety sapiens. Specifically, the author will recommend these tips for those experiencing severe symptoms such as depression and stress. (Aurira et al., 2023) wrote in his article that there are at least several efforts that can be made to overcome Digital anxiety syndrome, namely:

First, reduce social media use by limiting smartphone use. This can be done in terms of time, the amount of time we spend on social media, and functionally, where we must limit our smartphone usage. Second, by accepting ourselves. Digital anxiety often stems from envy and a desire to be better, leading us to compare ourselves with others, often feeling far behind. Third, we can shift our mindset from Digital anxiety to JoMO (Joy of Missing Out), which is a state of self-satisfaction. This approach can also help us feel more grateful for our achievements. Because Digital anxiety syndrome is triggered by a feeling of disbelief towards one's fate.

Conclusion

Everyone may experience difficulties based on the theme readings of multiple books by Al-Misbah, Al-Azhar, and Hidayatul Insan on the fear of missing out. In this verse, Allah refers to "trials/tests" in a broad sense, meaning that there are many different kinds of trials that cause worry, anxiety, and fear. These include fear of starvation, fear of not having enough money, and fear of being abandoned or of seeing people who have had better experiences.. In the author's opinion, the interpretation of various types of fear or the causes of this fear aligns with the theme of this study, which discusses the Fear of Missing Out, namely the fear of being left behind or the fear of seeing others' experiences better than one's own.

The findings of the thematic interpretation of the Fear of Missing Out teach Muslims to process information by first confirming whether the news is accurate and suitable for daily consumption. If not, we should ignore the news and refrain from sharing it. In this study, the author also presents a solution for Digital anxiety sapiens, suggested by psychologists. As explained previously, Digital anxiety sapiens can reduce social media use, accept themselves, and change their Digital anxiety mindset to JoMo, or the Joy of Missing Out. Psychologists also recommend psychotherapy for those with severe Digital anxiety.

The author provides suggestions and recommendations for further research. Researchers should collect as much data as possible to expand the interpretation of the

results so that there are no misunderstandings for lay readers and use data that is reliable and has proven validity so that the information obtained is relevant to the research being undertaken and can be accounted for.

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